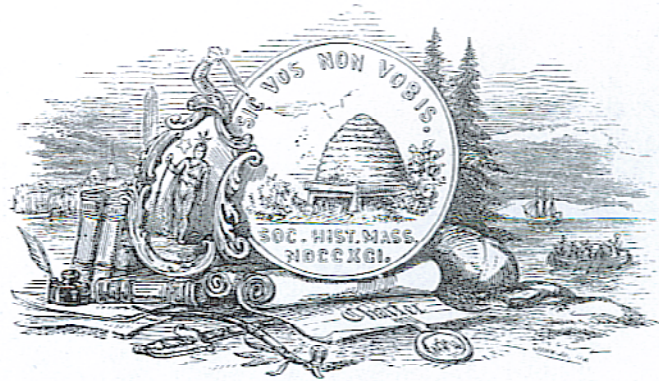


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*Sewall's
Letter Book
Vol I*

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pean Trees and Herbs? What was become of the Ship-Carpenters, and Workers in Iron? Of all which there was *nec vola nec vestigium*; neither Name nor Thing to be found in the New-World at the arrival of the Spaniards there.

And this Timing of the Vision, suits with the place it obtains in the Revelation; just after the Outrages of the Turks. The very same year that Belgrade was added to the Ottoman, Mexico was added to the Christian Empire, viz: 1521. And as Christ did more apparently set his Foot on America, when the New-English Worthies Landed here: So this Date will render the Accomodation still more easy. I am apt to think that the Agenda of the Apocalypse are placed according to the latest Date. As an Account consisting of many Dates from January to December, one may comprise them in one Article, and use only the December Date.

Praying that you and I may be Listed of this Angel's Guard; and that by the Refraction of His, a Secondary Rainbow may unquestionably defend and adorn our heads, I take Leave. If Mr. Noyes does not agree to it, let him impugn my Thesis. S. S.

N. I sent a Copy of the above-written to Mr. Richard Henschman, Febr. 24th, 1703 [sic] returning his verses.¹

SAMUEL SEWALL TO JOHN SEWALL.

To Cousin John Sewall at Newbury.

Febr. 23, 1703.²

DEAR COUSIN,—I have yours dated Febr. 11th which I received this week; wherein you ask my Advice in a very important Affair; viz: that of your Marriage. You

¹ Mr. Henschman frequently paid Sewall the compliment of making verses in his honor. Copies of some of these, composed both at an earlier and also at a later date than that mentioned in the text, may be found in the Boston Public Library. — Eds.

² See in Augt. 23, 1707, and July 16, 1708.

tell me you have been advised to marry the Widow of your Cousin German. 'Tis pity that any have been so Unadvised themselves, as to prompt you to do a needless thing, about which Advice is needed, to know whether it be Lawfull or No. You say, some Scruple it. And if you your self do not Scruple it at present, you are not sure that you shall not Scruple it after you are married; and that in such a distressing manner, as that all the Divines in New-England shall not be able to relieve you, or give you Satisfaction. There have been such Instances. You say you have thôt it not so near as Second-Cousins by Blood. In this you are plainly mistaken: for it is by Casuists laid down as a Rule in these Cases, That Degrees of Consanguinity and Affinity do equally affect Marriage.¹ For my own part, it is not plain to me that it is Lawfull for First-Cousins to marry: I rather incline to think it is Unlawfull. And we ought to have a great care, that we be not so ignorantly zealous in casting off the Yoke of Antichrist, as therewithal to cast off any part of the Yoke of CHRIST.² It is not easy to conceive how a man's marrying his Sister, should be a Capital Crime; and yet the Marriage of Cousin Germans should be blameless and Commendable, whereas they make the very next Relation of equal degree. Dr. John Owen in his excellent Exposition of the Hebrews, hath this passage — "Brotherhood "with respect to a near Stock, as the Children of the "same Parents; which in the Scripture is constantly ex- "tended unto Grandfathers also. Heb. 13. 1. p. 203." Now if the Scripture Reckons Grandfathers, Fathers: the Scripture likewise Reckons Cousins Germans among Brothers and Sisters, and so incapable of Intermarriage. Indeed, who can think it a comly and pleasant Sight for a Grandfather to see his own Children joined together in

¹ This is the argument of those who consider marriage with a deceased wife's sister as invalid. — Eds.

² Levit. 20. 17.

Marriage? Who can think it prudent and profitable for Cousin Germans to seek a Marriage-Union; Whenas they see themselves One already in their Grandfather? Who can think that it is not Unreasonable and absurd for a man to marry his great Unkles Widow? and yet this will also be justified if the Marriage of Cousin Germans be allowed. And it has been done. I will tra[n]scribe you a few passages out of the Assemblys Annotations on Levit. 18. "It is safe to forbear what is doubtfull, and "to keep aloof from what is unlawfull; especially the "choice of Lawfull Marriages being large enough, with- "out the hazard of so great a Sin as Incest. — In gen- "eral (since the Gospel is the Law of Love and Charity, "not to one Nation only, but all the World over) as far "as Consanguinity or Affinity will work in Affection, "without a new Tie of Matrimony: so far reacheth Matri- "monial Prohibition: and should then first begin, when "the Relations are so Remote, that they have little or no "Operations of Love: that so Charity might be more dif- "fusive; and not so contracted to ones Kindred, as it was "among the Jews." I must needs say, it grieves me to think that the sweet and amiable Relations and Names of Unkle and Aunt should be sunk and drowned in this Torrent of Confusion.

Learned men and Councils have been against these kind of Matches: yet because you ask my Advice, I will not refrain to give it. Doe that which is Safe, which is Most safe, in a matter of the greatest Importance. Be sure you have the Licence of Heaven to produce. If one were to purchase a Hundred Acres of Land, to build and plant on; one would chuse to have an undoubted and undefamed Right to it; and not Venture the Perplexity and Disappointment of a crazy Title. Much more ought a man to be concernd, to chuse such a Woman to be his wife, to whom he may have a good, clear, indisputable Title, without the least Flaw or Appearance of it.

Doe that which is Honorable, and of good Report Philip. 4. 8, 9. Marriage is Honorable. James Printer told me, the Indians call Cousin Germans, Brothers, as the Jews did. And he told me, the Indians seldom marry so near. Tis pity that any English Christian should need to be put to an Indian School to learn the practice of Temperance and Sobriety. The Generality of good people use to be displeasd and grieved at these Matches: And ordinarily, that which grieves the Saints grieves the Holy Spirit of God: And I am sure none will be gainers by that.¹

It would exceedingly delight me to hear you were well married; But it would be a Damp to me to hear of you two becoming man and wife.

Deare Cousin, if my Interest could help you to a good Match indisputably consonant to the Scriptures of Truth I should be very ready to improve it on your behalf, as I had opportunity: and should account my self, in the good success of it, to be highly favour'd of God, unto whose Protection and Direction I commend you, and desire to be commended by you. I thank you for your Information of my Cousin Moodey's being in the Service, and so many of his Flock: May the Shepherd of Israel keep them: and help them to kill the Lions and the Bears. Remember my Love to your Mother, Sister Moodey and Cousins. Accept the inclosed Prints from your Loving Unkle

S. S.

SAMUEL SEWALL TO RICHARD HENCHMAN.

To Mr. Rich^d Henchman.

Febr. 24, 1703.

SIR,—I send home your Verses with Thanks. There are many good strokes in them: but in my mind, the English excell. I think — *dominantur undiq[ue] fraudes*, does not well end a verse; the last syllable in [*Dominantur*] is short by Rule. I perceive Mr. Cotton Mather has

¹ 1 Cor. 8. 12, 13.