THE BOY OF BILSON:

OR,

A TRVE DISCOVERY OF THE LATE NOTORIOVS IMPOSTVRES OF CERTAINE ROMISH *Priests* in their pretended *Exorcisme*, or expulsion of *the Diuell out of a young Boy, named* WILLIAM PERRY, *sonne of* THOMAS PERRY *of* Bilson, *in the County of* Stafford, *Yeoman.*

Vpon which occasion, hereunto is premitted

A briefe Theologicall Discourse, by way of Caution, for the more easie discerning of such Romish spirits; and iudging of their false pretences, both in this and the like Practices.

---

2. Thes. 2. 10, 11.

Because they receiued not the loue of the truth, that they might be saued. For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should beleeue a lye.

AT LONDON,
Imprinted by *F. K.* for *William Barret.* 1622.

TO THE CHRISTIAN READER.

BEing acquainted with the mind and purpose of the Author of this ensuing Treatise, and having thereunto added those other Pieces (vnto which I am no stranger,) to make the Narration complete, as concerning the Boy of Bilson: I thought it my duty, after much sollicitation, to communicate the whole in print; and so to make it iuris publici. And this (as I thought) these very times did exact. For now the Popish Priests haue so cauterized their consciences, and rub'd their foreheads, as that they take delight, and blush not, daily to forge and coyne most monstrous *vntruths; all to support their drooping and dropping Cause. Since therefore their appetites are so well whetted and set on edge (by what * Stone we may easily gheſſe, it being their due reward,) as that they make no bones of whatsoeuer is set before them; to stay their stomacks a while, let them be chewing this bit, (which otherwise they shall not now eschue,) Vt quam falsa dicendo & scribendo voluptatem ceperint, eandem vera legendo & audiendo amittant.

* witnes (among many others) their fresh Master-lye, touching the supposed Apostasie of the late L. Bishop of London.

* Perhaps the same that one of them hanged about the Boyes necke. vid. pag. 63.

Here then (good Reader) in the first place thou hast a Treatise professedly written for a Discouery of, and a Caution against the enueagling proiects of Romish Priests, chiefly in that one particular, viz. their pretended Priestly Exorcizing and expelling of Diuels out of bodies possessed. By which thou maist iudge, whether these Mirabularies deserue not the reputation of the

rarest Mountebanks *of these times. Next followes,* A faithfull Relation *(for so they name it) made by these* Priests, touching *their* proceedings with the Boy: "*which they did purposely write and disperse,* To the "end *(as they professe)* that all indifferent mindes "may magnifie and praise Almighty God, that "hath left such power to men,&c. *such (forsooth) as they had, in* Exorcizing *and coniuring the* Diuell *within that* Boy, *being their supposed desperate* Demoniack. *Which glorious worke of theirs when these* Roman Aruspices *shall, at their next enteruiew, recognize,* Mirabor si non riserint. *And that so much the rather, after they haue perused the Remaine of this Booke, in which the Euent and successe of the whole businesse is truly related; and their formidable* Mormo *proued no other then an Apish* Cobalus. *Whereby it will also come to passe that these* Catholike Gentlemen *(for so they stile thēselues, albeit by their * outward garbe one would rather suspect thē for Serving-men & attendants on such persons,* nè quid grauius) *shall be so cleerly conuinced of palpable Quacksaluing, as that a very meane Herald, knowing the house they come of, may blazon their Armes; and so expose thē vnto shame and laughter.*

But I will not intertaine thee (gentle Reader) with any longer parle in the entrance, after that I shall put thee in mind of that sound aduise, which an Heathen Philosopher long since prescribed (but neuer so necessary as now, when Popish impostures are so rife,) viz. ΝΗΦΕ. ΚΑΙ ΜΕΜΝΗΣΟ. ΑΠΙΣΤΕΙΝ: *Which may be thus englished;* Bee wise, and bee not hasty to beleeue. *which precious* Amulet *I commend vnto thee, and All of vs to the rich mercy of our most gracious God.*

Ryc. Baddeley.

Vide pag. 45.

&c.

Epicharmus.

* *See their descriptions in this Booke pag. 63. 64. &c.*

THE GENERALL HEADS of this Booke.

Pag

I. A Discourse, by way of Caution, concerning Popish Exorcizing of vncleane spirits. 1

II. A Relation made by certaine Romish Priests, and by one of them dispersed; wherein they magnifie the power of their Exorcisme ouer the diuell, in the Boy of Bilson. 41

III. A description of the admirable guile and cunning of that Boy, in counterfeiting himselfe possessed of the diuell. 55

IV. The meanes and manner vsed by the R. Reuerend Father in God THOMAS Lo. Bishop of Couentry and Lichfield, for discouering his dissimulation. 56

V. The two examinations of the Boy, taken before the said Reuerend Father; together with his plaine and direct Confession of the whole Complot and Practice. 61,69

VI. The Successe and euent of all, shewed in the Boyes (first) priuate, and (after) publike Acknowledgement made before the whole County, in the Summer-Assizes held at Stafford this present yeere 1621. 72

TO

A FAITHFVLL RELATION OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE CATHOLICKE Gentlemen with the Boy of *Bilſon*; ſhewing how they found him, on what termes *they meddled with him, how farre they* proceeded with him, and in what caſe, and for what cauſe they left to deale further with him.

Non nobis Domine, ſed Nomini tuo da Gloriam.

TO ſtop diuers rumours that are ſpred, and to the end people ſhould not extend things further then matters paſſed really, Truth ſtanding in no need to bee ſupported with falſhood; and to the intent ill-minded people ſhould not extenuate the occurrences againſt truth it ſelfe, & what paſſed indeed: I haue thought good to put downe what paſſed in the ſtrange fits and tormentings of the Boy; to the end onely that all indifferent mindes may magnifie and praiſe almighty God, that hath left ſuch power to men, and to ſhew in what readineſſe of

The intents of this writing.

helpe the child was, if they had fought medicine ſtill in *Iſrael*, and not at *Endor*, and of *Belzebub*.

First then to ſhew how the Child grew thus to bee tormented, as I haue vnderſtood it of his Parents, and haue heard the Child confirme it himſelfe. The Boy returning homeward, from ſchoole, to *Bilſon* in *Staffordſhire* where hee dwelt, an old woman, vnknowne, met him, and taxed him, in that he did not giue her good time of the day, ſaying that he was a foule thing, and that it had been better for him if he had ſaluted her. At which words the Boy felt a thing to pricke him to the very heart. In fine, the Boy came home, languiſhed ſome dayes, and at length grew into extreme fits, that two or three, (though hee was a child of 12. yeeres of age) could hardly hold him. The Parents of the Child, ſeeing the extremity of the fits, and the miſery and imminent danger of death euery houre the Child did lye in, mooued with tender compaſſion, ſought helpe of *Catholicks*, and with cap and knee, by the meanes of ſome friends, did ſollicit a zealous Gentleman; who ouercome with their earneſt ſuit, did vſe ſome prayers and lawfull exorciſmes allowed by the Catholicke Church, with whoſe prayers the Child was eaſed ſomething, and the force of the ſpirituall Enemie abated. The Gentleman inſiſting to know how many was in him; to his thinking hee ſaid, Three. Hee (good Gentleman) called away partly by the danger of the place, as alſo by his vrgent buſineſſe, they ſought and ſent for a zealous Gentleman, whoſe zeale and vertues are ſufficiently

How the Boy came firſt to be poſſeſſed.

Two others meddled with him ere I came.

ly knowne, yea and acknowledged by Gods enemies themſelues. He moued with compaſſion came thither, vſed his beſt prayers and meanes that at that time he thought conuenient; very much weakened the diuels force, and quelled the extreme fiercenesſe of the fits. Yet hee, within a day or ſo, withdrew himſelfe for the ſame cauſe, yet though abſent in perſon, was moſt mindfull of his miſery. In ſo much as he did negotiate with mee, in that I had been preſent many times in the like occaſions, that I would ſee him, and make tryall whether hee were poſſeſſed, or obſeſſed. I was very vnwilling, yet ouercome by his intreaty, and the former motiues, I promiſed him to doe my beſt, and to ſee him within the ſpace of one moneth: yet ſo I diſpoſed of my buſineſſes, that I came thither in the ſpace of a weeke, about Thurſday before *Corpus Chriſti* day, where I did finde the Gentleman that requeſted me to come: and finding that they had vſed *Sorceries* of Witches, which made the Child offer violence to himſelfe, wee would not meddle with him, till they had burned thoſe Sorceries applyed to him, which they forthwith did fulfill. Whereupon we vſing the reading of the *Litanies*, and the holy *Goſpels*, together with the Exorciſme of Saint *Ambroſe*, when I came vnto thoſe words that ſhewed the power that Saint *Peter* had ouer *Simon Magus*, and Saint *Paul* on the Magician *Bariſus*, the Child would bee ſo tormented, that three or foure could hardly hold him; which words tooke effect in manner as often as they were vſed. The other Gentleman call'd away, I was left alone,

The diuell could not ſeduce Saint Peter and Saint Paul.

till it pleased God the Gentleman that had first meddled with him, by great chance came thither. He and I both did our best, till Saturday about two of the clocke, at which time, vrgent occasions, though diuers wayes, called vs away: yet wee left holy water, also water properly against *Witchcraft*, and holy oyle: the first hauing that power, that it would make him speake, though dumbe, and his tongue turned into his throat; and the second that force, that being applyed in a little quantity vnto his legs and armes most grieuously contracted, that a strong man could hardly vnfold them, onely with the force of the holy oyle they would bee stretched forth as they were vvont. Wee intreated them in our absence, to vse the holy waters and oyle in his extremities, and that wee absent, would assist him the best that wee could in our prayers; which they continued: on Saturday, Sunday, and Munday, with extreme fits and heauings hee brought vp pinnes, wooll, knotted thred, thrums, rosemary, walnut leaues, feathers, &c. the which he still drinking of the blessed water, brought vp: and when hee could not speake, hee would make signes for that water, with the letting dovvne of vvhich, presently he recouered his speech. Well, on Thursday, being *Corpus Christi* day, about three or foure of the clocke I came againe, found the Child in great extremities, continually heauing vp, and in this time he had brought vp 11. pinnes, and a knitting needle folded vp in diuers folds. On Friday next, he brought vp the last pinne. I told them that I vvas glad that hee brought vp most of those things

The vertue of holy water, and of holy oyle.

Strange things voyded.

things in my absence, that well they might see that really they came from him, and that it was no colusion of vs. On Saturday night finding the Boy to my thinking somewhat obstinate; I, before the Parents, wished him not to be deluded by the Enemie, but that if he spake any thing within him, he would impart it to vs, that wee might counsell him for the best. A great while the Child would not heare vs, yet at length hee said, hee would not tell vs before all the company. I asking then to whom he would tell it, he answered, to your selfe, so the others would leaue you: hee gaue mee leaue after to signifie vnto his Parents, sisters, and brothers thus much: First, that the spirit bade him not to hearken to me in any case. Secondly, that the Witch said, that shee would make an end of him, and that she would bring in othergates things into him, if it were not for me, whom she called a Roguish P. Thirdly, shee said I destroyed all her good things. Fourthly, shee said, that though I should helpe him, yet shee would haue a saying to his brothers and sisters. Fifthly, hee desired mee to carry with him vntill Munday, for when I should leaue him, he said hee should be torne in pieces: whereupon I, according to the prescript of the *Thesaurus Exorcismorum*, did blesse fire, and did burn those *maleficialia*, Sorceries, those filthy things that came from him; at smoke of which, and the fire thereof being temperate onely, and in a Chasing-dish, and the smoke onely of Frankincense, he would vehemently cry out that he was killed, burned, and choked; though my owne selfe and diuers

The boy tels what the diuell said to him.

ners others were neerer to all then himselfe. At length hee seemed greatly to reioyce, and with great eagernesse dranke vp the smoke, saying that he saw his Enemies tormented. I wished him then to pray for the Witch, and for her conuersion from that wicked life; which he did: then the Child did declare that now hee was perfectly himselfe, and desired that his bookes, pennes, inke, clothes, yea that euery thing he had might be blessed; wishing his Parents, sisters, and brothers to blesse themselues, and to become *Catholicks*; out of which faith, by Gods grace, he said hee would neuer liue or dye. On Sunday also I exorcised him, but diuers *Puritans* resorting to him, I could not haue conueniency to come till towards night. All which day he had many fits, and I comming to him, learned of him that still while the *Puritans* were in place on Saturday, as also at other times, hee saw the diuell assault him in forme of a Black bird. Well, I persisted in exorcising him, left him very well speaking and merry, retired my selfe, hauing seene his meate and drinke blessed. They then after giuing him a Syllibub, the sugar whereof being not blessed, he presently at the taste thereof began grieuously to be tormented. Yea, though he loued flowers, yet if vnbleft, hee would teare them in pieces, and distinguish them from others; and vnblessed Raisins he would say were too big for his mouth. I was sent for, and I had not charged him long, but at each charge I did finde the diuell very much to tremble: I hoping of Gods especiall assistance at that time, made the diuell to swell in his mouth

The markable deuotion of the child.

The force of ill company.

The force of blessings.

mouth, in signe of his presence, and to expresse first by signe, how many were in him: which he did, holding vp three fingers. I caused them then, one by one, to descend into the great toe of the right foot, and at the entring thereof to shake it, and to stirre the legge; all which they did higher and higher, to signifie how one was greater then another: then I caused the Boy to speake, who did acknowledge that hee would liue and dye a Catholicke, wishing father, mother, and all his friends to serue God: then I called vp the chiefe Fiend, and did demand him to shew himselfe, who presently puts forth the Childs tongue, and swelled the end thereof. Then I (all being Protestants, saying one Catholicke) commanded the diuell to shew by the sheet before him, how he would vse one dying out of the Romane Catholicke Church? who very vnwillingly, yet at length obeyed, tossing, plucking, haling, and biting the sheet, that it did make many to weepe and cry forth. Then I commanded him to shew how hee did vse *Luther*, *Iohn Calvin*, and *Iohn Fox*; which vnwillingly he did performe after the same manner, but in a fiercer sort. Then I commanded him to shew what power he had on a good Catholicke that dyed out of mortall sinne? hee thrust downe his armes, trembled, holding downe his head, and did no more. Heereupon the Parents were instant with me, presently and out of hand to helpe the Child. I told them that I did not doubt but by the power of Gods Church (on which I did onely relie, and not on any personall vertue of mine owne) to cast them out presently.

A markable thing.

But

A coniecture why the child might be possessed.

But I said, I did feare that the innocent Child was punished for the sins of his Parents, which might be for their lacke of beliefe; which is a sinne great enough, since without faith it is impossible to please God. Yet hereupon I said to his mother, Good woman, will you promise mee that you will become a Catholicke, if in your sight I cast out these diuels in forme of fire? shee answered, that she must consider of that: then said I, I am afraid this Child will not haue helpe; for, fearing the Child was punished for her lacke of beliefe, I doubted that the cause remaining, the effect also would remaine. Hereupon the Child gaue a great shricke, began to be vehemently tormented, grew obstinate, in so much that I feared another diuell was entred. I exorcized him also a long time: but the diuell with the Childs voyce cryed, *The Lord in heauen, the Lord in heauen.* A long time I exorcized him, but still he was obstinate, crying out, Father, mother, helpe me, helpe me, saying that I killed him: and when I gently strooke him on the head with a soft ribbon blessed, he yelled forth that I killed him, cursing me, saying, A poxe of God light on the P. saying moreouer, I will neuer bee conuerted; to which word a Protestant then by, that had seene all, replied, Thou wilt then do worse.

The child being himselfe, denies all the diuell had vttered by his tongue

Here I commanded the diuell that spake, to shew himselfe in the tongue, who comming forth as out of a trance, I asked him gently, whether he had vttered any of these words? he vtterly denied to haue spoken them, asking forgiuenesse, saying, that it was not hee that spake them; and affirming, by Gods

Gods grace, that he would be constant in the Romane Catholicke faith till death. Then I called vp the wicked spirit, tooke his oth, that with trembling hee tendred to be obedient in all to lawfull *Exorcists*, and not to hinder the eating, drinking, or sleeping of the Child. Then it being almost three of the clocke in the morning, I retired to bed: the next day, being Munday, I came and told the Parents, that I had tarried there as long as I had promised, and as long as I well durst for danger, and as my promise to others would permit, but promised them to come againe as soone as I could. The father then offered me the Child to dispose of as I would. I told him I had no conuenient place for that purpose; but I said, that if hee would not deale with *Witches* and *Sorcerers*, I would come as often as I could. The father said, he would seeke of *Witches*, or of any other for help.

The reason why I left to come any more.

I being sorry to heare his bad resolution, told him that I would not mingle God and the diuell together: and then got his promise that hee would not vse holy water and oyle blessed, if they meddled with *Witches*. Yet I heare, that he hath not complyend with his promise, in extremities of the Boyes fits, hauing recourse to blessed things, saying, he will course him with them. Well, the substance of all this I haue heere written, at my comming away I declared before three Protestants, and the Childs Parents, desiring them, that if I did not say truth in all things, that they would challenge me therein. Then the Child being in a sounding fit, anoynting him with holy oyle, I did

bring him vnto himselfe, in so much that with a staffe he walked vp and downe; and since, hee did eate, drinke, sleepe, and walke, hauing onely short fits, as I am faithfully informed, yea till shortly after they entertained many *Witches* and *Sorcerers*; notwithstanding whose helpe sought in vaine, hee is more grieuously tormented then euer before. Here before my departure, the Parents of the child offering me money and gold, I refused it, thanking them, saying, If they would giue mee 20. pound, I would not haue one penny: Charging them that they should not indanger their owne soules, and the soule of the poore Boy, in seeking vnlawfull meanes. And thus on Munday was fortnight I left him: and the truth of this I must say with S. *Paul*, that *God knowes in all this I doe not lye.*

Thus desiring that all may succeed to Gods glory, the good of the Child, and the confusion of all *Sorceries* and *Charmes*, which in my heart and soule I detest, I leaue the Parents, Child, and thee, Christian Reader, to the mercy of God.

July the first. 1620.

Non nobis Domine, non nobis, sed Nomini tuo da Gloriam.

Yours in charity, loue, or
in any good office,

T. B. W.

This Relation was published by the Priests themselues, and deliuered by one of them, called Master Wheeler, *into the hands of Master* Thomas Nechils *Gent. a Recusant dwelling neere the aforenamed towne of* Bilton: *as appeareth by his owne confession, vpon oth taken before the L. Bishop of Couentry and Lichfield; and added in the end of this Booke.*

THE EGREGIOVS CVNNING OF THE BOY OF *Bilson*, in counterfeiting himselfe to be *bewitched, and possessed of the diuell.*

THis *Boy*, being about thirteen yeres old (but for wit and subtilty farre exceeding his age) was thought by diuers, to bee possessed of the Diuell and bewitched, by reason of many strange fits, and much distemper, wherewith he seemed to haue been extremely affected. In those fits hee appeared both deafe and blinde, writhing his mouth aside, continually groning and panting, and (although often pinched with mens fingers, pricked with needles, tickled also on his sides, and once whipped with a rod, besides other the like extremities) yet could he not be discerned by either shrieking or shrinking, to bewray the least passion or feeling. Out of his fits he tooke (as might bee thought) no sustenance which hee could digest, but together with it, did voyd and cast out of his mouth, rags, thred, straw, crooked pinnes, &c. Both in, and out of his fits his belly (by wilfull and continuall abstinence

defrauding his owne guts) was almoſt as flat as his backe, beſides, his throat was ſwolne and hard, his tongue ſtiffe and rolled vp towards the roofe of his mouth, in ſo much that hee ſeemed alwayes dumbe, ſaue that hee would ſpeake once in a fortnight or three weekes, and that but in very few words.

Two things there were which gaue moſt iuſt cauſe of preſumption that hee was poſſeſſed and bewitched; one was, that hee could ſtill diſcerne when that woman (which was ſuppoſed to haue bewitched him) was brought into any roome where he was, although ſhe were very ſecretly conueyed thither, as was one time tryed before the grand Iury at Stafford: the ſecond, that though he would abide other paſſages of Scripture, yet he could not indure the repeating of that text, viz. *In the beginning was the Word, &c. Iob.*1. *verſ.* 1. but inſtantly rolling his eyes, and ſhaking his head, as one diſtracted, hee would fall into his vſuall fits of groning, panting, diſtraction, &c. In which plight he continued many moneths, to the great wonder and aſtoniſhment of thouſands, who from diuers parts came to ſee him. Thus much of his cunning.

Iohn Cocke.

*Iob.*1.1.

The meanes of diſcouering his diſſimulation.

Summer Aſſizes held at Stafford, xviij. Iacobi R. 1620.

AT the ſummer Aſſiſes held at *Stafford*, the tenth of Auguſt, *Anno Dom.* 1620. the afore-mentioned woman, ſuppoſed to haue beene the Witch, was brought to her triall, before the R. Worſhipful Sir *Peter Warberton*, and Sir *Iohn Davies* Knights, then

then his Maieſties Iuſtices of Aſſize for that Countie: before whom appeared ſome ſlender circumſtances, which were vulgarly eſteemed ſtrong proofes of *Witch-craft*; but after ſome ſpeech, manifeſting the idleneſſe of ſuch fantaſticall deluſions, the woman was freed by the Inqueſt. At what time the *Iudges* were pleaſed to commit the care and (if it might ſo be) the cure of the *Boy* vnto the L. *Biſhop of Couentry and Lichfield*, then, and there preſent.

When he had been with him at the Caſtle of *Eccleſhall*, about a moneth (much of which time his Lo. was neceſſarily abſent from home) although diuers ſymptomes gaue iuſt cauſe to ſuſpect that he did but counterfeit; as namely, the eaſie and equall beating of his pulſe in his ſtrongeſt fits, his quiet reſt and ſleepe, commonly the whole night long, his cleere complection, and (which plainly tells euery beholder that his tongue lyed in ſaying nothing) his ſwallowing of whole morſels of bread without chewing, his ſpitting forth from him as naturally and perfectly as euer hee could doe in his beſt health, (neither of which could poſſibly bee done with a tongue turned vpwards, and doubled towards his throat, as he would ſeeme to haue it,) beſides, his ordinary comming forth of his fits alwayes with one kind of lowd and large tunable grone: yet notwithſtanding his vſuall caſting vp of his meate, his much faſting, and lanke belly, his patience, or (as it might rather ſeeme) ſenſeleſſe ſtupidity, in induring thoſe many prickings and violent extremities, without any ſigne of feeling,

did argue some bodily disease and infirmity.

Therefore it was, that no experiment was vsed on him, vntill that the iudgement of some well approued *Physicians* might be had, *to deliuer in what* state his body then was: neuertheless, after a long-some expectation of such an one, an occasion offered it selfe, which required and exacted a more speedy and present triall.

The Father of the *Boy* (an honest Husbandman of sufficient ability, innocent and ignorant of any practice in his child) came with an Aunt of his to see him: when, being out of his fit, the Father earnestly demanded what might bee thought of his sonnes case, and whether he were possessed, or not? Whereto it was purposely answered, that nothing seemed so maruellous, or so much to betoken any such thing, as that at the hearing of those words of the holy Gospell of Saint *Iohn*, [*In the beginning was the Word, &c.*] he still vsed to fall into his fits. For further proofe whereof, then presently in the Fathers hearing those words were repeated; and accordingly vpon the repetition thereof the *Boy* fell instantly into his fit. Lo (quoth his Father then) doe you see? what thinke you of this? This (said the *Bishop*) doe I like very well; for vpon this must I begin to worke.

Iohn 1.1

The same day in the afternoone (when word was brought that the *Boy* did speake) diuers resorting vnto him, the *Bishop* calling for a Greeke Testament, said vnto him; *Boy*, it is either thou, or the diuel, that abhorrest those words of the Gospel: and if it be the diuell, he (being so ancient a scholer

as of almost 60. 3. yeeres standing) knoweth and vnderstandeth all languages in the world, so that he cannot but know when I recite the same sentence in the Gospell out of the Greeke text: but if it be thy selfe, then art thou an execrable wretch, who playest the diuels part, in loathing that part of the Gospell of *Christ*, which (aboue all other Scriptures) doth expresse the admirable vnion of the God-head and manhood in one *Christ* and Sauiour; which vnion is the arch-pillar of mans saluation. Wherefore looke to thy selfe, for now thou art to bee put vnto triall; and marke diligently whether it be that same Scripture which shall bee read vnto thee; at the reading whereof thou doest seeme to be so much troubled and tormented.

Then was read vnto him, in Greeke, the twelfth verse of the first Chapter of Saint *Iohns* Gospell, [*Quotquot autem receperunt, &c.*] which he supposing to be the first verse, did accordingly, as he was formerly wont, fall into the passion of a trance.

This fit being quickly passed ouer, next was read vnto him, in Greeke, the first verse, being indeed the aforesaid text [*In principio erat, &c.*] yet he suspecting that it was not the same text, was not any whit troubled therewith.

By this meanes was his notable fraud, in a manner, fully discouered, in so much that he seemed to be greatly confounded heerewith: notwithstanding, staring with his eyes, and casting his head on both sides the bed, wheron he lay, that he might dissemble his dissimulation the better, hee told the company y^t he was troubled at the sight of 2. mice.

After this discouery, (to the end that he might be freed from further triall, and bee sent home againe to his father) hee complained of extreme sicknesse, and by writing, as well as hee could, did signifie that he had a great paine in his belly: and the morning following, making water in an Vrinall, his water was as blacke as Inke; for there were some that writ very legibly therewith. And in the like sort, two dayes following hee seemed to make water of the same colour. Which that hee might the more cunningly dissemble, hee, in the making thereof vehemently groned; and thereupon one comming into the roome to him, the Boy did shew him his manner of making water, whereof a little remaine came then from him, of the same blacke tincture, which hee purposely had reserued within the skinne, to make semblance that it so came immediately from him.

But the third day following (which was the Lords day) by diligent watchfulnesse, and other meanes which was vsed to obserue him, hee was espyed mixing Inke with his Vrine, and nimbly conueying the Inkhorne into a priuate place. When being suddenly deprehended in this his conueyance, after an earnest, but louing exhortation made vnto him, this deafe began to heare, and dumbe to speake: and at the sight of his vngracious and godlesse practices, he brast out into plentifull teares, confessing all, to his owne shame, and Gods glory. Which confession (before he had heard of the aforesaid Relation of the *Priests*) hee made the same day, in manner following.

THE

THE FIRST EXAMINATION, AND CONFESSION OF THE BOY OF *Bilson*, Named *William Perry*, taken before the Reuerend Father in God, *Thomas* L. Bishop of *Couentry* and *Lichfield*, at *Eccleshall* Castle, 8. *Octob.* 1620. touching *his counterfeit practices, &c.*

BEing examined how long since, and of whom hee had learned such tricks and coozening deuices? The Boy recollecting himselfe, answered as followeth: In Lent last (said he) there met me, not farre from my fathers house, an old man, who called himselfe *Thomas* (but his surname I cannot remember) hauing a gray beard, russet apparell, and carrying a cradle of glasses or pots on his backe, who said vnto mee after this manner: "*Now, pretty Boy, where dwellest thou? dost thou goe* "*to schoole? If thou wilt doe as I shall teach thee, thou* "*shalt not need to goe to schoole; for* (said hee) *I can* "*teach thee such tricks and feats, that the people that* "*see thee, shall beleeue that thou art bewitched, and so* "*shall lament and pitty thee.* Whereupon I being

willing not to come at schoole, for feare of whipping, was desirous to learne such tricks. By and by this old man began to teach me, first, how to grone and mourne; next, to roll and cast vp my eyes, so that nothing but the white of the eye should bee seene; after that, to wrest and turne my necke and head both wayes towards my backe, then to gape hideously with my mouth, & grate with my teeth, to cling and draw in my belly and guts, to stretch out my legs, and clutch my hands: after that, to put crooked pinnes, rags, and such like baggage, into my mouth, that I might seeme to vomit them vp. And although (said he) that some folke shall put thee to paine, by pricking, and pinching thee, yet thou must indure all patiently. After this sort hee taught and learned me some six seuerall times priuately in a Close, where none could see vs.

And further, that old man made mee beleeue, that a body possessed could not indure to heare the first verse of the first Chapter of S. *Iohns* Gospell, *(viz. In the beginning was the Word, &c.)* and that therefore whensoeuer I heard it, then I should fall into my fits. Besides, hee willed mee that I should begin to doe these feats, when it should next happen that I should be sicke: and that then I should accuse some one body or other (whom I had heard to be accounted a *Witch*) to haue bewitched mee. And thereupon afterwards, of my selfe, I did accuse one *Ione Coxe*, and was once minded to haue made my picture in clay, and to haue conueyed it into her house, for the better proofe of her bewitching me.

Iohn 1.1.

Being

Being examined how long after it was that hee began to put these things into practice, and vpon what occasion? Hee answered; Not long after, (which was about the Easter following) I began to be sicke, and my father sought helpe for mee in diuers places: and then some Papists did perswade him to seeke for helpe at the hands of some Catholicke *Priests*. But my mother did rather desire to haue some learned scholer or Diuine that was no Papist. Yet at length, by their perswasions, there was first brought vnto me a *Priest*, of an indifferent tall stature, with long blacke haire, in a greenish suit, his doublet opened vnder the armepits with ribbons. 1. *Priest.*

As soone as he came to me, hee drew a stone out of his pocket, and hanged it about my necke, saying some Latine prayers ouer me, putting also his finger into my mouth: whereupon I seemed to come out of my fit. After that, hee made holy-water, and witch-water, saying certaine prayers ouer them, and putting salt into the witch-water. Then he gaue me a bottlefull of the one of those waters, (but of which I doe not remember) and willed me now and then to cast some of it ouer my bed; and himselfe, with a little Isop, did besprinkle me therewith also. Before he went away, he said certaine other Latine words or prayers ouer those waters, (which to my remembrance) did thus sound, *Eggse eggse atque famulo Dei Gulihelmo ante damnando*, and more thereof I cannot remember.

The next morning (as I remember) this *Priest* came againe, at which time (because I lay in a

lower roome, where many people thronged in to see me) they remoued me into an vpper roome, more priuate and fitter for them to pray in, where they continued and vsed the like meanes towards me, as they had done before, betwixt a fortnight and three weekes space, during which time I continued my wonted fits. Then at last, this Priest said that he could not helpe me, because hee wanted a booke, which hee sent for vp to *London*: but after that the book was brought, he then said y^t he could not helpe me, without the aide of another Priest,

I. *Priest.* whom after that he brought with him. Hee was a short big fat man, with blackish long curled haire, in a kind of russet coloured suite, with a sword by his side. As soone as he saw me, he said, that by the helpe of *God* and *our Lady*, and the *holy Saints* of heauen, he would either cast the Diuell out of mee that night, or else it should goe hard. And first, hee drew out a little booke of the bignesse of a *Primer*, in which he continued praying, til about 11. a clock of the night, and casting holy-water on me.

Then both these *Priests* went away, but came againe vnto me in the morning, and then they made as much holy-water as a pale could hold. But in the end they confessed that they could doe mee no good, without the helpe of a third Priest, whom they did send for by a Weauer of our towne.

III. *Priest.* About a weeke after came the third *Priest*, being a reasonable tall old man, in a horsemans coat, with long head-haire: before hee came to our house, he did say to the man that fetcht him (as I did heare) that if the spirits came to me, then I was obsest:

obsest; but if they were within me, then I was possest. The big fat *Priest* came in with this last *Priest*, and first hee put his finger into my mouth, and said, that I was bewitched at the tongues end: wherfore he bade me drink three or foure draughts of holy-water, which I did: he taught mee also to pray to the *Virgin Mary*, and to my *good Angel*, and to all the *Saints* in heauen to helpe me. Then he washed my head, feet, and belly with the same water, saying now and then to mee, *I hope art now somewhat better, Boy?* and I would say, *Yes, a little better.*

About the same time, my father comming one day home before supper, he asked mee what I had seene in my fits? and I told him that a thing came to me in the likenesse of a Black-bird. And now the Priest that came last vnto me, went out of towne, these three Priests hauing bin with me about three weekes, but could doe me no good.

About a weeke after, came the big fat *Priest* a- II. *Priest.* gaine, and held on his former course, saying, that by Gods grace he would helpe me. About which time hee made a Sermon to certaine Catholickes which were with me, hauing a white Surplesse on him, with a stole (as I remember they called it) about his necke: his Text was, *My flesh is bread indeed, and my blood is drinke indeed.* After his Sermon, he prayed with me as he had vsed to doe: and then made another paleful of holy-water, wishing them to boyle certaine herbs in water, to wash mee withall; as Time, Isop, and such like.

Vpon the Sunday following, people came in so

thicke to see me, that the *Priest* durst not preach; and he intended to be gone the next day.

His fashion was, to blesse and crosse all the meat which both themselues and I did eate: so that when my mother once gaue mee some of a Syllabub, which the Pr. had not crossed in the same manner, he told them that there was a *Puritan spirit* entred into it.

These three Priests dealt with mee at sundry times, that I should confesse my sins vnto them: which I did sometimes, when I listed to speake, but that was but now and then. They wished mee also to turne to their religion, and that then I should haue helpe.

Vpon that Sunday night before that this fat *Priest* was to goe away, he said, that by the helpe of the blessed *Virgin*, and the *Angels* and *Saints* in heauen, he would cast the Diuell out of me.

A little after, he began to aske certaine questions of the *spirit* within me; as first, what should become of the *Puritans* when they dyed? and he told me, that if they went to hell, then the spirit should tug and shake the bed-clothes: which I did doe after the same manner he bade me. Next, he asked what should become of the Roman *Catholickes*, and if they should goe to heauen? that then, in signe thereof, I should lift vp my hands, which I did also.

Then the *Priest* said, *Come out of thy fits, Will, in the name of the Father, and of the Sonne, and of the holy Ghost*: whereupon I seemed to come out of a fit, and then hee prayed by mee, and said, that hee would cast three diuels out of me that night. And so

so he hanged about my necke, and put vnder mine arme a fine stole, wrought with great siluer letters: and with the one end thereof, being very hard, hee did beate me about the head and face, vntill to my thinking hee made mee blacke and blue; chasing & rubbing my neck with that stole, which was so rough, that it made my necke very sore: and still he spake to the spirits within me, thus; *Come out, you Rogues, you Villaines, I charge you by God and the blessed Virgin, and by all the Angels and Saints in heauen, that you suffer the Boy to eate, and sleepe*: and withall, he stamped with his feet, as he spake those words.

Then he told my father that he would throw out those three spirits one after another, so that they should plainly see them come forth. And if hee should doe so, hee asked my mother whether shee would become a *Catholicke*, or no? She answered him that she would consider of it. Then, said he, wil I also consider whether I will helpe your sonne, or no.

But yet the *Priest* continued as he had begun, and said vnto me, *If there be three Diuels in thee, then giue three knocks, in signe thereof*; and so I did: but at the biggest Diuell hee willed me to giue the greatest thumpe, which I did at the last. And still the Priest did beate me with his stoale, & so continued with me til about three of the clocke in the morning: during which time, certaine Papists were sent to pray with me, bringing hallowed candles with thē.

At the same time, the *Priest* tooke such * things as I had seemed to vomit, and burning them with Frankincense, hee tooke an old rusty sword, and said

* *Viz. Crooked pins, rags, straw, &c. and such things as the Boy could finde and steale, into his mouth; as he did once halfe a knitting-needle.*

said a Latine prayer, resembling it to the sword wherwith *Peter* did cut off *Malchus* his eare: he also did beate the same things with an hammer, betokening that hammer which nailed *Christ* to the Crosse.

The morning being come, the *Priest* was to bee gone, and then my father said vnto him, Sir, I see you can doe my Child no good, and therefore I must seeke for some other helpe. Yes (said the Priest) you will goe seeke for helpe at witches to ease his body, but you care not for damning his soule. But yet before he went away, hee did hallow more water, and then he departed.

And here the *Boy* was suffered to pawse, and repose himselfe, by reason of his weakenesse; and was not then further examined till the next time.

THE

THE SECOND EXAMINATION, AND ANSWERE of the said *William Perry*, made vnto certaine other questions, which (vpon iust and special *presumptions*) were propounded vnto him by the *Reuerend Father in God*, THOMAS, *Lord B. of* Couentry *and* Lichfield, *taken at* Eccleshall *Castle, the* 13. *day of* October. *Anno Dom.* 1620.

IRst, it was demanded of him, that seeing the old man (called *Thomas*) perswaded him that at length hee should be cured by some Popish Priest; whether hee meant not accordingly in the end to seeme to bee dispossessed by some, or one such of them? 1

He answereth, yes; and further, that thereupon he meant to become a Papist.

Secondly, being asked, that if hee did meane so, why then he would not, after so long a time, and so great paines taken about him by those Priests, yeeld to their *Exorcismes*, and seeme to bee dispossessed by their meanes? 2

Hee answereth, because that much people did

resort vnto him, and brought him many good things; as also for that he was not willing to goe to schoole againe: yet that in the end his meaning was to be holpen by them.

3 Thirdly, being asked that after hee saw himselfe halfe discouered, whether in his griefe and feare that all should come to light, he had not an intent to doe himselfe some bodily mischiefe?

He answereth, that he had; for (saith he) the Diuell had [x] steeled my heart, so that I cared not to hang my selfe; and had purposed to doe so one night, but that I was watched, and hindred.

[x] *It was his owne word.*

4 Fourthly, being asked how it could be thought that he should be moued by any Papist, to charge a woman for bewitching him, which was her selfe an obstinate *Recusant*? He answereth, that hee was moued by *Thomas* the old man, to lay it on some woman so suspected: but that onely of himselfe, without the perswasion of any other, he named this [*] woman; because she was a woman ill thought of, and suspected for such like things.

[*] *Ione Cocke.*

5 Being here put in mind of the desire, which formerly before his discouery he had to be prayed for, as was accordingly then done, but (as at the same time was told him) not to driue the Diuell out of his body, but onely out of his soule, wherin the Diuell had possessed him, by a diuellish obstinacy of his heart, in faining himselfe to be bodily possessed of the diuell: And being further wished to remember how that after those prayers he writ on a paper, that he had found much ease thereby: He was hereupon demanded, whether he did not as then intend and

and resolue with himselfe to make an end of his former course, and counterfeit practices; and seeme to be dispossessed by such prayers?

He answereth, that it was indeed in his minde to doe so, because hee had then wearied himselfe with dissembling so long, and was also in feare to be discouered and found out.

And albeit this was easily discerned to haue bin his resolution, yet (as was at that time told him) it became not the Professors of *truth* to imitate the Popish *Priests* in such cases, who falsly arrogated to themselues such an *Apostolicall* power, by *Exorcizing* to expell *Diuels*, although it might (in mans opinion) much worke for the glorifying of *God*, edifying of Christian people in our Church, and also for the conuerting of Romish Recusants vnto our true Religion; because this ought to bee the profession of Christians, to seeke to glorifie Him onely by *truth*, who will bee worshipped *in spirit and truth*.

And here was an end made of examining the *Boy* any further.

Examinat'. coram præfat'. R^do Patre dictis diebus, anno, & loco; Præsente Ryc. Baddeley, Notario Publico.

THE BOY OF BILSON, his priuate and publike Acknowledgement, &c.

* Bilson *in* Staffordshire, *is a Chappelrie within the peculiar Iurisdiction of* Wooluerhampt̃; *where sacrilegious impiety hath produced such effects, that it is much infected with Popery, & infested with Popish Priests, whose ordinary Rendeuouz it is. No marueil therefore if they made choyce thereof, as the fittest nest wherein to lay and exclude their addle and supposititious egs of politicke impostures and godly deceits. But this Cockatrice was crusht in the shell, and their vaperous diffeine thereby defeated.*

NOw after those Popish * Priests were departed, and had left the Boy (as before is confessed, and set downe) his Father sought for further helpe by the meanes of *Witches*, (but as wickedly, so all in vaine) vntill such time as he was brought from the towne of *Bilson* aforesaid, vnto *Lichfield*, before Doctor *Master* Chancellor of the Dioces; where he continued vntill hee was carried to the Assizes at *Stafford*, and there by the *Iudges* referred and left vnto the aboue-named Reuerend Father in God, the L. *Bishop* of the Diocesse; who after a very short time sent to *Bilson* for him, and after his arriuall did deale with him, as formerly in this discourse hath been related.

Since which time, the *Boy*, vpon laying to his charge the hainousnesse of that his offence, as being blasphemous, in respect of *Christ*, whose words in the *Gospell* he fained himselfe to abhorre; and diuelliſh, in respect of the *Diuell*, whose person hee would seeme to bee possessed of; and also murtherous, in respect of the poore *Woman*, whom he willingly occasioned to bee brought (as much as in him lay) to the poynt of death: He hath earnestly bewailed

bewailed these his sinnes, and (as after his first Examination) by prayer conceiued by himselfe, to such purpose, craued forgiueneſſe at Gods hand for the same.

So hauing continued at *Eccleshall Castle* aforesaid, vntill he was perfectly recouered of his former weakneſſe, and benummed limmes, and that his Parents were willing to dispose of him otherwaies, hee was finally brought againe to the last Summer-Assizes held at *Stafford*, the 26. of July, *Anno* 1621. where before Sir *Peter Warburton*, and Sir *Humfrey Winch* Knights, his Maiesties Iustices of Assize, and the face of the County and Countrey there assembled, the *Boy* craued pardon first of Almighty *God*, then desired the *Woman* there also present, to forgiue him; and lastly, requested the whole *Countrey*, whom hee had so notoriously and wickedly scandalized, to admit of that his so hearty Confession, for their satisfaction.

Summer Assizes held at Stafford, 19. Iacobi R. 1621.

And thus it pleased *God* to open the eyes of this *Boy* (that I may so say) *Iuto*, with the clay of the Romish *Priests* lewd impostures; and *sputo*, with the spittle of his owne infamy, to see his errors, and to glorifie the *God of truth*.

Gloria sit Deo.

THE EXAMINATION AND ANSWERE OF THOMAS NECHILS of *Nechils*, in the County of *Stafford*, Gentleman (a Recusant) taken vpon oath before *the R. Reuerend Father in God* THOMAS *L.* Bishop *of* Couentry *and* Lichfield, *at* Eccleshall *Castle, the* 17. *of* Octob. Anno 1620. *touching the aforementioned* Relation *of the* Priests, *of their proceedings with the* Boy *of* Bilson.

BEing examined whether hee knew a written discourse then shewed vnto him, touching the *Boy of Bilson*, entituled and beginning thus; *A faithfull Relation of the proceedings of &c.* and ending in these words, *Yours in charity, loue, or any good office?* Hee answereth, that hee doth very well know, and remember the same.

Being examined how hee came first by that discourse, or *Relation*, and from whom he had it? Hee answereth, that it was deliuered vnto him by a Gentleman, whom he met iourneying on the way towards *Lichfield*, whose name was Master *Wheeler*, as he told this Examinate. And, being further demanded, he saith that he was as a man of a reasonable

nable stature, round faced, about fiftie yeeres old, and of a blackish complection.

Being examined what further discourse did at that time passe betwixt them two, touching the said *Boy*, called *William Perry*? He answereth that the said Master *Wheeler* then told this Examinate, that he would acquaint him with the whole businesse, concerning that *Boy*: whereupon hee gaue this Examinate a copie of the afore-named discourse or *Relation* (hauing two copies at the same time about him) and willed this Examinate to get it copied out, and to giue one copie thereof vnto one *Philip Higgins* of *Westbromage* Yeoman (as hee this Examinate remembers.) And further, that the said Master *Wheeler* said vnto this Examinate, that was no matter who should see it.

Being further examined what the said Master *Wheeler* did at the same time acquaint this Examinate with, touching himselfe? Hee confesseth that he told him how that he did often vse to resort vnto the French Embassadour: that hee did know the *Bishop of Couentry and Lichfield*; and further, that he was knowne to the *Lord Archbishop of Canterbury*.

Tho. Nechils.

Examinat'. coram præfat'. R^dº Patre dictis die, anno, & loco; Præsente Ryc. Baddeley Notario Publ.