

Salem Witch Trials¹

The Salem witchcraft trials were one of the most infamous episodes in American colonial history. In early 1692 some children in Salem, a village in Massachusetts close to Boston, accused three women of bewitching them. Charges and countercharges followed, and in June of that year witchcraft trials were authorized by the colonial governor, William Phips. Over the next few months the special court appointed by Phips tried, convicted, and executed nineteen people of witchcraft in the largest such proceedings in American history (one other person was tortured to death after refusing to enter a plea of guilty or not guilty). Amid growing criticism and doubts over the witch trials, Phips turned to Cotton Mather, Boston's leading minister and the author of several books and sermons on witchcraft, to defend the Salem proceedings. The result was *The Wonders of the Invisible World*, a study written by Mather and published in Boston in October 1692. The first viewpoint provided here contains excerpts of Mather's tract defending the Salem witch trials.

Mather states his beliefs in the existence of witches and, utilizing the records of Stephen Sewall, clerk of the court in Salem, examines the trials of five Salem people convicted of witchcraft (three are included in this first viewpoint). Some historians have argued that Mather was selective in his choice of trials to examine. Mather had been among a group of ministers arguing against the use of "special evidence"—testimony that a spirit resembling the accused had been seen tormenting a victim—as sole grounds for conviction of witchcraft. In *Wonders*, Mather chose to focus on the cases least affected by such supernatural proof.

Although the mass prosecutions and several executions for witchcraft in Salem, Massachusetts, in 1692, had the support of much of the public, many were deeply disturbed by the proceedings. One critic was Thomas Brattle, a prominent Boston merchant. Educated at Harvard College (and future treasurer of

the institution), Brattle had interests in science and mathematics as well as commerce. He was liberal in his political and religious beliefs and opposed Puritan orthodoxy. The second viewpoint provided here is taken from a letter Brattle wrote to an unknown English clergyman in which he attacks the proceedings used in the Salem witch trials, especially the "specter" or supernatural evidence. The letter was not published in Brattle's day, but is believed by historians to have been privately circulated, allowing Brattle to discreetly make his views of the witchcraft proceedings known. Governor William Phips suspended the witchcraft trials in October 1692. In all several hundred people were accused of witchcraft, fifty-five confessed, and twenty were killed.

A Defense of the Salem Witch Trials (1692)

Cotton Mather (1663-1728)²

The *New-Englanders* are a People of God settled in those, which were once the *Devil's Territories*; and it may easily be supposed that the *Devil* was exceedingly disturbed, when he perceived such a People here accomplishing the Promise of old made unto our Blessed Jesus, *That He should have the Utmost parts of the Earth for his Possession*. There was not a greater Uproar among the *Ephesians*, when the Gospel was first brought among them, than there was among, *The Powers of the Air* (after whom those *Ephesians* walked) when first the *Silver Trumpets* of the Gospel here made the *Joyful Sound*. The Devil thus Irritated, immediately tried all sorts of Methods to overturn this poor Plantation: and so much of the Church, as was *Fled into this Wilderness*, immediately found, *The Serpent cast out of his Mouth a Flood for the carrying of it away*. I believe, that never were more *Satanical Devices* used for the Unsettling of any People under the Sun, than what have been Employed for the Extirpation of the *Vine* which God has here *Planted, Casting out the Heathen, and preparing a Room before it, and causing it to take deep Root, and fill the Land, so that it sent its Boughs unto*

¹ From Leone, Bruno, William Dudley, and John C. Chalberg, eds. *Opposing Viewpoint in American History: Volume I: From Colonial Times to Reconstruction*. Greenhaven Press, Inc.: San Diego, CA, 1996.

² From *The Wonders of the Invisible World* by Cotton Mather (Boston, 1692).

the Atlantic Sea Eastward, and its Branches unto the Connecticut River Westward, and the Hills were covered with the shadow thereof. But, All those Attempts of Hell, have hitherto been Abortive, many an *Ebenezer* has been Erected unto the Praise of God, by his Poor People here; and, *Having obtained Help from God, we continue to this Day.* Wherefore the Devil is now making one Attempt more upon us; an Attempt more Difficult, more Surprising, more snarled with unintelligible Circumstances than any that we have hitherto Encountered; an Attempt so *Critical*, that if we get well through, we shall soon Enjoy *Halcyon Days* with all the *Vultures* of Hell *Trodden under our Feet.* He has wanted his *Incarnate Legions* to Persecute us, as the People of God have in the other Hemisphere been Persecuted: he has therefore drawn forth his more *Spiritual* ones to make an Attack upon us. We have been advised by some Credible Christians yet alive, that a Malefactor, accused of *Witchcraft* as well as *Murder*, and Executed in this place more than Forty Years ago, did then give Notice of, *An Horrible PLOT against the Country by WITCHCRAFT, and a Foundation of WITCHCRAFT then laid, which if it were not seasonally discovered, would probably Blow up, and pull down all the Churches in the Country.* And we have now with Horror seen the *Discovery* of such a *Witchcraft!* An Army of *Devils* is horribly broke in upon the place which is the *Center*, and after a sort, the *First-born* of our *English* Settlements: and the Houses of the Good People there are filled with the doleful Shrieks of their Children and Servants, Tormented by Invisible Hands, with Tortures altogether preternatural. After the Mischiefs there Endeavored, and since in part Conquered, the terrible Plague, of *Evil Angels*, hath made its Progress into some other places, where other Persons have been in like manner Diabolically handled. These our poor Afflicted Neighbors, quickly after they become *Infected* and *Infested* with these *Demons*, arrive to a Capacity of Discerning those which they conceive the *Shapes* of their Troublers; and notwithstanding the Great and Just Suspicion, that the *Demons* might Impose the *Shapes* of Innocent Persons in their *Spectral Exhibitions* upon the Sufferers, (which may perhaps prove no small part of the *Witch-Plot* in the issue) yet many of the Persons thus Represented, being Examined, several of them have been

Convicted of a very Damnable *Witchcraft*: yea, more than One *Twenty* have *Confessed*, that they have Signed unto a *Book*, which the Devil showed them, and Engaged in his Hellish Design of *Bewitching*, and *Ruining* our Land. We know not, at least *I* know not, how far the *Delusions* of Satan may be Interwoven into some Circumstances of the *Confessions*; but one would think, all the Rules of Understanding Humane Affairs are at an end, if after so many most Voluntary Harmonious *Confessions*, made by Intelligent Persons of all Ages, in sundry Towns, at several Times, we must not Believe the *main strokes* wherein those *Confessions* all agree: especially when we have a thousand preternatural Things every day before our eyes, wherein the *Confessors* do acknowledge their Concernment, and give Demonstration of their being so Concerned. If the Devils now can strike the minds of men with any *Poisons* of so fine a Composition and Operation, that Scores of Innocent People shall Unite, in *Confessions* of a Crime, which we see actually committed, it is a thing prodigious, beyond the Wonders of the former Ages, and it threatens no less than a sort of a Dissolution upon the World. Now, by these *Confessions* 'tis Agreed, *That* the Devil has made a dreadful Knot of *Witches* in the Country, and by the help of *Witches* has dreadfully increased that Knot: *That* these *Witches* have driven a Trade of Commissioning their *Confederate Spirits*, to do all sorts of Mischiefs to the Neighbors, whereupon there have ensued such Mischievous consequences upon the Bodies and Estates of the Neighborhood, as could not otherwise be accounted for: yea, *That* at prodigious *Witch-Meetings*, the Wretches have proceeded so far, as to Concert and Consult the Methods of Rooting out the Christian Religion from this Country, and setting up instead of it, perhaps a more gross *Diabolesm*, than ever the World saw before. And yet it will be a thing little short of *Miracle*, if in so *spread* a Business as this, the Devil should not get in some of his Juggles, to confound the Discovery of all the rest....

The Salem Trials

But I shall no longer detain my Reader, from his expected Entertainment, in a brief account of the Trials which have passed

upon some of the Malefactors lately Executed at *Salem*, for the *Witchcrafts* whereof they stood Convicted. For my own part, I was not present at any of them; nor ever had I any Personal prejudice at the Persons thus brought upon the Stage; much less at the Surviving Relations of those Persons, with and for whom I would be as hearty a Mourner as any Man living in the World: *The Lord Comfort them!* But having received a Command so to do, I can do no other than shortly relate the chief *Matters of Fact*, which occurred in the Trials of some that were Executed, in an Abridgment Collected out of the *Court-Papers*, on this occasion put into my hands. You are to take the *Truth*, just as it was; and the Truth will hurt no good Man. There might have been more of these, if my Book would not thereby have swollen too big; and if some other worthy hands did not perhaps intend something further in these *Collections*; for which cause I have only singled out Four or Five, which may serve to illustrate the way of Dealing, wherein *Witchcrafts* use to be concerned; and I report matters not as an *Advocate*, but as an *Historian*.

They were some of the Gracious Words inserted in the Advice, which many of the Neighboring Ministers, did this Summer humbly lay before our Honorable Judges, *We cannot but with all thankfulness, acknowledge the success which the Merciful God has given unto the Sedulous and Assiduous endeavors of Our Honorable Rulers, to detect the abominable Witchcrafts which have been committed in the Country; Humbly Praying, that the discovery of those mysterious and mischievous wickednesses, may be Perfected.* If in the midst of the many Dissatisfactions among us, the Publication of these Trials, may promote such a Pious Thankfulness unto God, for Justice being so far executed among us, I shall Rejoice that God is Glorified; and pray, that no wrong steps of ours may ever sully any of his Glorious Works....

**The Trial of Susanna Martin, at the
COURT OF OYER AND TERMINER, HELD BY
ADJOURNMENT AT SALEM, JUNE 29, 1692**

Susanna Martin, pleading *Not Guilty* to the Indictment of *Witchcraft*, brought in against her, there were produced the Evidences of many Persons very sensibly and grievously

Bewitched; who all complained of the Prisoner at the Bar, as the Person whom they believed the cause of their Miseries. And now, as well as in the other Trials, there was an extraordinary Endeavour by *Witchcrafts*, with Cruel and frequent Fits, to hinder the poor Sufferers from giving in their Complaints, which the Court was forced with much Patience to obtain, by much waiting and watching for it.

2. There was now also an account given of what passed at her first Examination before the Magistrates. The Cast of her *Eye*, then striking the afflicted People to the Ground, whether they saw that Cast or no; there were these among other Passages between the Magistrates and the Examinee.

Magistrate. Pray, what ails these People?

Martin. I don't know.

Magistrate. But what do you think ails them?

Martin. I don't desire to spend my Judgment upon it.

Magistrate. Don't you think they are bewitched?

Martin. No, I do not think they are.

Magistrate. Tell us your Thoughts about them then.

Martin. No, my thoughts are my own, when they are in, but when they are out they are another's. Their Master.—

Magistrate. Their Master? who do you think is their Master?

Martin. If they be dealing in the Black Art, you may know as well as I.

Magistrate. Well, what have you done towards this?

Martin. Nothing at all.

Magistrate. Why, 'tis you or your Appearance.

Martin. I cannot help it.

Magistrate. Is it not *your* Master? How comes your Appearance to hurt these?

Martin. How do I know? He that appeared in the Shape of *Samuel*, a glorified Saint, may appear in any ones Shape.

It was then also noted in her, as in others like her, that if the Afflicted went to approach her, they were flung down to the Ground. And, when she was asked the reason of it, she said, *I cannot tell; it may be, the Devil bears me more Malice than another.*

3. The Court accounted themselves, alarmed by these Things, to enquire further into the Conversation of the Prisoner; and see

what there might occur, to render these Accusations further credible. Whereupon, *John Allen* of *Salisbury*, testified, That he refusing, because of the weakness of his Oxen, to Cart some Staves at the request of this *Martin*, she was displeased at it; and said, *It had been as good that he had; for his Oxen should never do him much more Service.* Whereupon, this Deponent said, *Dose thou threaten me, thou old Witch? I'll throw thee into the Brook:* Which to avoid, she flew over the Bridge, and escaped. But, as he was going home, one of his Oxen tired, so that he was forced to Unyoke him, that he might get him home. He then put his Oxen, with many more, upon *Salisbury* Beach, where Cattle did use to get *Flesh*. In a few days, all the Oxen upon the Beach were found by their Tracks, to have run unto the Mouth of *Merrimack-River*, and not returned; but the next day they were found come ashore upon *Plum-Island*. They that sought them, used all imaginable gentleness, but they would still run away with a violence, that seemed wholly Diabolical, till they came near the mouth of *Merrimack-River*; when they ran right into the Sea, swimming as far as they could be seen. One of them then swam back again, with a swiftness, amazing to the Beholders, who stood ready to receive him, and help up his tired Carcass: But the Beast ran furiously up into the Island, and from thence, thorough the Marshes, up into *Newbury* Town, and so up into the Woods; and there after a while found near *Amesbury*. So that, of fourteen good Oxen, there was only this saved: The rest were all cast up, some in one place, and some in another, Drowned.

4. *John Atkinson* testified, That he exchanged a Cow with a Son of *Susanna Martin's*, whereat she muttered, and was unwilling he should have it. Going to receive this Cow, though he Hamstringed her, and Haltered her, she, of a Tame Creature, grew so mad, that they could scarce get her along. She broke all the Ropes that were fastened unto her, and though she were tied fast unto a Tree, yet she made her escape, and gave them such further trouble, as they could ascribe to no cause but Witchcraft.

5. *Bernard Peache* testified, That being in Bed, on the Lord's-day Night, he heard a scrabbling at the Window, whereat he then saw *Susanna Martin* come in, and jump down upon the Floor. She took hold of this Deponent's Feet, and drawing his Body up into an Heap, she lay upon him near Two Hours; in all which time he

could neither speak nor stir. At length, when he could begin to move, he laid hold on her Hand, and pulling it up to his Mouth, he bit three of her Fingers, as he judged, unto the Bone. Whereupon she went from the Chamber, down the Stairs, out at the Door. This Deponent thereupon called unto the People of the House, to advise them of what passed; and he himself did follow her. The People saw her not; but there being a Bucket at the Left-hand of the Door, there was a drop of Blood found upon it; and several more drops of Blood upon the Snow newly fallen abroad: There was likewise the print of her 2 Feet just without the Threshold; but no more sign of any Footing further off.

At another time this Deponent was desired by the Prisoner, to come unto an Husking of Corn, at her House; and she said, *If he did not come, it were better that he did!* He went not; but the Night following, *Susanna Martin*, as he judged, and another came towards him. One of them said, *Here he is!* but he having a Quarter-staff, made a Blow at them. The Roof of the Barn, broke his Blow; but following them to the Window, he made another Blow at them, and struck them down; yet they got up, and got out, and he saw no more of them.

About this time, there was a Rumor about the Town, that *Martin* had a Broken Head; but the Deponent could say nothing to that.

The said *Peache* also testified the Bewitching the Cattle to Death, upon *Martin's* Discontents.

6. *Robert Downer* testified, That this Prisoner being some Years ago prosecuted at Court for a Witch, he then said unto her, *He believed she was a Witch.* Whereat she being dissatisfied, said, *That some She-Devil would shortly fetch him away!* Which words were heard by others, as well as himself. The Night following, as he lay in his Bed, there came in at the Window, the likeness of a *Cat*, which flew upon him, took fast hold of his Throat, lay on him a considerable while, and almost killed him. At length he remembered what *Susanna Martin* had threatened the Day before; and with much striving he cried out, *Avoid, thou She-Devil! In the Name of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, Avoid!* Whereupon it left him, leaped on the Floor, and flew out at the Window.

And there also came in several Testimonies, that before ever *Downer* spoke a word of this Accident, *Susanna Martin* and her Family had related, *How this Downer had been handled!*

7. *John Kembal* testified, that *Susanna Martin*, upon a Causeless Disgust, had threatened him, about a certain Cow of his, *That she should never do him any more Good:* and it came to pass accordingly. For soon after the Cow was found stark dead on the dry Ground, without any Distemper to be discerned upon her. Upon which he was followed with a strange Death upon more of his Cattle, whereof he lost in one Spring to the Value of Thirty Pounds. But the said *John Kembal* had a further Testimony to give in against the Prisoner which was truly admirable.

Being desirous to furnish himself with a Dog, he applied himself to buy one of this *Martin*, who had a Bitch with Whelps in her House. But she not letting him have his choice, he said, he would supply himself then at one *Blezdels*. Having marked a Puppy, which he liked at *Blezdels*, he met *George Martin*, the Husband of the Prisoner, going by, who asked him, *Whether he would not have one of his Wife's Puppies?* and he answered, *No.* The same Day, one *Edmond Eliot*, being at *Martin's* House, heard *George Martin* relate, where this *Kembal* had been, and what he had said. Whereupon *Susanna Martin* replied, *If I live, I'll give him Puppies enough!* Within a few days after, this *Kembal*, coming out of the Woods, there arose a little Black Cloud in the N. W. and *Kembal* immediately felt a force upon him, which made him not able to avoid running upon the stumps of Trees, that were before him, albeit he had a broad, plain Cart-way, before him; but though' he had his Ax also on his Shoulder to endanger him in his Falls, he could not forbear going out of his way to tumble over them. When he came below the Meeting House, there appeared unto him, a little thing like a *Puppy*, of a Darkish Color; and it shot backwards and forwards between his Legs. He had the Courage to use all possible Endeavors of Cutting it with his Ax; but he could not Hit it: the Puppy gave a jump from him, and went, as to him it seemed into the Ground. Going a little further, there appeared unto him a Black Puppy, somewhat bigger than the first, but as Black as a Cole. Its Motions were quicker than those of his Ax; it flew at his Belly, and away; then at his Throat; so, over his Shoulder one way,

and then over his Shoulder another way. His Heart now began to fail him, and he thought the Dog would have tore his Throat out. But he recovered himself, and called upon God in his Distress; and naming the Name of JESUS CHRIST, it vanished away at once. The Deponent spoke not one Word of these Accidents, for fear of affrighting his Wife. But the next Morning, *Edmond Eliot*, going into *Martin's* House, this Woman asked him where *Kembal* was? He replied, *At home, a Bed, for ought he knew.* She returned, *They say, he was frightened last Night.* *Eliot* asked, *With what?* She answered, *With Puppies.* *Eliot* asked, *Where she heard of it, for he had heard nothing of it?* She rejoined, *About the Town.* Although *Kembal* had mentioned the Matter to no Creature living.

8. *William Brown* testified, That Heaven having blessed him with a most Pious and Prudent Wife, this Wife of his, one day met with *Susanna Martin*; but when she approached just unto her, *Martin* vanished out of sight, and left her extremely affrighted. After which time, the said *Martin* often appeared unto her, giving her no little trouble; and when she did come, she was visited with Birds, that sorely pecked and prickled her; and sometimes, a Bunch, like a Pullet's Egg, would rise in her Throat, ready to choke her, till she cried out, *Witch, you shan't choke me!* While this good Woman was in this extremity, the Church appointed a Day of Prayer, on her behalf; whereupon her Trouble ceased; she saw not *Martin* as formerly; and the Church, instead of their Fast, gave Thanks for her Deliverance. But a considerable while after, she being Summoned to give in some Evidence at the Court, against this *Martin*, quickly thereupon, this *Martin* came behind her, while she was milking her Cow, and said unto her, *For thy defaming her at Court, I'll make thee the most miserable Creature in the World.* Soon after which, she fell into a strange kind of distemper, and became horribly frantic, and incapable of any reasonable Action; the Physicians declaring, that her Distemper was preternatural, and that some Devil had certainly bewitched her; and in that condition she now remained.

9. *Sarah Atkinson* testified, That *Susanna Martin* came from *Amesbury* to their House at *Newbury*, in an extraordinary Season, when it was not fit for any to Travel. She came (as she said, unto *Atkinson*) all that long way on Foot. She bragged and

showed how dry she was; nor could it be perceived that so much as the Soles of her Shoes were wet. *Atkinson* was amazed at it; and professed, that she should herself have been wet up to the knees, if she had then come so far; but *Martin* replied, *She scorn'd to be Drabbled!* It was noted, that this Testimony upon her Trial, cast her in a very singular Confusion.

10. *John Pressy* testified, That being one Evening very unaccountably Bewildered, near a Field of *Martins*, and several times, as one under an Enchantment, returning to the place he had left, at length he saw a marvelous Light, about the bigness of an Half-bushel, near two Rod, out of the way. He went, and struck at it with a Stick, and laid it on with all his might. He gave it near forty blows; and felt it a palpable substance. But going from it, his Heels were struck up, and he was laid with his Back on the Ground, sliding, as he thought, into a Pit; from whence he recover'd by taking hold on the Bush; although afterwards he could find no such Pit in the place. Having, after his Recovery, gone five or six Rod, he saw *Susanna Martin* standing on his Left-hand, as the Light had done before; but they changed no words with one another. He could scarce find his House in his Return; but at length he got home extremely affrighted. The next day, it was upon Enquiry understood, that *Martin* was in a miserable condition by pains and hurts that were upon her.

It was further testified by this Deponent, That after he had given in some Evidence against *Susanna Martin* many years ago, she gave him foul words about it; and said, *He should never prosper more; particularly, That he should never have more than two Cows; that though he was never so likely to have more, yet he should never have them.* And that from that very day to this, namely for twenty years together, he could never exceed that number; but some strange thing or other still prevented his having any more.

11. *Jervis Ring* testified, That about seven years ago, he was oftentimes and grievously oppressed in the Night, but saw not who troubled him; until at last he Lying perfectly Awake, plainly saw *Susanna Martin* approach him. She came to him, and forcibly bit him by the Finger; so that the Print of the bite is now, so long after, to be seen upon him.

12. But besides all of these Evidences, there was a most wonderful Account of one *Joseph Ring*, produced on this occasion. This Man has been strangely carried about by *Demons*, from one *Witch-meeting* to another, for near two years together; and for one quarter of this time, they have made him, and keep him Dumb, though he is now again able to speak. There was one *T. H.* who having, as 'tis judged, a design of engaging this *Joseph Ring* in a snare of Devillism, contrived a while, to bring this *Ring* two Shillings in Debt unto him.

Afterwards, this poor Man would be visited with unknown shapes, and this *T. H.* sometimes among them; which would force him away with them, unto unknown Places, where he saw Meetings, Feastings, Dancings; and after his return, wherein they hurried him along through the Air, he gave Demonstrations to the Neighbors, that he had indeed been so transported. When he was brought unto these hellish Meetings, one of the first Things they still did unto him, was to give him a knock on the Back, whereupon he was ever as if bound with Chains, incapable of stirring out of the place, till they should release him. He related, that there often came to him a Man, who presented him a *Book*, whereto he would have him set his Hand; promising to him, that he should then have even what he would; and presenting him with all the delectable Things, Persons, and Places, that he could imagine. But he refusing to subscribe, the business would end with dreadful Shapes, Noises and Screeches, which almost scared him out of his Wits. Once with the Book, there was a Pen offered him, and an Ink-horn with Liquor in it, that seemed like Blood: But he never touched it.

This Man did now affirm, That he saw the Prisoner at several of those hellish Rendezvouses. Note, this Woman was one of the most impudent, scurrilous, wicked Creatures in the World; and she did now throughout her whole Trial, discover herself to be such an one. Yet when she was asked, what she had to say for herself? Her chief Plea was, *That she had lead a most virtuous and holy Life.*

**The Trial of Elizabeth How, at the
COURT OF OYER AND TERMINER, HELD BY
ADJOURNMENT AT SALEM, JUNE 30, 1692**

Elizabeth How pleading *Not Guilty* to the Indictment of Witchcrafts, then charged upon her; the Court, according to the usual Proceedings of the Courts in *England*, in such Cases, began with hearing the Depositions of several afflicted People, who were grievously tortured by sensible and evident *Witchcrafts*, and all complained of the Prisoner, as the cause of their Trouble. It was also found that the Sufferers were not able to bear her *Look*, as likewise, that in their greatest Swoons, they distinguished her *Touch* from other Peoples, being thereby raised out of them.

And there was other Testimony of People to whom the shape of this *How*, gave trouble nine or ten years ago.

2. It has been a most usual thing for the bewitched Persons, at the same time that the *Specters*, representing the *Witches*, troubled them, to be visited with Apparitions of *Ghosts*, pretending to have been Murdered by the *Witches* then represented. And sometimes the Confessions of the *Witches* afterwards acknowledged those very Murders, which these *Apparitions* charged upon them; although they had never heard what Informations had been given by the Sufferers.

There were such Apparitions of Ghosts testified by some of the present Sufferers; and the Ghosts affirmed, that this *How* had Murdered them: Which things were *feared* but not *proved*.

3. This *How* had made some Attempts of joining to the Church at *Ipswich*, several years ago; but she was denied an admission into that Holy Society, partly through a suspicion of Witchcraft, then urged against her. And there now came in Testimony, of preternatural Mischiefs, presently befalling some that had been Instrumental to debar her from the Communion whereupon she was intruding.

4. There was a particular Deposition of *Joseph Stafford*, That his Wife had conceived an extreme Aversion to this *How*, on the Reports of her *Witchcrafts*: But *How* one day, taking her by the Hand, and saying, *I believe you are not ignorant of the great Scandal that I lie under, by an evil Report raised upon me*. She immediately, unreasonably and unpersuadably, even like one Enchanted, began to take this Woman's part. *How* being soon after propounded, as desiring an Admission to the Table of the Lord, some of the pious Brethren were unsatisfied about her. The Elders appointed a Meeting to hear Matters objected against her; and no

Arguments in the World could hinder this Goodwife *Stafford* from going to the Lecture. She did indeed promise, with much ado, that she would not go to the Church-meeting, yet she could not refrain going thither also. *How's* Affairs there were so canvased, that she came off rather *Guilty* than *Cleared*: nevertheless Goodwife *Stafford* could not forbear taking her by the Hand, and saying, *Though you are Condemned before Men, you are Justified before God*. She was quickly taken in a very strange manner, Ranting, Raving, Raging and crying out, *Goody How must come into the Church; she is a precious Saint; and though she be condemned before Men, she is Justified before God*. So she continued for the space of two or three Hours; and then fell into a Trance. But coming to herself, she cried out, *Ha! I was mistaken*; and afterwards again repeated, *Ha! I was mistaken!* Being asked by a stander by, *Wherein?* she replied, *I thought Goody How had been a precious Saint of God, but now I see she is a Witch: She has bewitched me, and my Child, and we shall never be well, till there be a Testimony for her, that she may be taken into the Church*. And *How* said afterwards, that she was very sorry to see *Stafford* at the Church-meeting mentioned. *Stafford*, after this, declared herself to be afflicted by the Shape of *How*; and from that Shape she endured many Miseries.

5. *John How*, Brother to the Husband of the Prisoner testified, that he refusing to accompany the Prisoner unto her Examination, as was by her desired, immediately some of his Cattle were Bewitched to Death, leaping three or four foot high, turning about, speaking, falling, and dying at once; and going to cut off an Ear, for an use, that might as well perhaps have been omitted, the Hand wherein he held his Knife was taken very numb, and so it remained, and full of Pain, for several Days, being not well at this very Time. And he suspected the Prisoner for the Author of it.

6. *Nehemiah Abbot* testified, that unusual and mischievous Accidents would befall his Cattle, whenever he had any Difference with this Prisoner. Once, particularly, she wished his Ox choked; and within a little while that Ox was choked with a Turnip in his Throat. At another Time, refusing to lend his Horse, at the Request of her Daughter, the Horse was in a preternatural manner abused. And several other odd things of that kind were testified.

7. There came in Testimony, that one Good-wife *Sherwin*, upon some Difference with *How*, was Bewitched; and that she died, charging this *How* with having an Hand in her Death. And that other People had their Barrels of Drink unaccountably mischieved, spoiled and spilt, upon their displeasing of her.

The things in themselves were trivial, but there being such a Course of them, it made them the more considered. Among others, *Martha Wood*, gave her Testimony, That a little after her Father had been employed in gathering an account of *How's* Conversation, they once and again lost great Quantities of Drink out of their Vessels, in such a manner, as they could ascribe to nothing but Witchcraft. As also, That *How* giving her some Apples, when she had eaten of them, she was taken with a very strange kind of Amaze, insomuch that she knew not what she said or did.

8. There was likewise a Cluster of Depositions, That one *Isaac Cummings* refusing to lend his Mare unto the Husband of this *How*, the Mare was within a Day or two taken in a strange condition: The Beast seemed much abused, being bruised as if she had been running over the Rocks, and marked where the Bridle went, as if burnt with a red hot Bridle. Moreover, one using a Pipe of Tobacco for the Cure of the Beast, a blue Flame issued out of her, took hold of her Hair, and not only spread and burnt on her, but it also flew upwards towards the Roof of the Barn, and had like to have set the Barn on Fire: And the Mare dyed very suddenly.

9. *Timothy Pearley* and his Wife, testified, Not only unaccountable Mischiefs befell their Cattle, upon their having of Differences with this Prisoner: but also that they had a Daughter destroyed by Witchcrafts; which Daughter still charged *How* as the Cause of her Affliction. And it was noted, that she would be struck down whenever *How* were spoken of. She was often endeavored to be thrown into the Fire, and into the Water, in her strange Fits: Though her Father had corrected her for charging *How* with bewitching her, yet (as was testified by others also) she said, She was sure of it, and must dye standing to it. Accordingly she charged *How* to the very Death; and said, *Though How could afflict and torment her Body, yet she could not hurt her Soul: And, That the Truth of this matter would appear, when she should be dead and gone.*

10. *Francis Lane* testified, That being hired by the Husband of this *How* to get him a parcel of Posts and Rails, this *Lane* hired *John Pearly* to assist him. This Prisoner then told *Lane*, That she believed the Posts and Rails would not do, because *John Pearly* helped him; but that if he had got them alone, without *John Pearly's* help, they might have done well enough. When *James How* came to receive his Posts and Rails of *Lane*, *How* taking them up by the Ends, they, though good and sound, yet unaccountably broke off, so that *Lane* was forced to get thirty or forty more. And this Prisoner being informed of it, she said, She told him so before, because *Pearly* helped about them.

11. Afterwards there came in the Confessions of several other (penitent) Witches, which affirmed this *How* to be one of those, who with them had been baptized by the Devil in the River, at *Newbury-Falls*: before which he made them there kneel down by the Brink of the River and worshiped him.

**The Trial of Martha Carrier, at the
COURT OF OYER AND TERMNER, HELD BY
ADJOURNMENT AT SALEM, AUGUST 2, 1692**

Martha Carrier was Indicted for the bewitching certain Persons, according to the Form usual in such Cases, pleading *Not Guilty*, to her Indictment; there were first brought in a considerable number of the bewitched Persons; who not only made the Court sensible of an horrid Witchcraft committed upon them, but also deposed, That it was *Martha Carrier*, or her Shape, that grievously tormented them, by Biting, Pricking, Pinching and Choking of them. It was further deposed, That while this *Carrier* was on her Examination, before the Magistrates, the Poor People were so tortured that everyone expected their Death upon the very spot, but that upon the binding of *Carrier* they were eased. Moreover the Look of *Carrier* then laid the Afflicted People for dead; and her Touch, if her Eye at the same time were off them, raised them again: Which Things were also now seen upon her Tryal. And it was testified, That upon the mention of some having their Necks twisted almost round, by the Shape of this *Carrier*, she replied, *Its no matter though their Necks had been twisted quite off.*

2. Before the Trial of this Prisoner, several of her own Children had frankly and fully confessed, not only that they were Witches themselves, but that this their Mother had made them so. This Confession they made with great Shews of Repentance, and with much Demonstration of Truth. They related Place, Time, Occasion; they gave an account of Journeys, Meetings and Mischiefs by them performed, and were very credible in what they said. Nevertheless, this Evidence was not produced against the Prisoner at the Bar, inasmuch as there was other Evidence enough to proceed upon.

3. *Benjamin Abbot* gave his Testimony, That last March was a twelvemonth, this *Carrier* was very angry with him, upon laying out some Land, near her Husband's: Her Expressions in this Anger, were, *That she would stick as close to Abbot as the Bark stuck to the Tree; and that he should repent of it afore seven Years came to an End, so as Doctor Prescott should never cure him.* These Words were heard by others besides *Abbot* himself; who also heard her say, *She would hold his Nose as close to the Grindstone as ever it was held since his Name was Abbot.* Presently after this, he was taken with a Swelling in his Foot, and then with a Pain in his Side, and exceedingly tormented. It bred into a Sore, which was launched by *Doctor Prescott*, and several Gallons of Corruption ran out of it. For six Weeks it continued very bad, and then another Sore bred in the Groin, which was also lanced by *Doctor Prescott*. Another Sore then bred in his Groin, which was likewise cut, and put him to very great Misery: He was brought unto Death's Door, and so remained until *Carrier* was taken, and carried away by the Constable, from which very Day he began to mend, and so grew better every Day, and is well ever since.

Sarah Abbot also, his Wife, testified, That her Husband was not only all this while Afflicted in his Body, but also that strange extraordinary and unaccountable Calamities befell his Cattle; their Death being such as they could guess at no Natural Reason for.

4. *Allin Toothaker* testified, That *Richard*, the son of *Martha Carrier*, having some difference with him, pulled him down by the Hair of the Head. When he Rose again, he was going to strike at *Richard Carrier*; but fell down flat on his Back to the ground, and had not power to stir hand or foot, until he told *Carrier* he

yielded; and then he saw the shape of *Martha Carrier*, go off his breast.

This *Toothaker*, had Received a wound in the *Wars*; and he now testified, that *Martha Carrier* told him, *He should never be Cured.* Just afore the Apprehending of *Carrier*, he could thrust a knitting Needle into his wound, four inches deep; but presently after her being seized, he was thoroughly healed.

He further testified, that when *Carrier* and he sometimes were at variance, she would clap her hands at him, and say, *He should get nothing by it;* whereupon he several times lost his Cattle, by strange Deaths, whereof no natural causes could be given.

5. *John Rogger* also testified, That upon the threatening words of this malicious *Carrier*, his Cattle would be strangely bewitched; as was more particularly then described.

6. *Samuel Preston* testified, that about two years ago, having some difference with *Martha Carrier*, he lost a *Cow* in a strange Preternatural unusual manner; and about a month after this, the said *Carrier*, having again some difference with him, she told him; *He had lately lost a Cow, and it should not be long before he lost another;* which accordingly came to pass; for he had a thriving and well-kept *Cow*, which without any known cause quickly fell down and died.

7. *Phebe Chandler* testified, that about a Fortnight before the apprehension of *Martha Carrier*, on a Lords-day, while the Psalm was singing in the *Church*, this *Carrier* then took her by the shoulder and shaking her, asked her, *where she lived:* she made her no Answer, although as *Carrier*, who lived next door to her Father's House, could not in reason but know who she was. Quickly after this, as she was at several times crossing the Fields, she heard a voice, that she took to be *Martha Carriers*, and it seemed as if it was over her head. The voice told her, *she should within two or three days be poisoned.* Accordingly, within such a little time, one half of her right hand, became greatly swollen, and very painful; as also part of her Face; whereof she can give no account how it came. It continued very bad for some days; and several times since, she has had a great pain in her breast; and been so seized on her legs, that she has hardly been able to go. She added, that lately, going well to the House of God, *Richard*, the son of *Martha Carrier*, looked very earnestly upon her, and

immediately her hand, which had formerly been poisoned, as is above said, began to pain her greatly, and she had a strange Burning at her stomach; but was then struck deaf, so that she could not hear any of the prayer, or singing, till the two or three last words of the Psalm.

8. One *Foster*, who confessed her own share in the Witchcraft for which the Prisoner stood indicted, affirmed, that she had seen the prisoner at some of their *Witch-meetings*, and that it was this *Carrier*, who persuaded her to be a Witch. She confessed, that the Devil carried them on a pole, to a *Witch-meeting*; but the pole broke, and she hanging about *Carriers* neck, they both fell down, and she then received an hurt by the Fall, whereof she was not at this very time recovered.

9. One *Lacy*, who likewise confessed her share in this Witchcraft, now testified, that she and the prisoner were once Bodily present at a *Witch-meeting* in *Salem Village*; and that she knew the prisoner to be a Witch, and to have been at a Diabolical sacrament, and that the prisoner was the undoing of her, and her Children, by enticing them into the snare of the Devil.

10. Another *Lacy*, who also confessed her share in this Witchcraft, now testified, that the prisoner was at the *Witch-meeting*, in *Salem Village*, where they had Bread and Wine Administered unto them.

11. In the time of this prisoners Trial, one *Susanna Sheldon*, in open Court had her hands Unaccountably tied together with a Wheel-band, so fast that without cutting, it could not be loosed: It was done by a *Specter*; and the Sufferer affirmed, it was the *Prisoners*.

Memorandum. This Rampant Hag, *Martha Carrier*, was the person, of whom the Confessions of the Witches, and of her own Children among the rest, agreed, That the Devil had promised her, she should be *Queen of Heb...*

Deliverance from Evil

If a Drop of *Innocent Blood* should be shed, in the Prosecution of the *Witchcrafts* among us, how unhappy are we! For which cause, I cannot express myself in better terms, than those of a

most Worthy Person, who lives near the present Center of these things. *The Mind of God in these matters, is to be carefully looked into, with due Circumspection, that Satan deceive us not with his Devices, who transforms himself into an Angel of Light, and may pretend justice and yet intend mischief.* But on the other side, if the storm of Justice do now fall only on the Heads of those guilty *Witches* and *Wretches* which have defiled our Land, *How Happy!*

The Execution of some that have lately Dyed, has been immediately attended, with a strange Deliverance of some, that had lain for many years, in a most sad Condition, under, they knew not whose *evil hands*. As I am abundantly satisfied, That many of the Self-Murders committed here, have been the effects of a Cruel and Bloody *Witchcraft*, letting fly *Demons* upon the miserable *Seneca's*; thus, it has been admirable unto me to see, how a Devilish *Witchcraft*, sending Devils upon them, has driven many poor people to *Despair*, and persecuted their minds, with such Buzzes of *Atheism* and *Blasphemy*, as has made them even run *distracted with Terrors*: And some long *Bowed down* under such a *spirit of Infirmary*, have been marvelously Recovered upon the death of the Witches.

An Attack on the Salem Witch Trials (1692)

Thomas Brattle (1658-1713)³

I should be very loath to bring myself into any snare by my freedom with you, and therefore hope that you will put the best construction on what I write, and secure me from such as would interpret my lines otherwise than they are designed. Obedience to lawful authority I evermore accounted a great duty; and willingly I would not practice anything that might thwart and contradict such a principle. Too many are ready to despise dominions, and speak evil of Dignities; and I am sure the mischiefs, which arise from a factious and rebellious spirit, are

³ From Thomas Brattle's letter dated 8 October 1692, to an unknown clergyman in England (Massachusetts Historical Society, *Collections*, vol. 5). Courtesy of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

very sad and notorious; insomuch that I would sooner bite my finger's ends than willingly cast dirt on authority, or any way offer reproach to it: Far, therefore, be it from me, to have anything to do with those men your letter mentions, whom you acknowledge to be men of a factious spirit, and never more in their element than when they are declaiming against men in public place, and contriving methods that tend to the disturbance of the common peace. I never accounted it a credit to my cause, to have the good liking of such men. My son! (says Solomon) fear thou the Lord and the King, and meddle not with them that are given to change. (Prov. 24:21).

However, Sir, I never thought Judges infallible; but reckoned that they, as well as private men, might err; and that when they were guilty of erring, standers-by, who possibly had not half their judgment, might, notwithstanding, be able to detect and behold their errors. And furthermore, when errors of that nature are thus detected and observed, I never thought it an interfering with dutifulness and subjection for one man to communicate his thoughts to another thereabout; and with modesty and due reverence to debate the premised failings; at least, when errors are fundamental, and palpably pervert the great end of authority and government: for as to circumstantial errors; I must confess my principle is, that it is the duty of a good subject to cover with his silence a multitude of them.

But I shall no longer detain you with my preface, but pass to some things you look for, and whether you expect such freedom from me, yea or no, yet shall you find, that I am very open to communicate my thoughts unto you, and in plain terms to tell you what my opinion is of the Salem proceedings.

First, as to the method which the Salem Justices do take in their examinations, it is truly this: A warrant being issued out to apprehend the persons that are charged and complained of by the afflicted children, as they are called; said persons are brought before the Justices, the afflicted being present. The Justices ask the apprehended why they afflict those poor children; to which the apprehended answer, they do not afflict them. The Justices order the apprehended to look upon the said children, which accordingly they do; and at the time of that look, (I dare not say by that look, as the Salem Gentlemen do) the afflicted are cast into a fit. The

apprehended are then blinded, and ordered to touch the afflicted; and at that touch, though not by the touch, (as above) the afflicted ordinarily do come out of their fits. The afflicted persons then declare and affirm, that the apprehended have afflicted them; upon which the apprehended persons, though of never so good repute, are forthwith committed to prison, on suspicion for witchcraft.

One of the Salem Justices was pleased to tell Mr. Alden, (when upon his examination) that truly he had been acquainted with him these many years; and had always accounted him a good man; but indeed now he should be obliged to change his opinion. This, there are more than one or two did hear, and are ready to swear to, if not in so many words, yet as to its natural and plain meaning. He saw reason to change his opinion of Mr. Alden, because that at the time he touched the poor child, the poor child came out of her fit. I suppose his Honor never made the experiment, whether there was not as much virtue in his own hand; as there was in Mr. Alden's, to cure by a touch. I know a man that will venture two to one with any Salemite whatever, that let the matter be duly managed, and the afflicted person shall come out of her fit upon the touch of the most religious hand in Salem. It is worthily noted by some, that at some times the afflicted will not presently come out of their fits upon the touch of the suspected; and then, forsooth, they are ordered by the Justices to grasp hard, harder yet, etc. insomuch that at length the afflicted come out of their fits; and the reason is very good, because that a touch of any hand, and processes of time, will work the cure; infallibly they will do it, as experience teaches.

I cannot but condemn this method of the Justices, of making this touch of the hand a rule to discover witchcraft; because I am fully persuaded that it is sorcery, and a superstitious method, and that which we have no rule for, either from reason or religion....

Superstition and Mockery

This Salem philosophy, some men may call the new philosophy; but I think it rather deserves the name of Salem superstition and sorcery, and it is not fit to be named in a land of such light as New-England is. I think the matter might be better

solved another way; but I shall not make any attempt that way, further than to say, that these afflicted children, (as they are called,) do hold correspondence with the devil, even in the esteem and account of the S. G. ;^ for when the black man, i.e., say these gentlemen, the Devil, does appear to them, they ask him many questions, and accordingly give information to the inquirer; and if this is not holding correspondence with the devill, and something worse, I know not what is....

Secondly, with respect to the confessors, as they are improperly called, or such as confess themselves to be witches, (the second thing you inquire into in your letter), there are now about fifty of them in Prison; many of which I have again and again seen and heard; and I cannot but tell you, that my faith is strong concerning them, that they are deluded, imposed upon, and under the influence of some evil spirit; and therefore unfit to be evidences either against themselves, or anyone else. I now speak of one sort of them, and of others afterward.

These confessors, as they are called, do very often contradict themselves, as inconsistently as is usual for any crazed, distempered person to do. This the Salem gentlemen do see and take notice of; and even the Judges themselves have, at some times, taken these confessors in flat lies, or contradictions, even in the Courts; By reason of which, one would have thought, that the Judges would have frowned upon the said confessors, discarded them, and not minded one tittle of anything that they said; but instead thereof, (as sure as we are men,) the Judges vindicate these confessors, and salve their contradictions, by proclaiming, that the Devil takes away their memory, and imposes upon their brain. If this reflects anywhere, I am very sorry for it: I can but assure you, that, upon the word of an honest man, it is truth, and that I can bring you many credible persons to witness it, who have been eye and ear witnesses to these things.

These confessors then, at least some of them, even in the Judges own account, are under the influence of the Devil; and the brain of these Confessors is imposed upon by the Devil, even in the Judges' account. But now, if, in the Judges' account, these confessors are under the influence of the Devil, and their brains are affected and imposed upon by the Devil, so that they are not their own men, why then should these Judges, or any other

men, make such account of, and set so much by, the words of these Confessors, as they do? In short, I argue thus:

If the Devil does actually take away the memory of them at some times, certainly the Devil, at other times, may very reasonably be thought to affect their fancies, and to represent false ideas to their imagination. But now, if it be thus granted, that the Devil is able to represent false ideas (to speak vulgarly) to the imaginations of the confessors, what man of sense will regard the confessions, or any of the words, of these confessors?

The great cry of many of our neighbors now is. What, will you not believe the confessors? Will you not believe men and women who confess that they have signed to the Devil's book? that they were baptized by the Devil; and that they were at the mock-sacrament once and again? What! will you not believe that this is witchcraft, and that such and such men are witches, although the confessors do own and assert it?

Thus, I say, many of our good neighbors do argue; but methinks they might soon be convinced that there is nothing at all in all these their arguings, if they would but duly consider of the premises.

In the meantime, I think we must rest satisfied in it, and be thankful to God for it, that all men are not thus bereft of their senses; but that we have here and there considerate and thinking men, who will not thus be imposed upon, and abused, by the subtle endeavors of the crafty one.

In the next place, I proceed to the form of their indictments, and the Trials thereupon.

The Indictment runs for sorcery and witchcraft, acted upon the body of such an one, (say M. Warren), at such a particular time ... and at diverse other times before and after, whereby the said M. W. is wasted and consumed, pined, etc.

Now for the proof of the said sorcery and witchcraft, the prisoner at the bar pleading not guilty.

1. The afflicted persons are brought into Court; and after much patience and pains taken with them, do take their oaths, that the prisoner at the bar did afflict them: And here I think it very observable, that often, when the afflicted do mean and intend only the appearance and shape of such an one, (say G. Proctor) yet they positively swear that G. Proctor did afflict them; and they

have been allowed so to do; as though there was no real difference between G. Proctor and the shape of G. Proctor. This, methinks, may readily prove a stumbling block to the jury, lead them into a very fundamental error, and occasion innocent blood, yea the most innocent blood imaginable, to be in great danger. Whom it belongs unto, to be eyes unto the blind, and to remove such stumbling blocks, I know full well; and yet you, and everyone else, do know as well as I who do not.

2. The confessors do declare what they know of the said prisoner; and some of the confessors are allowed to give their oaths ; a thing which I believe was never heard of in this world ; that such as confess themselves to be witches, to have renounced God and Christ, and all that is sacred, should yet be allowed and ordered to swear by the name of the great God ! This indeed seems to me to be a gross taking of God's name in vain. I know the Salem gentlemen do say, that there is hope that the said confessors have repented;

I shall only say, that if they have repented, it is well for themselves; but if they have not, it is very ill for you know who. But then,

3. Whoever can be an evidence against the prisoner at the bar is ordered to come into court; and here it scarce ever fails hut that evidences, of one nature and another, are brought in, though, I think, all of them altogether alien to the matter of indictment; for they none of them do respect witchcraft upon the bodies of the afflicted, which is the alone matter of charge in the indictment.

4. They are searched by a jury; and as to some of them, the jury brought in, that on such or such a place there was a preternatural excrescence. And I wonder what person there is, whether man or woman, of whom it cannot be said but that, in some part of their body or other, there is a preternatural excrescence. The term is a very general and inclusive term.

Ignorance of Human Nature

Some of the Salem gentlemen are very forward to censure and condemn the poor prisoner at the bar, because he sheds no tears; but such betray great ignorance in the nature of passion, and as great heedlessness as to common passages of a man's life.

Some there are who never shed tears; others there are that ordinarily shed tears upon light occasions, and yet for their lives cannot shed a tear when the deepest sorrow is upon their hearts; and who is there that knows not these things? Who knows not that an ecstasy of joy will sometimes fetch tears, when as the quite contrary passion will shut them close up? Why then should any be so silly and foolish as to take an argument from this appearance? But this is by the by. In short, the prisoner at the bar is indicted for sorcery and witchcraft acted upon the bodies of the afflicted. Now, for the proof of this, I reckon that the only pertinent evidences brought in are the evidences of the said afflicted.

It is true, that over and above the evidences of the afflicted persons, there are many evidences brought in, against the prisoner at the bar; either that he was at a witch meeting, or that he performed things which could not be done by an ordinary natural power; or that she sold butter to a sailor which proving bad at sea; and the seamen exclaiming against her, she appeared, and soon after there was a storm, or the like. But what if there were ten thousand evidences of this nature; how do they prove the matter of indictment? And if they do not reach the matter of indictment, then I think it is clear, that the prisoner at the bar is brought in guilty, and condemned, merely from the evidences of the afflicted persons....

I cannot but admire that the justices, whom I think to be well-meaning men, should so far give ear to the devil, as merely upon his authority to issue out their warrants, and apprehend people. Liberty was evermore accounted the great privilege of an Englishman; but certainly, if the devil will be heard against us, and his testimony taken, to the seizing and apprehending of us, our liberty vanishes, and we are fools if we boast of our liberty. Now, that the justices have thus have given ear to the devil, I think may be mathematically demonstrated to any man of common sense. And for the demonstration and proof hereof, I desire, only, that these two things may be duly considered, viz.:

1. That several persons have been apprehended purely upon the complaints of these afflicted, to whom the afflicted were perfect strangers, and had not the least knowledge of imaginable, before they were apprehended.

2. That the afflicted do own and assert, and the justices do grant, that the devil does inform and tell the afflicted the names of those persons that are thus unknown unto them. Now these two things being duly considered, I think it will appear evident to any one, that the devil's information is the fundamental testimony that is gone upon in the apprehending of the aforesaid people.

If I believe such or such an assertion as comes immediately from the minister of God in the pulpit, because it is the word of the everliving God, I build my faith on God's testimony; and if I practice upon it, this my practice is properly built on the word of God: even so in the case before us.

If I believe the afflicted persons as informed by the devil, and act thereupon, this my act may properly be said to be grounded upon the testimony or information of the devil, And now, if things are thus, I think it ought to be for a lamentation to you and me, and all such as would be accounted good Christians.

If any should see the force of this argument, and upon it say (as I heard a wise and good judge once propose) that they know not but that God Almighty, or a good spirit, does give this information to these afflicted persons; I make answer thereto, and say, that it is most certain that it is neither Almighty God, nor yet any good spirit, that gives this information; and my reason is good, because God is a God of truth ; and the good spirits will not lie: whereas these informations have several times proved false, when the accused were brought before the afflicted.