

MAGNALIA CHRISTI AMERICANA;  
OR,  
THE ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY  
OF  
NEW-ENGLAND,

FROM ITS FIRST PLANTING, IN THE YEAR 1620, UNTO THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1698.

IN SEVEN BOOKS.

BY THE  
REVEREND AND LEARNED COTTON MATHER, D. D. F. R. S.  
AND PASTOR OF THE NORTH CHURCH IN BOSTON, NEW-ENGLAND.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOLUME II.

WITH  
AN INTRODUCTION AND OCCASIONAL NOTES,  
BY THE REV. THOMAS ROBBINS, D. D.  
AND  
TRANSLATIONS OF THE HEBREW, GREEK, AND LATIN QUOTATIONS,  
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invention and corruption in the church of the New Testament. The writings that go under the name of Justin Martyr deny it and decry it. Chrysostom speaks meanly of it. Even Aquinas himself, about 400 years ago, determines against it, as *Jewish* and *carnal*. Bellarmine himself confesses that it was but late received in the church.

V. If we admit instrumental musick in the worship of God, how can we resist the imposition of all the *instruments* used among the ancient Jews?—yea, *dancing* as well as *playing*, and several other Judaic actions? or, how can we decline a whole *rabble* of church-officers, necessary to be introduced for instrumental musick, whereof our Lord Jesus Christ hath left us no manner of direction?

QUESTION.—*Whether Baptism is to be administered by any but the Ordained Ministers of our Lord Jesus Christ?*

I. WE find no commission or permission from our Lord Jesus Christ for any to be the administrators of baptism, except those whose *work* it is by his *commission* to *preach* the gospel, (Matth. xxviii. 9.) And none have a commission to make the preaching of the gospel their work, but such as are, with the call of the faithful thereunto, “set apart” for that work, (Rom. x. 15.)

Baptism is a *seal* of the *covenant*; for any but an officer to apply the seal, in the name of the great King of heaven, is a presumptuous arrogance.

Baptism is one of the *evangelical mysteries*, and none but stewards in the house of our Lord Jesus Christ may pretend unto the dispensation of those mysteries.

The apostolical writings intimate, that some are “sent to baptise.” Hence, none are to baptise, but those that are *sent*.

II. As both the primitive and Protestant churches have signified their dislike of baptism administered by common hands, thus the disorder and confusion, and the contempt of the institutions of the Lord Jesus Christ, which would be thereby introduced, is a sufficient prejudice against it.

III. The original of the allowance and countenance given in some churches unto *undue administrators* of baptism has been from gross errors in the minds of men, about the necessity and operation of that sacrament, whereof, *non Privatio sed Contemptus damnat.\**

¶ PROPOSITIONS—*Concerning the Marriage of Cousin-Germans.*

I. THO’ in the first propagation of mankind from *one head*, by the great God resolved and required, it was necessary for *brothers* to marry their *sisters*, yet that so the bonds of amity in humane society might be the better increased, the Lord afterwards prohibited several marriages, under the title of incest; and some were now too *near akin* to be united: there were degrees of *consanguinity*, and so of *affinity*, wherein marriages might not be contracted.

\* It is not the loss, but the abuse, which condemns.

II. Albeit the light of nature teaches men to preserve a distance, and honour, for some that are very nearly related, and natural conscience relucts with horror at some conjunctions; like, what the apostle calls, “a fornication that is not so much as named among the Gentiles,” and those which the poets themselves call, *Vetitos Hymenæos*,\* and impieties; yet it is a *moral law* of God, positively given, or a law, the general reason whereof is in the nature of the thing, but the particular limitation of it is by revelation from God, that is to determine the *degrees* wherein marriages are to be judged unlawful and incestuous.

III. In the eighteenth chapter of Leviticus, there is a law of Heaven, declaring the degrees wherein marriages are forbidden; and there is no doubt that all that come within those degrees, are as much forbidden, tho’ they be not expressly mentioned.

What is pronounced a *sin*, by that law, is to be esteemed a sin by the Gentiles as well as Jews, (which the conclusion of it abundantly intimates:) but what falls not within the reach of that *law*, is no sin: and the *canon-law*, which for some covetous and enslaving ends, hath made vast additions to this law of God, is to be rejected, as full of superstitious impositions.

IV. If we exactly consider the *line* in the fifteenth chapter of Leviticus, we shall find that the most remote relations forbidden to marry, (which are the *brother* and the *brother’s daughter*) stand one degree nearer to the *root* than *cousin-germans* do. An *uncle* or an *aunt*, therefore, being the furthest, with whom a marriage is interdicted, it seems plain that the marriage of *cousin-germans* is not *incestuous*.

V. Altho’ *cousin-germans* that are married unto each other now may and should, with all peace of mind, live together in the fear of God, and not give way to distressing scruples; or question the lawfulness of their marriage any more than the famous Holoman would have done, who has written to prove it, *pium et Christianum esse*;† nevertheless, there is much to be said for the dissuading of *cousin-germans* from coming together in marriage. *Inexpedience* we know sometimes does produce *unlawfulness*. This marriage may be very inexpedient; it borders as near as is possible to what is unlawful. There is no need of coming so near, while we have such a wide world before us. One end of marriage—namely, to promote and extend alliances—is damnified herein. Some wise and good men have been so troubled in their minds concerning these marriages, that it is an easier thing to abstain here from than to extirpate such a trouble from the minds of the faithful.

Some of the most considerable among the ancients—especially Ambrose and Austin, besides five several councils—have severely *censured* them; and the churches of the Augustan confession do to this day prohibit them. So that, upon the whole, the advice of the renowned Ames may seem not amiss, *Tutius est abstinere*.‡

\* Unlawful marriages.

† That it is religious and Christian.

‡ It is safer to abstain.