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SOCIETY OF CHURCH HISTORY

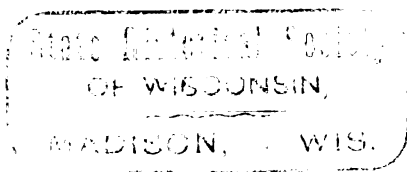
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REPORT AND PAPERS OF THE SECOND ANNUAL MEETING, HELD IN
THE CITY OF NEW YORK, DEC. 30 AND 31, 1889

EDITED BY

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SECRETARY



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**SOME RELICS OF EARLY PRESBYTERIANISM IN
MARYLAND.**

SOME RELICS OF EARLY PRESBYTERIANISM IN MARYLAND.

BY REV. JAMES WILLIAM MCILVAIN,
Hyattsville, Maryland.

There are among the archives of Maryland preserved at Annapolis (the colonial records are perhaps the best in the country) some curious documentary proofs of the existence of a large number of Puritans in the colony. Indeed, these State papers contain almost all the account that we have of their presence there at an early date, as all their purely ecclesiastical documents have perished. They were there, however, from a very early period, and in such large numbers, that Maryland cannot be called a Roman Catholic colony in the sense that Massachusetts can be called a Puritan colony, or Virginia a colony of the Cavaliers. The Protestants were in the majority from the very beginning, as the reports of the Jesuit fathers clearly show. The celebrated Act of Toleration was evidently a compromise between the Lord Proprietor and his Protestant subjects, a piece of legislation which reflects great credit upon the common-sense of Lord Baltimore, even if we may suspect that on this occasion he made a virtue of necessity. Of these Protestants so large a number were Puritans in their sympathies, that they ruled the colony during the Commonwealth, passing a law, which is little to their credit, which deprived both Papists and prelatists of any part in the government. For a long time the colony continued Puritan in its tone. So late as 1676 Lord Baltimore objected to the proposed action of the Privy Council of

England looking toward the establishment of the Church of the mother country as the established church of Maryland, on the ground that the large majority of the inhabitants of the province were either Presbyterians, Independents, or Quakers. He represents those of his own faith as being but a small minority. The Episcopalians, also, did not form a majority until some time after the establishment of the Church of England, at the beginning of the next century.

Of the many incidental proofs of the prevalence of Puritanism in so unexpected a quarter, one of the most curious is a marriage-vow, which the writer came across in a very ancient tome, written in a very crabbed hand with ink whose blackness had faded into a yellow only a little darker than the page on which it was written. One did not expect to find among the musty records of ancient deeds and grants this old love-letter, for so we may almost call it. We think it is worth preserving, and so we transcribe it. The vow was entered into by Edith Bayne and Jonathan Marles. You will see that it is a rather one-sided affair, as the lady apparently did all the vowing, at least so far as the records show. Who this Jonathan Marles was we do not know, except that he was a planter of Charles County, Maryland. Of Edith Bayne we know a good deal, for she was connected with some of the most prominent people in the colony. Her father, Walter Bayne,—or Bean, as it is sometimes written,—came from Southwark, England, where he had a brother, a merchant. He was in Maryland prior to 1642, for in that year he sat in the Assembly as a burgess. His name appears frequently on the records of the province. His home was not far from the present village of Port Tobacco.

Why such a vow was entered into does not appear. It may have been from the scarcity of ministers in the province. It may have been from sympathy with the doctrines of the Quakers, who about this time were beginning to spread rapidly in Maryland. Whatever its *raison d'être*, it has a strong Puritan tone about it, reminding us rather of New England than of Lord Baltimore and the Cavaliers. It is entitled :

A MARRIAGE VOW BETWEEN EDITH BAYNE AND JONATHAN MARLES.

In the name of the most high and mighty Jehovah everlasting glorious and blessed to all eternity to whom be all honor and praise ascribed, who by his divine wisdom created the heavens and the earth and all that in them is according to Thy blessed will and hath formed mankind in the likeness of thine own image, and placed him chiefe above all other creatures, therefore to thee that art that great and mighty Judge of heaven and earth unto whom all flesh shall come to be judged by thee and to give the account of all our deeds done or committed in the body whether good or evill and to answer before thy Divine majesty for every Idle word much more for every solemn vow and engagement contracted in thy Glorious presence. therefore in the presence of the most Great and Glorious God and as I shall hope and doe ever expect mercie and salvation from him by the meritt of my deare Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, I Edith Bayne doe freely and fully dedicate and contract myself unto thee Jonathan Marles to be thy own and lawful by a full and mutuall consent of my hart in love to thee above all others and never shall nor will yield to love or like of any other but thee during each other's life. But will remain thy firm and faithful and constant wife untill death shall separate us, therefore having solemnized my troth unto thee in the presence of Almighty God claiming his assistance in the performance hereof that as he hath by his divine providence knit and tyed our harts in the perfect bond of unity here, soo he may seal up our souls in everlasting happyness hereafter. In testimony whereof before the great and glorious God doe subscribe myselfe unto thee Jonathan Marles to be thy own and lawful lyall and constant and ever loving wife till Death Death Death.

EDITH BAYNE,
[Sealed.]

Sealed signed and delivered
in the presence of Almighty God 27th day of October 1665.

After all this love and theology, which seems to have put a severe strain upon the writer of the document to inscribe, let us hope that the union was a happy one. It was not a long-lived one, however. For in the will of Walter Bayne, dated April 12, 1670, we find a bequest to "my eldest

daughter Edith, the present wife of Mr. Matthew Hill." Mr. Matthew Hill was a Presbyterian clergymen, mentioned by Calamy as one of the victims of the Act of Uniformity. He had a church in Maryland as early as 1669, which he describes in a letter to the celebrated Richard Baxter, and was one of the first Presbyterian ministers to settle in America.

Among other papers which came under the eye of the writer was a list, found in a most unexpected quarter of the library of Rev. Nathaniel Taylor, one of the original members of the first Presbytery ever formed in America. He was pastor of the church at Upper Marlboro or Patuxent, Prince George County, Maryland. He was pastor there as early as 1704, and died there about January, 1710.

The library numbered over five hundred volumes. It would be impossible to give any thing like an analysis that would be thorough. A few notes and reflections, however, may not be out of place.

The library is a very fine one, and interesting as showing the learning of one whom we look up to as one of the founders of the Presbyterian Church. The list starts out with a very ponderous folio, "*Biblia Hebraica cum latina interpretatione Xantes Pagnini, Ariae Montani, nec non libri apochryphi et Testamenti Greci cum vulgata ariae Montani,*" etc. This and a copy of the Psalms and Lamentations are the only books in Hebrew. Taylor possessed the lexicon of Buxtof, and his grammar; also that of Martinius. His Greek collection also was rather slender. It consisted of two Greek Testaments, the Septuagint, and the works of Themistius. He had, however, a fine library of Latin authors, embracing Terence, Suetonius, Horace, Tacitus, Ovid, Juvenal, Persius, Quintilian, Gellius; and Hesiod and Herodian in Latin. Besides these there were over a hundred more, chiefly theological works. There is not much of patristic lore to be found among them. "*Augustine's Confessions,*" "*Minucius Felix,*" the "*Romance of Heliodorus,*" and the "*Life of Martin of Tours,*" by Sulpicius Severus, make up the list. Perhaps

the best known volume of the remaining works is Milton's famous "Defence of the English People." The list is very rich in Puritan theology. No less than sixteen of the Westminster divines are represented. Among them we find such names as Tuckney, Reynolds, Selden, Burgess, Wallis, and Calamy. To these we might add a long list of other Puritan authors, famous and otherwise, such as Baxter, Howe, Owen, Charnock, Poole, etc. Baxter seems to have been a great favorite with Taylor, for we find most of his works in this collection. Nor are the divines of the Church of England neglected, as a long list will prove, including Prideaux, Cudworth, Pearson, Stillingfleet, Jeremy Taylor, Cave, Burnett, and Barrow. His theology was not, however, confined to English writers. We find in the library such books as the works of Ramus, Clericus, Ravenel, Grotius, Buxtorf, Capellus, Amyraut, and Spanheim. It even includes such Roman Catholic authors as Baronius, Petavius, and Salmeron. Taylor was no lover of the Quakers, as indeed were none of the clergy of that day. He had several works written against them, such as "Ye Snake in Ye Grass." One thing seems a little strange, and that is, that among all these theological works only one written by a Scotchman appears, viz., "Buchanan on the Psalms." This shows how independent English Presbyterianism was of its sister Church in Scotland. This fact appears again in another form, when we discover among these books a number of Tate and Brady's Psalms, which were evidently used in the worship of the Marlboro Church, thus showing that it was to the Church of England rather than to the Church of Scotland that the English Nonconformists looked for their Church music.

Another interesting fact comes out in examining the catalogue, namely, the love of science which their owner possessed. We find a number of works on geography, grammar, arithmetic, and physics. The library is quite up with the times, for we find among the books those of Boyle, Newton, and Locke, some of which had but recently been published. Besides these we find others, notably the works

of Bacon, Montaigne, and Hobbes. The omissions are quite striking. There is no light reading except two or three books of poetry, by writers now unread, indeed unknown to any except the bookworm. What surprises us more is that not one of the great poets of England finds a place in this library of one who was so evidently a man of culture. Did the Rev. Nathaniel think, with the authors of the Larger Catechism, that stage plays are forbidden by the Seventh Commandment? Did he think the "Faerie Queene" and the "Paradise Lost" beneath his notice? Did he think them unclerical, or was it because he had no taste for poetry, that he banished all works of the imagination from his severely intellectual library. Two theological omissions seem strange to us. We find no works by either Bunyan or Calvin. But Bunyan's absence may be accounted for by the fact that he was as yet unrecognized by the college and the rectory. Calvin's place was supplied by his English followers, Ussher and the great Puritan divines.

Two thoughts suggest themselves in closing. Does this list of books throw any light upon the vexed question, which was once a subject of controversy between Dr. Hodge and Dr. Hill, as to who their owner, the Rev. Nathaniel Taylor, was. The question owed its importance to the fact that Taylor was one of the founders of Presbyterianism in the United States. Do we owe our origin to England or to Scotland? It was claimed by some that the Presbyterian Church owes nothing to English Puritanism. Dr. Balch stated, on family tradition, that Taylor came from Scotland with Ninian Beall. That tradition has elsewhere been shown by the writer to be utterly untrue; this library is an additional proof of the untrustworthiness of said tradition. It is simply impossible that this can be the library of a Scotch clergyman, seeing that there are no Scotch books in it either of theology or psalmody.

Whither then does this library point as to its probable origin? It suggests the owner as one who was a London Nonconformist clergyman, one who had recently come from England, and was interested in the scientific proceedings of

the struggling Royal Society. Is it building too much on so slight a foundation to say, that the person who best answers all the facts in the case is Nathaniel Taylor, the son of the famous Nathaniel Taylor, a well-known Nonconformist divine of the latter part of the seventeenth century, who preached in London at Salters Hall, and whose eloquence earned for him the name of the Dissenting South. We know that he had a son named Nathaniel, and it is probable that this is he, who so mysteriously turns up in the province of Maryland about the year 1704. What became of this library? This is a sad question. We do not know. The only thing now known to have been in the possession of the learned divine is a handsome communion service of English plate, now used by the Presbyterian Church of Hyattsville, once part of the old Patuxent Parish. Oh! that some of the wealthy planters of Southern Maryland had had the foresight and the generosity to found a school of the prophets, and present to it this library as a noble beginning. But they did not. And so until this late day, they and their learned pastor, Nathaniel Taylor, remain "unwept, unhonored, and unsung."

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