

SOME

NECESSARY and IMPORTANT  
CONSIDERATIONS,

DIRECTED

To ALL Sorts of PEOPLE,

Taken out of the

WRITINGS

OF

That late Worthy and Renowned Judge

Sir MATTHEW HALE.

Wherein is discovered,

His own Experience of the *Inward* and *Invisible* Guidance

OF

The SPIRIT OF GOD.

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TWELFTH EDITION.

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*The Righteous shall be had in everlasting Remembrance. Psal. cxii. 6.  
What Man is he that feareth the Lord? him shall he teach in the Way  
that he shall chuse; Psal. xxv. 21.*

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WOODBRIDGE:

Printed and Sold, by JAMES PARKER, MDCCLIX.

Mr. Baxter's Character of Judge HALE, in the Account of his Life.

SIR *Matheew 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) that godly, serious, practical Christian; the Lover of Goodness and all good Men; that great Contemner of the Riches, Fame and Vanity of the World; who, while he fled from the Honour that pursued him, was yet made Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench, after being long Lord Chief Baron of the Exchequer; living and dying with the most universal Love, Honour and Praise, that ever did any English Subject in this Age, or any that just History doth acquaint us with.

In his younger Days he was eminent for the Gravity of his Deportment, and remarkable Probity of Mind; but yet loved Gaity of Dress and much vain Company; which he did not break off till a sad Accident drove him from it. Being, with some other young Students, invited to be merry out of Town, one of the Company called for so much Wine, that notwithstanding all that Mr. *Hale* could do to prevent it, he went on in his Exceis, till he fell down dead; and all that were present were greatly terrified. This Accident particularly affected Mr. *Hale*; who withdrew into another Room, and shutting the Door, fell on his Knees, and prayed earnestly to God, both for his Friend, that he might return to Life, and himself be pardoned for countenancing such Exceis, vowing he would never keep Company in that Manner, nor drink a Health, while he lived: His Friend recovered, and he religiously observed his Vow till his Death.

He that reads this little Book in a serious and weighty Mind, may, as in a Glass, plainly see how it is betwixt God and his own Soul.

Some necessary and important CONSIDERATIONS, taken out of the *Great Audit*: with some Account of the *Good Steward*.

As touching my Conscience.

I HAVE been very diligent to keep my Conscience clean, to encourage it in the Vicegerency that thou (the great Lord of the World) hast given it over my Soul and Actions. I have kept it in the Throne and greatest Reverence and Authority in my Heart.

In Actions to be done or omitted, I have always advised with it, and taken its Advice; I have neither stifled, nor forced, nor bribed it, but gave it free Liberty to advise and speak out, and a free Subjection of my Will, Purposes and Actions to it.

If thro' Importunity of Temptations, &c. I have at any Time done amiss, I have not taken her up short, or stopped her Mouth, or my own Attention to her Chiding or Reproof; but I have, with much Submission of Mind borne her Chastisement, and improv'd it to an Humbling of myself before Thee for my Failings; for I look'd upon her as acting by thy Authority, for thy Service, and to thy Glory; and I durst not discourage, discountenance, or disobey her.

When she was pleased, and gave me good Words, I was glad, for I esteemed her as a Glass that represented to my Soul the Favour or Displeasure of God himself, and how he stood affected towards me.

I have more trembled under the Fear of a scared or discouraged Conscience, than under the Fear of a sharp or scrupulous Conscience, because I always accounted the latter, tho' more troublesome, yet more safe.

I have

I have been very jealous either of wounding, or grieving or discouraging, or deadning my Conscience; I have therefore chosen rather to forbear that which seemed but indifferent, lest there should be some-what in it that might be unlawful, and would rather gratify my Conscience with being too scrupulous, than displease, disquiet or flat it, by being too venturous: I have still chosen rather to forbear what might be probably lawful, than to do that which might be possibly unlawful, because I could not err in the former, I might in the latter.

I have been careful to advise impartially with my Conscience before my Actions; but lest I had committed any Thing amiss, either in the Nature or the Manner of the Action, I commonly every Night, brought my Actions of the Day past, before the Judicatory of my Conscience, and left her to a free and impartial censure of them; and what she sentenced *Well done*, I, with Humility, returned the Praise thereof to thy Name: What she sentenced *done amiss*, I did humbly sue unto Thee for Pardon, and for Grace to prevent me from the like Miscarriages. By this Means I kept my Conscience active, renewed, and preserved my Peace with Thee, and learned Vigilance and Caution for the Time to come.

#### *Touching thy Creatures.*

I Have not only look'd upon thy Blessings and Bounty, in lending me thy own Creatures for my Use, but I have sought unto Thee for a Blessing upon them, in my Use of them. I did very well observe, that there is by my Sin a Curse upon the very Creatures that I receive, unless thy Blessing fetch it out; an Emptiness in them, unless thy Goodness fill them. Tho' thou shouldest give me Quails and Manna from Heaven, yet without thy Blessing upon them, they would become Rottenness and Putrefaction to me, and therefore I ever begg'd thy Blessing upon thy Blessings, as well as the Blessings themselves, and

and attributed the Good I found, or was to expect in them, to the same Hand that gave them.

I received and used thy Creatures as committed to me under a Trust, and as a Steward and Accomptant for them; and therefore I was always careful to use them according to those Limits, and in order for those Ends, for which thou didst commit them to me; 1<sup>st</sup>. With Temperance and Moderation; I did not use thy Creatures to Luxury and Excess, to make Provision for my Lufts, with Vain-glory or Ostentation, but for the convenient Support of the Exigencies of my Nature and Condition; and if at any Time thy Goodness did indulge me an Use of them for Delight, as well as Necessity, I did it but rarely and watchfully: I looked not upon the Wine when it gave its Colour in the Cup, nor gave myself over either to Excess or Curiosity in Meats or Drinks; I check'd myself therein, as being in thy Presence, and still remembered I had thy Creatures under an Account; and was ever careful to avoid Excess or Intemperance, because every excessive Cup and Meal was in Danger to leave somewhat in Supper and Arrear to my Lord. 2<sup>dly</sup>. With Mercy and Compassion to the Creatures themselves, which thou hast put under my Power and Disposal. When I considered the admirable Powers of Life and Sense which I saw in the Birds and Beasts; and that all the Men in the World could not give the like Being to any Thing, nor restore that Life and Sense which is once taken from them: When I considered how innocently and harmlessly the Fowls and Fish, the Sheep and Oxen take their Food, that thou the Lord of All, hast given them; I have been apt to think, that surely thou didst intend a more innocent Kind of Food to Man, than such as must be taken with such Detriment to those living Parts of thy Creation: And tho' thy wonderful Goodness hath so much indulged Mankind, as to give up the Lives of these Creatures for the Food of Man, by thy express Permission, yet I still do, and ever did think, that there was a Justice due from Man,

even to these sensible Creatures, and that he should take them sparingly, for Necessity, and not for Delight, or if for Delight, yet not for Luxury. I have been apt to think, that if there were any more liberal Use of Creatures for Delight or Variety, it should be of Fruits, or such other Delicacies as might be had without the Jois of Life; But however it be, this very Consideration hath made me very sparing and careful, not vainly or superfluously, or unnecessarily, or prodigally, to take away the Life of thy Creatures for Feasting and Excess. And the very same Consideration hath always gone along with me, in Reference to the Labour of thy Creatures: I have even thought, there was a certain Degree of Justice due from Man to the Creatures, as from Man to Man; and that an excessive, immoderate, unseasonable Use of the Creatures Labour, is an Injustice, for which he must account.

To deny domestical Creatures their convenient Food; to exact that Labour from them that they are not able to perform; to use Extremity or Cruelty towards them, is a Breach of that Trust, under which the Dominion of the Creatures was committed to us, and a Breach of that Justice that is due from Men to them; and therefore I have always esteemed it as Part of my Duty, and it hath always been my Practice, to be merciful to my Beasts; and upon the same account I have ever esteemed it a Breach of Trust, and have accordingly declined any Cruelty to any of thy Creatures; and as much as I might, prevented it in others, as a Tyranny, inconsistent with the Trust and Stewardship that thou hast committed to me. I have abhorred those Sports that consist in the torturing of the Creatures; and if either noxious Creatures must be destroyed, or Creatures for Food must be taken, it hath been my Practice to do it in that manner, that may be with the least Torture or Cruelty to the Creature; and I have still thought it an unlawful thing to destroy those Creatures for Recreation Sake, that either were not hurtful when they lived, or are not hurtful when they are killed; ever remembering

that tho' thou hast given us a Dominion over thy Creatures; yet it is under a Law of Justice, Prudence, and Moderation; otherwise we should become Tyrants, not Lords over thy Creatures; and therefore those Things of this Nature, that others have practised as Recreations, I have avoided as Sins.

*Touching my Body.*

**M**Y Body, which was given to serve and obey, became the Empress, and commanded, and corrupted my Soul; embased and enslav'd it to Lust and Disorder; and my Soul, which was given to rule, became but the Slave of my-Body: I consider'd, that if the Business was thus, my Happiness must be only in this Life; and that when Death seiz'd upon me I had an immortal Soul that had lost her Time wholly in this World; and therefore could expect nothing but Vexation and everlasting Confusion to all Eternity, &c. Upon these and the like Considerations, I resolv'd and practic'd Severity over my Body; and refused to gratify her intemperate Desires: Denied them, kept them in Awe, and under Discipline; and because I found that my Lusts grew unruly, by Variety and Curiosity of Meats and Drinks, I subdued them by moderate Diet and Temperance.

My Table was sparing to myself, my Cloaths plain, my Retinue, and Attendance, but necessary: I chased away my Lusts, with the Contemplations of the Presence of God, the End of Christ's Sufferings, the Certainty yet Uncertainty of Death, the State after Death; and mingled all my Enjoyments and Desires, with these serious and cleansing Considerations; and I peremptorily refused to gratify the Cravings of an inordinate, sensual Appetite; and did resolutely let them know, they should not, might not expect any better dealing from me; and my Practice was accordingly.

*Concerning my Wealth.*

**T**HE more I had, the more was my Care, and the greater the Charge that I had under my Hands, and the more was my Solicitude to be a faithful Steward of it, to the Honour and Use of my Master; but my Part was the least that was in it: Indeed I rejoiced in this, that my Master esteemed me wise and faithful, committing the Dispensation thereof to my Trust; but I thought it no more mine, than the Lord's Bailiff, or the Merchant's Cash-keeper, thinks his Master's Rents or Money his.

And therefore thought it would be a Breach of my Trust to consume or imbezzle that Wealth in excessive Superfluities of Meats, Drinks or Apparel, or in advancing myself or my Posterity, to a massy or huge Acquest.

*Touching my Reputation.*

**T**HOU' I have lov'd my Reputation, and have been vigilant not to lose or impair it by my Default or Neglect, yet I have look'd upon it as a brittle Thing, a Thing that the Devil aims to hit in a special Manner, a Thing that is much in the Power of a false Report, a Mistake, a Misapprehension, to wound and hurt; notwithstanding all my Care I am at the Mercy of others, without God's wonderful over-ruling Providence. And as my Reputation is the Esteem that others have of me, so that Esteem may be blemished without my Default; I have therefore always taken this Care, not to set my Heart upon my Reputation. I will use all Fidelity and Honesty, and take care that it shall not be lost by any Default of mine; and if notwithstanding all this, my Reputation be soiled by evil or envious Men, I will patiently bear it, and content myself with the Serenity of my own Conscience: *Luci Marus abentus esto.*



*The same Author, in his Book of The Nature of true Religion, pag. 17, &c. says,*

**T**RUE Religion teaches the Soul to have a high Reverence and Veneration of Almighty God, a sincere and bright walking, *as in the Presence of the invisible all-seeing God*: It makes a Man truly to love, to honour, to obey him, and therefore carefully to know what his Will is: It renders the Heart highly thankful to him, both as his Creator, Redeemer and Benefactor; It makes a Man entirely depend upon him, to seek to him for Guidance, Direction and Protection of Soul: It gives the Law not only to his Words and Actions, but to his very Thoughts and Purposes, that he dares not entertain Thoughts unbecoming the Sight and Presence of that God, to whom all our Thoughts are legible. It teacheth and bringeth a Man to such a Deportment both of external and internal Sobriety, that he may appear decent in the Presence of God, and all his Angels. It (True Religion) crusheth and casteth down all Pride and Haughtiness, both in Men's Heart and Conversation, and gives him an humble Frame of Soul and Life, such in the Sight of God and Men. It regulates and governs the Passions of the Mind, and brings them into due Moderation and Frame. It gives a Man a right Estimate of this present World, and sets the Heart and Hopes above it, so that he never loves it more than it deserves. It makes the Wealth and the Glory of this World, (high Offices and great Preferments) but of low and little Value in his Sight; so that he is neither covetous, nor ambitious, nor solicitous concerning the Advantages of it. It brings a Man to that Frame, that Righteousness, Justice, Honesty and Fidelity is, as it were, part of his Nature; he can never die than commit or purpose that which is unjust, dishonest or unworthy a good Man. It makes him value the Love of God, and Peace of Conscience, above all the Wealth and Honour in the World, and to be very vigilant

lant to keep it inviolably. He performs all his Duties to God in Sincerity and Integrity; and whilst he lives on Earth yet his Conversation, his Hopes, his Treasure, is in Heaven, and he entirely endeavours to walk suitably to such Hope. This Man hath the Life of Religion in him, and that Life acts in him, and will conform his Soul to the Image of his Saviour, and to walk along with him to Eternity.



**G**OD hath given to the Sons of Men, in respect of sensual Things, Objects, not only for Necessity, but for Delight; but here is their Misery, as well as their Sin, that they rest not in what God lawfully allows. And hence it is that the God of Mercy curies, and that most justly, his own Blessings, unto that Man that thus perverts the Use of them. *Wine Rejoiceth the Heart of Man*, as it was given for that End; but when a Man in the Use of it, looks no higher but to satiate himself, there is a Sting put into it, and it proves a Serpent, *Prov. 23. 32. Knowledge of God* p. 286.

*Touching Conscience.*

**C**ONSCIENCE is God's Vicegerent in Man, and when her Lord is angry, the Conscience will chide (reprove) him. It is a Glass wherein a Man may, by Reflection, see the Face of Heaven, and of his own Soul. See his Book, entitled *Knowledge of God*, p. 26.

If thy Conscience blame thee, tho' never so little, despise it not, nor neglect this secret Check, it is a Message from Heaven, that doth summon thee to thy Duty, page 372.

Certainly the Sense of the Love of God is either not at all, or not awake, when any Man, considerately, commits the least Sin against his Conscience. p. 207.

The Direction of Conscience, when it is well used, is seldom without the immediate Direction of the very Spirit

God; but if the Guidance of that Spirit be neglected, it will not return to thy Assistance when thou pleasest, p. 369. There is nothing in the World conduceth more to the Composure and Tranquility of the Mind, than the Serenity and Clearness of the Conscience; keep but that safe and untroubled, the Mind will enjoy a Calm and Tranquility in the midst of all the Storms of the World; and although the Waves beat, and the Sea works, and the Winds blow, the Mind that hath a quiet and clear Conscience within, will be as stable and as safe from Perturbation as a Rock in the tempestuous Sea, and will be a Goshen to, and within thee, when the rest of the World without, is like an Egypt of Flames and Darknefs.

Whenever thou dost hazard or lose, keep the Integrity of thy Conscience, both before Troubles come, and under them; it is a Jewel will make thee rich in the Midst of Poverty, a Sun that will give thee Light in the Midst of Darknefs, a Fortrefs that will keep thee safe in the greatest Danger; and that is never to be taken from thee, unless thou thyself betray it, and deliver it up.



*Judge Hale's Experience of the Inward and Invisible Guidance of the Spirit of God.*

**A**LL those that truly fear God, have a sincere Guidance from a higher Wisdom than what is barely human, namely, *The Spirit of Truth and Wisdom*, that doth really direct them, but secretly prevent and direct them. Any Man that sincerely and truly fears Almighty God, relies upon him, and calls upon him, for his Guidance and Direction, hath it as really as a Son hath the Counsel and Direction of a Father; and tho' the Voice be not audible, nor the Direction always perceptible, or discernable to Sense, it is equally as real as if a Man heard the Voice, saying, *This is the Way, walk in it.* And this secret Direction of the Almighty God is principally seen in Matters relating to

the Good of the Soul, yet it may also be found in the Concerns of this Life, which a good Man, that fears God, and begs his Direction, shall very often, if not at all Times find. *Contempl. p. 45.*

I can call my own Experience to Witness, that even the external Actions of my whole Life, I was never disappointed of the best Guidance and Direction, when I have in Humility and Sincerity, implored the secret Direction and Guidance of the Divine Wisdom, *p. 323.*

The Observation of the secret Admonitions of the Spirit of God in the Heart, as it is an effectual Means, so it is a calm and comfortable Means to cleanse and sanctify the Heart; and the more it is attended unto, the more it will be conversant with thy Soul, for thy Instruction. In the midst of thy Difficulties, it will be thy Counsellor; in the midst of thy Temptations, it will be thy Strength; and Grace sufficient for thee. In the midst of thy Troubles it will be thy Light and thy Comforter; only beware thou neglect not the Voice of this Spirit; it may be thy Neglect may quench it, and thou mayst never hear that Voice more. *Knowledge of God, p. 31.*

It is impossible for thee to enjoy that which must make thee happy, till thou art deeply sensible of thy own Emptiness and Nothingness, and thy Spirit thereby brought down and laid in the Dust: The Spirit of Christ is an humbling Spirit, the more thou hast of it, the more it will humble thee; and it is a Sign, that either thou hast it not, or that it is yet over-mastered by thy Corruptions, if thy Heart be still haughty.

Watch therefore, the secret Persuasions and Dispersions of the Spirit of God; and beware thou quench it not, nor grieve it; be sure thou observe this Voice. This Wind that blows where it listeth, if shut out, resisted or grieved, may haply never breath upon thee again, but leave thee to be hardened in thy Sins: But if observed and obeyed, thou shalt be sure to have it thy Monitor and Director upon all Occasions. *When thou sleepest, it will keep thee; when thou*

*wakest, it will keep thee; and when thou wakest, it will talk with thee.*

[These are faithful, weighty and true Sayings.]

Sir Matthew Hale sums up Religion thus,

HE that fears the Lord of Heaven and Earth, walks humbly before him, thankfully lays hold of the Message of Redemption by Jesus Christ, and strives to express his Gratitude by the Sincerity of his Obedience: He is ready with all his Soul when he comes short of his Duty: He walks watchfully in the Denial of himself, and holds no confederacy with any Lust or known Sin: If he falls in the least Measure, he is restless till he has made his Peace by Repentance. He is true in his Promises, just in his Dealings, charitable to the Poor, sincere in his Devotion; he will not deliberately dishonour God, altho' with the greatest Security of Impunity; that hath his Hopes and Conversation in Heaven; that dares not do any Thing unjustly, altho' never so much to his Advantage; and all this because he sees him that is invisible, and fears him because he loves him, fears him as well for his Goodness as his Greatness. Such a Man, whether he be an *Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Baptist* or *Quaker*, whether he wears a *Wig*, or wears none, whether he hears Organs, or hears none; whether he kneels at the Communion, or for conscience sake stands or sits, he hath the Life of Religion in him, and that Life acts in him, and will conform his Soul to the Image of his Saviour, and go along with him to Eternity, notwithstanding his Practice or Non-Practice of Things indifferent.

On the other Side, if a Man fears not the Eternal God, he does commit Sin with Presumption; he can drink to excess, lie, swear vainly and falsely, live loosely, break his Promises. Such a Man, altho' he cry down Bishops, or

cry down Presbytery; altho' he be re-baptised every Day or disclaim it as Heresie; altho' he fast all the Lent, feast out of Pretence for avoiding Superstition; yet withstanding all these, and a Thousand more external Conformities, or zealous Oppositions of them, he wants **LIFE OF RELIGION.**

*Bishop Burnet, Author of the History of the Reformation has the following Passage, viz.*

**N**OTHING does so open our Faculties, and compose direct the whole Man, as an inward Sense of GOD his Authority over us, of his Eye ever upon us, of his being our Prayers, assisting our Endeavours, watching over our Concerns; and of his being a Judge, and to reward or punish us in another State, according to what we do in this. Nothing will give a Man such a Detestation of Sin, and such a Sense of the Goodness of God, and of our Obligations to Holiness, as a right Understanding and a firm Belief of the Christian Religion. By Religion, I do not mean an outward Compliance with Forms and Customs in going to Church, to Prayers, to Sermons, and to Sacraments, with an external shew of Devotion, and with some inward forced good Thoughts, in which many satisfy themselves, while this has no visible Effect on their Lives, nor no inward Force to subdue and restrain their Appetites, Passions and Designs; Secret Prayer, the most effectual of all other Means, is designed for a higher End, which is to possess our Minds with such a constant Sense of Divine Truths, as may make them live in us, and govern us, and may draw down such Assistances as may enlighten and sanctify our Natures. So that by Religion, I mean a Sense of Divine Truth, as enters into Man, and becomes a Spring of a new Nature within him; reforming his Thoughts and Designs, purifying his Heart, and sanctifying him, so as to govern his whole Deportment, his Words as well as his

actions; convincing him, that it is not enough not to be scandalously vicious, or to be innocent in his Conversation, but that he must be entirely, uniformly and constantly pure and vertuous, animating him with a Zeal to be still better and better, more eminently good and exemplary, using Prayers and all outward Devotions, as solemn Acts, testifying what he is inwardly and in Heart, and as Methods instituted by God, to be still advancing in the Use of them, further and further into a more refined and spiritual Sense of Divine Matters. This is true Religion, which is the Perfection of human Nature, and the Joy and Delight of every One that feels it active and strong within him. It is true, this is not arrived at all at once, and it will be an unhappy Allay hanging long even about a good Man, as those ill Mixtures are the perpetual Grief of his Soul, which is his chief Care to watch over and to mortify them; he must be in a continual Progress, still gaining Ground upon himself; and as he attains to a good Degree of Purity, he will have a noble Flame of Life and Joy growing up in him. Of this I write with more Concern and Emotion, because I have felt this the true and indeed the only Joy which runs thro' a Man's Heart and Life; it is that which hath for many Years been my greatest Support, I rejoyce daily in it; I feel it from the Earnest of that Supreme Joy which I long and pant for. I am sure there is nothing else can afford any true or compleat Happiness. I have, considering my Sphere, seen a great deal of all that is most striking and tempting in the World; I acquainted myself with Knowledge and Learning, in a great Variety; and tho' human Wisdom excels Folly, as much as Light doth Darkness, yet as it is a sore Travail, so it is so difficult, that what is wanting to compleat it, can't be numbered. I have seen that two were better than one, and that a threefold Cord is not easily loosed, and have therefore cultivated Friendship with much Zeal and disinterested Tenderness; but I have found this also Vanity and Vexation of Spirit. So that upon great and long Experience, I could enlarge upon the Teacher's Text, Vanity of Vanities, and All is Vanity; I must also conclude with him, Fear God and keep his Commandments;



Commandments; for this is all of Man, the whole both his Duty and his Happiness. I do therefore end all in Words of David, of the Truth of which, upon great Experience and long Observation, I am so well assured, that I leave these as my last Words to Posterity.

Come ye Children, hearken unto me, I will teach thee the Fear of the Lord: What Man is he that desireth long life and loveth many Days, that he may see good? Keep thy Tongue from Evil and thy Lips from speaking Guilt. Depart from Evil, and do Good, seek Peace and pursue it. The Eyes of the Lord are upon the Righteous, and his Ears are open to their Cry, but the Face of the Lord is against them that do Evil, to cut off the Remembrance of them from the Earth. The Righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their Troubles. The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken Heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite Spirit.

**K**NOW then this Truth (enough for Man to know)  
*'Virtue alone is Happiness below:  
 The only Point where human bliss stands still,  
 And taste the good, without the fall to ill;  
 Where only Merit constant pay receives,  
 Is blest in what it takes, and what it gives;  
 The Joy unequal'd, if its end it gain,  
 And, if it lose, attended with no Pain.*

The E N D.

