

## *Note on Increase Mather's Observations Respecting the Lord's Supper*

IN PART 1 of this volume there appeared a hitherto unpublished document of Increase Mather, edited by Everett Emerson and Mason I. Lowance. This document, 'Mather's Confutation of the Rev. Mr. Stoddard's Observations respecting the Lord's Supper 1680,' is described by the editors as the earliest written evidence (the first published item appeared in 1687) in the controversy between Solomon Stoddard and Increase Mather regarding admission of the unregenerate to the Lord's Supper. Mather opposed Stoddard's proposal for free admission of all godly persons to the Lord's Supper, preferring the more traditional Puritan position that only those with evidence of a regenerating conversion experience be admitted.

In editing Increase Mather's 'Confutation,' Emerson and Lowance asserted that the original document is 'either lost or no longer extant' and that they used a transcription prepared by Cotton Mather, probably after 1700. However, the original is neither lost nor destroyed, but is to be found in the Mather Papers at the Society. Although it had been separated from Cotton Mather's transcription of his father's 'Confutation,' the original was located recently in a box in the Mather Papers labelled 'Increase Mather Sermons, 1663-1718.' The original, a fifteen-page autograph draft, is a holograph manuscript almost certainly written by Increase Mather. It is endorsed on the outside page, 'An Answer to Mr. Stoddard's 9 Arguments against Examinations concerning a Work of Grace before Admission to the Lord's Supper 2m[onth] 26d[ay] 1680.' Be-

neath this, Isaiah Thomas has written, 'This I suppose to have been written by the Rev. Cotton (which is crossed out and the name Increase is written above in another hand) Mather. 1814.' Doubtless, Thomas made this notation after acquiring the Mather Papers from Hannah Mather Crocker in 1814.

The original autograph draft does not, on the basis of a brief comparison, appear to differ materially in organization or substance from Cotton Mather's copy. However, it is a document with many corrections and amendments rendered in a close if not cramped hand. Slight differences between Increase Mather's draft and Cotton Mather's copy can be anticipated, though it is improbable that the differences would change the historical significance of the document or the place in Puritan theology ascribed to it by Emerson and Lowance. Both documents are now readily accessible in the Mather Papers and qualified scholars are invited to make use of them.

William L. Joyce

Copyright of Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society is the property of American Antiquarian Society and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.