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Harvard Theological Review / Volume 10 / Issue 03 / July 1917, pp 245 - 271
DOI: 10.1017/S0017816000000869, Published online: 03 November 2011

Link to this article: http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0017816000000869

How to cite this article:

Nancy E. Scott (1917). The Ever Memorable Mr. John Hales. Harvard Theological Review, 10, pp 245-271 doi:10.1017/S0017816000000869

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THE EVER MEMORABLE MR. JOHN HALES

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In the midst of dusty records in long-forgotten corners of history one sometimes comes pleasantly upon personalities which have all the freshness and charm of present-day acquaintances. At once they become such real friends that one wonders how they have escaped more general notice. One feels that it must have been untoward circumstances only which veiled their light and kept its radiance from shining down the centuries to reveal them at least to their spiritual kin of later times.

Such a one was John Hales of Eton College, called curiously enough by his own generation and that following the "ever memorable." We no longer render him the homage which his contemporaries felt would even now be his. One likes to feel, however, that theirs was not a mistaken judgment, but perhaps a prophecy. In many ways Hales was for his time peculiarly modern; he was one of those free thinkers who belong both to their own age and to a far-distant time; one of those whose ideas, when the years that form the gap between have been fulfilled, stand revealed in almost startling agreement with contemporary thought. He cannot remain but a dim name in the midst of the chaos of the seventeenth century.

He himself made no effort to win fame either among his contemporaries or from posterity. In the three small volumes which contain his writings there is nothing which was meant to serve more than the immediate occasion. It was only long afterward and with great difficulty

that the few scattered records of his thought were all collected. They consist of seventeen sermons, less than half a dozen small tracts of a few pages each on religious subjects, eight or ten letters to various of his friends, and a series of some thirty-odd letters to Sir Dudley Carlton, the English Ambassador at The Hague, whose chaplain Hales then was and by whom he had been sent to witness the proceedings of the Synod of Dort. He was above all else a scholar, and when we consider, for instance, the nine bulky volumes of his contemporary, Archbishop Laud, a busy executive, his record seems meagre indeed. His little writing was not from lack of power but was due mainly to deliberate choice. His friends urged him to write more, but he as persistently refused. To personal glory he was indifferent, an attitude which constitutes much of his charm. He felt that he could do more good by teaching, by direct contact with people, than by writing. He deplored the mass of controversial literature of his day. He realized that many of his own opinions were not those commonly held, and he wished to avoid any possibility of injury that might result from obtruding them upon others. Not only did he refrain from writing but he would not accept high position in either the universities or the Church. By choice he passed most of his life in scholarly retirement at Eton College, where he might, as he said on one occasion when expressing his preference, have "a small, a private, a retired Auditory."

Yet no man was accorded greater praise than he by a wide circle of learned and influential friends. The Earl of Clarendon spoke of him as "one of the least men in the kingdom and one of the greatest scholars in Europe." He marvelled at his preferring to live at Eton when his learning and ability were such as to have gained for him, had he so wished, any position within the gift of the Church. He praised his profound

judgment and his discerning spirit, and remarked that he had read more and retained more in his memory than any man he knew except Lord Falkland, who he thought "sided him." The two men, Hales and Falkland, thus placed together by Clarendon, were themselves intimate friends. They were much alike in spirit. Anthony à Wood gave Hales a high place among his Oxford worthies. On one occasion he applied to him the epithet, "a walking library," and on another, when speaking of the life of John Donne by Isaac Walton, the greatest praise he could give the book was to say that Hales, "the best critic of the last age," had approved of it. Stillingtonfleet, Bishop of Worcester, in praising his wisdom, judgment, and moderation, spoke of him as "that incomparable man." Dr. Heylin, Laud's biographer, called him a "man of infinite reading and no less ingenuity, free of discourse, and as communicative of his knowledge as the celestial bodies of their light and influence." Andrew Marvel, a man of opposite religious views, counted it "no small honor to have grown up into some part of his [Hales'] acquaintance, and to have conversed awhile with the living remains of one of the clearest heads and best-prepared breasts in Christendom." Bishop Pearson, of Chester, long Hales' friend, described him as "a man of as great sharpness, quickness, and subtilty of wit, as ever this or perhaps any nation bred." "His industry did strive," he said, "if it were possible, to equal the largeness of his capacity, whereby he became as great a master of polite, various, and universal learning, as ever yet conversed with books."

None of these men could find terms strong enough, seemingly, in which to express their admiration for Hales. Yet while many of their names are today household words with us, he of whom they thus spoke is almost entirely forgotten. If what they said of him was true, and we do not doubt their testimony in other matters,

he too was a force in his generation. His was the quiet radiation of a luminous personality, a direct man-to-man influence, with only the intangible result of more threads of pure gold woven into the fabric of the lives of those who knew him. To catch again the full vision of such a life is difficult indeed, yet such is the charm of even a few bright gleams, that, as a child that seeks the end of the rainbow, one is led irresistibly on in the hope of discovering the full brightness of the treasures of mind and heart which endeared Hales to his contemporaries.

He was born at Bath in 1584. His father was John Hales, who acted as steward to the Horner family in Somersetshire. At Bath he was educated in "grammar learning," in the phrase of Anthony à Wood, and at thirteen, he went to Oxford, where he became a scholar of Corpus Christi. Finally in 1605, when he was twenty-one, as that old worthy quaintly continues, "the prodigious pregnancy of his parts being discovered by the Hedge beaters of Sir Henry Savile, he was encouraged to stand for a Fellowship at Merton." Although the competition was strong and all the candidates "sifted and examined to the utmost," he stood easily first among those appointed. One is not surprised that he did if Wood's testimony be true that certain seniors at Oxford, at his (Wood's) first coming there, told him that no one "in the then memory of man" ever went beyond him for "subtle Disputations in Philosophy, for his eloquent Declamations and Orations; as also for his exact knowledge in the Greek tongue." He proceeded M.A. in 1609. For a time he was lecturer in Greek at Merton, and in 1612 was made public university lecturer in the same subject. Part at least of Wood's praise of him must have been well founded. During the years from 1610 to 1613 were published the volumes of Sir Henry Savile's fine edition of Chrysostom. Savile was at this time warden of Merton. He had been the first to recog-

nize Hales' ability and to secure his promotion. It was he whom he chose to help him in his great work of editing the eloquent Greek Father. Hales' own joy in the task and the extent to which he shared the spirit of the author, are evident from the numerous references to Chrysostom in his own later sermons.

In 1596, without giving up the wardenship of Merton, Savile had been made provost of Eton College. As a part of the Eton foundation were a number of Fellowships designed for the support of resident scholars, men of mature and recognized ability, who would thus have leisure amid congenial surroundings to carry on their researches. They also shared the common life and work of the college. Each college was proud of the record of the scholars whom it could thus permanently attach to itself. Although Sir Henry was, as Wood curiously laments, "troubled with the cumbrances of marriage," he desired to improve the college of which he was the head with "riches and literature." Accordingly in 1613, as one step toward the latter end, he made his young Oxford assistant one of the Fellows of Eton. To Hales the appointment was peculiarly pleasing. Besides continuing his intimate and happy companionship with the older scholar, it afforded him just that measure of seclusion which his modest yet industrious soul most craved. He felt that he could do more good through his researches than by accepting a position involving wide pastoral duties. The money reward of more active work made no appeal to him. Clarendon quoted him as saying on one occasion that his Fellowship and the place of bursar, which he also filled at Eton, brought him fifty pounds a year more than he could spend. Yet their combined income was very small. His only personal extravagance was books. His library was valued at twenty-five hundred pounds, and was, in Aubrey's phrase, "a noble one and judiciously chosen."

Clarendon considered it the best private library he had ever seen. It is with Eton that Hales' name is always associated. There were passed the busy, mature years of his life, from the time when he was twenty-nine until he was sixty-five. From his activity there not only many generations of Eton boys but men of eminence in England and on the Continent came to know and admire him.

We have noted the high place assigned him as a critic and as a scholar. Although his refusal to write more has kept us from having anything like a complete record of his thought, still the bits which we do possess, miscellaneous and disconnected as they are, furnish indisputable evidence of his intellectual power.

We have for one thing considerable light on the methods by which he did his work. They were strikingly like those of modern scholars. He disclosed them in the talks which from time to time he gave to the boys of Eton, who we think must have been decidedly proud of the quiet but famous little scholar who dwelt among them. Interests primarily religious did not, in his view, excuse one from the labor of critical scholarship. "Piety," he affirmed, "doth not require us to be either short-witted or beggarly." On the contrary, St. Paul himself expressly forbade "greenness of scholarship." Moreover, as he put it with unconsciously humorous emphasis, in interpreting the Scriptures rightly "that which here gives us the victory must be the grace of God and our own industry." He knew the value of systematic work. He was fond of quoting the advice of a former scholar who had said that if a man had thirty years in which to acquire knowledge, he might with greater profit use twenty of them in learning how to study than to spend the entire period in diligent but unregulated work. On the other hand he warned them against securing exactness at the sacrifice of things more worth while. Quoting

Quintilian, he declared that it ought not impeach the learning of a good Grammarian to be ignorant of some things, since there were many "unnecessary quillets and quirks in Grammar, of which to purchase the knowledge were but loss of labor and time." The difficulties which beset the path of the real student he never underestimated. Knowledge he declared to be indeed a very pleasant thing to possess, but the process of learning was, he warned them, "harsh and tedious above all things else in the world." By knowledge he meant not merely knowing what others had put into books, but the attainment of ultimate truth as far as that was humanly possible.

The earnestness with which he himself sought to reach this high goal is evident from a passage of remarkable beauty in a letter he wrote to Archbishop Laud.

"The pursuit of truth," [he said], "hath been my only care, ever since I first understood the meaning of the word. For this, I have forsaken all hopes, all friends, all desires, which might biass me, and hinder me from driving right at what I aimed. For this I have spent all my money, my means, my youth, my age and all that I have; that I might remove from myself that censure of Tertullian, *Suo vitio quis quid ignorat?* If with all this cost and pains, my purchase is but error; I may safely say, to err hath cost me more than it has many to find the truth: and truth itself shall give me this testimony at last, that if I have missed of her, it is not my fault but my misfortune."

What pretended to be truth, he told the students, must be diligently weighed and sifted. He loved Epicharmus' maxim that "The chiefest sinew and strength of wisdom is not easily to believe." This attitude, now particularly dear to the historian, is further emphasized in one of his letters. A friend who was about to undertake the guidance of a young gentleman in the study of Roman history, wrote to him for advice. His answer, printed now as a tract with the title *The Method of Reading Profane History*, reveals not only a wide knowledge of the literature of Roman history but also

a surprising grasp of scientific methods of procedure in its study; such things as due attention to geography and chronology, the critical emendation and comparison of texts, tests of the accuracy and good faith of authors, reliance upon primary sources, orderly methods of taking notes, in fact most of the things which only in the last seventy years have come to be generally recognized as the bulwarks of historical scholarship.

What are the results of his untiring and surprisingly scientific search for truth as shown by his conclusions in regard to the big problems of his own day? Those of which we have fullest record concern the religious situation, one of the two vital issues about to plunge the nation into civil war. Here his intellectual power is abundantly evident, though he did not succeed in solving the vexed problem. His fundamental fallacy, one common to the majority of men in his day, Anglican and Puritan alike, was his belief in the close connection between Church and State. A Royalist in politics, he believed that a single Church organization under the king's control and in religious sympathy with him was a political necessity. He feared that were private unauthorized religious meetings allowed, they might serve as a cloak for treasonable attempts against the sovereign; hence his acquiescence in Laud's severe policy of enforced conformity. He held at the same time views as to the freedom and independence of the individual which are in our opinion a direct denial of the rightfulness of such a policy. He sought to reconcile the two positions by a scheme of comprehension—a single Church which would make provision for individual differences. This was not his idea alone but was common to a whole group of Anglican liberalists. His position was unique in the greater stress which he laid upon the need for individualism and the extent to which, accordingly, he would have altered existing doctrine and practice.

As authoritative sources for the determination of religious truth, he would acknowledge nothing except Scripture and reason; "beyond these two," as he said on one occasion, "I have no ground for my Religion, neither in Substance nor in Ceremony." This was a bold position. It meant the possible rejection of the precepts of one's early training, of usages sanctioned by age or by universality, of decrees of national churches and of general councils, all of which, as he proved in a series of masterly expositions, were but the expressions of man's authority only. To none of these, therefore, belonged infallibility. On the contrary, the command was laid upon each individual, no matter how lowly, "of what sex, of what rank or degree, and place soever, from him that studies in his Library, to him that sweats at the Plough-tail," to know for himself not only "*what*" he believed but "*wherefore*, upon what reason." Such an injunction of course presupposed freedom of thought and the impossibility of coercing belief. On no subject did Hales express himself more strongly.

"The nature of Truth is such," he explained, "that if the understanding apprehend it for Truth, it cannot but assent unto it. No Man can force himself to believe what he lists, or when he lists." Again, princes "can restrain the *outward man*, and moderate our *outward actions*; by *Edicts* and *Laws* they can tie our *hands* and our *tongues*; Thus far they can go, and when they are gone thus far, they can go no farther; But to rule the *inward man*, in our *hearts* and *souls*, to set up an Imperial throne in our understandings and wills, this part of our government belongs to *God* and to *Christ*. . . . Men may be kings of Earth and Bodies, but Christ alone is King of Spirits and Souls." Wherefore, "if Secular Princes stretch out the skirts of their Authority to command ought by which our souls are prejudiced, the King of Souls hath in this case given us a greater command, '*That we rather obey God then men.*'"

With individualism in belief thus given free range, how then, one asks, could there be any unity at all, any scheme of comprehension, however broad? His answer,

and that of the others of this group, was that there were certain fundamental Christian truths so clearly set down in Scripture that no one not of evil mind could fail to recognize them. Here we grant that their psychology was at fault, for unanimity even on a single point is not so readily attained. But of such a possibility they did not have a doubt. In the fundamentals only was belief to be required. All other points of belief, those not fully explained in Scripture or those based on passages the meaning of which was ambiguous, were from their very nature non-essentials. Here, since men's powers of interpretation differed, their conclusions must inevitably be different. That such was the case was wholly negligible, provided men did not make them a ground of separation or try to force them upon others. Opposite opinions of the same thing might even, Hales thought, be of such a nature that both might not only be held without offence, but profitably taught. "It is," he said, "*unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*, and not *Identity of conceit*, which the Holy Ghost requires at the hands of Christians."

He also interpreted belief even in the fundamentals much more broadly than did most of the men of his day. In his classification of "weak Christians," all of whom were to be received into the Church, he included men of upright lives who perchance knew little or nothing of Christ. This somewhat startling position was at least partly due, I fancy, to his love of the classics and of the men of ancient days. The Holy Spirit, he affirmed, had endowed the "famous Ethnicks," as he called them, with "Natural Wisdom and Moral discretion." All the good which such men accomplished, and others like them at present, so-called "moral men," was a part of God's will written in their hearts. In so far as they acted conscientiously, they acted like Christians, and were to be received as such. "Two parts there are," he explained,

“that do compleatly make up a *Christian* man, A true *Faith*, and an honest *Conversation*.” The first part might seem the “worthier” since it gave us the name of Christians, but the second was the “surer.”

His view of the ritual of public worship was an application of the distinction made in matters of belief. Only those parts of the service which rested on essential beliefs were of fundamental importance. Here no error could be tolerated by the worshipper. All other observances, based as they were upon elements of belief which were not essential to salvation, were in their turn matters really of indifference. Here to him and to all those who desired comprehension, was the solution of the English situation. The Anglican Church, they felt, was without error in the fundamentals and hence in the parts of her ritual based on them. In other phases, either of her creed or her ritual, individuals might conceivably and possibly rightly differ from her, but since such matters were of minor importance, other views concerning them did not justify their holders in separating from her communion, or in refusing to join in forms of worship other than they might personally have desired. Such conformity was, in their view, but a small price to pay for peace and for political safety. Hales himself would have liked to see the Church take the further step of so simplifying her ritual that it should contain nothing which was not based on a fundamental belief. Then indeed, he felt, would be removed the last conceivable barrier to the common worship of all Christians. “Why may I not,” he reasoned, “go to an Arian Church, so there be no Arianism exprest in their Liturgy?”

To a man with these views, the bitterly antagonistic attitude toward one another expressed by the various religious sects of his day seemed utterly needless and wrong. “You shall not find,” he exclaimed, “two things of more different countenance and complexion, then that Christ-

ianity which is commended unto us in the writings of the Apostles and Evangelists, and that which is current in use and practise of the times." The Church's story he called an "*Index of Controversies*." With all the earnestness of his nature he prayed that God might truly come to be with those to whom was committed the waging of controversies, that He might like Lazarus "drop one cooling drop into their Tongues, and Pens too, too much exasperated each against other." If this were not possible, he hoped the end of the world might speedily come. Had all men possessed his generous nature, his widely tolerant attitude, his depth of spiritual vision, the bitterness of hatred culminating in civil war would not have been. He was truly the prophet of what Charles Beard calls "that Reformation of Erasmus that is yet to be."

Religion, however, was not his only interest. His letters, even the few of them which we possess, disclose a wide range of secular studies. They also incidentally throw a curious light upon intellectual development in the seventeenth century.

He was so much an Egyptologist that a famous traveller and scientist, Mr. John Greaves, who had just returned from measuring the Pyramids, sent him his book on the subject for criticism. Although Hales modestly attributed his doing so more to his affection than to his judgment, his reply reveals the keenly critical interest of the scholar. He wished that Mr. Greaves had included in the book a topographical map of the Nile in the region of the Pyramids in order that he might the better test the conclusion of

"a learned gentleman of Bavaria, Johannes Fredericus Herwart, who in the XXI Chapter of his *Admiranda Ethnicae Theologicae Mysteria*, endeavors to take off from the founders of those stupendous buildings the scandal of folly and madness, which in the common judgment of the world, hath stuck upon them; and would

persuade us that the Pyramids are monuments of the singular wisdom of the raisers of them, and of wondrous use and benefit to the country, in maintaining the banks of that part of the river upon which the city of Memphis stands, which otherwise were in danger to be swept away by the unruly eruptions of the river, if it were not checked by those wonderful structures."

Whether he accepted either of these somewhat startling interpretations, we cannot tell; in the letter he showed the wisdom of suspended judgment, and was anxious to learn Mr. Greaves' opinion on the subject. He also wondered whether he were right in concluding that the Sphinx "is not of such moment as many report," since Mr. Greaves did not in his book "do it so much honour as to name it."

Mr. William Oughtred, a famous mathematician, was his intimate friend. A few days after one of his visits to Eton, Hales wrote a letter thanking him for a number of solutions he had given him, but explaining that he could not quite agree with one of them, a demonstration concerning the "projectures of an oblique circle." His reasoning shows him to have been no mean mathematician, but with the humility of the true scholar, he added, "If I take upon me to dispute with you, it is but only to learn, and learn I cannot of you except I betray my ignorance unto you." At the same time he returned by Mr. Oughtred's servant his "little compendium of triangles" by which he confessed himself "much eased." The grace and courtesy of the letter are charming, and Mr. Oughtred must indeed have valued his "true, plain, and loving friend, John Hales," as the latter signed himself in closing.

Upon matters of conduct, especially those involving a knowledge of historical precedent, his judgment was much sought. Two letters, one to a man and the other to a woman, were answers to queries concerning the rightfulness of usury, a practice at that time of much doubt.

He acknowledged that "traffic, and merchandise, and all dealings in stock of money, will utterly fail if way be not given to usury: and therefore in commonwealths, and so in ours, the moderate use of it by law is to be rated." John Calvin, he said, was the first good man "from the beginning of the world" that ever sanctioned the practice, and if all abided within the limits set by him, he admitted that no harm would result. He personally wished, however, that Calvin "had been pleased to conceal his conceit," since the multitude was likely to ignore such limitations. And he regretfully added, "What shall we say to God himself, who everywhere decries it! What unto all good men, both Ethnic and Christian, who for many hundred years have still protested against it?" Another man wished to know whether it were lawful for first cousins to marry. He replied in the affirmative, and supported his views with an astounding array of authorities—the Bible, the Church Fathers, the Romans, and ten Church councils.

Apparently no subject was considered too abstruse for him to solve. One letter of distinctly seventeenth-century flavor is a reply to an "Honourable Person," whose rank, from the tone of the letter, must have been high, who had written to ask his opinion of "a new-devised cure of wounds, by applying the salve to the weapon that did the mischief." Hales' answer affords us a curious glimpse into the mind of a man gradually freeing himself from mediæval superstition, but yet fully aware of the weight of arguments which his opponents might plausibly offer. It is evident that he considered the notion of weapon-salve utterly ridiculous, nevertheless he marshalled his forces after the usual method of the schools, and discussed the matter with all fulness and dignity. The supposed antiquity of the "cure" he discredited by connecting it with a "merry gullery" of the times, the so-called "Brethren of the Rosie Cross," a

school of quack scientists who claimed to be followers of Paracelsus. Their alleged proofs of the efficacy of weapon-salve based on the usual authorities, reason, Scripture, and experience, he proceeded to demolish by sane common-sense arguments upon which not even a modern scientist could improve. But right in their midst are two curiously mediæval touches. The Scriptural argument propounded did not, as he plainly demonstrated, support the weapon-salve theory, but it did, as he warned his correspondent, place its authors in danger of prosecution by the Court of High Commission for attributing to so-called scientific forces the miracle-working power of Elisha's bones. That he himself believed in miracles there can be no doubt. He referred to them repeatedly. Christ and the Apostles used them, he said, to prove that they were of God, and under similar circumstances they would be necessary now. The transitional stage of his thinking is apparent, however, from the fact that the reasons he gave for accepting them are in line with those by which now similar events become only natural phenomena. Why should we let this matter of miracles trouble us so much, he asked on one occasion; "Seems it unto us a greater miracle that our Saviour once turn'd a little water into wine, then every year in so many Vine-trees to turn that into wine in the branches, which being received at the root was mere water? Or why was it more wonderful for Him once to feed five thousand with five loaves, then every year to feed the whole world by the strange multiplication of a few seeds cast into the ground?"

Wholly without any modern trend, however, was his statement that if weapon-salve were possible, a position he did not once grant, its potency would proceed from supernatural powers. It was in all seriousness that he affirmed that "*Spirits*, by reason of the *subtilty* of *their nature* and long experience, know certainly *more*

mysteries in nature then we do." In the same vein he condemned the Greeks for consulting the oracle at Delphi, on the ground that "*Apollo* was the *Devil*." In one of his sermons too we see evidence of his belief in supernatural agencies when he quoted the experience of miners, who often on returning to the mine in the morning found their work of the previous day all in confusion, owing to the mischievous pranks of the spirits which dwell in the minerals. A Puritan contemporary, Flavel, was accused by Wood of plagiarizing from him. It was this story of the mine gnomes that he stole. On another occasion Hales quoted from a book on meteors the fact that before a storm a great noise is often heard "which is the banding of good and evil Angels, the one striving to annoy us with tempests, the other striving to preserve us from the danger of them." Yet he was perhaps more scientific and less credulous than any man of his age.

It was not, however, for his intellectual acumen, the clarity of his theological vision, his scientific interests, or his accumulation of mediæval lore, that men loved him most, but for the rare charm of his personality. Bishop Pearson, after recounting his high intellectual gifts, almost burst out with, "and had he never understood a letter, he had other ornaments sufficient to indear him. For he was of a nature (as we ordinarily speak) so kind, so sweet, so courting all mankind, of an affability so prompt, so ready to receive all conditions of men, that I conceive it near as easy a task for anyone to become so knowing, as so obliging." To Anthony à Wood the gentleness and sweetness of his disposition were the more marked in that, in his opinion, those were qualities which, as he said, "seldom accompany hard students and critics." Although Hales seemed utterly unconscious of possessing such attributes himself, he well understood their value in others. Moreover, on reading his analysis

of "goodness," one cannot help feeling that he is indeed revealing the motive force of his own life. Goodness he defined as "*a soft, and sweet, and flexible disposition,*" more to be desired than any other virtue. "For," as he expressed it,

"all other Excellencies and *Eminent qualities* which raise in the minds of men some opinion and conceit of us, may occasion peradventure some strong respect in another kind; but *impression of love* and true *respect*, nothing can give but this. *Greatness* of place and authority may make us fear'd, *Depth of Learning* admired, *Abundance of Wealth* may make men outwardly obsequious unto us; but that which makes one man a *God* unto another, that which *doth tie the Souls* of Men unto us, that which like the *Eye of the Bridegroom*, in the *Book of Canticles*, *ravishes the heart of him that looks upon it, is Goodness:*" . . . Of all our qualities, goodness is *most available to Humane Society*. . . . All other *Qualities*, how excellent soever they are, seem to be somewhat of a *melancholick* and solitary disposition. But *Goodness* is more sociable; and rejoyceth in equalling others unto itself, and loses its nature, when it ceases to be *communicable*."

The value he put upon goodness in this sense is evident from the emphasis he continually gave it. He loved to dwell upon the goodness of God. Severity, he held, was a quality not natural with Him, but only casual, and unto which, as he expresses it, "He is constrained besides His nature." Comparing God to a person, he described His countenance as "fair as the Sun in its strength; no frown, no wrinkle in His forehead." In almost ecstatic exaltation he cried out, "When He created this beautiful frame of Heaven and Earth, Men, and Angels, and in that wonderful order, who counselled Him?" Christ's acts upon earth were all, he said, but the issues of His tenderness. He saw no purpose in that which was harsh and ugly. He marvelled that man had been given the faculty of anger, since he really had so little use for it! Duelling, for instance, he said could be justified only by texts from the Old Testa-

ment, since the Apostles could not think of Christians shedding one another's blood. In a sermon preached to the boys at Eton he curiously remarked that "*It hath been observed of the Ancient Cornish Language, that it afforded no forms of Oathes, no phrases to swear in.*" Said he, "I should never think our Language the poorer, if it were utterly destitute of all forms and phrases of reviling and opprobrious speech." It is so useless, "that except a man did love a vice for its own sake, he can give no reason why he doth affect it." Its only supposed use, he continued, was in reproof or in administration of justice, but neither require it, as both may better be performed without it. Good words were as cheap as bad ones and far more effective. Thereupon he told the story of the north wind and the sun in their race to deprive a man of his coat. Repeatedly in his sermons, which with their formalism, their Latin and Greek, their mention of long-forgotten names, would sound queer indeed to modern boys of sixteen, does one find these bright gleams of rare human kindliness.

But with all his gentleness there was in him no lack of virility. It was to the strength of men that he continually appealed. "Even the natural man," he said, quoting a heathen historian, "is a creature of great strength, and if at any time he find himself weak, it is through his fault, not through his nature." As for the Christian, strength was his birthright. Quoting the words "I can do all things," he exclaimed, "These words are Anakims . . . he that hath a right unto them must be one of the race of Giants at least." There would be difficulties enough to overcome, for "it is a hard way that leads to life." But there was the test of the man. There was, he held, a martyrdom even in time of peace. If a man's faith was to save him, he must be ever ready to lay down his life for it. He who would have failed under temptation was lost, even though no temptation

came to him. In his view, it was entirely possible for men, if they so willed, to live without sin. Why, he asked, should any man think otherwise and so discourage himself from what he termed "the happiest experiment in the world"? He was aware, he said, that many did not agree with him and lived accordingly, but he would have all under his charge "hold it possible," and "live as if they meant to prove it." He had no patience with the kind of religion that, as he said, might be compared to a "quotidian Ague; it comes by fits; every day it takes us, and every day it leaves us." All work of whatever nature ought to be in a large sense religious in character, for, he maintained, "whoever labors not with God *is idle*, how busie soever he may seem to be in the world." Living and devotion were to him synonymous terms. The motive force of a godly life was a right mental attitude, to maintain which constant prayer was essential. Its exercise need not interfere with whatever else one might be doing. "For the mind of man," he explained with somewhat naïve psychology, "is a very agile and nimble substance, and it is a wonderful thing to see how many things it will at one moment apply itself unto without any confusion or lett." Thus only through the control of sinful thought could one maintain the inner purity of life. Enormities, the greater sins, were the temptations of comparatively few. It was the multitude of lesser sins that most men had really to fear. To cast the blame of one's sins upon the Devil was shirking, for the fault lay rather with one's self. "I doubt not," he said, "if we would but shut up our wills, and use that grace of God which is offered, but a great part of this suggesting power of his would fall to nothing." Self-indulgence he condemned with a sternness that was almost more than Puritanical. He regularly fasted from "Thursday dinner to Saturday." Eating too much was, he held, a vice, and the

root of many of the worst evils. All feasts in memory of the saints he abhorred. Out of his asceticism grew doubtless his queer mediæval theory as to the nature of the body after the resurrection. It was to look outwardly just as it does now; but since in heaven there could be neither hunger nor thirst, there would be no eating there, and the new body would lack all the organs that eating renders necessary. Certainly, here was an antithesis of the Mohammedan view of Heaven! He was too sensitive, however, too much the Humanist, to banish harmless pleasure or beauty from the world. "To refresh his spirits," he used canary to a moderate degree. Aubrey found him, when he visited him shortly before his death, clad in a "violet-coloured cloth gown with buttons and loops." "He wore not a black gown," explained Aubrey. The soft bright color was evidently more pleasing to him. His æsthetic sense also found expression in an almost child-like play of fancy. Particularly was this true of his appreciation of nature. "Who is not moved," he cried, "with that Parable of *Jotham*, in the Book of *Judges*, that the trees went forth to choose a king?" It underlay his fondness for parables in general. He rejoiced that Christ had filled the Gospels with them. He had made them, he said, like Divine and Christian *Aesop's Fables*, because he found it to be exceeding profitable. Much of his own teaching power resulted from his use of vivid illustration.

His love of humanity was so wide and deep that with prophetic vision he seemed almost to forecast the trend of modern social movements, to picture indeed an era of co-operative effort along all lines, the possibility of which we in our day are just beginning to realize. His sense of such possibilities made him like to read about the much-condemned "Familists." The emphasis which they placed upon the common brotherhood of man and upon mutual responsibility greatly appealed to him.

He was wont to say, according to Aubrey, "that sometime or other those fine notions would take in the world." "No man," he maintained, "is born only for his own good, but for the good of his friends, for the good of his country, and for millions more beside himself." In religion this view meant the responsibility of laymen. "Every one of you," he told his hearers, "hath cure of Souls, either of his child, or his servant, or his friend, or of his neighbor; and if any of these perish through your default, his blood shall be required at your hands." In matters of material betterment also he had a keen sense of common obligation. Of worldly wealth it was his firm belief that one should keep only enough for the necessities; the rest was a trust to be administered for the good of others. Over-carefulness in giving was, he felt, apt to defeat its own purpose. "How many occasions of Christian charity," he lamented, "do we let slip when we refuse to give our alms, unless we first cast doubts, and examine the persons, their lives, their necessities, though it be onely to reach out some small thing, which is due unto him, whatsoever it be." The common practice was "like to the Sun in winter, long ere it rise, and quickly gone." Of his own small store of wealth he gave liberally. When as bursar of the college he received bad money, he always substituted for it his own money, a practice which often resulted in an outlay of as much as twenty or thirty pounds at a time. Poor students walking to Oxford received help from him as they passed through Eton. He was the common godfather of all the children of Eton. As he walked from there to Windsor, it was pretty to see, said Aubrey, how they fell on their knees and asked his blessing. All the groats he received as bursar he saved for them and by the time he reached Windsor bridge he usually had none left. Pleasing pictures, these, of him who had termed "goodness" the quality "most available to humane

society, and that which doth tie the souls of men to us"! They accord with the tribute paid him at his death, that the poor did him more honor than the rich. Such was Hales, the man.

That his friends did not fail to appreciate these qualities in him is evident from the few delightful glimpses that we fortunately have of him as he appeared among them. Clarendon described him as being "not in the least degree inclined to melancholy, but on the contrary of a very open and pleasant conversation; and therefore very well pleased with the resort of his friends to him, who were such as he had chosen, and in whose company he delighted, and for whose sake he would sometimes, once a year, resort to London only to enjoy their cheerful conversation." In the works of the dashing Cavalier poet, Sir John Suckling, is a letter in verse with no name on it, beginning:—

"Whether these lines do find you out,
Putting or clearing of a doubt,
(Whether predestination,
Or reconciling three in one,
Or the unriddling how men die,
And live at once eternally,
Now take you up) know 'tis decreed
You strait bestride the colledge steed:
Leave *Socinus* and the Schoolmen
(Which Jack Bond swears do but fool men)
And come to town. . . ."

There are forty-one lines of it, all in similar strain. It is evidently a whimsically phrased yet earnest invitation to Hales to leave his studies for awhile and come to London. For there in a day he may have as much news "as serves all Windsor for a year" and partake of

"Dishes, with names not known in books,
And lesse amongst the colledge cooks."

His friends, who also strove to be "masters of truth, as victory" would be the gainers, for where he came "a Synod might as easily erre." In his Session of the Poets, Suckling furnishes another characteristic picture of him.

"Hales set by himself most gravely did smile,
To see them about nothing keep such a coile,
Apollo had spied him, but knowing his mind,
Past by and called Falkland that sate just behind."

Nicholas Rowe, the first biographer of Shakespeare, relates in his Preface an incident which reveals Hales' independence as a critic, a trait which must have been much relished by at least part of these literary men. Sir John Suckling, a professed admirer of Shakespeare, a position then requiring much courage, was defending him to Ben Jonson, another member of the group. Hales, who sat quietly by, listening, finally remarked that if Shakespeare had not read the ancients, as Jonson affirmed, he had likewise not stolen anything from them. Thereupon he challenged Jonson to produce any topic fully treated by the ancients upon which he could not show something at least as well written by Shakespeare. We have already noticed his friendship for the scientists, Mr. Greaves and Mr. Oughtred, for Sir Henry Savile, and Lord Falkland. Among his younger friends was William Chillingworth, whose book *The Religion of Protestants a safe Way to Salvation*, at once gave its author the position of the greatest controversialist of his age. Hales helped him write it. Indeed, during a period of twenty years of Hales' life, from 1619 to 1638, Anthony à Wood, who looked only for the objective facts of life, found nothing to record of him except his friendship for Chillingworth. Hales' own mention of Chillingworth is a whimsical one. A friend had asked him for one of his books. Hales was sorry that he could not "pleasure" him, since his good friend Mr. Chillingworth, "a gentleman that borrows books in haste, but

restores them with advice," had gotten it into his hands, and he scarcely expected to see it again, particularly since it was the second time he had borrowed it. No man, he said, had ever borrowed the same book twice of him and restored it. Clarendon observed, curiously, that Chillingworth was only a little taller than Hales, and added, by way of parenthesis, that "it was an age in which there were many great and wonderful men of that size." Another "little" friend of Hales was Archbishop Laud. The liberalism of Hales' tract on *Schism and Schismatics* had at once alarmed Laud. He sent for him to come to see him at Lambeth. They spent the entire day in earnest conversation. Later Hales wrote Laud a letter in which he disclaimed any purpose of disturbing the peace of the Church, restated his views, but did not disavow their essential tolerance. Not long afterward Laud appointed Hales one of his own chaplains and Canon of Windsor, a position he held, without giving up that at Eton, from 1639 until the outbreak of the war. That Laud should on investigation thus signally honor Hales is not surprising. Although in natural tendencies two men were never more unlike, for practical purposes they were agreed, since both believed that comprehension supplied that unity in religion on which in their view political safety depended. With all its terrible grimness there was a more pleasing side to Laud's nature; this recognition of the Eton scholar was one of its all too infrequent manifestations. Hales was already past middle age and well known. Now a still wider circle grew to appreciate his genial presence, for Wood tells us that "when the King and the Court resided at Windsor he was much frequented by Noblemen and Courtiers, who delighted much in his company, not for his severe and retired Walks of Learning, but for his polite Discourse, Stories, and Poetry, in which last, 'tis supposed, he was excellent."

For many happy, busy years thus lived Hales, the guide of Eton boys, and the friend of scholars, poets, and noblemen, all of whom, no matter how widely different their interests, found that in him which called forth their admiration and their love. Then the monster of civil war descended upon England; the quiet, gentle scholar was turned out of the position he had so graced by the Long Parliament, which claimed curiously, though conscientiously, that it did so in the name of religion. Such was Hales' hold upon men, however, that even those of the victorious party felt no personal animosity toward him. Penwarden, the Presbyterian divine who was chosen to succeed him at Eton, insisted on returning the Fellowship to him. He, however, refused to accept as a favor from Parliament what it had denied as a right. After the war, Andrew Marvel, one of the most redoubtable fighters in the Puritan ranks, counted it "not one of the least ignominies of that age," as he said, "that so eminent a person of the Church of England (as Hales was) should have been by the iniquity of the times reduced to those necessities under which he lived."

It was indeed a hard lot that he had to bear for the remaining seven years of his life. The Sedleian family of Kent offered him one hundred pounds a year, two horses, and a servant's diet. "But he," said Wood, "being wedded to a retired and studious life, refused to accept this generous (!) offer." To us it is small wonder that he, the wisest scholar of his time, should refuse a servant's place in a nobleman's family. Wood, however, mentioned the matter with no disparagement, but, with somewhat of surprise, continued by saying that soon afterward he accepted a position as tutor, at one-fourth the salary formerly offered, in the family of one Madame Salter near Eton. He was to instruct her son Will, "but he being blockish," said Wood, "Hales could do nothing upon him." Poor Will! He must have been dull indeed if

such a master failed to make an impression. We almost doubt Wood's testimony; for in his will Hales left all his Greek and Latin books (except *St. Jerome*, reserved for another friend) to his "most deservedly beloved friend, Wm. Salter," together with five pounds for a "fair seal ring of gold, engraven with his arms and hatchments doubled and mantled, to preserve the memory of his poor deceased friend." However, when the act was passed by Parliament, forbidding any one to harbor Royalists—malignants, as they were called—Hales refused to endanger the Salters by staying longer. In the town of Eton, opposite the churchyard, lived Hannah Powney, the widow of one of his old servants. Thither he went to lodge. Wood spoke of her as "very careful and respectful to him, as having formerly at her marriage received of his bounty"—another glimpse of Hales' kindly generosity. Aubrey, who visited Hales some seven years later, shortly before his death, has left us an even more pleasing picture of her. "She had been handsome," he said, and was "of good understanding and cleanly," a woman "primitively good and deserving to be remembered." People who were "primitively good" were sure to be discerned by a penetrating spirit like Hales, and by him honored, no matter what their rank. Hannah lived, to follow Aubrey's quaint description, in a "handsome, darke old house. The hall above the wainscot, painted cloath, with godly sentences out of the Psalmes, etc., according to the pious custome of old times; a convenient garden and orchard." It was here that Aubrey found him, clad in his violet-colored gown, with its buttons and loops, peacefully reading Thomas à Kempis. We are pleased with this bit of evidence as to the nature of the few books which, as he told Aubrey, he had kept "to wind up his days withal." The rest of his large library he had been forced to sell, receiving for it less than one-third of its value. Yet despite his

straitened circumstances, which were daily growing more so, a situation far from bright for a man of seventy-one, Aubrey could still describe him as "a prettie little man, sanguine, of a cheerful countenance, very gentile and courteous," who, as he was proud to say, "received him with great humanity." Anthony Farindon, one of his earlier protegés, also visited him in these last months of his life. After a "slight and homely dinner" they had gone to walk in the nearby churchyard. With composure Hales spoke of his own death, saying that he was "weary of this uncharitable world." But it was its lack of charity toward others rather than himself that caused his sorrow. His only personal regret seems to have been that he had not more to leave to others. He told Farindon that he did not wish to be buried in the church at Eton, since he was not its founder and could "not now be its benefactor." By his will also, written in the morning of the day on which he died, he indicated as its one binding provision, that "since in his life he had done the Church no service, so he would not that the Church at his death do him any honour." He wished to be buried in the churchyard at Eton, as close as possible to the body of his little godson, Jack Dickinson, a beautifully human touch; his funeral was to be absolutely without the usual ceremonies, "without any sermon, or ringing the bell, or calling the people together." His sense of unworthiness was the outgrowth of his deep humility of spirit, his sorrow, part of his unconscious greatness, not a note of pessimism. Throughout his conversation with Farindon the latter described him as "gravely cheerful." That in these last years when position and worldly wealth, even the little he had enjoyed, were gone, he kept undisturbed the happy serenity of his mind, is not the least among his claims to the title "The Ever Memorable Mr. John Hales."