



On Witchcraft

Cotton Mather

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In this fascinating account of witches and devils in colonial America, the renowned and influential minister of Boston's Old North Church attempts to justify his role in the Salem witch trials. A true believer in the devil's battle to get converts in Salem and other Massachusetts towns during the late seventeenth century, Mather also believed the fantastic accusations of those who accused their neighbors of witchcraft.

The theologian's book, first published in 1692, provides readers with guidelines for discovering witches, explanations for how good Christians are tempted by the devil to become witches, and methods of resisting such temptation. The great Boston minister also provides testimony from a number of similar trials, describes instances of witchcraft in other countries, and explains the devil's predicament in dealing with Christianity. Essential reading for students of the Salem witch trials, *On Witchcraft* will intrigue anyone interested in early American social and cultural history.

On Witchcraft Details

Date : Published August 23rd 2005 by Dover Publications (first published October 1692)

ISBN : 9780486444130

Author : Cotton Mather

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Genre : History, Nonfiction, Religion, Paranormal, Witches, North American Hi..., American History, Reference, Research, Christianity, Literature, American

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From Reader Review On Witchcraft for online ebook

Kristina says

Such an interesting view into the past and to read what was read by the early colonial Americans during the Salem witch trials.

Per says

Certainly interesting.

Ed Walker says

Read a download of part of Mather's Wonders of the Invisible World. It is very frightening that the thinking that went into the idiocy depicted in this work detailing the Puritan witch trials continues to influence the American character.

Marshall Wayne Lee says

First let me say: I skimmed a lot of this book. It becomes redundant after a time, notably all the recounts of the trials are about the same. And most of his explanations are similar: in the trials, the bewitched were afraid and fell into fits, everyone was scared who saw it, but when they bind ed the accused the bewitched calmed down; in his explanation about witches: they are real, Satan is behind it, happens in Europe too, Satan is attacking us because we are good people.

However, I think this is an important book as it gives insights into the mind of the Puritan. Mather is utterly convinced of that witches exists and are trying to harm good people. This book should not be read as a novel, but more of a resources for us today. I find the writing difficult at times to follow his meaning. Still, I think it was a good experience for me to read. I recommend this (or sections of it rather) for anyone interested in American History, in Puritan life and world view, or in the Salem Witch Trials.

Dorado Finn says

Mathers states in his preface, that his critics are simply siding with the devil. I entered this invaluable informative book already feeling slighted, should I dislike his work.

The first chapters provide entertaining perspective, but then the chapters mid-book go on and on about the biblical devil, and the interpretation of his actions. Most of the sentences here read blah, blah, blah.

The final chapters feature court proceedings, and level the evidence against the accused. Mathers states that

most readers are here for these chapters, which he calls "entertainment". He's right, concerning this reader.

Other than the blatant one-sidedness with which he views the accused, Mather's also displays double standards and contradicts his own points a few times.

Concerning the accused, whereas Hale believed that it was better to let ten witches free than to hang an innocent, Cotton Mather believed the opposite.

I've wanted to read this book since childhood, after reading about Ichabod Crane's obsession with the Mathers. Now I understand his character a bit more.

Trevor Woodhouse says

Interesting to see the thinking of people back then and read what happened. A bit too preachy at times and hard to understand due to the old language but intriguing nonetheless.

Laura says

Full text available at a fantastic Salem Witchcraft Trials website, <http://etext.virginia.edu/salem/witch...> , along with all of the original court transcriptions and other books.
