

The Wonders of the Invisible world: Being an Account of the Tryals... [witches] by Cotton Mather

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Book, 106 pages.

[draft excerpt]

[7] II. 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...Wherefore The devil is now making one Attempt more upon us; an Attempt more Difficult, more Surprizing, more snarl'd 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 attacque 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 seasonably 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 fill'd 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 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 show'd them, and Engaged in his Hellish Design of Bewitching and Ruining our Land....

Now, by these confessions it is 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 seeing up instead of it perhaps a more gross diabolism than ever the world saw before. And yet it will be a thing lime 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 the rest.