

ADDITIONAL NOTES  
OF THE  
LIFE AND DEATH  
OF  
Sir MATTHEW HALE, Knt.

Written by RICHARD BAXTER,

At the Request of EDWARD STEPHENS, Esq; Publisher  
of his Contemplations, and his familiar Friend,

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To the READER.

SINCE the history of judge Hale's life is published (written by Dr. Burnet very well) some men have thought, that because my familiarity with him was known, and the last time of a man's life is supposed to contain his maturest judgment, time, study, and experience correcting former oversights; and this great man who was most diligently and thirstily learning to the last, was like to be still wiser, the notice that I had of him in the latter years of his life should not be omitted.

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I was never acquainted with him till 1667, and therefore have nothing to say of the former part of his life; nor of the latter, as to any public affairs, but only of what our familiar converse acquainted me: but the visible effects made me wonder at the industry and unwearied labours of his former life. Besides the four volumes against atheism and infidelity, in folio, which I after mention, when I was desired to borrow a manuscript of his law collections, he shewed me, as I remember, about two and thirty folios, and told me, he had no other on that subject, (collections out of the tower records, &c.) and that the amanuensis work that wrote them, cost him a thousand pound. He was so set on study, that he resolutely avoided all necessary diversions, and so little valued either grandeur, wealth, or any worldly vanity, that he avoided them to that notable degree, which incompetent judges took to be an excess. His habit was so coarse and plain, that I, who am thought guilty of a culpable neglect therein, have been bold to desire him to lay by some things which seemed too homely. The house which I surrendered to him, and wherein he lived at Acton, was indeed well situate but very small, and so far below the ordinary dwellings of men of his rank, as that divers farmers thereabout had better; but it pleased him. Many censured him for chusing his last wife below his quality: but the good man more regarded his own daily comfort, than men's thoughts and talk. As far as I could discern, he chose one very  
suitable

suitable to his ends; one of his own judgment and temper, prudent and loving and fit to please him; and that would not draw on him the trouble of much acquaintance and relations. His housekeeping was according to the rest, like his estate and mind, but not like his place and honour: for he resolved never to grasp at riches, nor take great fees, but would refuse what many others thought too little. I wondered when he told me how small his estate was, after such ways of getting as were before him: but as he had little, and desired little, so he was content with little, and suited his dwelling, table, and retinue thereto. He greatly shunned the visits of many, or great persons, that came not to him on necessary business, because all his hours were precious to him, and therefore he contrived the avoiding of them, and the free enjoyment of his beloved privacy.

I must with a glad remembrance acknowledge, that while we were so unsuitable in places and worth, yet some suitableness of judgment and disposition made our frequent converse pleasing to us both. The last time save one, that I was at his house, he made me lodge there, and in the morning inviting me to more frequent visits said, no man shall be more welcome; and he was no dissembler. To signify his love, he put my name as a legatee in his will, bequeathing me forty shillings. Mr. Stephens gave me two manuscripts, as appointed by him for me, declaring his judgment of our church contentions and their cure (after  
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mentioned). Though they are imperfect as written on the same question at several times, I had a great mind to print them, to try whether the common reverence of the author would cool any of our contentious clergy: but hearing that there was a restraint in his will, I took out part of a copy in which I find these words, “ I do expressly declare, that I will have nothing of my writings printed after my death, but only such as I shall in my life-time deliver out to be printed.” And not having received this in his life-time, nor to be printed in express terms, I am afraid of crossing the will of the dead, though he ordered them for me.

It shewed his mean estate as to riches, that in his will he is put to distribute the profits of a book or two when printed, among his friends and servants. Alas! we that are great loofers by printing, know that it must be a small gain that must thus accrue to them. Doubtless, if the lord chief justice Hale had gathered money as other lawyers do that had less advantage, as he wanted not will, so he would not have wanted power to have left them far greater legacies. But the servants of a self-denying mortified master, must be content to suffer by his virtues, which yet if they imitate him, will turn to their final gain.

God made him a public good, which is more than to get riches. His great judgment and known integrity, commanded respect from those that knew him; so that I verily think, that no one  
subject

subject since the days that history hath notified the affairs of England to us, went off the stage with greater and more universal love and honour; (and what honour without love is, I understand not.) I remember when his successor, the lord chief justice Rainsford, falling into some melancholly, came and sent to me for some advice, he did it as he said, because judge Hale desired him so to do; and expressed so great respect to his judgment and writings, as I perceived much prevailed with him. And many have profited by his contemplations, who would never have read them, had they been written by such a one as I. Yet among all his books and discourses, I never knew of these until he was dead.

His resolution for justice was so great, that I am persuaded, that no wealth nor honour would have hired him knowingly to do one unjust act.

And though he left us in sorrow, I cannot but acknowledge it a great mercy to him, to be taken away when he was. Alas! what would the good man have done, if he had been put by plotters, and traitors, and swearers, and forswearers, upon all that his successors have been put to? In likelihood, even all his great wisdom and sincerity, could never have got him through such a wilderness of thorns, and briars, and wild beasts, without tearing in pieces his entire reputation, if he had never so well secured his conscience. O! how seasonably did he avoid the tempest and go to Christ.

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And so have so many excellent persons since then, and especially within the space of one year, as may well make England tremble at the prognostick, that the righteous are taken as from the evil to come. And alas! what an evil is it like to be? We feel our loss. We fear the common danger. But what believer can chuse but acknowledge God's mercy to them, in taking them up to the world of light, love, peace and order, when confusion is coming upon this world, by darkness, malignity, perfidiousness and cruelty. Some think that the last conflagration shall turn this earth into hell. If so who would not first be taken from it? And when it is so like to hell already, who would not rather be in heaven?

Though some mistook this man for a meer philosopher or humanist, that knew him not within; yet his most serious description of the sufferings of Christ, and his copious volumes to prove the truth of the scripture, christianity, our immortality, and the Deity, do prove so much reality in his faith and devotion, as makes us past doubt of the reality of his reward and glory.

When he found his belly swell, his breath and strength much abate, and his face and flesh decay, he chearfully received the sentence of death: and though Dr. Glisson by meer oximel squilliticum, seemed a while to ease him, yet that also soon failed him; and he told me, he was prepared and contented comfortably to receive his change. And accordingly he left us, and went into his native

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country of Gloucestershire to die, as the history tells you.

Mr. Edward Stephens being most familiar with him, told me his purpose to write his life: and desired me to draw up the meer narrative of my short familiarity with him; which I did as followeth: by hearing no more of him, cast it by; but others desiring it, upon the sight of the published history of his life by Dr. Burnet, I have left it to the discretion of some of them, to do with it what they will.

And being half dead already in those dearest friends who were half myself, am much the more willing to leave this mole-hill and prison of earth, to be with that wise and blessed society, who being united to their head in glory, do not envy, hate, or persecute each other, nor forsake God, nor shall ever be forsaken by him.

R. B.

Note, That this narrative was written two years before Dr. Burnet's; and it's not to be doubted, but that he had better information of his manuscripts, and some other circumstances, than I. But of those manuscripts directed to me, about the soul's immortality, of which I have the originals under his hand, and also of his thoughts of the subjects mentioned by me, from 1671, till he went to die in Gloucestershire, I had the fullest notice.

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## ADDITIONAL NOTES

On the LIFE and DEATH of

Sir MATTHEW HALE, Knt.

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To my Worthy Friend Mr. STEPHENS,  
the Publisher of Judge HALE'S Con-  
templations.

S I R,

**Y**OU desired me to give you notice of what I knew in my personal converse, of the great lord chief justice of England, sir Matthew Hale. You have partly made any thing of mine unmeet for the sight of any but yourself and his private friends (to whom it is useless) by your divulging those words of his extraordinary favour to me, which will make it thought, that I am partial in his praises. And indeed that excessive esteem of his, which you have told men of, is a divulging of his imperfection, who did over-value so unworthy a person as I know myself to be.

I will promise you to say nothing but the truth; and judge of it and use it as you please.

My acquaintance with him was not long: and I look'd on him as an excellent person studied in his own way, which I hoped I should never have occasion to make much use of; but I thought not so versed in our matters as ourselves. I was confirmed in this conceit by the first report I had from him, which was his wish, that Dr. Reignolds, Mr. Calamy, and I, would have taken bishopricks, when they were offered us by the lord chancellor, as from the king, in 1660, (as one did). I thought he understood not our case, or the true state of English prelacy. Many years after when I lived at Acton, he being lord chief baron of the exchequer, suddenly took a house in the village. We sat next seats together at church for many weeks, but neither did he ever speak to me or I to him. At last, my extraordinary friend (to whom I was more beholding than I must here express,) serjeant Fountain, asked me, why I did not visit the lord chief baron? I told him, because I had no reason for it, being a stranger to him; and had some against it, viz. that a judge, whose reputation was necessary to the ends of his office, should not be brought under court suspicion, or disgrace, by his familiarity with a person, whom the interest and diligence of some prelates had rendered so odious, as I knew myself to be with such, I durst not be so injurious to him. The serjeant answered, it is not meet for him to come first to you; I know why I speak it: let me intreat you to go first to him. In obedience to which request I did it; and so

fo we entered into neighbourly familiarity. I lived then in a small house, but it had a pleafant garden and backside, which the (honest) landlord had a desire to fell. The judge had a mind to the house; but he would not meddle with it, till he got a stranger to me, to come and enquire of me whether I was willing to leave it? I told him, I was not only willing but desirous, not for my own ends, but for my landlord's sake, who must needs fell it: and so he bought it, and lived in that poor house, till his mortal sickness sent him to the place of his interment.

I will truly tell you the matter and the manner of our converse. We were oft together, and almost all our discourse was philosophical, and especially about the nature of spirits and superiour regions; and the nature, operations, and immortality of man's soul. And our disposition and course of thoughts, were in such things so like, that I did not much cross the bent of his conference. He studied physicks, and got all new or old books of philosophy that he could meet with, as eagerly as if he had been a boy at the university. Mousnerius, and Honoratus Faber, he deservedly much esteemed; but yet took not the latter to be without some mistakes. Mathematicks he studied more than I did, it being a knowledge which he much more esteemed than I did; who valued all knowledge by the greatness of the benefit, and necessity of the use; and my unskilfulness in them, I acknowledge my great defect, in which he much

excelled. But we were both much addicted to know and read all the pretenders to more than ordinary in physicks; the Platonists, the Peripateticks, the Epicureans (and especially their Gassendus,) Teleius, Campanella, Patricius, Lullius, White, and every sect that made us any encouraging promise. We neither of us approved of all in Aristotle; but he valued him more than I did. We both greatly disliked the principles of Cartesius and Gassendus (much more of the Bruitists, Hobbs and Spinoza); especially their doctrine de motu, and their obscuring, or denying nature itself, even the principia motus, the virtutes formales, which are the causes of operations.

Whenever we were together, he was the spring of our discourse (as chusing the subject): and most of it still was of the nature of spirits, and the immortality, state, and operations of separated souls. We both were conscious of human darkness, and how much of our understandings, quiet in such matters, must be fetcht from our implicit trust in the goodness and promises of God, rather than from a clear and satisfying conception of the mode of separated souls operations; and how great use we have herein of our faith in Jesus Christ, as he is the undertaker, mediator, the Lord and lover of souls, and the actual possessor of that glory. But yet we thought, that it greatly concerned us, to search as far as God allowed us, into a matter of so great moment; and that even little and obscure prospects into the heavenly state,

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are more excellent than much and applauded knowledge of transitory things.

He was much in urging difficulties and objections; but you could not tell by them what was his own judgment: for when he was able to answer them himself, he would draw out anothers answer.

He was but of a slow speech, and sometimes so hesitating, that a stranger would have thought him a man of low parts, that knew not readily what to say (though ready at other times). But I never saw Cicero's doctrine de Oratore, more verified in any man, that furnishing the mind with all sorts of knowledge, is the chief thing to make an excellent orator: for when there is abundance and clearness of knowledge in the mind, it will furnish even a slow tongue to speak that which by its congruence and verity shall prevail. Such a one never wants moving matter, nor an answer to vain objectors.

The manner of our converse was as suitable to my inclination as the matter. For whereas many bred in universities, and called scholars, have not the wit, manners, or patience, to hear those that they discourse with speak to the end, but through list and impotency cannot hold, but cut off a man's speech when they hear any thing that urgeth them, before the latter part make the former intelligible or strong (when oft the proof and use is reserved to the end), liker scolds than scholars; as if they commanded silence at the end of each sentence to him that speaketh, or else would have

two talk at once. I do not remember, that ever he and I did interrupt each other in any discourse. His wisdom and accustomed patience caused him still to stay for the end. And though my disposition have too much forwardness to speak, I had not so little wit or manners, as to interrupt him; whereby we far better understood each other, than we could have done in chopping and maimed discourse.

He was much for coming to philosophical knowledge by the help of experiments: but he thought, that our new philosophers, as some call the Cartesians, had taken up many fallacies as experiments, and had made as unhappy a use of their trials, as many empericks and mountebanks do in medicine: and that Aristotle was a man of far greater experience, as well as study, than they. He was wont to say, that lads at the universities had found it a way to be thought wiser than others, to join with boasters that cried down the ancients before they understood them: for he thought that few of these contemners of Aristotle, had ever so far studied him, as to know his doctrine, but spoke against they knew not what; even as some secular theologues take it to be the way to be thought wise men and orthodox, to cant against some party or sect which they have advantage to contemn. It must cost a man many years study to know what Aristotle held. But to read over Magirus (and perhaps the Conimbricenses or Zabarella), and then prate against Aristotle, requireth but a little time and labour. He could well bear it,

it, when one that had thoroughly studied Aristotle, dissented from him in any particular upon reason; but he loathed it in ignorant men, that were carried to it by shameful vanity of mind.

His many hard questions, doubts and objections to me, occasioned me to draw up a small tract of the nature and immortality of man's soul, as proved by natural light alone (by way of questions and answers): in which I had not baulked the hardest objections and difficulties that I could think of (conceiving that atheists and Sadduces are so unhappily witty, and Satan such a tutor, that they are as like to think of them as I). But the good man, when I sent it to him, was wiser than I, and sent me word in his return, that he would not have me publish it in English (nor without some alterations of the method); because though he thought I had sufficiently answered all the objections, yet ordinary readers would take deeper into their minds such hard objections as they never heard before, than the answer (how full soever) would be able to overcome: whereupon, not having leisure to translate and alter it, I cast it by.

He seemed to reverence and believe the opinion of Dr. Willis, and such others, *de animis brutorum*, as being not spiritual substances. But when I sent him a confutation of them, he seemed to acquiesce, and as far as I could judge, did change his mind; and had higher thoughts of sensitive natures, than they that take them to be some evanid qualities,  
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proceeding from contexture, attemperation, and motion.

Yet he and I did think, that the notion of immateriality, had little satisfactory to acquaint us with the nature of a spirit (not telling us any thing what it is, but what it is not). And we thought, that the old Greek and Latin doctors (cited by Faustus Rhegiculis, whom Mamertus answereth), did mean by a body or matter (of which they said spirits did consist), the same thing as we now mean by the substance of spirits, distinguishing them from meer accidents. And we thought it a matter of some moment, and no small difficulty, to tell what men mean here by the word [substance], if it be but a relative notion, because it doth *substare accidentibus* & *subsistere per se*, relation is not proper substance. It is substance that doth so subsist: it is somewhat, and not nothing, nor an accident. Therefore if more than relation must be meant, it will prove hard to distinguish substance from substance by the notion of immateriality. Souls have no shadows: they are not palpable and gross; but they are SUBSTANTIAL LIFE, as VIRTUES. And it is hard to conceive, how a created *vis vel virtus* should be the adequate *conceptus* of a spirit, and not rather an inadequate, supposing the *conceptus* of *substantia fundamentalis* (as Dr. Glisson calls it *de vita naturæ*), seeing *omnis virtus est rei alieni virtus*.

Yet he yielded to me, that *virtus seu vis vitalis*, is not *animæ accidens*, but the *conceptus formalis spiritus*,

*spiritus*, supposing *substantia* to be the *conceptus fundamentalis*: and both together express the essence of a spirit.

Every created being is passive; for *recipit in fluxum causæ primæ*. God transcendeth our defining skill: but where there is receptivity, many ancients thought there were some pure sort of materiality: and we say, there is receptive substantiality: and who can describe the difference (laying aside the formal virtues that difference things) between the highest material substance, and the lowest substance, called immaterial.

We were neither of us satisfied with the notions of penetrability and indivisibility, as sufficient differences. But the *virtutes specificæ* plainly difference.

What latter thoughts, a year before he died, he had of these things, I know not: but some say, that a treatise of this subject, the soul's immortality, was his last finished work (promised in the end of his treatise of man's origination); and if we have the sight of that, it will fuller tell us his judgment.

One thing I must notify to you, and to those that have his manuscripts, that when I sent him a scheme, with some elucidations, he wrote me on that and my treatise of the soul, almost a quire of paper of animadversions; by which you must not conclude at all of his own judgment: for he professed to me, that he wrote them to me, not as his judgment, but (as his way was) as the hardest objections

objections which he would have satisfaction in. And when I had written him a full answer to all, and have been oft since with him, he seemed satisfied. You will wrong him therefore, if you should print that written to me as his judgment.

As to his judgment about religion; our discourse was very sparing about controversies. He thought not fit to begin with me about them, nor I with him: and as it was in me, so it seemed to be in him, from a conceit, that we were not fit to pretend to add much to one another.

About matters of conformity, I could gladly have known his mind more fully: but I thought it unmeet to put such questions to a judge, who must not speak against the laws; and he never offered his judgment to me. And I knew, that as I was to reverence him in his own profession, so in matters of my profession and concernment, he expected not, that I should think as he, beyond the reasons which he gave.

I must say, that he was of opinion, that the wealth and honour of the bishops was convenient, to enable them the better to relieve the poor, and rescue the inferiour clergy from oppression, and to keep up the honour of religion in the world. But all this on supposition, that it would be in the hands of wise and good men, or else it would do as much harm. But when I asked him, whether great wealth and honour would not be most earnestly desired and sought by the worst of men, while good men would not seek them? And whether

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he that was the only fervent seeker, was not likeliest to obtain (except under some rare extraordinary prince)? And so whether it was not like to entail the office on the worst, and to arm Christ's enemies against him to the end of the world (which a provision that had neither alluring nor much discouraging temptation, might prevent), he gave me no answer. I have heard some say, if the pope were a good man, what a deal of good might he do? But have popes therefore blest the world.

I can truly say, that he greatly lamented the negligence, and ill lives, and violence of some of the clergy; and would oft say, what have they their calling, honour and maintenance for, but to seek the instructing and saving of men's souls?

He much lamented, that so many worthy ministers were silenced, the church weakened, papists strengthened, the cause of love and piety greatly wronged and hindered by the present differences about conformity. And he hath told me his judgment, that the only means to heal us was, a new act of uniformity, which should neither leave all at liberty, nor impose any thing but necessary.

I had once a full opportunity to try his judgment far in this. It pleased the lord keeper Bridgman to invite Dr. Manton and myself (to whom Dr. Bates at our desire was added), to treat with Dr. Wilkins and Dr. Burton about the terms of our reconciliation and restoration to our ministerial liberty. After some days conference, we came to agree-

agreement in all things, as to the necessary terms. And because Dr. Wilkins and I had special intimacy with judge Hale, we desired him to draw it up in the form of an act, which he willingly did, and we agreed to every word. But it pleased the house of commons, hearing of it, to begin their next session with a vote, that no such bill should be brought in; and so it died.

Query 1. Whether after this and other such agreement, it be ingenuity, or somewhat else, that hath ever since said, we know not what they would have? And that at once call out to us, and yet strictly forbid us to tell them what it is we take for sin, and what we desire.

2. Whether it be likely, that such men as bishop Wilkins, and Dr. Burton, and judge Hale, would consent to such terms of our concord, as should be worse than our present condition of division and convulsion is? And whether the maintainers of our dividing impositions, be all wiser and better men than this judge and that bishop were?

3. And whether it be any distance of opinion, or difficulty of bringing us to agreement, that keepeth England in its sad divisions, or rather some mens opinion, that our unity itself is not desirable, lest it strengthen us? The case is plain.

His behaviour in the church was conformable, but prudent. He constantly heard a curate, too low for such an auditor. In common-prayer he behaved himself as others, saying that, to avoid  
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the differencing of the gospels from the epistles, and the bowing at the name of Jesus, from the names, Christ, Saviour, God, &c. He would use some equality in his gestures, and stand up at the reading of all God's word alike.

I had but one fear or suspicion concerning him, which since I am assured was groundless: I was afraid least he had been too little for the practical part of religion, as to the working of the soul towards God, in prayer, meditation, &c. because he seldom spake to me of such subjects, nor of practical books, or sermons; but was still speaking of philosophy, or of spirits, souls, the future state, and the nature of God. But at last I understood, that his averfeness to hypocrisy made him purposely conceal the most of such his practical thoughts and works, as the world now findeth by his contemplations and other writings.

He told me once, how God brought him to a fixed honour and observation of the Lord's day; that when he was young, being in the west, the sickness or death of some relation at London, made some matter of estate to become his concernment; which required his hastening to London from the west: and he was commanded to travel on the Lord's day: but I cannot well remember how many cross accidents befel him in his journey; one horse fell lame, another died, and much more; which struck him with such sense of divine rebuke, as he never forgot.

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When I went out of the house, in which he succeeded me, I went into a greater, over-against the church-door. The town having great need of help for their souls, I preached between the public sermons in my house, taking the people with me to the church (to common-prayer and sermon) morning and evening. The judge told me, that he thought my course did the church much service; and would carry it so respectfully to me at my door, that all the people might perceive his approbation. But Dr. Reeves could not bear it, but complained against me; and the bishop of London caused one Mr. Rolfe of Brainford, and Mr. Philips, two justices of the peace, to send their warrants to apprehend me. I told the judge of the warrant, but asked him no council, nor he gave me none; but with tears shewed his sorrow: (the only time that ever I saw him weep). So I was sent to the common goal for six months, by these two justices, by the procurement of the said Dr. Reeves (his majesty's chaplain, dean of Windsor, dean of Wolverhampton, parson of Horseley, parson of Acton). When I came to move for my release upon a habeas corpus (by the council of my great friend serjeant Fountain), I found, that the character which judge Hale had given of me, stood me in some stead; and every one of the four judges of the common-pleas, did not only acquit me, but said more for me than my council, (viz. judge Wild, judge Archer, judge Tyrel, and the lord chief justice Vaughan); and made me  
sensible

sensible, how great a part of the honour of his majesty's government, and the peace of the kingdom, consisted in the justice of the judges.

And indeed judge Hale would tell me, that bishop Usher was much prejudiced against lawyers, because the worst causes find their advocates: but that he and Mr. Selden had convinced him of the reasons of it, to his satisfaction: and that he did by acquaintance with them, believe that there were as many honest men among lawyers, proportionably, as among any profession of men in England (not excepting bishops or divines).

And I must needs say, that the improvement of reason, the diverting men from sensuality and idleness, the maintaining of propriety and justice, and consequently the peace and welfare of the kingdom, is very much to be ascribed to the judges, and lawyers.

But this imprisonment brought me the great loss of converse with judge Hale: for the parliament in the next act against conventicles, put into it diverse clauses, suited to my case; by which I was obliged to go dwell in another county, and to forsake both London and my former habitation; and yet the justices of another county were partly enabled to pursue me.

Before I went, the judge had put into my hand four volumes (in folio), which he had written, to prove the being and providence of God, the immortality of the soul, and life to come, the truth of christianity, and of every book of the scripture

by itself, besides the common proofs of the whole. Three of the four volumes I had read over, and was sent to the goal before I read the fourth. I turned down a few leaves for some small animadversions, but had no time to give them him. I could not then persuade him to review them for the press. The only fault I found with them of any moment, was that great copiousness, the effect of his fulness and patience, which will be called tediousness by impatient readers.

When we were separated, he (that would receive no letters from any man, about any matters which he was to judge) was desirous of letter-converse about our philosophical and spiritual subjects. I having then begun a Latin *methodus theologiæ*, sent him one of the schemes (before mentioned), containing the generals of the philosophical part, with some notes upon it; which he so over-valued, that he urged me to proceed in the same way. I objected against putting so much philosophy (though mostly but *de homine*) in a method of theology: but he rejected my objections, and resolved me to go on.

At last it pleased God to visit him with his mortal sickness. Having had the stone before (which he found thick pond-water better ease him of, than the gravel spring-water), in a cold journey; an extraordinary flux of urine took him first, and then such a pain in his side, as forced him to let much blood, more than once, to save him from sudden suffocation or oppression. Ever after which

he had death in his lapsed countenance, flesh and strength, with shortness of breath. Dr. Willis, in his life-time, wrote his case without his name, in an observation in his pharmaceut, &c. which was shortly printed after his own death, and before his patient's: but I dare say it so crudely, as is no honour to that book.

When he had striven a while under his disease, he gave up his place, not so much from the apprehension of the nearness of his death (for he could have died comfortably in his public work), but from the sense of his disability to discharge his part: but he ceased not his studies, and that upon points which I could have wished him to let go (being confident, that he was not far from his end).

I sent him a book which I newly published, for reconciling the controversies about predestination, redemption, grace, free-will, but desired him not to bestow too much of his precious time upon it: but (before he left his place) I found him at it so oft, that I took the boldness to tell him, that I thought more practical writings were most suitable to his case, who was going from this contentious world. He gave me but little answer; but I after found, that he plied practicals and contemplatives in their season; which he never thought meet to give me any account of. Only in general he oft told me, that the reason and season of his writings (against atheism, &c. aforesaid) were, both in his circuit and at home, he used to set apart some time for  
K 2 meditation,

meditation, especially after the evening public worship every Lord's day; and that he could not so profitable keep his thoughts in connection and method, otherwise, as by writing them down; and withal, that if there were any thing in them useful it was the way to keep it for after use: and therefore for the better management, for the accountability and the after use, he had long accustomed to pen his meditations; which gave us all of that nature that he hath left us.

Notwithstanding his own great furniture of knowledge, and he was accounted by some, somewhat tenacious of his conceptions (for men that know much, cannot easily yield to the expectations of less knowing men), yet I must say, that I remember not that ever I conversed with a man that was readier to receive and learn. He would hear as patiently, and recollect all so distinctly, and then try it so judiciously (not disdainng to learn of an inferior in some things, who in more had need to learn of him), that he would presently take what some stand wrangling against many years. I never more perceived in any man, how much great knowledge and wisdom facilitate additions, and the reception of any thing not before known. Such a one presently perceiveth that evidence which another is incapable of.

For instance, the last time, save one, that I saw him (in his weakness at Acton), he engaged me to explicate the doctrine of divine government (and decree), as consistent with the sin of man.

And

And when I had distinctly told him, 1. What God did, as the author of nature, physically. 2. What he did, as legislator, morally. And 3. What he did, as benefactor, and by special grace. 4. And where permission came in, and where actual operation. 5. And so, how certainly God might cause the effects, and not cause the volitions, as determinate to evil, [though the volition and effect being called by one name (as theft, murder, adultery, lying, &c.) oft deceive men]: he took up all that I had said in order, and distinctly twice over repeated each part in its proper place, and with its reason: and when he had done, said, that I had given him satisfaction.

Before I knew what he did himself in contemplations, I took it not well, that he more than once told me, “ Mr. Baxter, I am more beholden  
“ to you than you are aware of; and I thank you  
“ for all, but especially for your scheme, and your  
“ catholic theology.” For I was sorry, that a man (that I thought) so near death, should spend much of his time on such controversies (though tending to end them). But he continued after, near a year, and had leisure for contemplations which I knew not of.

When I parted with him, I doubted which of us would be first at heaven: but he is gone before, and I am at the door, and somewhat the willinger to go, when I think such souls as his are there.

When he was gone to Gloucestershire, and his contemplations were published by you, I sent him

the confession of my censures of him, how I had feared that he had allowed too great a share of his time and thoughts to speculation, and too little to practicals; but rejoiced to see the conviction of my error: and he returned me a very kind letter, which was the last.

Some censured him for living under such a curate at Acton, thinking it was in his power to have got Dr. Reeves, the parson, to provide a better. Of which I can say, that I once took the liberty to tell him, that I feared too much tepidity in him, by reason of that thing; not that he needed himself a better teacher, who knew more, and could over-look scandals; but for the sake of the poor ignorant people, who greatly needed better help. He answered me, that if money would do it, he would willingly have done it; but the Dr. was a man, not to be dealt with; which was the hardest word that I remember I ever heard him use of any. For I never knew any man more free from speaking evil of others behind their backs. Whenever the discourse came up to the faultiness of any individuals, he would be silent: but the sorts of faulty persons he would blame with cautelous freedom, especially idle, proud, scandalous, contentious, and factious clergymen. We agreed in nothing more than that which he oft repeateth in the papers which you gave me, and which he oft expressed, viz. that true religion consisteth in great, plain, necessary things, the life of faith and hope, the love of God and man, an humble self-denying  
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mind, with mortification of worldly affection, carnal lust, &c. And that the calamity of the church, and withering of religion, hath come from proud and busy men's additions, that cannot give peace to themselves and others, by living in love and quietness on this christian simplicity of faith and practice, but vex and turmoil the church with these needless and hurtful superfluities; some by their decisions of words, or unnecessary controversies; and some by their restless reaching after their own worldly interest, and corrupting the church, on pretence of raising and defending it; some by their needless ceremonies, and some by their superstitious and causeless scruples. But he was especially angry at them that would so manage their differences about such things, as to shew, that they had a greater zeal for their own additions, than for the common saving truths and duties which we were all agreed in; and that did so manage their several little and selfish causes, as wounded or injured the common cause of the christian and reformed churches. He had a great distaste of the books called, a friendly debate, &c. and ecclesiastical polity, as from an evil spirit, injuring scripture phrase, and tempting the atheists to condemn all religion, so they might but vent their spleen, and be thought to have the better of their adversaries; and would say, how easy is it to requite such men, and all parties to expose each other to contempt? (Indeed, how many parishes in England afford too plenteous matter of reply

to one that took that for his part; and of tears to serious observers)?

His main desire was, that as men should not be peevishly quarrellous against any lawful circumstances, forms or orders in religion, much less think themselves godly men, because they can fly from other mens circumstances, or settled lawful orders as sin; so especially, that no human additions of opinion, order, modes, ceremonies, professions, or promises, should ever be managed to the hindering of christian love and peace, nor of the preaching of the gospel, nor the wrong of our common cause, or the strengthening of atheism, infidelity, prophaneness or popery; but that christian verity and piety, the love of God and man, and a good life, and our common peace in these, might be first resolved on and secured, and all our additions might be used, but in due subordination to these, and not to any injury of any of them; nor sects, parties, or narrow interests be set up against the common duty, and the public interest and peace.

I know you are acquainted, how greatly he valued Mr. Selden, being one of his executors; his books and picture being still near him. I think it meet therefore to remember, that because many Hobbists do report, that Mr. Selden was at the heart an infidel, and inclined to the opinions of Hobbs, I desired him to tell me the truth herein: and he oft professed to me, that Mr. Selden was a resolved serious christian; and that he was a great adversary to Hobbs's errors; and that he had seen  
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him openly oppose him so earnestly, as either to depart from him, or drive him out of the room. And as Mr. Selden was one of those called Erastians (as his book de Synedriis, and others shew), yet owned the office properly ministerial. So most lawyers that ever I was acquainted with, taking the word jurisdiction, to signify something more than the meer doctoral, priestly power, and power over their own sacramental communion in the church which they guide, do use to say, that it is primarily in the magistrate (as no doubt all power of corporal coercion, by mulcts and penalties is). And as to the accidentals to the proper power of priesthood, or the keys, they truly say with Dr. Stillingsfleet, that God hath settled no one form.

Indeed, the lord chief justice thought, that the power of the word and sacraments in the ministerial office, was of God's institution; and that they were the proper judges appointed by Christ, to whom they themselves should apply sacraments, and to whom they should deny them. But that the power of chancellors courts, and many modal additions, which are not of the essence of the priestly office, floweth from the king, and may be fitted to the state of the kingdom. Which is true, if it be limited by God's laws, and exercised on things only allowed them to deal in, and contradict not the orders and powers settled by Christ and his apostles.

On this account he thought well of the form of government in the church of England; (lamenting  
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ing the miscarriages of many persons), and the want of parochial reformation: but he was greatly for uniting in love and peace, upon so much as is necessary to salvation, with all good, sober, peaceable men.

And he was much against the corrupting of the christian religion (whose simplicity and purity he justly took to be much of its excellency), by mens busy additions, by wit, policy, ambition, or any thing else which sophisticateth it, and maketh it another thing, and causeth the lamentable contentions of the world.

What he was as a lawyer, a judge, a christian, is so well known, that I think for me to pretend that my testimony is of any use, were vain. I will only tell you what I have written by his picture, in the front of the great bible which I bought with his legacy, in memory of his love and name, viz. " Sir Matthew Hale, that unwearied student, that prudent man, that solid philosopher, that famous lawyer, that pillar and basis of justice (who would not have done an unjust act for any worldly price or motive), the ornament of his majesty's government, and honour of England; the highest faculty of the soul of Westminster-hall, and pattern to all the reverend and honourable judges; that godly, serious, practical christian, the lover of goodness and all good men; a lamenter of the clergy's selfishness, and unfaithfulness, and discord, and of the sad divisions following hereupon; an earnest desire of their reformation, concord, and  
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the church's peace, and of a reformed act of uniformity, as the best and necessary means thereto; that great contemner of the riches, pomp and vanity of the world; that pattern of honest plainness and humility, who while he fled from the honours that pursued him, was yet lord chief justice of the king's bench, after his being long lord chief baron of the exchequer; living and dying, entering on, using, and voluntarily surrendering his place of judicature, with the most universal love, and honour, and praise, that ever did English subject in this age, or any that just history doth acquaint us with, &c. &c. &c. This man so wise, so good, so great, bequeathing me in his testament the legacy of forty shillings, meerly as a testimony of his respect and love, I thought this book, the testament of Christ, the meetest purchase by that price, to remain in memorial of the faithful love, which he bare and long expressed to his inferior and unworthy, but honouring friend, who thought to have been with Christ before him, and waiteth for the day of his perfect conjunction with the spirits of the just made perfect."

RICHARD BAXTER.