

A Strange,

and terrible Wunder wrought
very late in the parish Church
of Bongay, a Town of no great di-
stance from the citie of Norwich, name-
ly the fourth of this August, in y^e yere of
our Lord 1577. in a great tempest of vi-
olent raine, lightning, and thunder, the
like wherof hath been seld

come sene.

With the appearance of an horrible shap-
ped thing, sensibly perceived of the
people then and there
assembled.

Drawen into a plain method ac-
cording to the written copie,
by Abraham Fleming,



The Preface to the Reader

Among men it is growen in custome, to haue forwarni[n]gsof afterclaps, as beacons built vpon hilles, which then are set on fier when daunger is imminent and at hand: Alarum belles serving to thesame purpose, and other inuentions of men proceedi[n]g & prouided of policie, to preuent or else to prepare agaynst that which is perillouse. Euery man canne arme himself, when hazard is at hand to saue him and his as he is able: for the preseruing of temporall thinges, Iesus how painefull and venterous wee bee: and no sooner shall a premonition bee giuen, but wee are furnished I warrant you prooffe.

God warneth us by signs fro[m] heaven, by fierie apparauncesin the aire moste terrible, by wonders, wrought on earthe, Strauge & unusiall, by exinundations of waters beyond their appointed limits, by the removing of senselesse trees from the naturall place where they were planted, by the great power which the Prince of darknesse through Gods permission and sufferaunce hath recovered by many late moste misserable murders not be named, much lesse to be committed among Christians, by insurrectionsfull of daunger and detestable treason on this side the seas, by tumults and uprores betweenPrinces of forreigne nations, and what should I say more? by the trump of his sweet and heavenly Gospell, sounded unto us out of the mouths of his messengers. But wee will not be warned, wee will tumble still upon the bedde of wantonnesse, an drink ourselves drunck with the wine of sensualitie, that whle wee lye wallowing in the sink of our Sodomitical sinne wee may bee consumed with a Sodomitical or a Babylonicall destruction.

God open the eyes of our hartes, that wee may see in what Wildernesse, among what wilde Beastes and devouring Serpentes wee doo wander: and give us mindes mollified and made soft, that at his woorkes we may feare and bee astonished.

The occasion that I have wrote this warning (which I would to God I had the grace to follow) was a wonder lately wrought in Norfolke, and So lately wrought, that the ter rour of the same is this instant freshe in memorie. A spectacle no doubt of Gods judgement, which as the fire of our iniquities hath kindled, so by none other meanes then by the teares of repentance it may bee quenched. The order of the thing as I received the same I have committed to paper, for the present viewe and perusing of those that are disposed. Itis grounded uppon trueth, and therefore not only worthie the writing and publishing but also the hearing and considering.

The reporte of a Straunge and wonderful Spectacle

Sunday being the fourrth of this August in the year of our Lord 1577. to the amasing and singular astonishment of the present beholders and absent hearers at a certain towne called Bongay, not past tenne miles distant from the citie of Norwich, there fell from heaven an exceeding great and terrible tempest sodein violent between nine of the clock in the morning and tenne of the day aforesaid this tempest took beginning with a rain, which fel with a wonderful force and with no lesse violence then abundance, which made the storme so much the more extreme and terrible.

This tempest was not simply of raine but also of lightening and thunder the flashing of the one whereof was so rare and vehement and the roaring noise of the other so forceable and violent that it made not onely people perplexed in minde and at their wits end but ministered such straunge and unaccustomed cause of fear to be conceived that dumb creatures with the horror of that which fortun'd, were exceedingly disquieted and senselesse things void of all life and feeling shook and trembled.

There were assembled at the same season, to hear divine service and common prayer, according to order, in the parish Church of the said towne of Bongay, the people thereabouts inhabiting, who were witnesses of the straungeness the rarenesse and sodenesse of the storm, consisting of raine violently falling, fearful dashes of lightening, and terrible cracks of thunder, which came with such unwonted force and power, that to the perceiving of the people, at the time and in the place above named assembled, the Church did as it were quake and stagger, which struck into the harts of those that were present such a sore and sodain feare that they were in a manner robbed of their right wits.

Immediately heervpo[n] there appeared in a moste horrible similitude and likenesse to the congregation then therepresent a dog as they might discerne it, of a black colour: at the sight whereof, together with the fearful flashes of fire which then were seene moved such admiration in the minds of the assemblie that they thought doomes day was already come.

This black dog, or the divel in such a likeness (God hee knoweth al who worketh all) runing all along the body of the Church with great swiftnesse, and incredible haste, among the people, in a visible fourm and shape, passed between two persons, as they were kneeling uppon their knees, and occupied in prayer as it seemed, wrung the necks of them bothe at one instant clene back wards in somuch that even at a moment where they kneeled they straungely dyed.

This is a wonderful example of Gods wrath, no dout to terifie us, that we might feare him for his justice, or puling back our footsteps from the pathes of sinne, to love him for his mercy.

To our matter again. There was at the same time another wonder wrought: for the same black dog, stil continuing and remaining in one and the self same shape, passing by an other man of the congregation in the Church, gave him such a gripe on the back, that therewith all he was presently drawen together and shrunk up, as it were a peece of lether scorched in a hot fire: or as the mouth of a purse or bag, drawen together with a string. The man, albeit hee was in so straunge a taking, dyed not, but as it is thought is yet alive: whiche thing is mervelous in the eyes of men, and offereth much matter of amasing the mind,

Morover, and beside, the Clark of the said Church beeing occupied in cleansing the gutter of the Church with a violent clap of thunder wassmitten down, and beside his fall had no further harme: unto whom beeing all amased this straunge shape, whereof we have before spoken, appeared, howbeit he escaped without daunger: which might paradventure seem to sound a gainst trueth, and to be a thing incredible: but, let us leave thus or thus to iudge, and cry out with the Prophet O Domine! O Lord, how wonderful art thou in thy works!

At the time that these things in this order happened, the Rector, or Curate of the Church, being partaker of the peoples perplexitie, seeing what was seen, and done, comforted the people, and exhorted them to prayer, whole counsell in such extreme distresse they folowed, and prayed to God as they were assemled together.

Now for the verifying of this report (which to some wil seem absurd, although the sensibleness of the thing it self confirmeth it to be a trueth) as testimonies and witnesses of the force which rested in this strange shaped thing there are remaining in the stoness of the Church and likewise in the Church dore which are mervelously rent and tone, the marks as it were of his clawes or talans. Beside that all the wires, the wheeles, and other things belonging to the Clock, were wrung in sunder and broken in peces.

And (which I should have tolde you in the begining of this report, if I had regarded the observing of order) at the time that this tempest lasted, and while these stormes endured, the whole church was so darkened Yea with such a palpable darknesse, that one persone could not perceive another, neither yet might discern any light at all, though it were lesse then the least, but onely when the greatflashing of fire and lightening appeared.

These things are not lightly with violence to be over passed, but precisely and throughly to be considered. On the selfsame day, in like maner, into the parish church of anothe town called Blibery not above seven miles distant from Bongay above said, the likething entred, in the same shape and similitude, where placing him self uppon a maine balke or beam, whereon some time the Rood did stand, sodainely he gave a swinge downe through the Church, and there also, as before, slew two men and a lad, and burned the hand of another person that was there among the rest of the company, of who divers were blasted.

This mischief thus wrought he flew with wonderful force to not little feare of the assembly, out of the church in a hideous and hellish likenes.

These things are reported to be true yeaby the mouthes of them that were eye witnesses of the same, and therefore dare with so much the more boldnesse verifie what soever is reported



A necessary Prayer

O GOD which hast promised to be a shield to such as flee to thee for succoure in their necessities, & with thy wings to ouer shadow thee that they feele not the scorching heat of afflictions & miseries: we beseech thee, that although we, through the infinite and vnmeasurable sinnes which we commit, provoke thee to smite vs with the Iron rod of thy wrath and iudgement: yetthat it would please thee to remember that we are but fraile flesh, subiect to sinne, and to too prone to offend: that it would please thee to cast thy gracious countenance vpon vs, that beeing restoredinto thy fauoure, from whichour offe[n]ces haue separated vs.we may shrowd our safegarde against all man[n]er of anoyances whatsoeuer through Christ Iesus our onely sauior & redeemer, in whose name, as hee hath taught vs, we say and pray.

*Ab omni malo libera nos Domine: Deliuer vs from all euil,
good Lord. Amen.*

*Tibi laus honor & gloria in aeuum.
Amen.*