

**REMARKS ON THE
MANUSCRIPTS IN THE
LIBRARY OF THE AMERICAN
ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY**

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Remarks on the Manuscripts in the Library of the American Antiquarian Society by Nathaniel Paine

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ON THE
MANUSCRIPTS IN THE LIBRARY
OF THE
AMERICAN ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY.

FROM THE REPORT OF THE COUNCIL, PRESENTED APRIL 29, 1903.

BY
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REMARKS
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MANUSCRIPTS OF THE AMERICAN ANTIQUARIAN
SOCIETY.

IN these remarks made at the semi-annual meeting of the American Antiquarian Society at Boston, April 29, 1903, it was not intended to give a full list of the valuable manuscripts in the collection of the Society, but simply to call attention to the wealth of material in its possession and to make suggestions for its care.

In the report of the Council for April, 1873, the writer made brief allusion to the large and valuable collection of manuscripts owned by the Society, and suggested the importance of having a catalogue of these treasures prepared for the information of members. Since then a brief list of some of the more important has been prepared, and is of some help, but the writer believes that a card catalogue giving more in detail the contents of the various volumes, as well as descriptions of single manuscripts of historical interest, should be made, that the collection may be more available to the student.

At the Lenox Library department of the New York Public Library, "a separate title is made for every letter or document under the writer's name, or if a document, under the name of the official body by which it is issued." In the library of Congress a more elaborate or detailed plan has been adopted; all manuscripts are classified with reference to the subject treated, and one card made for each group. Some plan might be adopted more applica-

ble to our collection than either of these; but of the importance and necessity of *some* catalogue there can be no question.

It is proposed in this report to speak more at length of this department of the Society's collections, with the view of bringing to the attention of members its real value as an aid to historical investigations.

The earliest manuscripts in our library are two richly illuminated missals; one, supposed to have been written early in the 14th century, is a small volume with designs in gold and colors, and another is a Persian tale or romance, with gilt border to each page, and several highly colored illustrations. The wooden covers of this volume are ornamented both inside and out with representations of men and women, birds and reptiles, all in brilliant colors. A folio volume of the Koran in manuscript is also one of the attractions in the show-case in the main hall.

From our collection of manuscripts there have been printed, under direction of the Committee of Publication:

"The Diary of John Hull, Mint Master and Treasurer of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay," with a memoir by Samuel Jennison and notes by Edward E. Hale. *Archæologia Americana*, Vol. III.

"A short discourse of a Voyage made in ye years of our lord 1613. to ye late discovered Countrye of Greenland; and a briefe discription of ye same countrie, and ye Comodities yer raised to ye Adventurers."

This was published by the Antiquarian Society in Vol. IV. of *Archæologia Americana*, with an introduction and notes by Samuel F. Haven, LL.D. Fifty copies were also printed in separate form.

Note Book kept by Thomas Lechford, Esq., Lawyer, in Boston, Massachusetts Bay, from June 27, 1638, to July 29, 1641. Edited by Edward Everett Hale. With a sketch of the life of Lechford by J. H. Trumbull. *Archæologia Americana*, Vol. VII.

The Diary of Christopher Columbus Baldwin, Librarian of the American Antiquarian Society, 1829-1836, with an introduction and notes by Nathaniel Paine, Worcester, 1901.¹

¹ Among other works of Mr. Baldwin in manuscript are two volumes containing complete indexes to Hutchinson's *History of Massachusetts* and to Mather's "*Magnalia*." Also four volumes of a *History of Sutton, Mass.*, four volumes of *Epi-*

THE MATHER MANUSCRIPTS.

These manuscripts being among the oldest and rarest in the Society's archives, may properly first claim attention. In the diary of Isaiah Thomas, our first President, are these entries in regard to their coming into possession of the Antiquarian Society :

Nov. 11, 1814. "Purchased the remains of the old library of the Mathers, which had belonged to Drs. Increase and Samuel Mather. This is unquestionably the oldest in New England. The remains are between 600 and 700 volumes. Worked hard all day with Lawrence and other assistance in packing and removing it."

Nov. 15. "The Mather library came up from Boston and was unpacked."

Nov. 28. "Have been engaged in taking a catalogue and putting the books in order of the Mather library for the last eight days."

Dec. 28. "Still at work on the Mather library very assiduously; have been only to bank and church for a month past. Have got through with the bound books, and am now engaged on the manuscripts."

From the large number of these found in the collection, a few only can be selected for the limited space allowed this report.

We are fortunate enough to have the original draught of the "Platform of Church Discipline," by Ralph Partridge, and the revised copy in the handwriting of Richard Mather, from which the document, as approved by the Synod was printed; these manuscripts are in good condition, considering they were written more than two hundred and fifty years ago.

(In our library there is also a copy of the *first edition* of the "Platform of Church Discipline," printed at Boston by Samuel Green, 1649, which has the autograph of Increase Mather on the title page).

papers, etc. Two volumes of letters to Mr. Baldwin, among which are letters from John Quincy Adams, George Bancroft, Alden Bradford, Lewis Cass, John Davis, S. G. Drake, Edward Everett, Rev. Dr. W. Jenks, Dr. T. M. Harris, Levi Lincoln, Jared Sparks, Charles Sumner, Thos. L. Winthrop, and other prominent men of the time.

Other manuscripts of Richard Mather are :

"An Answer of y^e Elders to certayne doubts and objections ag^t sundry passages in y^e 'Platform' of discipline' agreed upon by y^e late Synod." Oct. 26, 1651.

"Answers to Arguments for the Government of the Church to be in the hands of the People." 1644.

"Observations and Arguments respecting the Government of Christian Churches." About 1650.

"Answers to the twenty-one questions from the General Court as Hartford to the General Court at Boston." 1657.

"Answer to the objections against the Imposition of hands in Ordination." 1655.

There is also a large number of his manuscript sermons.

INCREASE MATHER.

One of the most valuable and interesting manuscripts of Increase Mather is his autobiography written for his children. It is preceded by the following letter to his children, which I take from a copy made from the original by our late esteemed librarian, Samuel F. Haven, LL.D. :

TO MY CHILDREN :

Dear Children :—You are all of you so many parts of my life, and dearer to me y^e all things which I enjoy in this world. Wee must not live together long here below, but if wee shall meet in Heaven to be forever with the Lord, that's happiness enough. I am not altogether without hope concerning my sure interest in Christ.

I have thought y^e y^e relation of what y^e Lord has done for y^e Father, and y^e wonderful experience w^h he has had of God's faithfulness towards him might be a means to cause you to give y^e selves entirely to y^e Lord Jesus and to endeavor to walk w^h God. If you live to him here you shall live with him in another and better world.

The autobiography was copied several years ago by Rev. Abijah P. Marvin with a view to publication, but it will require careful revision and comparison before it is printed. Undoubtedly it would prove an interesting publication, and it is hoped that the time may come when the funds of the Society will permit its publication.

A few titles are given to show the general character of the collection :

"Fatherly Kindness from God calling for Dutifull Carriagees from Men." 1688.

"Dr. Increase Mather's Testimony against several profane and Superstitious Customs prevalent in New England." (Written when he was President of Harvard College, and Printed in 1687).

Contained in fifteen or sixteen volumes of interleaved Almanacs is the diary of Increase Mather for the years 1660, 1668, 1693, 1695, 1696 to 1698, 1702, 1704 to 1706, 1717 and 1721. The Almanacs used are of various dates from 1660 to 1721, and include Rider's British Merlin, 1660, and Tully's (various dates), New England, New England Kalendar, Kalendarium Nov-Anglicanum, and others. Two of the diaries are in small volumes without the letter-press, and some of them are incomplete.

COTTON MATHER.

The sermons, letters and other papers in the handwriting of Cotton Mather in our collection comprise the larger part of the manuscripts of this remarkable family. A few only can be mentioned here :

"The Ancient Gospel." 26 d. 6 m. 1688.

"Abraham, and Issac and Jacob." 1688.

"Seth, and Methuselah and Noah." 1688.

"Gideon, and Jephthah and Sampson." 1688.

"The Mystery of Providence." 1689.

"On a Day of Prayer at Lyn to stop the plague of Quakerism." 1694.

"Enquiry what are the evils which have provoked the Lord to bring his judgments on New England."

"The Observations and Reflections of the Rev. Dr. Cotton Mather concerning Witchcraft." In a letter to Rev. John Cotton, Aug. 5, 1692.

"The Best of Blessings,—Real and Vital Piety described and assisted in six brief essays on the Thessalonian."

"O' Lord before the Ecclesiastical Court."

"O' Lord Before the Political Court."

"One Among the Myrtle trees. A Brief & Plain Essay on Good Services to be done by people in low stations."

"The New Heavens Opened."

"Where to find Gog and Magog."

"The New Earth Surveyed."

"When shall those Things be? When the Grand Revolution to be look'd for!"

Five "Sacramental Discourses on the name of y^e Lord Jesus Christ." 1689.

"A Day of Prayer Kept by the North Church for Direction about y^e calling of a Minister." 2 d. 8 m. 1717.

"Triparadisus. Essays on, I. The paradise of the old world enriched with some instructive Illustrations on the Sacred Geography. II. The Paradise of Departed Spirits fortify'd with well attested Relations to Demonstrate as well as illustrate the state of such. III. The Paradise of the New Earth under the Influences of the New Heavens."

"A Declaration of the Oppressed Brethren in the South part of Boston."

"Letter to the Brethren of the Church at New Haven, 20th 4 m. 1718."

"Letter proposing an address to the new King." 1715. (Geo. I.)

"Letter respecting the appointing of a Chaplain at the Castle." Nov. 7, 1716.

"Letter concerning the call of Mr. Fisk to the New South Church, Boston."

One entitled "A Brand Pluck'd out of the Burning," is an account of Mercy Short, one of those said to have been afflicted with witchcraft in 1692. This was followed by the story of Margaret Rule, with the title, "Another Brand Pluck't out of the Burning," an account of which appears in "More Wonders of the Invisible World," by Robert Calef. London, 1770.

"The Angel of Bethesda." Some remarks on the grand causes of sickness about 1724; pp. 418. It is a treatise on diseases and their remedies. Dr. Joseph Sargent, in his report of the Council, April, 1874, gives a full and interesting account of this curious manuscript. Our late librarian, Samuel F. Haven, also speaks of it in his report of the same date.

"Problema Theologicum." An Essay Concerning the Happy State expected for the Church upon Earth, endeavoring to Demonstrate that the Second Coming of the Lord