

The Groton Witch

Elizabeth Knapp 1655-1720

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Elizabeth Knapp was born in Massachusetts in 1655. She was the daughter of James Knapp 1627-1696 and Elizabeth (Warren) Knapp 1629-1715. They were immigrants to New England who settled first at Watertown, and then later removed to the new town of Groton.

NOTE: The first (4) pages of this document summarize what happened. Pages (5 thru 19) provide much more detail.

At the age of 16, when she was a servant in the household of Reverend Samuel Willard of Groton, Massachusetts, she first exhibited signs of being possessed by the Devil. (This was 20 years before the Salem, Massachusetts Witch trials.)

"In October, 1671, Elizabeth was taken after a very strange manner; sometimes weeping, sometimes laughing, sometimes roaring, with violent Agitations, crying out Money! Money! Her Tongue would be for many Hours together drawn like a Semicircle, up to the Roof of her mouth; so that no Fingers apply'd unto it, could remove it. Six Men were scarce able to hold her in some of her Fits; but she would skip about the House yelling and howling, and looking hideously."

"On December 17, 1671 her Tongue being drawn out of her mouth to an extraordinary Length, a Dæmon began manifestly to speak in her; for many Words were distinctly utter'd, wherein are the Labial Letters, without any motion of her Lips at all: Words also were utter'd from her Throat sometimes when her mouth was wholly shut; and sometimes Words were utter'd when her mouth was wide open; but no Organs of Speech us'd therein. The chief things that the Dæmon spoke, were horrid Railings against the Godly Minister of the Town; but sometimes he likewise belch'd out most nefandous Blasphemies against the God of Heaven. And one thing about this young Woman was yet more particularly remarkable: She cry'd out in her Fits, that a certain Woman in the Neighbourhood appear'd unto her, and was the only Cause of her Affliction."

"The Woman thus cry'd out upon, was doubtless an Holy, a Devout, a Vertuous Person; and she, by the advice of her Friends, visited the Afflicted. The possess'd Creature, tho' she was in one of her Fits, and had her Eyes wholly shut, yet when this innocent Woman was coming, she discover'd her self wonderfully sensible of it, and was in grievous Agonies at her Approaches."

"But this Innocent Woman thus accus'd and abus'd by a malicious Devil, pray'd earnestly with as well as for this possess'd Creature: Whereupon coming to her self, she confess'd, That she had been deluded by Satan, and compell'd by him unreasonably to think and speak Evil of a good Neighbour without a Cause. After this, there was no further Complaint of such an ones Apparition; but she said, some Devil in the Shape of divers, did very diversly and cruelly torment her, and then told her, it was not He but They, that were her Tormentors."

As her symptoms intensified - she fell into violent fits, complained of being strangled, and attempted to throw herself into the fire - Reverend Willard observed that she began to "carry herself in a strange and unwonted manner," saw apparitions, and experienced violent "fits" over a period of three months.

In the midst of one fit, she spoke in a "hollow" voice, and called the minister "a great black rogue" who "tell[s] the people a company of lies." Willard answered back, "Satan, thou art a liar and a deceiver, and God will vindicate His own truth one day." Others in the room took up the confrontation, telling the Devil that "God had him in chains."

The answer came back, "For all my chain, I can knock thee in the head when I please." Meanwhile, in her own voice Elizabeth told how the Devil had promised to make her a "witch" if she would sign a "compact" to become his servant.

Under pressure to reveal the "true and real occasion" of her fits, Elizabeth admitted that the Devil had frequently appeared before her in the past three years and offered her "money, silks, fine clothes, ease from her labor" and other items of youthful fancy, particularly on her walks from the Willard home to her parents after work in the evening. These meetings had been infrequent at first, but had become a daily occurrence.

Puritan Beliefs

Witchcraft in the seventeenth century was not an idle belief held only by the simple or superstitious, but was entertained, in the words of Groton historian Samuel Greene, by "educated and thoughtful men everywhere" in the Anglo world. Colonists at that time viewed the presence of witches as a sign of the wrath of God.

From the Puritan perspective, Elizabeth Knapp's possession was the result of her discontent with her condition, with her place in the social order. Had she been willing to be content with her lack of financial resources, with her work as a servant, and with her limited horizons, she would not have become possessed.

It was the same sin that defined other women as witches, and the one that led Elizabeth at times to see herself as a witch. She admitted that the Devil came because of her unhappiness with her station in life, and that he came more frequently once she started to work as a servant in the Willard household, a household much more prosperous than her own.

But for Puritans, possession was not witchcraft, but the potential for witchcraft. Ministers could prevent the onset of witchcraft by helping the possessed adjust to their place in society. In Elizabeth's case, the Devil was able to take advantage of her discontent by attracting her with the things she most desired and leading her to think about committing other sins identified with witches, but he was not able to win her completely.

Events in Groton proceeded from the assumption that Satan lures certain people into compact with him, promising them, as he promised Elizabeth Knapp, that all "should be well," and they need not worry any longer about sin and salvation. The people of Groton also believed that, in the full course of God's providence, good would overcome evil.

As the story of Elizabeth Knapp reveals, some tensions originated in the religious expectations of Puritanism. One expectation was that believers fulfill, to the best of their ability, their moral duties. Another was that they examine their motives to see whether they had sufficiently repented of sin and trusted entirely in the mercy of Christ.

The Reverend Willard

When not possessed, Elizabeth was respectful of the man who was both her minister and master. When the demons were in her, however, she expressed an intense hostility toward him. She railed at him and called him a liar. She castigated her father and others for listening to him. She challenged his authority in the community and his power over her.

She had cause to resent him. He was a young, well-off, Harvard-educated minister whose life was full of promise. She was a young woman with little schooling and little prospect of anything but service to others, either as a servant, a daughter, or a wife.

He spent most of his time reading, writing, and traveling. She had never been taught to write, seldom left Groton, and spent her time sweeping his house, caring for his children, carrying in his wood, keeping his fires burning - all so he could continue to work in peace and comfort.

The Puritans believed that God had entered into a special relationship with godly people. This relationship obliged them to purge themselves of sins that inevitably accumulated. The ministers and magistrates in New England believed witch hunting, and the public executions of witches cleansed the community of evil.

Witch-hunting was not unique to Puritan America. It occurred in both Catholic and Protestant regions of Europe, and the toll it exacted in New England was much smaller than in Scotland or parts of France and Germany. Why witch-hunting became deadly in some Puritan villages but not others will likely remain a mystery.

Elizabeth Knapp wasn't a witch. She married Samuel Scripture and lived out her life as a good Puritan wife and mother. So successfully did she obliterate her discontent that she almost completely disappears from the public records after 1673.

The following pages are an excerpt from a book written by Reverend Samuel Willard, who's family Elizabeth Knapp was living with when her demon appeared.

Samuel Willard, *A briefe account of a strange & unusuall Providence of God befallen to Elizabeth Knap of Groton* (Pages 7 thru 21)

[Page 7] *A briefe account of a strange & unusuall Providence of God befallen to Elizabeth Knap of Groton, by me Samuel Willard.*

THIS poore & miserable object, about a fortnight before shee was taken, wee observed to carry herselfe in a strange & unwonted manner, sometimes shee would give sudden shriekes, & if wee enquired a Reason, would alwayes put it off with some excuse, & then would burst forth into immoderate & extravagant laughter, in such wise, as some times shee fell onto the ground with it: I my selfe observed oftentimes a strange change in here countenance, but could not suspect the true reason, but coneived shee might bee ill, & therefore divers times enquired how shee did, & shee alwayes answered well; which made mee wonder: but the tragedye began to unfold itselfe upon Munday, Octob. 30. 71, after this manner (as I received by credible information, being that day my selfe gon from home).

In the evening, a little before shee went to bed, sitting by the fire, shee cryed out, oh my legs! & clapt her hand on them, immediately oh my breast! & removed her hands thither; & forthwith, oh I am strangled, & put her hands on her throat: those that observed her could not see what to make of it; whither shee was in earnest or dissembled, & in this manner they left her (excepting the person that lay with her) complaining of her breath being stopt: The next day shee was in a strange frame, (as was observed by divers) sometimes weeping, sometimes laughing, & many foolish & apish gestures. In the evening, going into the cellar, shee shrieked suddenly, & being enquired of the cause, shee answered, that shee saw 2 persons in the cellar; whereupon some went downe with her to search, but found none; shee also looking with them; at last shee turned her head, & looking one way stedfastly, used the expression, what cheere old man? which, they that were with her tooke for a fansye, & soe ceased; afterwards (the same evening,) the rest of the family being in bed, shee was (as one lying in the roome saw, & shee herselfe also afterwards related) suddenly throwne downe into the midst of the floore with violence, & taken with a violent fit, whereupon the whole family was raised, & with much adoe was shee kept out of the fire from destroying herselfe after which time shee was followed with fits from thence till the sabbath day; in which shee was violent in bodily motions, leapings, strainings & strange agitations, scarce to bee held in bounds by the strength of 3 or 4: violent alsoe in roarings & screamings,

[Page 8] representing a dark resemblance of hellish torments, & frequently using in these fits divers words, sometimes crying out money, money, sometimes, sin & misery with other words.

On wednesday, being in the time of intermission questioned about the case shee was in, with reference to the cause or occasion of it, shee seemed to impeach one of the neighbors, a person (I doubt not) of sincere uprightness before God, as though either shee, or the devill in her likeness & habit, particularly her riding hood, had come downe the chimney, stricken her that night shee was first taken violently, which was the occasion of her being cast into the floore; whereupon those about her sent to request the person to come to her, who coming unwittingly, was at the first assaulted by her strangely, for though her eyes were (as it were) sealed up (as they were alwayes, or for the most part, in those fits, & soe continue in them all to this day) shee yet knew her very touch from any other, though no voice were uttered, & discovered it evidently by her gestures, soe powerfull were Satans suggestions in her, yet afterward God was pleased to vindicate the case & justifie the innocent, even to remove jealousyes from the spirits of the party concerned, & satisfaction of the by standers; for after shee had gon to prayer with her, shee confessed that she beleevved Satan had deluded her, & hath never since complained of any such apparition or disturbance from the person. These fits continuing, (though with intermission) divers, (when they had opportunity) pressed upon her to declare what might bee the true & real occasion of these amazing fits. Shee used many tergiversations & excuses, pretending shee would to this & that young person, who coming, she put it off to another, till at the last, on thurdsday night, shee brake forth into a large confession in the presence of many, the substance whereof amounted to thus much:

That the devill had oftentimes appeared to her, presenting the treaty of a Covenant, & preffering largely to her: viz, such things as suted her youthfull fancye, money, silkes, fine cloaths, ease from labor to show her the whole world, &c: that it had bin then 3 yeers since his first appearance, occasioned by her discontent: That at first his apparitions had bin more rare, but lately more frequent; yea those few weekes that shee had dwelt with us almost constant, that shee seldome went out of one roome into another, but hee appeared to her urging of her: & that hee had presented her a booke written with blood of covenants made by others with him, & told her such & such (of some wherof we hope better things) had a name there;

[Page 9] that hee urged upon her constant temptations to murder her parents, her neighbors, our children, especially the youngest, tempting her to throw it into the fire, on the hearth, into the oven; & that once hee put a bill hooke into her hand, to murder my selfe, persuading her I was asleep, but coming about it, shee met me on the staires at which shee was affrighted, the time I remember well, & observd a strange frame in her countenance & saw she endeavored to hide something, but I knew not what, neither did I at all suspect any such matter; & that often he persuaded her to make away with herselfe & once she was going to drowne herselfe in the well, for, looking into it, shee saw such sights as allured her, & was gotten within the curbe, & was by God's providence prevented, many other like things shee related, too tedious to recollect: but being pressed to declare whither she had not consented to a covenant with the Devill, shee with solemne assertions denyed it, yea asserted that shee had never soe much as consented to discorse with him, nor had ever but once before that night used the expession, What cheere, old man? & this argument shee used, that the providence of God had ordered it soe, that all his apparitions had bin frightfull to her; yet this shee acknowledged, (which seemed contradictorie, viz :) that when shee came to our house to schoole, before such time as shee dwelt with us, shee delayed her going home in the evening, till it was darke, (which wee observed) upon his persuasion to have his company home, & that shee could not, when hee appeared, but goe to him; one evident testimony wherof wee can say something to, viz. the night before the Thanksgiving, Octob. 19. shee was with another maid that boarded in the house, where both of them saw the appearance of a mans head & shoulders, with a great white neckcloath, looking in at the window, at which they came up affrighted both into the chamber, where the rest of us were, they declaring the case, one of us went downe to see who it might bee, but shee ran immediately out of the doore before him, which shee hath since confessed, was the Devill coming to her; shee also acknowledged the reason of her former sudden shriekings, was from a sudden apparition, & that the devill put these excuses into her mouth, & bit her soe to say, & hurried her into those violent (but shee saith feigned & forced) laughers: shee then also complained against herselfe of many sins, disobedience to parents, neglect of attendance upon ordinances, attempts to murder herselfe & others; but this particular of a covenant shee utterly disclaimed: which relation seemed faire,

[Page 10] especially in that it was attended with bitter teares, selfe condemnations, good counsell given to all about her, especially the youth then present, & an earnest desire of prayers: shee sent to Lancaster for Mr. Rowlandson, who came & prayed with her, & gave her serious counsell; but shee was still followed, all this notwithstanding, with these fits: & in this state (coming home on fryday) I found her; but could get nothing from her, whenever I came in presence shee fell into those fits, concerning which fits, I find this noteworthy, shee knew & understood what was spoken to her, but could not answer, nor use any other words but the forementioned, money, &c: as long as the fit continued, for when shee came out of it, shee could give a relation of all that had been spoken to her: shee was demanded a reason why shee used those words in her fits, & signified that the Devill presented her with such things, to tempt her, & with sin & miserye, to terrifye her; shee also declared that shee had seene the Devills in their hellish shapes, & more Devills then any one there ever saw men in the world. Many of these things I heard her declare on Saturday at night:

On the Sabbath the Physitian came, who judged a maine point of her distempr to be naturall, arising from the foulness of her stomacke, & corruptnesse of her blood, occasioning fumes in her braine, & strange fansyes; whereupon (in order to further tryall & administration) shee was removed home, & the succeeding weeke shee tooke physicke, & was not in such violence handled in her fits as before; but enjoyed an intermission, & gave some hopes of recovery; in which intermission shee was altogether sencelesse (as to our discoverye) of her state, held under securitye, & hardnesse of heart, professing shee had no trouble upon her spirits, shee cried satan had left her: A solemne day was kept with her, yet it had then, (as I apprehend,) little efficacy upon her; shee that day again expressed hopes that the Devill had left her, but there was little ground to thinke soe, because she remained under such extreame sencelessnesse of her owne estate: & thus shee continued, being exercised with some moderate fits, in which shee used none of the former expressions, but sometimes fainted away, sometimes used some struglings, yet not with extremitye, till the Wednesday following, which day was spent in prayer with her, when her fits something more encreased, & her tongue was for many houres together drawne into a semicircle up to the rooffe of her mouth, & not to be remooved, for some tryed with the fingers to doe it: from thence till the sabbath seven

[Page 11] night following: she continued alike, only shee added to former confessions, of her twise consenting to travell with the Devill in her company between Groton & Lancaster, who accompanied her in forme of a blacke dog with eyes in his backe, sometimes stopping her horse, sometimes leaping up behind, & keeping her (when she came home with company) 40 rod at least behind, leading her out of the way into a swampe, &c.: but still no conference would shee owne, but urged that the devills quarell with her was because shee would not seale a covenant with him, & that this was the ground of her first being taken. besides this nothing observable came from her, only one morning shee said God is a father, the next morning, God is my father, which words (it is to be feared) were words of presumption, put into her mouth by the adversary.

I suspecting the truth of her former storye, pressed, whether shee never verbally promised to covenant with him, which shee stoutly denyed: only acknowledged that shee had had some thoughts soe to doe: but on the forenamed Nov. 26. shee was again with violence & extremity seized by her fits, in such wise that 6 persons could hardly hold her, but shee leaped & skipped about the house proforce roaring, & yelling extreemly, & fetching deadly sighs, as if her heartstrings would have broken, & looking wth a frightfull aspect, to the amazement & astonishment of all the beholders, of which I was an eye witnesse: The Physitian being then agen with her consented that the distemper was Diabolicall, refused further to administer, advised to extraordinary fasting; whereupon some of Gods ministers were sent for: shee meane while continued extreemly tormented night & day, till Tuesday about noon; having this added on Munday & Tuesday morning that shee barked like a dog, & bleated like a calfe, in which her organs were visibly made use of: yea, (as was carefully observed) on Munday night, & Tuesday morning, when ever any came neere the house, though they within heard nothing at all, yet would shee barke till they were come into the house, on Tuesday, about 12 of the clocke, she came out of the fit, which had held her from Sabbath day about the same time, at least 48 howers, with little or no intermission, & then her speech was restored to her, & shee expressed a great seeming sence of her state: many bitter teares, sighings, sobbings, complainings shee uttered, bewailing of many sins fore mentioned, begging prayers, & in the houre of prayer expressing much affection: I then pressed if there were anything behind in reference to the dealings between her & Satan,

[Page 12] when she agen professed that shee had related all: & declared that in those fits the devill had assaulted her many wayes, that hee came downe the chimney, & shee essayed to escape him, but was siezed upon by him, that hee sat upon her breast, & used many arguments with her, & that hee urged here at one time with persuasions & promises, of ease, & great matters, told her that shee had done enough in what shee had already confessed, shee might henceforth serve him more securely; anon told hir her time was past, & there was no hopes unlesse shee would serve him; & it was observed in the time of her extremity, once when a little moments respite was granted her of speech, shee advised us to make our peace with God, & use our time better then shee had done, the party advised her also to bethinke herselfe of making her peace, shee replied, it is too late for me : the next day was solemnized, when we had the presence of Mr. Bulkley, Mr. Rowlandson, & Mr. Estabrooke, whither coming, we found her returned to a sottish & stupid kind of frame, much was prest upon her, but no affection at all discovered; though shee was little or nothing exercised with any fits, & her speech also continued: though a day or two after shee was melancholye & being enquired of a reason, shee complained that shee was grieved that so much pains were taken wth her, & did her no good, but this held her not long: & thus shee remained till Munday, when to some neighbors there present, shee related something more of he converse with the devill, viz. That it had bin 5 yeers or therabouts, since shee first saw him, & declared methodically the sundry apparitions from time to time, till shee was thus dreadfully assaulted, in which, the principall was, that after many assaults, shee had resolved to seale a covenant with Satan, thinking shee had better doe it, then be thus followed by him, that once, when shee lived at Lancaster, he presented himselfe, & desired of her blood, & shee would have done it, but wanted a knife, in the parley shee was prevented by the providence of God interposing my father; a 2nd time in the house hee met her, & presented her a knife, & as she was going about it my father stept in agen & prevented, that when shee sought & enquired for the knife, it was not to bee found, & that afterward shee saw it sticking in the top of the barne, & some other like passages shee agen owned an observable passage which shee also had confessed in her first declaration, but is not there inserted, viz. that the devill had often proffered her his service, but shee accepted not; & once in ptic: to bring her in chips for the fire,

[Page 13] shee refused, but when shee came in shee saw them lye by the fire side, & was affraid, & this I remarke, I sitting by the fire spake to her to lay them on, & she turned away in an unwonted manner: she then also declared against herselfe her unprofitable life she had led, & how justly God had thus permitted Satan to handle her, telling them, they little knew what a sad case shee was in. I after asked her concerning these passages, & shee owned the truth of them, & declared that now shee hoped the devill had left her, but being prest whether there were not a covenant, she earnestly professed, that by Gods goodnesse shee had bin prevented from doing that, which shee of herselfe had been ready enough to assent to; & shee thanked God there was no such thing:

The same day shee was agen taken with a new kind of unwonted fitt in which after shee had bin awhile exercised with violence, shee got her a sticke, & went up and downe, thrusting, & pushing, here & there, & anon looking out at a window, & cryed out of a witch appearing in a strange manner in forme of a dog downward, with a womans head, & declared the person, other whiles that shee appeared in her whole likenesse, & described her shape and habit: signified that shee went up the chimney & went her way: what impression wee reade in the clay of the chimney, in similitude of a dogs paw, by the operation of Satan, & in the form of a dogs going in the same place she tould of, I shall not conclude, though something there was, as I myselfe saw in the chimney in the same place where shee declared the foot was set to goe up:

In this manner was she handled that night, & the 2 next dayes, using strange gestures, complaining by signes, when shee could not speake explaining that shee was sometimes in the chamber, somet. in the chimney, & anon assaults her, sometimes scratching her breast, beating her sides, strangling her throat, & she did oftentimes seeme to our apprehension as if shee would forthwith bee strangled: She declared that if the party were apprehended shee should forthwith bee well, but never till then; whereupon her father went, & percured the coming of the woman impeached by her, who came downe to her on Thursd day night, where (being desired to be present) I observed that she was violently handled, & lamentably tormented by the adversarye, & uttered unusual shriekes at the instant of the persons coming in, though her eyes were fast closed: but having experience of such former actings, wee made nothing of it, but waited the issue: God therefore was sought to, to signifye something. whereby the innocent might bee acquitted, or the guilty discovered,

[Page 14] & 'hee Answered our prayers, for by 2 evident & cleere mistakes she was cleered, & then all prejudices ceased, & she never more to this day hath impeached her of any apparition: in the fore mentioned allegation of the person, shee also signified that somet. the devil alsoe in the likenesse of a little boy appeared together with the person: Fryday was a sad day with her, for shee was sorely handled with fits, which some perceiving pressed that there was something yet behind not discovered by her; & shee after a violent fit, holding her betweene two & 3 houres did first to one, & afterwards to many acknowledge that shee had given of her blood to the Devill, & made a covenant with him, whereupon I was sent for to her; & understanding how things had passed, I found that there was no roome for privacye, in another already made by her soe publicke, I therefore examined her concerning the matter; & found her not soe forward to confesse, as shee had bin to others, yet thus much I gathered from her confession:

That after shee came to dwell with us, one day as shee was alone in a lower roome, all the rest of us being in the chamber, she looked out at the window, & saw the devill in the habit of an old man, coming over a great meadow lying neere the house; & suspecting his designe, shee had thoughts to have gon away; yet at length resolved to tarry it out, & heare what hee had to say to her; when hee came hee demanded of her some of her blood, which shee forthwith consented to, & with a knife cut her finger, hee caught the blood in his hand, & then told her she must write her name in his booke, shee answered, shee could not Write, but hee told her he would direct her hand, & then took a little sharpened sticke, & dipt in the blood, & put it into her hand, & guided it, & shee wrote her name with his helpe: what was the matter shee set her hand to, I could not learne from her; but thus much shee confessed, that the terme of time agreed upon with him was for 7 yeers; one yeere shee was to be faithfull in his service, & then the other six hee would serve her, & make her a witch: shee also related, that the ground of contest between her & the devill which was the occasion of this sad providence, was this, that after her covenant made the devill showed her hell & the damned, & told her if shee were not faithfull to him, shee should goe thither, & bee tormented there; shee desired of him to show her heaven, but hee told her that heaven was an ougly place, & that none went thither but a company of base roagues whom he hated; but if shee would obey him, it should be well with her:

[Page 15] but afterward shee considered with herselfe, that the terme of her covenant, was but short, & would soone bee at an end, & shee doubted (for all the devills promises) shee must at last come to the place hee had showne her, & withall, feared, if shee were a witch, shee should bee discovered, & brought to a shamefull end: which was many times a trouble on her spirits; this the Devill perceiving, urged upon her to give him more of her blood, & set her hand agen to his booke, which shee refused to doe, but partly through promises, partly by threatnings, hee brought her at last to a promise that shee would sometime doe it: after which hee left not incessantly to urge her to the performance of it, once hee met her on the staires. & often elsewhere pressing her with vehemencye, but shee still put it off; till the first night shee was taken when the devill came to her, & told her he would not tarry any longer: shee told him shee would not doe it hee Answered shee had done it already, & what further damage would it bee to doe it agen, for shee was his sure enough: she rejoyned shee had done it already, & if shee were his sure enough, what need hee to desire any more of her: whereupon he stricke her the first night, agen more violently the 2nd as is above exprest :

This is the sum of the Relation I then had from her: which at that time seemed to bee methodicall: These things she uttered with great affection, overflowing of teares, & seeming bitterness: I asked of the Reason of her weeping & bitterness, shee complained of her sinns, & some in particular, profanation of the sabbath &c: but nothing of this sin of renouncing the goverment of God. & giving herselfe up to the devill: I therefore, (as God helped) applied it to her & asked her whether shee desired not prayers with & for her, shee assented with earnestnesse, & in prayer seemed to bewaile the sin as God helped, then in the aggravation of it, & afterward declared a desire to rely on the power & mercy of God in Christ: shee then also declared, that the Devill had deceived her concerning those persons impeached by her, that hee had in their likenesse or resemblance tormented her, persuading her that it was they, that they bare her a spleen, but he loved her, & would free her from them, & pressed on her to endeavor to bring them forth to the censure of the law.

In this case I left her; but (not being satisfied in some things) I promised to visit her agen the next day which accordingly I did, but coming to her, I found her (though her speech still remained) in a case sad enough, her teares dried up, & senses stupified, & (as was observed) when I

[Page 16] could get nothing from her, & therefore applyed myselfe in counsell to her, shee regarded it not, but fixed her eye steadfastly upon a place, as shee was wont when the Devill presented himselfe to her, which was a griefe to her parents, & brought mee to a stand; in the condition I left her:

The next day, being the Sabbath, whither upon any hint given her, or any advantage Satan tooke by it upon her, shee sent for mee in hast at noone, coming to her, shee immediately with teares told me that shee had belied the Devill, in saying shee had given him of her blood: &c: professed that the most of the apparitions shee had spoken of were but fansyes, as images represented in a dreame; earnestly entreated me to beleeeve her, called God to witnesse to her assertion, I told her I would willingly hope the best, & beleeeve what I had any good grounds to apprehend; if therefore shee would tell a more methodicall relation than the former, it would be well, but if otherwise, she must bee content that every one should censure according to their apprehension, shee promised soe to doe, & expressed a desire that all that would might heare her; that as they had heard soe many lyes & untruths, they might now heare the truth, & engaged that in the evening shee would doe it; I then repaired to her, & divers more then went; shee then declared thus much, that the Devill had sometimes appeared to her; that the occasion of it was her discontent, that her condition displeased her, her labor was burdensome to her, shee was neither content to bee at home nor abroad; & had oftentime strong persuasions to practice in witchcraft, had often wished the Devill would come to her at such & such times, & resolved that if hee would, shee would give herselfe up to him soule & body: but (though hee had oft times appeared to her, yet) at such times hee had not discovered himselfe, and therefore shee had bin preserved from such a thing: I declared a suspicion of the truth of the relation, & gave her some Reasons; but by Reason of the company did not say much, neither could anything further be gotten from her: but the next day I went to her, & opened my mind to her alone, & left it with her, declared (among other things) that shee had used preposterous courses, & therefore it was no marvell that shee had bin led into such contradictions, & tendered her all the helpe I could, if shee would make use of me, & more privately relate any weighty & serious case of Conscience to me, shee promised me shee would if shee knew any thing, but said that then shee knew nothing at all; but stood to the story shee had told the foregoing evening: & indeed what to make

[Page 17] of these things I at present know not, but am waiting till God (if hee see meet) wind up the story, & make a more cleere discoverye.

It was not many dayes ere shee was hurried agen into violent fits after a different manner, being taken agen speechlesse, & using all endeavors to make away with herselfe, & doe mischiefe unto others; striking those that held her; spitting in their faces; & if at any time shee had done any harme or frightened them shee would laugh immediately; which fits held her sometimes longer, sometimes shorter, few occasions shee had of speech, but when shee could speake, shee complained of a hard heart, counselled some to beware of sin, for that had brought her to this, bewailed that soe many prayers had bin put up for her, & shee still so hard hearted, & no more good wrought upon her; but being asked whither shee were willing to repent, shook her head, & said nothing. Thus shee continued till the next sabbath in the afternoone; on which day in the morning, being somthing better then at other times, shee had but little company tarried with her in the afternoon; when the Devill began to make more full discoverye of himselfe:

It had bin a question before, whither shee might properly bee called a Demoniacke, or person possessed of the Devill, but it was then put out of Question: hee began (as the persons with her testifie) by drawing her tongue out of her mouth most frightfully to an extraordinary length & greatnesse, & many amazing postures of her bodye; & then by speaking, vocally in her, whereupon her father, & another neighbor were called from the meeting, on whom, (as soon as they came in,) he railed, calling them roagues, charging them for folly in going to heare a blacke roague, who told them nothing but a parcell of lyes, & deceived them, & many like expressions. after exercise I was called, but understood not the occasion, till I came, & heard the same voice, a grum, low, yet audible voice it was, the first salutation I had was, oh ! you are a great roague, I was at the first somthing daunted & amazed, & many reluctances I had upon my spirits, which brought mee to a silence and amazement in my spirits, till at last God heard my groanes & gave me both refreshment in Christ, & courage: I then called for a light, to see whither it might not appeare a counterfiet, and observed not any of her organs to moove, the voice was hollow, as if it issued out of her throat; hee then agen called me great blacke roague, I challenged him to make it appear; but all the Answer was, you tell the people a company of lyes : I reflected on myselfe, & could not but

[Page 18] magnifye the goodnesse of God not to suffer Satan to bespatter the names of his people, with those sins which hee himselfe hath pardoned in the blood of Christ.

I Answered, Satan, thou art a lyar, and a deceiver, & God will vindicate his owne truth one day: hee Answered nothing directly, but said, I am not Satan, I am a pretty blacke boy; this is my pretty girle; I have bin here a great while, I sat still, and Answered nothing to these expressions; but when hee directed himselfe to mee agen, oh! you blacke roague, I doe not love you: I replyed through God's grace, I hate thee; hee rejoyned, but you had better love mee; these manner of expressions filled some of the company there present with great consternation, others put on boldnesse to speake to him, at which I was displeased, & advised them to see their call cleere, fearing least by his policye, & many apish expressions hee used, hee might insinuate himselfe, & raise in them a fearlesnesse of spirit of him: I no sooner turned my backe to goe to the fire, but he called out agen, where is that blacke roague gon: I seeing little good to bee done by discorse, & questioning many things in my mind concerning it, I desired the company to joyne in prayer unto God; when wee went about that duty & were kneeled downe, with a voice louder then before something, hee cryed out, hold your tongue, hold your tongue, get you gon you blacke roague, what are you going to doe, you have nothing to doe with me, &c: but through Gods goodnesse was silenced, & shee lay quiet during the time of prayer, but as soone as it was ended, began afresh, using the former expressions, at which some ventured to speake to him: Though I thinke imprudentlye: one told him, God had him in chaines, hee replyed, for all my chaine, I can knocke thee on the head when I please: hee said hee would carry her away that night. Another Answered, but God is stronger than thou, He presently rejoyned, that 's a ly, I am stronger than God: at which blasphemy I agen advised them to bee wary of speaking, counselled them to get serious parsons to watch with her, & left her, commending her to God:

On Tuesday following shee confessed that the Devill entred into her the 2nd night after her first taking, that when shee was going to bed, hee entred in (as shee conceived) at her mouth, & had bin in her ever since, & professed, that if there were ever a Devill in the world, there was one in her, but in what manner he spake in her she could not tell: On Wednesday night, shee must forthwith be carried downe to the bay in all hast, shee should never be well, till an assembly of

[Page 19] ministers was met together to pray with & for her, & in particular Mr. Cobbet: her friends advised with me about it; I signified to them, that I apprehended, Satan never made any good motion, but it was out of season, & that it was not a thing now fiesable, the season being then extreame cold; & the snow deepe, that if shee had bin taken in the woods with her fits shee must needs perish: On friday in the evening shee was taken agen violently, & then the former voice (for the sound) was heard in her agen, not speaking, but imitating the crowing of a cocke, accompanied with many other gestures, some violent, some ridiculous, which occasioned my going to her, where by signes she signified that the Devill threatened to carry her away that night, God was agen then sought for her. & when in prayer, that expression was used, the God had proved Satan a liar, in preserving her once when hee had threatned to carry her away that night, & was entreated soe to doe agen, the same voice, which had ceased 2 dayes before, was agen heard by the by-standers 5 times distinctly to cry out, oh you are a roague, and then ceased: but the whole time of prayer, sometimes by violence of fits sometimes by noises shee made, shee drowned her owne hearing from receiving our petition, as she afterwards confessed:

Since that time shee hath continued for the most part speechlesse, her fits coming upon her sometimes often, sometimes with greater intermission, & with great varieties in the manner of them, sometimes by violence, sometimes by making her sicke, but (through Gods goodnesse) soe abated in violence, that now one person can as well rule her, as formerly 4 or 5: She is observed alwayes to fall into her fits when any strangers goe to visit her, & the more goe the more violent are her fits: as to the frame of her spirits hee hath bin more averse lately to good counsell than heretofore, yet sometime shee signifies a desire of the companye of ministers.

On Thursday last, in the evening, shee came a season to her speech, & (as I received from them with her) agen disowned a Covenant with the Devill, disowned that relation about the knife fore mentioned, declared the occasion of her fits to bee discontent, owned the temptations to murder; declared that though the devill had power of her body, shee hoped hee should not of her soule, that she had rather continue soe speechlesse, then have her speech, & make no better use of it then formerly shee had, expressed that shee was sometimes disposed to doe mischief, & was as if some had laid hold of her to enforce her to it, & had double strength to her owne, that shee knew not whither the devill

[Page 20] were in her or no if hee were shee knew not when or how he entered; that when shee was taken speechlesse, she fared as if a string was tyed about the roots of her tongue, & reached doune into her vitalls & pulled her tongue downe, & then most when shee strove to speake:

On Fryday, in the evening shee was taken wth a passion of weeping, & sighing, which held her till late in the night, at length she sent for me; but then unseasonablenesse of the weather, & my owne bodily indisposednesse prevented: I went the next morning, when shee strove to speake somthing but could not, but was taken with her fits, which held her as long as I tarried, which was more then an houre, & I left her in them: & thus she continues speechlesse to this instant, Jan. 15. & followed with fits: concerning which state of hers I shall suspend my owne Judgment, & willingly leave it to the censure of those that are more learned, aged, & Judicious: only I shall leave my thoughts in resp. of 2 or 3 questions which have risen about her: viz.

1. Whither her distemper be reale or counterfiet: I shall say no more to that but this, the great strength appearing in them, & great weaknesse after them, will disclaime the contrary opinion: for tho a person may counterfiet much yet such a strength is beyond the force of dissimulation:

2. Whither her distemper bee naturall or Diabolicall, I suppose the premises will strongly enough conclude the latter, yet I will adde these 2 further arguments:

1. the actings of convulsion, which these come nearest to, are (as parsons acquainted with them observe) in many, yea the most essentiall parts of them quite contrary to these actings:

2. Shee hath no wayes wasted in body, or strength by all these fits, though soe dreadfule, but gathered flesh exceedinglye, & hath her naturall strength when her fits are off, for the most part:

3. Whither the Devill did really speake in her: to that point which some have much doubted of, thus much I will say to countermand this apprehension:

1. The manner of expression I diligently observed, & could not perceive any organ, any instrument of speech (which the philosopher makes mention of) to have any motion at all, yea her mouth was sometimes shut without opening sometimes open without shutting or moving, & then both I & others saw her tongue (as it used to bee when shee was in some fits, when speechlesse) turned up circularly to the roofe of her mouth.

2. the labial letters, divers of which were used by her, viz. B. M. P.

which cannot bee naturally expressed without motion of the lips, which must needs come within our ken, if observed, were uttered without any such motion,

2. **[Page 21]** shee had used only Linguals, Gutturalls &c: the matter might have bin more suspicious:

3. the reviling termes then used, were such as shee never used before nor since, in all this time of her being thus taken: yea, hath bin alwayes observed to speake respectively concerning mee;

4. They were expressions which the devill (by her confession) aspersed mee, & others withall, in the houre of temptation, particularly shee had freely acknowledged that the Devill was wont to appear to her in the house of God & divert her mind, & charge her shee should not give eare to what the Blacke coated roage spake:

5. wee observed when the voice spake, her throat was swelled formidably as big at least as ones fist: These arguments I shall leave to the censure of the Judicious:

4. whither shee have covenanted with the Devill or noe: I thinke this is a case unanswerable, her declarations have been soe contradictorie, one to another, that wee know not what to make of them & her condition is such as administers many doubts; charity would hope the best, love would alsoe feare the worst, but thus much is cleare, shee is an object of pitye, & I desire that all that heare of her would compassionate her forlorne state, Shee is (I question not) a subject of hope, & thererfore all meanes ought to bee used for her recoverye, Shee is a monument of divine severitye, & the Lord grant that all that see or heare, may feare & tremble: Amen.

S. W.