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## **Memorials of John Ray**

**Ray, John**

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To the right honorable the earl of Macclesfield, [...].

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TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE

THE EARL OF MACCLESFIELD,

PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY.\*

MY LORD,

As Mr. Ray was both an eminent Philosopher and a Fellow of the Royal Society, there is no one to whom the following sheets could, with so much propriety, be addressed, as to your Lordship. I will not here, my Lord, attempt an encomium on your Lordship's character, for it would be thought presumption in me to endeavour to do justice to those excellent qualities which so eminently distinguish your Lordship. May you, my Lord, long live an ornament to your country, and to that illustrious body over which you so worthily preside.

I will not, my Lord, make any apology for not giving a more elaborate life of Mr. Ray; I shall only beg leave to assure your Lordship that it now appears as it was left by Dr. Derham,† who even seemed to despair of ever

\* Macclesfield, Right Honorable George Parker, second Earl of, was president of the Royal Society from 1750 to 1764, and contributed the following paper to the 'Philosophical Transactions' for 1740: "Remarks on the Solar and the Lunar Years, the cycle of nineteen years, commonly called the Golden Number, the Epact, and the Method of finding the time of Easter, as it is now observed in most parts of Europe." He was a principal promoter of the reformation of the Calendar, and made a speech on this subject in the House of Lords, which was afterwards published. He died in 1766.

† Derham, the Reverend William, D.D., was born at Stowton, near Worcester, in November 1657, and received his early education at Blockley in the same county. He was admitted of Trinity College, Oxford, in 1675. Having completed his academic studies, he was ordained, and in 1685 was

putting it into its present dress, if we may judge by what he says on this subject in his preface to the Collection of Philosophical Letters between Mr. Ray and his

instituted in the vicarage of Wargrave in Berkshire; and four years afterwards, to the valuable rectory of Upminster in Essex, where he spent the remainder of his life. To this residence he was much attached, mainly because it gave him, by its contiguity to London, ample opportunities of associating with the scientific men of the metropolis. He was made canon of Windsor in 1716, and in 1730 he received from his university the diploma of D.D.

He devoted his attention, with great earnestness, to natural and experimental philosophy. He was enrolled a member of the Royal Society, and he contributed a considerable number of memoirs to its Transactions. These papers prove him to have been a man of indefatigable research and careful observation.

His first publication was the 'Artificial Clock-Maker,' which has gone through three or four editions, and is considered a useful manual even now. In 1711, 1712, and 1714, he preached those sermons at Boyle's Lecture which he afterwards expanded into the well-known works 'Physico-Theology' and 'Astro-Theology,' or a demonstration of the being and attributes of God from the works of creation and a survey of the heavens, enriched with valuable notes, and good engravings after drawings of his own. His next separate work was 'Christo-Theology,' or a demonstration of the divine authority of the Christian religion, being the substance of a sermon preached in the Abbey Church of Bath, in 1729. His last published work of his own was entitled 'A Defence of the Church's Right in Leasehold Estates,' written in answer to a work entitled 'An Inquiry into the Customary Estates and Tenant-rights of those who hold lands of the Church and other Foundations.' It was published in the name of Everard Fleetwood.

Dr. Derham also wrote a life and published some letters of the naturalist Ray, of which he had procured the MSS., and to him the world is indebted for the publication of the philosophical experiments of Dr. Hook. He also gave new editions of other of Ray's works, with valuable additions, original, and from the author's manuscripts, besides editing other works of value, amongst which was the 'Miscellanea Curiosa,' in 3 vols. small 8vo, a work of value even at this time.

A considerable number of his papers were printed in the 'Philosophical Transactions,' from the 20th to the 39th volume inclusive, the principal of which are:—1, Experiments on Pendulums in vacuo; 2, Of an Instrument for finding the Meridian; 3, Experiments and Observations on the Motion of Sound; 4, On the Migration of Birds; 5, On the Spots on the Sun from 1703 to 1711; 6, Observations on the Northern Lights, October 8th, 1726, and October 13th, 1728; 7, Tables of the Eclipses of Jupiter's Satellites; 8, Difference of Time in the Meridian of different places; 9, On the Meteor called Ignis Fatuus; 10, The History of the Death-watch; 11, Meteorological Tables for several years.

Dr. Derham was of an ungainly appearance, small stature, and distorted form. He was not only the moral and religious benefactor of his parishioners, and of all those who came in his way, but he was likewise the physician of their bodies, and their pecuniary friend in all their difficulties. He lived beloved, and died lamented, at his rectory, in 1735, aged seventy-eight.

ingenious correspondents; where he observes, that notwithstanding he had made a considerable progress in his Life, yet he was afraid he should scarce be able to accomplish what he intended, as he had much less leisure at that time than when he undertook that work.

The three letters from Mr. Ray to Dr. Derham are not, my Lord, in the collection just mentioned; I have therefore given them a place among the remains, which I hope is done with the more propriety, as they have some reference to Mr. Ray's life.\*

The Itineraries, my Lord, are in Mr. Ray's own handwriting; and as no one was ever more accurate in his observations than he was, I thought it would not be right to keep them any longer from the public, especially as I have letters by me from some eminent persons to Dr. Derham, earnestly pressing the publication of them. Permit me now, my Lord, to offer them, with the other remains of Mr. Ray, to the public, under your Lordship's protection, and to subscribe myself, my Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient, humble servant,

GEORGE SCOTT.†

\* Ray's letters are arranged chronologically in this work. Those alluded to in the text are dated May 8th, 1702; March 31st, 1703; August 16th, 1704.

† Of George Scott I can find no satisfactory information. He appears to have been a friend of Dr. Derham's; and the notes which are signed G. S., and which are found in the original edition of Ray's Life by Derham, are undoubtedly his. In Watt's 'Bibliotheca Britannica' there is a George Lewis Scott, F.R. A.S.S., mentioned as a gentleman of considerable talents and general learning. He was born at Hanover, of Scottish parents, and died in 1780.

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