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WILL OF)

REV. RICHARD MATHER.

OF DORCHESTER, MASS.

1664.

WILL OF REV. RICHARD MATHER.

[Transcribed from the Record, in Suffolk Probate Office, Vol. vi., by WILLIAM B. TRASK,
and communicated to the N. E. Hist. & Gen. Register for July, 1866.]

[In the Library of the Dorchester Antiquarian and Historical Society is an interesting pamphlet, in small quarto form, pp. 38, bearing the following title:—"The | LIFE and DEATH | of That Reverend Man of God, | Mr. RICHARD MATHER, | Teacher of the Church | in | DORCHESTER | in | NEW ENGLAND. | Psal. 112. 6. The Righteous shall be had in everlasting remem | brance. Heb. 13. 7. Remember them who have spoken to you the Word | of God. Rev. 14. 13. Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord: they rest from their labours, and their works follow them. | *Ministri vita censura & cynosura.* | Cambridge: | Printed by S. G. and M. J., 1670." | This work was reprinted by Mr. David Clapp, in 1850, in a small volume of 108 pages, which contained, also, "The Journal of Richard Mather," copied from the original MSS., which has been preserved nearly 231 years. The manuscript is in possession of the Society, and the volume referred to was published with Preface and Appendix as Number 3 of their "Collections."

The edition of 1670 was sent forth under the sanction of the Rev. Increase Mather, and is included in the list of his works by Cotton Mather, in his "*Remarkables*," dedicated "To the Church and Inhabitants of Dorchester in N. E. Grace unto you from God by Jesus Christ. Beloved in the Lord Jesus. *You have here presented to your view, and for your Imitation in the Lord, the Life of him that was to many of you a Spiritual (as to me a Natural) Father: Inasmuch as the greatest part of his time in the Ministry he was a Labourer in the Lord's Harvest amongst you; Also with you did he finish his course. There is therefore special reason why what is here done should be directed to yourselves. The Composer of this ensuing Relation is not willing that his Name should be published. But it is done by one who hath had the viewing of my Father's Manuscripts; from whence, as well as from personal and intimate Acquaintance of many years continuance, and other*

ways, he hath been truly furnished with the knowledge of what is here reported. And indeed the greatest part of the Story is known unto sundry amongst yourselves.

"What remaineth then, Brethren and Beloved in the Lord, but that we should be mindfull of what is by the Lord required, when the Scripture saith, Remember them that have taught (and not onely them that do teach) the Word of God, whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation. What that Doctrine of Faith is, which your blessed Teacher did from the Lord instruct you in, I need not say, onely Remember it. Remember his Farewell Exhortation,* which is now in many of your Houses, and Oh that it were in all your hearts. And as for his Conversation, your selves know that God made him Exemplarily Faithfull, Zealous, Patient, Humble, Holy: Follow him as he followed Christ. So likewise pray that he may do who is

Yours in the Lord always,

Boston, Septemb. 6,
N. E. 1670.

INCREASE MATHER."

On page 34 of the book it says:—"It hath been the manner of some, in writing Lives to insert the Wills,† of those whose Lives and Death they have described. The last last Will and Testament of him, whose Life and Death hath thus been related, breathing forth a most humble, holy, and gracious Spirit, we shall subjoyn the Preface and Conclusion of it." The portion which relates to "the disposal of his Temporal Estate [about two thirds of the whole will], being of private Concernment, we shall not here trouble the World therewith. But after the disposal of that, he concludeth with a most Solemn Charge to his Children, with the rehearsall whereof we shall finish." So says the book.

We have therefore taken pains to make an entire copy of the Will as recorded in the Suffolk Probate Office, and present it now, probably for the first time, as a whole, in print. There are a few slight variations in the book from the record, the most important of which will be indicated in the accompanying foot notes.

We have endeavored to ascertain—thus far without success—whether the original will is in existence. We do not find it on file at the Suffolk Probate Office, and have been informed by the gentlemanly librarian of the American Antiquarian Society, at Worcester, Mass., S. F. Haven, Esq., that it is not among the "Mather Papers," in that veteran institution.]

* Cotton Mather, in the *Magnalia*, gives the Life of his grandfather (Rev. Richard), in which he states—"Some years before his death [having sent over unto his old flock in Lancashire, a like testimony of his concernment for them] he composed and published, 'A Farewell Exhortation to the Church and People of Dorchester,' consisting of seven directions, wherein his flock might read the design and spirit of his whole ministry among them; on a certain Lord's day he did, by the hands of his deacons, put these little books into the hands of his congregation, that so whenever he should by death take his farewell of them, they might still remember how they had been exhorted."

Rev. Dr. Harris, in the appendix to his *Memorials of the First Church in Dorchester*, delivered in two discourses, at the end of the second century, July 4, 1834, enumerates the publications of Mr. Richard Mather, closing with the "Farewell Exhortation." He says:—"This last, he distributed in all the families; and yet a copy is not now to be found. We have recently learned of the existence of a copy in the possession of Rev. A. H. Quint, of New Bedford, Mass. It will, probably, be reprinted."

† On the margin—"So Beza in the Life of Calvin. Bannosius in the Life of Ramus, &c."

The last Will and Testament of Richard Mather, Minister of the Word of God, at Dorchester, in New England, Written with his Owne hands the 16th day of the 8th month 1661:—I, Richard Mather, Considering the Certanty of death and the Vncertanty of the time thereof, and withall knowing it to bee the will of God that man should see* his house in Order before hee depart this life, doe make this my last will and Testament, in manner following.—First of all, I Acknowledge the rich and Wonderfull Grace and mercy of Almighty God whose hands haue made mee and fashioned mee, and who took mee out of my mothers womb, that hauing made mee a man that might haue made mee a beast, or other Creature, or some deformed monster, † hee hath also by his good Providence preserued the Comfort and being ‡ of my life all the dayes of my Pilgrimage vntil now, Euen for the space, almost, § of these sixty and Five yeares, during which time hee hath not suffered me to want Either food or Rayment or the Seruice of any Creature that hath benn requisit for my Comfortable subsisting in this World, which I Acknowledge to bee the bounteous giuft of him who is the Lord of all Creatures, and the high possessor of Heauen and Earth. Next of all, and more Especially, I am bound to Giue praise and thanks ¶ to him while I haue my being that I, being a child of wrath, by nature, as well as others, and being borne in a place of much Prophanes and Poperie, hee hath of his abundant Grace, uouchsafed to draw mee out of that wofull Estate of sinn and ignorance wherein I lay, and to make himselfe and his Christ knowne vnto mee by the Gospell, of which Grace I was most vnworthy, and in his great Patience and mercy to bear with my manifold and great offences, both before and since that time of his gracious calling of mee, though for my vnworthy walking, in many particulars, I might justly haue benn foreuer rejected of him. Yea and such hath benn his Rich grace, that hee hath uouchsafed to put mee, an vnworthy Creature, into the ministry of the Gospell of his Sonn, that I should not only know and profes the same, which is an vnspeakable mercy, but bee also a Preacher of it vnto others, in which employment, if any thing haue benn done that haue benn pleasing to him, or any way bennificiall to any Child of his, it hath not benn I that haue done the same, but the Grace of God which hath benn with mee; for I must needs Acknowledge, to the praise of his Patience and Grace, that in my poore ministration for these two and Forty yeares and vpwards, I haue benn much defectiue in Wisdome and watchfulnes Ouer the Peoples Soules, in purity, in Faithfulnes, in vprightnes, meeknes, Humility and zeale; and because of these, and many other my defects and offences against the Lord, I stand this day in much need of mercy and forgiuenes, through his Christ, and haue noe Cause to looke for any Acceptance with him, ¶ in this or in another World, for any Righteousnes of my Owne, Either as touching my ministry or otherwise, but disclayming all thought of that kind, my only trust and Hope is to bee accepted of him, and when this life shall bee at an

* In the book, set.

† “ “ or some deformed monster, omitted.
 ‡ “ “ Comfort and being, transposed.
 § “ “ almost, omitted.
 ¶ “ “ praise and thanks, transposed.
 ¶ “ “ with him, omitted.

End, to bee saued in his Heauenly Kingdome meerly by his free grace and the Obedience and precious passion and intercession of his deare Sonn. And Concerning death, as I doe belieue that it is appointed for all men once to dye, soe, because I see a great deale of vnprofitableness in my owne life, and because God hath also let mee see such unity and Emtnes Euen in the best of those Comforts which this life cann aford, that I think I may truly say, that I haue seene an End of all perfection, therefore, if it were the will of God, I should bee glad to be remoued hence, where the best that is to bee had doth yeald soe little Sattisfaction to my Soule, and to bee brought in to his presence in Glory, that there I might find (for there I know it is to bee had) that Satisfying of* all sufficient Contentment in him, which vnder the Sunne is not to bee Enjoyed. In the meane time I desire to stay the Lord's leasure, but then, † O Lord, how long. Now Concerning my outward Estate of House, Lands, goods and Chattles, ‡ sith the Earth is the Lords and the fulnes thereof, the Inhabitable§ world and all that is therein, to him therefore belongeth the Praise of all that I possess in this kind; and for the Portion thereof which hee hath giuen mee, it is my mind and will, if soe it please his highnes, that after my decease the same may bee disposed of as followeth.¶

First of all, whereas vpon my marriage with my deare wife, Sarah Mather, I received of her in Household Stuffe the uallue of Fifty pounds and Engaged my selfe to leaue to her at my decease the dubble thereof, that is 100^{lb}, It is now my mind and will that the said Engagement bee truly performed and fulfilled, and therefore I hereby giue and Appoint to bee paid vnto her, after my decease, the said sum of one Hundred Pounds, the one halfe of it in such Household Stuffe as I received with her or shall leaue in my House, and the other Fifty pounds in such good pay as may bee to her just Sattisfaction and Consent, Either in Houshold stuffe, Corne, Cattle or otherwise, in all or any of these. Item, I Giue to her daughter, Mary Cotton, and to her Grand-daughter, Elizabeth Day, to each of them, twenty shillings, as a Testimony of my Acknowledgment of their obseruance and dutifull Respect towards mee whilst they liued in my family. Item, I Giue to the Children of my sister, Ellin Worseley, the sume of Five pounds. to bee Equally denided Amongst them, the said Legacy and gift of Five pounds to bee paid within the space of Three yeares next after my decease. Item, of my Bookes, I giue Mr. Perkins workes, in three Vollumes, to my beloued Sonn, Timothy Mather, And to his wife, my deare daughter, Elizabeth Mather, that Treatise of Mr. Scudder Concerning a Christians daly walke. Also, I Giue vnto Samuel Mather, the Eldest sonn of my son Timothy, Five pounds, and to all his other Children which shall bee lining at my decease, to Each of them, Forty shillings. As for all the rest of my Bookes not formerly Expressed, mentioned, together with all my written Papers and manuscripts whatsoeuer, whether in my Desk or without it, in my Study or Else where, Except only such writting as doe Concerne my lands or other Outward Estate, All these, with the deskes and

* In the book, and.

† " " thou.

‡ " " of House, Lands, goods and Chatties, omitted.

§ " " habitable.

¶ The printed part, in book, first portion, ends here.

Tables in my study and the Trunck that is there, Also, I Giue to my Beloued Sonns Samuell, Nathaniell, Eliazer and Increase Mather, to bee distributed and diuided Amongst them, in manner following, that is to say, that Nathaniell, Eliazer and Increase, shall Each of them haue one fifth part thereof, and the other two fifth parts to bee to my sonn Samuell Mather. And whereas, I Giue vnto my sonns Samuell, Nathaniell, Eliazer and Increase noe further Portion out of my Outward Estate, but only what is mentioned, I doe it only Conceiuing that the Cost and Charges I haue bestowed on them, in their Education, together with what I hereby now giue them, may as well, if not better, Enable and fitt them, through the blessing of God, to a Comfortable Way of subsisting and seruing the Lord, as if they had had greater Portions left them at my decease and had had their Education in some other Way, that had benn less chargable and Costly, in which regard, what I now giue them and haue formerly layd out for them may bee accounted as Amounting to the full of their filliall Portions. And Concerning my sonn Timothy, in as much as hee hath [not] had soe much Cost bestowed vpon him in his Education as his brethren haue had, therefore I thinck it meete I should otherwise bestow on him and his a greater Portion of my Outward Estate, and therefore, as I haue some yeares since giuen and assured to him in Land, meadow, barne and other building in Cowes, Oxen, bedding, Household Stuffe and otherwise a Considerable Portion, not much less than two Hundred pounds in ualue, as I suppose, if not more, soe vpon Condition that hee, the said Timothy, shall faithfully discharge and pay the seuerall legacies and gifts aboue mentioned, with what-euer I shall mention, hereafter, by my last will or otherwise, vpon these Conditions, I giue to him, the said Timothy, all my House, barne, buildings and Lands in Dorchester, whatsoeuer or wheresoeuer the same bee, whether in the home Lotts, or in the neck of Land, or in the great Lotts, or in the Commons, or Cowe walke, or wheresoeuer, to bee to the vse of him, the said Timothy, and his assignes, during the time and space of his naturall life, in as full and Ample manner as I, my selfe, or my assignes, haue had and Enjoyed, or doe, might, and ought to Enjoy the same; and after the decease of him, the said Timothy, I giue the reuersion and inheritance of all the said Lands and other before receiued premisses, vnto Samuell Mather, sonn to him the said Timothy, and to the heires of him, the said Samuell, and to the rest of the Children of him, the said Timothy, and to their heires, a dubble portion always reserved to the Eldest Sonn of him, the said Timothy and the Portion of his wife, in Case shee bee left a widdow, alwayes Excepted. And as I hereby giue the reuersion and inheritance of such Lands as are now in my possession, or in the possession of my assignes, vnto the Children of my said sonn Timothy and to their heires, in like sort I giue vnto them the reuersion and inheritance of all such Lands, whatsoeuer, as I haue latly giuen and assured to him, the said Timothy, during the tearme of his naturall life, by a writting vnder my hand, bearing date, the 4th day of the 11th month, in the year 1655; likewise, vpon the Condition or Conditions afore mentioned, I doe hereby giue to him, the said Timothy Mather, all the rest and remainder of my Estate in mouable Goods whatsoeuer, whether it bee seruants, debts owing vnto mee, brass, pewter, Table stooles, bedding, linnens or other household stuffe, or

Cattle, as Cowes, Oxen, Horses, mares or whatever, all these, I Giue to him, the said Timothy, vpon the Conditions before Expressed, to bee his owne proper goods in as full and Ample manner as I doe now Enjoy the same, or of right ought or might see doe; but all and Euey giuft or giufts, legacy or legacies, whatsoeuer, which I hereby giue or shall hereafter giue or promise to giue, or to bee giuen to any Person or Persons, whatsoeuer, whether writting vnder my hand, or before two sufficient witnesses and all, and all Conenants and promises whereto I shall Engage my selfe, to any Person or Persons whatsoeuer or have done heretofore. All these same, I doe Appoint to bee taken as part of my last will and Testament, and to bee accordingly performed and fulfilled as well as if they had benn, and as what is hereby by mee in perticular Expressed and set downe. Provided, that all what is here said shall not Extend to any such perticular thing or things as shall by mee bee reuoked, disanulled or repealed before my decease. And,* Concerning my sonn Timothy, with all the rest of my beloued sonns, As I hope God hath already made them pertakers, at least sundry of them, of his sauing Grace, in Christ, for which I and they haue Cause to bee Endlesly thanckfull, see I thinck it not amiss, for the furtherance of their spirituall good, to lay vpon them this serious and sollemne charge of a dying Father, that none of them presume, after my decease, to walke in any way of sinn or wickednes, in one kind or in an other, or in a Carless neglect of God or of the things of God and of their owne saluation by Christ, for if they shall see doe (which God forbid) then in such Case I hereby testify unto them, that their Father which begat them, and their mother which bare them, with all the Prayers they haue made, and teares they haue cryed † for them, their Example, their Admonitions and Exortations they haue Administred vnto them, together with this my last will and sollemne charge, all these will rise vp against them as see many testimonies for their Condemnation at the last day; but I haue better hopes of them, and doe hereby declare vnto them, that if they shall seriously repent of their sins, belieue in the Lord Jesus and by his grace walke in all the wayes of God and as becometh the Gospell of Christ, as this will bee to the Honnor and glory of him that made them, and see will redoune to their vnspeakable Comfort and bennifit in this and in another world. And their Father that now speakes vnto them, with their deare mother, now with God, shall Exceedingly rejoyce in the day of Christ, when we shall receive our children into those Euelasting habitations and shall see ourselues not alone, but those Also that haue proceeded and come fourth out of our owne bowells, to haue there part and Portion in that Eternall Glory. In desire and hope that it may bee see, I Commend them all to the Lord of Heauens blessing. And let the blessing of God in Jesus Christ bee powred out and remaine vpon them all foreuermore, Amen. ‡ Finally, of this my last will and Testament, I nominate and Appoint my beloued sonns, Timothy Mather, and his Brother, Eliazer, my true and Lawfull Executo^r, to Execute the same Faithfully and truly, as I haue therein Appointed. And I intreate my beloued Friends and

* The second extract in the book begins here.

† In book, *sheet*.

‡ Here end the extracts in the Memoir.

Brethren in the Lord, Mr. Henry Withington, Deacon Edward Clap, Leift. Roger Clape, and Ensigne Hopestill Foster, to afford their helpe and furtherance as Ouerseers, by their best aduice and Care to further the performance and fulfilling of what I haue herein Expressed and Appointed. And that this is my last will and Testament let the subscription of my name Testify, which I haue hereunto subscribed, written with my owne hand in manner following, viz^t.

RICHARD MATHER.

The Testament afore mentioned, in Testimony that this was his last will and Testament, did subscribe his name in p^rsence of vs, viz^t.

Roger Clap,
Hopestill Foster,
Richard Withington,
William Pond.

1727395

For Explanation of the mind and will of mee, Richard Mather, in my Testament bearing date the 16th day of the 8th month 1661, and for some addition thereto, I doe hereby declare that it is my mind and will, that my beloued wife, Sarah Mather, shall haue free liberty to dwell and inhabit, where shee now doth, in my House, in Dorchester, for the space of 3 or fowre months after my decease, and during that time shall haue the free vse of that House, which shee now hath, with the Garden and Orchard thereto adjoyning. Item, it is my mind and will, that Samuell Mather, sonn to my sonn, Timothy, shall haue Competant maintenace aforeded to him out of my Estate, in house and Lands, in Dorchester, for his liuing in the way of learning and studdy, as a scholler, vntill such time hee may bee fitt, by Gods blessing on his studdies, to take the degree of master of Arts, hee Carrying himselfe, in the meane time, as I hope he will, in duty and Obedience to his Parents and other superiors, and in a Carefull Endeauour to feare the Lord and walke in his Ways, for the good of his soule; and being for that end dilligent in reading the holy Scriptures and meditating, they being able to make wise vnto saluation, through the Faith which is in Christ Jesus. Item, I Giue vnto this Church and People of Dorchester and Deacons, for their vse, the small mite of the yearly some of 20s., to bee paid yearly, out of my house and Lands in Dorchester, for and towards the maintenance of the ministry in this Congregation, but if once my sonn, Timothy, or his assignes, shall pay for the vse afore mentioned, the some of Five pounds together, then and in such Case, it is my mind and will, that the yearely payment of the said 20s. shall cease, and discontinue, and be paid noe longer. And the said Five pounds being paid to the Deacons, it is my desire, that the same may by them bee bestowed, layd out and disposed of, in some such way as in their wisdome and discretion may bee most aualable for the End and vse aforementioned, viz^t. for sum helpe towards the yearly maintenance of the ministry in this place, in some 20s. yearly, vntill the said 5^{lb}. bee paid, and afterwards, the yearely incomb and bennifit of the said 5^{lb}. or of what it shall bee paid out vpon. Item, it is my mind and will that my sonn, Increase Mather, who is now in this Country, and I hope may continue and abide therein till after my decease, may bee added to his brothers Timothy and Eliazer, as joynt Executo^rs, with them, of this my last will and Testa-

ment, who I doe hereby nominate and Appoint for that purpose. Lastly, that this Explanation or addition, here written, in part of my last will and Testament, and as such to bee accordingly received and observed, let the subscription of my name Testify, which I have hereunto adjoyned, written with my owne hand, the 21th day of the 7th month, in the yeare 1664.

RICHARD MATHER.

The testator afore mentioned did hereunto subscribe his name in presence of vs, vizt.

Roger Clap, Hopestill Foster, William Sumner.

Present :

Ri. Bellingham, Gov^r.
 Samuell Symons, }
 John Pincheon, } Esq^{rs}.
 and Record^r.

Att a meeting of the magistrates and Recorder in Boston, 24th May, 1669, Captaine Roger Clap, Capt. Hopestill Foster and William Pond deposed, Respectiuey, Each for themselves, that hauing sub-

scribed their names, Capt : Clap and Captaine Foster to both parts, and the said Pond to the first, on the first, on the day of the date thereof, were present and did both heare and see the late Reuerend M^r. Richard Mather to sigue, publish and declare, that the whole Containes his last will and Testament, that when hee soe did hee was of a sound disposing mind, to their best knowledge. This will was thus proued as aboue.

EDW : RAWSON, Record^r.

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