

The Tryal of

WITCHCRAFT

OR,

WITCHCRAFT

Arraign'd and Condemn'd.

In some Answers to a few Questions anent
Witches and Witchcraft.

Wherein is shewed, how to know if one be
a Witch, as also when one is bewitched:
with some Observations upon the Witches
Mark, their compact with the Devil, the
White Witches &c.

By: Mr. John
Bell.

Exod. 22. 18. Thou shalt not suffer a
Witch to live.

It is advantageous to have many engaged in
writing on the same Subject, even though
they should say little more then what is said
by others. Mr. Durham on the Revelation.
Digress. 3. Page 63.

Letter from a Friend.

Sir,

HAVING heard strange things reported of Witchcraft and Witches: I desire to know from you, what satisfaction you can give me in answer to the following *Queries*, wherewith the mouths of People are on that occasion so much filled: take them thus.

Query 1. How shall one know if a disease be the effect of Witchcraft, seeing all grant, that strange diseases may happen either to Man or Beast, which yet are neither the product of Devils or Witches.

Query 2. What meanes are best to be used for help to these thus bewitched, And here I would know 1. what is to be thought of causing the suspected *Witch*, touch the afflicted Party, 2. If this be not, then what other mean is best.

Query 3. I would further know, what will
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prove one to be a *Witch*? and here 1. If bitter cursing and imprecations with malefices following thereupon, will prove it? and if not that, then 2d. If a persons often enquiring into the disease of the tormented, or their coming to visite them unsent for; yea, after they have been discharg'd the house as being suspected persons, will do the buliness? Or 3d. if the afflicted person his or her seeing, in time of their tormenting fits, so as to know and name particular Persons; will prove the Person thus seen known, and nominate, to be a *Witch*. Or 4th. If none of those, then (pray) what will do it? your answers agreeably to the mind of the best Writers you have seen, is earnestly intreated by,

Your Humble Servant.

An answer to the Letter.

Sir,

THO I am sensible, that to speak on this head of witchcraft, is a very hard Task; considering especially the difficulty of discovering *Witches*; (the secrecy of the grounds of witchcraft; and the cunningness of some juggling counterfits, being so great and many) as also considering how Satan seeks to imitate God in his actions; as Scripture, and many strange

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(the true) relations about *Witches* do abundantly make appear: for example, 2 *Kings* 5. 27. we read that God by the Prophet makes *Naamans* leprosie cleave to *Gehazi*; so Satan does by the help of *Witches* at sometimes, take the disease from off one person, & layes it upon another. Also, we read *Acts* 8. 39. of *Philip* being carried bodily out of the *Eunuchs* sight; so also can the Devil transport bodies from one place to another, as we find he took our blessed Saviour up unto the pinnacle of the Temple, *Mat.* 4. And he often carries his own servants into the aire, as he did *Dr. Faustus*, or over into forraign places; as is usual for him to do with these *Witches*. Tho, I say, these with many moe things concur to render the undertaking hard; yet I think it needs not be ill look't upon if an essay be made of this nature; considering especially how much light may be borrowed from the Writings of learned men both of old and of late, the direful experience of former ages, as well as of this, having afforded occasion for such questions as be proposed by you, and which are current with the common people. Adventuring therefore to obey your desire, take the Answers in the following Method.

Secd.

SECTION I.

How to know if one be bewitched.

IN answer to your first *Quer.* I would say, that no doubt most people may be thought too rash in attributing to Witchcraft every disease that seems strange and beyond ordinary, as is rightly insinuated, in your ground given for your first *Quer.* famous writers insinuating in their books many strange and wonderful diseases, yet no work of witchcraft, as are the *Apoplexy, Carum, Catalepsis, Cramp,* with many more mentioned by *Dr. Gotta* in his *Emperiks*, and *Dr. Mason* in his practice of philosophy, and *R. Bernard* in his *Guide to Grand jury men*. All which Authors do yet still affirm these to proceed from natural causes, and to be curable by natural remedies; tho scarce would a common person look on the party thus distempered, without concluding witchcraft to be there.

However; where the disease is more then natural, and no less then the effect of witchcraft

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it may be known by such signs as *Witches* themselves in their confessions, and learned Physicians have condescended upon as symptoms of Witchcraft. I only name a few which we may take thus. 1. When the disease is such as that wise and skilful Physicians can find no probable reason of any natural cause for it, as it was with *M. Throgmortons* child, who would often have a great heaving & swelling of the belly, then a passing to the throat ready to stop the breath; as also thrusting out her leg or arm so as none could bow it, with other such like motions. 2. When a tormented Party in time of such fits vomite up crooked pins, coals, nails, needles, knoted hair, straw, &c. 3. When the tormented party in time of their fits tell truly many things; some past, others in doing, as, where the Witch is, what she is doing, saying, &c. as hapened in the case of *Mr. Throgmortons* elder daughter, *Mrs Jean*, who could also tell some things to come, as how many in the house were to be bewitched, and who they were. 4. When there is supernatural strength, so as that a very strong man should not be able to keep down a child of about 12. years of age as it was with one of *M. Throgmortons* children. Other signs are given by Authors, but we pass them.

SECTION

SECTION II.

*Of Means to be used for helping
the bewitched.*

VARIOUS are the methods fallen upon for curing the afflicted: among which is the made mention of in the second *Query* of causing the suspected Witch touch the afflicted person as if their touch could cure them: Which seems not to be a mean on which we are to rely (though I find not the use of it simply condemned) as having neither a divine appointment, nor a natural reason for it. Add to this (which some have well taken notice of) that the suspected *Witches* either presence or absence, is a very uncertain thing, for 1. Their presence or absence as *Witches* takes it force only from their league and covenant with the Devil; which as they can renew at pleasure, so can they make their presence or *Touch* effectual accordingly; So as the tormented party be bad, and take fits, the present, by indenting with the Devil over again

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(God permitting) they may procure that in their presence they may take no more fits; and on the contrary, if in their presence and at their *Touch* they be well, so that their presence there will prove nothing, either for curing the diseased, or making them yet worse, and so thereby founding a presumption for By-standers to conclude them *Witches*, 2. Their touching is an uncertain thing, because (as writers on this head have sufficiently instructed) by *Touching* they even sometimes bewitch the afflicted party. Thus *Danaus* in *Dialogis suis de Sortiariis*, witnesseth, that a *Witch* touched but the breasts of a woman that gave suck, and her milk dried up: and the forscited Rector of *Batcomb*, R. Bernard reports of one *Mary Sutton* a *Bedfordshire Witch*, that having but touched the neck of one of Mr. *Engar's* servants, wth her finger, he was presently after her departure miserably vexed, how then can their touch cure the diseased?

So then, the best mean is, fasting and prayer, for God only can best free us from Devils, and in the use of his means alone it is, that we are to expect a blessing: So that if we would prevent *Witches*, and whatever else the Devil can do, let us always rely on God, who hath promised to such, that he will cover them under his wings, &c. *Psalms* 91. 4.

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SECTION III.

What will prove one to be a Witch

GREAT is the Mystery of iniquity, and its hard to discover the Members of that Kingdom of darkness, where the King is Satan, the fiery Dragon, the roaring Lyon, and deceiver of the Nations; and where the subjects are fagots of hell, Deceivers and deceived: Yet thorough the Lords blessing on the means and methods fallen upon for detecting such, they may be known, let us then touch at these, and first negatively what will not prove one to be a *Witch*, and then positively, what will.

To begin then and go throw with the several particulars contained in the third *Query* let us consider the first particular which is it bitter cursings & imprecations, evil following thereupon, will prove one to be a *Witch*, and to this it is answered, that tho *Witches* have been known thus to bewitch people by *Cursing* them whereupon presently evil followed to the per-

son thus *Cursed*, yet it is no more then a presumption of ones being a *Witch*, for first such *Cursings* and *Imprecations* are in some no other then the effect of a *natural constitution*, and so may be acted oftner than once or twice: *Constitutions* (in the Judgment of the learned) differing from habits mostly in name, when they come to any perfection; and habits being got by acts frequently repeated. 2. Because, as Satan may get a permission from God, to work *natural diseases* which do break forth upon cursing, so doubtless he improves it subtilly, of which some do thus conceive. They say, the Devil he knows when his power to do hurt is granted him of God; as also, he knows the growing, ripening, and breaking forth of a disease upon man or beast. Again, ere natures act thus break out, he stirs up some occasion to make the party against whom his design is, to fall out with some angry neighbour, which being gain'd, Satan stirs up people hereupon, because of one or two such practises, to pursue the neighbour to death, as becoming by her ill tongue a *Witch*; when as, tho she be otherwise pestilentious enough, yet possibly is no *Witch*. So then we conclude, that however this may be an *Item* to such ill nature'd cursers and railers to forbear further provoking of God by such practices to give them

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over to Satans power ; yet I see not why cur-
sings with harm following them are any other
then a presumption (however great it be) that
one is a *Witch*.

2. As to a persons often enquiring into the
disease of the tormented, or their coming to vi-
sitate them unsent for, yea perhaps after they have
been discharg'd the house, as persons under sus-
picion, its answered in one word, that this is no
other then a presumption, & that for this reason
among others, that revengeful spirits (though
they be no *Witches*) having once cursed, and
hearing of some sudden mischance following
in order of time thereupon, may inquire after
the afflicted party, yea visit him or her, while
under this fit of cursed joy conceived in them
at the hearing of such news, when yet for all
this there is perhaps no league with the Devil
and as for their visiting undesir'd, yea, when
prohibited and discharg'd, some have rightly im-
puted the same to the confidence, or rather im-
pudence of the poorer, and unmannerly sort of
people.

3. As to the afflicted persons seeing, know-
ing and naming diverse persons in time of their
fits, as their tormentors ; as it was with Mr
Throgmortons Children (as the Author of the
Relation of *Warboys Witches* does attest) ye
will

will not & prove & person or persons so known,
& nominate, to be all *Witches*, for 1. as to their
being *seen*, doubtless tho the Devil cannot cre-
ate any inward *species* or representation, this
being a work of *Omnipotence* (as *Holy* and *learn-*
ed Mr. Durham hath observed) yet God per-
mitting him ; he by working upon what is al-
ready within the person, may misrepresent ob-
jects, by disturbing inwardlie the Faculties &
Organs : so that he can presentiate to the *Phan-*
tastic such persons, as he knows the tormented
party abhors to see, and useth to fear : for if he
could represent a seeming *Samuel*, much more
a Graceless man or woman, to deceive the Fan-
cy of disturbed minds of afflicted Persons ; and
yet these graceless persons may be no *Witches*,
for doubtless in this the Devil may lie, as well
as speak true. 2. As to their being named, its
but the Devils Testimonie, which is not to be
laid weight on, *in the matter of life and death* ;
seeing he may accuse an innocent, as histories
abundantly declare

Sir, I perswade my self you take up my mind
in this matter better then to think any favour
to be intended or allowed, by what I have said
of thir *Negative marks* (as I called them for
distinctions sake) to any of these members of
Satans Kingdom the *Witches* : God forbid any
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(far less I) should in the least Favour such for whom God hath told us in his word he hath no favour they continuing such ; for however I have all alongst called these but *Presumptions*, in so doing ; I say no other then what pious and learn'd Writers on this head have spoken, who withal are of opinion (as I also am) that such pregnant and sinew'd presumptions sufficiently witnessed are just cause of imprisonment, and are worthy (after tryal) of most severe and condign punishment ; but ere the life can be taken away from them, it will perhaps be found needful, that a league with the Devil be once proven, for understanding of this, let us premise these 4. or 5. things. 1. that the Devil seeks not to make any a *Witch* whom he finds not some way prepar'd. either by impenitency and obduredness, distemperedness of passion, prophane's, and the like : for he will not readily nor willingly attacke and surprize, where he thinks not to gain ground. 2. Finding man or woman thus prepar'd, he waits his opportunity of appearing to them visibly, sometimes in one shape, sometimes in another, varying according to the nature, quality, and condition of the persons to whom he thus appears : thus he is said to have appeared to Dr *Fanflus* in the habite of some religious person ; and now it is, that he works upon the poor

poor creature, whom he at one time allures by many perfwasives, at other times surprizing them, frights them into a compliance with his overtures, according as he finds them ignorant or witty : for he's a cunning Engineer, who attacks towns according to their fortification, situation, or garrison : he understands who among men and women are weak, and on what side ; and agreeably, some are min'd, others bomb'd, some won by storm, others by composition, others again are starved into a surrender, ; That which he aims at in all thir assaults, and in order whereunto he appears once, or oftner, as he finds need is, to draw the poor, impenitent, and obdured creature into a league with himself, which League or Covenant, Divines makes to be twofold : the one implicite, secret and close ; wherein is a mutual consente, but without any expresse terms on either side ; Mr. *Perkins* in his discourse of Witchcraft, chap. 2. Explains this, while he says that when a person desires in heart to have such or such a thing effected by superstitious forms, &c. And the Devil consents thereunto, if he then do the business, there is a secret compact : thus such as by cerrain forms of words and prayers, call upon the Devil ; and when tho they know it to be unwarantable, yet will do it, because they find

find an effect answerable to their expectation in using such charms and spells, they are in Covenant with the Devil, though they will not let themselves know or think it. Now this secret compact Satan sometimes, and as to some persons, rests satisfied with, as when the man or woman is of considerable knowledge, and hath much *Mother Wit* (as we commonly call it) and so is such as he knows will not be easily drawn into a more formal and express league with him; or when he is content they should be shining professors and such of whom he designs to serve himself mostly, if not only, in matters seemingly good. The other sort of league is that which is more express and formal, and when there be mutual conditions: the *Witch* on his or her part giving over their Soul (and sometimes also the body) into Sathans power, he on the other part, promises great things to them, knowledge to the ignorant, revenge to the envious, and wrathful, &c. though he often breaks his promise to them, as he did to a *Hungarian Witch*, of whom I have read, who being put in prison, and wanting food, she did eat her own flesh and so perished: Satan her Master, never once helping her, if it was not to destroy her self, sooner then otherwise she might have done. But then 4. the Covenant thus made, he proceeds

proceeds to confirm it, which (some say) must be done by blood: therefore, some offer him a Sacrifice; perhaps of a cat, dog, &c. possibly he condescends thus far to some *Witches* of a more then ordinary station: but however I will not be positive in this; only I find it asserted by some, that he will not part thus with your ordinary *Witches*, but must needs *Suck Blood* of them which is done by *Spirits*, and that in several parts of the body, as the crown of the head, under the ear, the chin, &c. as witches of whom I have read, have confessed before the Judges. Next follows the *Witch Mark*, sometimes like a blew spot, or a little tate, or reid spots like flea biting, sometimes also the flesh is sunk in, and hallow, and this is put in secret places, as among the hair of the Head, or eyebrows, within the lips, under the arm-pits, and even in the most secret parts of the Body. 5. Thus the Devil & they becoming familiar, they get from him *Familiar Spirits*, some one, some more, with whom they consult, and act, and over which Spirits he makes them believe they have all power, and can command them at pleasure: and in this they assume to themselves a kind of Glory, to think that they have *Spirits* at their nodd, to send forth for the torment of others; and herein they rejoyce, that they can keep

keep others in awe by such thoughts of them, or words to them, whereupon follows hurt and mischief. Some have so far run on in maintaining this point of it, anent the *Witches* getting familiar Spirits, at that they think, that *Witches* do work all their malice and mischief by those cursed *Castiffes*; and so they make three things concur to the bewitching of a Person; viz. a Divine permission, a Devilish operation, or the evil Spirits working; and lastly, the *Witches* consent; So that the Devil does all, and they consent to all, which to wit, is done in their behalf, for no doubt, Satan can go on and for himself, where he hath no league with the Witch, thus some define a Witch, to be such as do act beyond the ordinary power of Nature, by the help of wicked Spirits. *Athen. Mere. V. 1. N. 3. Q. 6.*

Now, before we proceed further, we shall take notice of this one *Collorary* that may be drawn from what we have now said anent the Covenant with the Devil. From hence possibly we may gather a reason, why *Witches* themselves are not afraid to meet with the Devil? For one would think that *Humane Nature* might justly fright at the appearance, if not the *awful* name of *DEVIL*. We would say therefore, that we doubt nothing, but at sometime the Devil appears even to his own in frightful shapes,

shapes, to their great terror, especially if he be angry at them, and designs violence unto them, upon their refusing to do as he bids them, as *Bernard* reports he did to old *Demb-dike*, whom he pusht into a Ditch, because she would not go help *Chattox* another *Witch*, (whom she could not abide) to make Pictures. The same Author says, the Devil came sometimes to *Witch Chattox* gaping upon her in the Form of a *Beare*, with open mouth as if he would have worried her, yet I think the reason why for ordinary they are not so much afraid to meet, speak to and keep Caballs with him; is, that they being now in Covenant with him, dream of no hurt in the business: yea, they fancy they have him at Command. And if it be said, its strange they have no checks of Conscience in the mean time because of their League wth the Devil: We answer, that it is not so strange as sad, and to be lamented; For they being readily before that given up of God to a reprobate mind, have their Consciences seared, so as that they want all sense and feeling of sin.

But now, to come to the question more closely, and to shew how one may be convicted of this their league with the Devil; this compact how secretly so ever made, is to be searcht into, and all the presumptions hitherto spoken of, must tend to prove and discover this

this compact, which some think may be gotten done by a narrow scrutiny and search into these among other evidences of this Covenant. 1. By a *Witches Mark*. We told already where this is to be found, it must therefore be again & again diligently searched for; and least it be mistaken for a Natural mark, it is to be observed, that this is Insensible, so that being pricked it will not bleed, as Natural marks will do. But what if they hide them? Or what if they find a way to remove them? We answer that God in his providence will scarce suffer it to be so; or if it so fall out, then it grows again, and comes to its old Form, if we may credit the *Grand Witch Lewis Gaufridus* a rich and learn'd Priest, as *Bernard* calls him: So that, tho this mark be not found at first, it may be discovered at length. 2d. By *Witches words*, as their fortelling what shall happen to others the same found true, and their boasting thereof afterwards; as also, their speaking of transportation from home to forraign places &c. 3d. *Witches deeds*; as their feeding creatures secretly, which some say they send their errands; their making of pictures, giving anything to any Man which causes pains or death as is, the perusing one shirt or cloaths, returning the same again, and the owner upon wearing

wearing them, and all the time of his or her wearing them, pained or tormented. 4th. *The confession of Fellow Witches*, especially if appearing penitent, and being called one by one yet all agree in their Testimony; as their having seen, and been with them at their suspected Devilish meetings, plotings, &c. And here comes in the report of the *Good or white Witch* (as they call him or her) whereby is meant, these *Healers* or *Blessers* (as some call them) who pretend to know who are bad *Witches*, and where they dwell; and how to heal blasting, for speaking &c. These being themselves *Witches* and in league with the Devil, best know who these are, and what be their practices. 5. *A Divine witness*, where God condescends to give it, as, when they pray for a token from God of displeasure against them if they be guilty; and it accordingly falls out. As it is reported to have been with one *Mother Samuel the Warboys Witch* that tormented *Mr. Throgmorton's* children, who by bitter curses on her self if she were guilty; presently her Chin did bleed, the place (as afterwards she confessed) where the *Spirits* did Suck blood, 6th. And lastly, *The confession of the Witches themselves*. Sometimes the arraign'd *Witches* confess their being in Covenant with the Devil,

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partly upon being charg'd with the guilt, of their own accord, or finally, being drawn thereto through terror of Conscience.

But now *Sir*, after all that is said, I desire not to be so understood, as if hereby I design'd to force any into a compliance with the Conclusions already laid down, further than the reasons brought by grave Authors already hinted will persuade; nor do I think the Opinions or Practises of others which may seem to run cross to something hitherto asserted are to be taxed by any; so that what is here said is only to shew you what hath given the *Answerer* to your Questions most satisfaction in these Points. For a conclusion therefore I would say, that tho I have adventured on these few lines in answer to your *Queries*, therein I do not, nor indeed can I expect to satisfy all even of the more Judicious, but am apprehensive on the contrary, that I may displease some of them (for which I should yet be sorry) who may possibly think that the greatness of the Task might have forc'd me to a more awfull distance, and a giving way to better and greater Undertakers; but finding none hitherto forward for allaying vulgar rude notions about your momentuous questions, I have (ye with

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with all submission) adventur'd on this short essay the questions handled therein, rather than the answers, being such as may push others forward to second and much better cares about them; which should much

Sir,

Your Friend and Servant.

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