INTRODUCTION

John Rastrick: fragments of a life

In the Huntington Library in San Marino, California is a small, closely written, manuscript autobiography. MS HM 6131 carries an elaborate title-page, inscribed in a hand so neat and uniform that it almost looks as if it has been printed, bearing the title:

> A NARRATIVE; OR AN Historicall Account Of The most Materiall passages In the Life of John Rastrick: An Unworthy Minister of Jesus Christ At Kirkton in Holland in Lincolnshire. And afterwards Preacher to a Private Congregation at Spalding in the same County, & at Rotheram in Yorkshire, and at Lynn-Regis in Norfolk. Conteining chiefly God's Providences And His own experiences. Written by himself.

As will be discussed below, the whereabouts of Rastrick's manuscript between the middle of the eighteenth and the early twentieth centuries remain a mystery, but, even after it arrived at the Huntington, the manuscript was overlooked by scholars.[1] Although much of the excitement of history lies in the potential discovery of something 'new', it was surprising to come upon such a remarkable autobiography. Its author was known for leaving his position in the Church of England at the strikingly late date of 1687; what was not known, however, was that John Rastrick's autobiography is a distinguished piece of writing, among the most stylish, detailed, and entertaining examples of its kind. It is at once a pearl of nonconformist writing and a treasure trove of information about religion, politics, and culture in the half-century after the Restoration.

So much of what is known about the life of John Rastrick is included in his autobiography that no attempt will be made to supply a full biography here. Instead, this outline provides a brief sketch of the major events of his life and career, using the manuscript narrative and related materials. Although, as with other autobiographies, it should

[1] For the first detailed engagement with the manuscript, see Andrew Cambers and Michelle Wolfe, 'Reading, family religion, and evangelical identity in late Stuart England', *Historical Journal*, 47 (2004), pp. 875–896.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000059 Published online by Cambridge University Press

not be taken at face value, Rastrick's full and frank life story largely speaks for itself.[2]

Early years and education

John Rastrick was born at Heckington near Sleaford in Lincolnshire on 26 March 1650, the youngest and only surviving child of John and Ellen Rastrick.[3] Rastrick described his father as 'of the middle rank of Husbandmen' but he certainly rose in social status, particularly after the death of his wife in 1668 and his remarriage to a prosperous local widow, and he claimed the title of yeoman in his will.[4]

The 1650s were not the easiest decade in which to get an education and Rastrick's schooling was disrupted as schoolmasters died, moved on, or were removed. That, combined with a mother who was unhappy for her son to board out, meant that Rastrick was educated by no fewer than eight masters, from relatively informal education by the local minister to a year and a half at the Grammar School (now the King's School) at Grantham, a prestigious institution whose old boys included Henry More and Isaac Newton. Rastrick eventually settled under the tuition of Mr Walker, the minister of Great Hale, and delighted in the freedom that he was given to pursue his studies. In 1667, he went up to Trinity College, Cambridge, where his tutor was Thomas Bainbrigg, who was later vice-master of the college and would gain some notoriety as a religious controversialist.[5] Although he made social connections there that would serve him well throughout his career, Cambridge proved both a spiritual and an educational disappointment to Rastrick. He was plagued by melancholy and somewhat bewildered at the lack of direction in his studies. Nevertheless, it was at Cambridge that he developed his lifelong love of the works of Richard Baxter, an affinity for works of puritan practical divinity, and a continuing interest in the physical workings of the universe, notably through the works of Descartes.

[2]The following is based on Huntington Library, MS HM 6131, 'A NARRATIVE; OR AN Historicall Account Of The most Materiall passages In the Life of John Rastrick'. I have not provided references for each passage in this biographical sketch, since in large part it follows the sequence of events in the manuscript. References to other sources are provided where they occur.

[3]W.P.W. Phillimore, Ashley K. Maples, R.E.G. Cole, Thomas M. Blagg, and Reginald C. Dudding (eds), *Lincolnshire Parish Registers: marriages*, 11 vols (London, 1905–1921), IV, p. 89.

[4]Lincolnshire Archives, Lincoln, LCC Wills 1618/1/169.

[5]Thomas Bainbrigg (1636–1703), *ODNB*.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000059 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Church of England clergyman

By the time he took his BA in January 1671, Rastrick's life had changed. His mother had died and his father had remarried, and Rastrick returned to Heckington in eager anticipation of a life in the Church. In May 1671, he gained his first job, as curate to Basil Berridg, the rector of Algarkirk and Fosdyke. Serving as curate to Berridg, whom he thought 'a high, Austere and Lordly man', was a singular disappointment, and Rastrick moved in May 1672 to become curate at Wyberton, a post that offered scant financial reward but greater spiritual opportunities. A month later he married Jane Wilson, the daughter of a rector and prebendary of Lincoln cathedral. Rastrick was going up in the world. He was ordained priest in 1673 and, after he preached in a vacancy at Kirton in Holland, the parishioners put his name forward to the patrons of the living, the Mercers' Company of London. On 23 June 1673, Rastrick, who had just become a father, was presented to the living where he would remain for fourteen years.

When they recommended Rastrick's appointment to the Mercers' Company, the parishioners of Kirton seemed impressed by his 'exemplary life and conversation' and the good they received from his 'painefull preaching'.[6] But in time his intense and uncompromising religiosity drove a wedge between the priest and his parishioners. Rastrick thought he made too little progress in improving the spirituality of his parishioners. They, in turn, did not like his rigid stance on baptism any more than his tinkering with the wording of the burial and marriage services. They were bewildered that their clergyman would excommunicate ungodly parishioners but gladly pay the fines of local anabaptists out of his own pocket. These and other characteristics earned him a string of enemies, who met together at the King's Head tavern at Kirton. Indeed, Rastrick had a gift for stirring up personal animosity: one William Hunt threatened 'to sheath his Sword' in Rastrick's blood; while the steward of Magdalen College, Oxford, collecting rents in a neighbouring parish, declared that he would have stabbed Rastrick if he had not been a clergyman.[7]

Rastrick fared little better with the ecclesiastical authorities. He would always argue his case, even quoting the prayer-book rubric at Bishop White of Peterborough when he raised objections to Rastrick's

[6]Mercers' Company, London, Acts of Court, 23 June 1673.

[7]Rastrick's conflict with William Hunt was long-standing and wide-ranging. In addition to the incidents mentioned in the manuscript, in 1699 Hunt was sued by Rastrick and the overseers of the poor for Kirton for failing to pay back any of the equity or interest on £50 that he had borrowed in 1687 from a trust (established in the will of Jane Adamson) that had been set up to assist the poor of Kirton. See TNA, PRO C5/626/32. For Jane Adamson's will (1637), see TNA, PRO, PROB 11/176/415.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000059 Published online by Cambridge University Press

interpretation of altar policy. In 1687, he was finally cited to appear at the ecclesiastical court for his refusal to wear the surplice, his refusal to baptise children born out of wedlock, and his friendship with the nonconformist John Richardson, but a fortunate coincidence with James II's Declaration of Indulgence meant that no action was taken against him. Rastrick gave his answers to the charges in writing and heard no more of the matter. But, while others continued through these trying times, Rastrick decided that he could not in good conscience stay within the Church and resigned his cure on 27 November 1687.[8]

Meanwhile, his personal life was as strained as his professional life. Rastrick's marriage disintegrated as he tired of his wife's intellectual shortcomings and she in turn grew jealous of his spiritual intimacy with their maidservants and religiously inclined local women. Things came to a head when the young Mary Harrison started visiting the house: her attentions proved 'a Snare' to Rastrick, who admitted that his feelings for her were like those he had felt for his wife before they married. Rastrick was released from the snare by his wife's death from an autumnal fever on 27 September 1684. In twelve years of marriage, they had had eight children, four of whom – Abigail, Elizabeth, John, and Samuel – were still living when their mother died. Just six months later, after seeking God's approval regarding the legitimacy of his affections, Rastrick married Mary Harrison. They were married for six years and had four children, all of whom died within fourteen months of birth. A stillbirth followed in August 1691, and two weeks later Mary Rastrick died.

Nonconformist minister of Spalding, Rotherham, and King's Lynn

After a brief period of unemployment, Rastrick returned to work early in 1688, when he accepted the invitation to become the nonconformist minister to a congregation at Spalding in Lincolnshire who were alarmed at the spread of Thomas Grantham's Baptists in the area. He stayed for nine years, preaching his way through the Bible, but he was uneasy and increasingly frustrated by the divisions of the people and their unwillingness to accept his occasional conformity. When they withheld their contributions towards his maintenance, he accepted a call to remove to Rotherham in 1697. Although this

[8]There were also local tensions. In late October 1687, one Richard Stevenson, tenant to the Rectory of Kirton, had written to the Mercers' Company to complain 'of some Irregularityes practiced by the present Vicar'. Although the Mercers' Company resolved that they could take no notice of Stevenson's complaint, Rastrick was increasingly aware of the hostility provoked by his ministry. See Mercers' Company, London, Acts of Court, 24 October 1687.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000059 Published online by Cambridge University Press

position enabled Rastrick to cultivate strong links with Yorkshire's nonconformist ministers and gentry and occasioned a remarkable description of the natural history of the Peak District, he was again frustrated at the lack of serious spirituality in the area and disheartened at his lack of progress.

In 1692, Rastrick had married Elizabeth Horn, the daughter of James Horn of Long Sutton in Lincolnshire, the nephew of John Horn, the ejected minister of King's Lynn. Feeling isolated in Yorkshire, in May 1701 John and Elizabeth Rastrick set out to visit family and friends in Spalding, Wisbech, and King's Lynn. They never came back. At King's Lynn, Rastrick's old friend Anthony Williamson (who had succeeded John Horn as Presbyterian minister there) came into what must have been a fairly significant sum of money upon the death of his father-in-law, Mr Blithe, and used the money to offer Rastrick a position as his assistant.

For three years, their joint ministry appears to have progressed smoothly but, after Williamson's death in August 1704, Rastrick became embroiled in a series of escalating conflicts with a small but vocal and well-connected hyper-Calvinist faction among his congregation. The story of their enmity to Rastrick's ministry has a familiar ring to it. They objected to Rastrick's occasional conformity, his high-handed insistence on discipline, and the bluntness of his preaching. They were not amused at his publication of his decision to go out, in *An Account of the Nonconformity of John Rastrick* in 1705. And they were enraged at what they saw as his 'Baxterian doctrine' and his Arminianism.[9]

To be fair to Rastrick, the charge of Arminianism seems unjust – his position was one of hypothetical universalism – but it stuck in the minds of his opponents. It was over his theology of salvation that matters came to a head in 1707, as the enmity towards him crystallized into 'formal and formed opposition'. Rastrick's opponents could suffer him no longer: they left the meeting and withdrew their financial support. Meanwhile, they charged the man who paid Rastrick his salary – the aptly named Mr Money – with fraud and injustice. Although they put their differences aside in 1708, fearing the ramifications of the Jacobite invasion of Scotland, tensions boiled

[9]They would presumably have been bewildered by some of Rastrick's actions that are not mentioned in the manuscript, such as his gift of fifty shillings to the Dean and Chapter of Lincoln to purchase books for the library there. See Lincoln Cathedral Library, Lincoln MS 256, p. 10: '1707 Mem. that Mr Rastrick formerly Vicar of Kirton in Holland having some years ago subscribed fifty shillings for the use of the Library hath paid the said fifty shill. which is to be laid out in such books as the Dean and Chapter think fit'. Cited in Naomi Linnell, 'The catalogues of Lincoln Cathedral Library', *Library History*, 7 (1985), p. 6.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000059 Published online by Cambridge University Press

over once more in the following year. The leader of the faction, Seal Peast, petitioned Daniel Williams and Edmund Calamy, before finally shutting up the meeting-house in a desperate attempt to get rid of their minister. The exclusion was actually short-lived – some of the faction sided with Rastrick and he was readmitted – but only the deaths of two of Rastrick's most important enemies in 1713 effectively drew a line under the affair.[10]

Later life

After 1713, the chronology of the narrative ends and it is probable that it was at this time that Rastrick wrote his autobiography. Thereafter, although he served as the Presbyterian minister of Spinner Lane for another fourteen years, information about his life and career is more thinly spread. Certainly, affairs in his personal life appear to have been calmer than they once were. When she married the forty-two-year-old John Rastrick in 1692, Elizabeth was just twenty, barely older than her husband's eldest surviving daughter. But they appear to have got along well, spiritually and socially. Between November 1693 and April 1710, they had eleven children: four died within their first year; a fifth died aged twelve; and six more outlived their parents. By 1710, Rastrick, at sixty, had fathered twenty-three children, of whom at least nine were still living – a tenth (his eldest son, John) had gone to Carolina, and Rastrick appears not to have known whether he was dead or alive.

Little is known about Rastrick's ministry after 1713, though it seems reasonable to assume that any conflicts were less public. In April 1714, he preached a well-received sermon at the ordination of Samuel Savage at Bury St Edmunds in Suffolk, and shortly afterwards *A Sermon Preach'd at the Ordination of Mr. Samuel Savage, At St. Edmund's-Bury* appeared in print.[11] Beside repeating once more how the meeting-house at King's Lynn had been shut up against him – the lesson of which Rastrick appears to have interpreted as stick to your guns and providence will see things right – the sermon reveals how little his outlook on the duties of the minister had changed: Savage was to make discipline his watchword; he was not to admit all promiscuously

[10]The shutting up of the meeting-house appears to have had little lasting effect upon Rastrick's diplomacy. Intriguingly, in 1712 he appears to have met up with Daniel Defoe, who was travelling incognito, and to have agreed to put the people of King's Lynn straight regarding some of the wilder delusions of Whig propaganda. See George Harris Healey (ed.), *The Letters of Daniel Defoe* (Oxford, 1955), pp. 385–386 (letter to Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford, 20 September 1712).

[11]John Rastrick, *A Sermon Preach'd at the Ordination of Mr. Samuel Savage, at St. Edmund's-Bury, in the County of Suffolk, Apr. 22. 1714* (London, 1714).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000059 Published online by Cambridge University Press

to baptism; he was to reprove those whose conduct was disorderly; and he was to suspend the scandalous from the Lord's Supper. It was, Rastrick wrote, 'a Feast for Reconciliation and Friendship; and therefore, for Enemies to approach it, is intollerable, abominable, and Confusion'.[12] As well as this uncompromising disciplinary strain, the sermon once again shows Rastrick's theological moderation, asserting his belief in free will and reasserting his position on grace, whereby he upheld the General Grace of the Arminians and the Special Grace of the Calvinists, 'because there is no Contradiction betwixt these two'.[13] Perhaps most revealing are his comments on what the people should do to support their minister: accept his reproofs; inform him of those of loose behaviour; and encourage him by providing for him financially. The need to be bountiful is made at some length and the sermon concludes 'Why then should Believers grudge their Cost for Truth? for the Gospel and Interest of our Lord Jesus Christ?'[14]

This was Rastrick's last venture in print, but he maintained his intellectual curiosity and kept writing until the end of his life. He composed poetry and a short catechism and, after 1719, a more substantial volume entitled 'Plain and Easy Principles of Christian Religion and Obedience; or the necessity of keeping Christ's Commandments, in order to our preserving an interest in his favour, demonstrated from John xv. 10.' The manuscript is now missing, but it was written as a response to the Salters' Hall dispute – the meeting of London ministers in 1719 that was designed to settle the question of whether the Dissenters should have a subscription on the Trinity (to distance themselves from Arianism) but that, in the end, served only to shatter any doctrinal unity that Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists still shared.[15] Rastrick's manuscript was informed by a careful reading of the vitriolic printed exchanges between the Arian-leaning Samuel Clarke (1675–1729) and his follower John Jackson (1686–1763) and the orthodox Whig Daniel Waterland (1683–1740) over the doctrine of the Trinity, which had preceded and precipitated the Salters' Hall dispute. Rastrick apparently agreed with the Presbyterian minister James Peirce (1674–1726) in the debate – and so presumably denied that he was an Arian but argued that Christ was subordinate in the Trinity. He left instructions for his son to publish the book – 'I leave it to you to tell the world' – along with the letters that he had received from Samuel Wright (1683–1746) and an appendix of

[12]Ibid., p. 58.
[13]Ibid., pp. 67–68.
[14]Ibid., pp. 71–75.
[15]On the Salters' Hall dispute, see Michael. R. Watts, *The Dissenters*, 2 vols (Oxford, 1978–1995), I, pp. 371–382.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000059 Published online by Cambridge University Press

'last Thoughts about the Trinity and Son of God'. This appendix apparently contained some thoughts on the nature of the universe and in particular upon comets, which he thought were 'worlds in a state of conflagration and dissolution', spinning through space, burning for the sins of their inhabitants. Rastrick's space odyssey was not published, perhaps unsurprisingly given the unorthodox nature of his belief: he thought that after the sun had been extinguished the earth would become a comet, just as other comets had once been occupied with 'rational inhabitants', each comet having its own saviour.[16]

Although he wrote of a modest life in a 'poor Smoky Cottage', the wills of John and Elizabeth Rastrick suggest that they enjoyed a fairly comfortable lifestyle.[17] Rastrick's portrait, which hung in his study, had been painted by Daniel de Koninck, an artist of some standing, who had moved to England in 1690. He kept up correspondence with old friends such as William Scoffin.[18] And he continued to receive donations right up until his death: some of those who had been touched by his ministry remembered him many years later. In 1757, for example, Samuel Brookes of Dorchester, Massachusetts, who had met Rastrick in 1727, left £20 to his heirs.[19] Elizabeth Rastrick's will also testifies to a family confident of displaying their status within King's Lynn society – the portrait of her cousin John Horn, the schoolmaster of King's Lynn, hung in the household hall together with a Dutch painting. There was a large clock, and the house was furnished with fashionable cane furniture. Rastrick's study included not only drawers, chests, and shelves full of books and manuscripts, but also mathematical instruments, telescopes, and a double barometer. Elizabeth's will made mention of jewellery, silver spoons, and carefully furnished bedrooms. Clearly helped by bequests from family and

[16]See the description of the manuscript in William Richards, *The History of Lynn*, 2 vols (King's Lynn, 1812), II, pp. 1063–1064.

[17]For the complaint, see Dr Williams's Library, London, MS 24.115, letter from John Rastrick to Mr William Steevens, factor at Queen-Hithe, London (14 December 1721), p. 41. Copies of the wills can be found at Norfolk Record Office, Norwich, Will Register, Kirke, 82–84 (Will of John Rastrick of King's Lynn, 1727); Will Register, Goats, 289–291 (Will of Elizabeth Rastrick, 1740). These are transcribed in the appendix on pp. 203–207 below.

[18]William Scoffin (1654/5–1732) had known Rastrick since at least 1681, when he became curate of Brothertoft, Lincs., and the pair stayed friends after they had both left the Church of England: 'they continued their intimacy by letter till Mr. Rastrick's death'. See Edmund Calamy, *The Nonconformist's Memorial*, ed. Samuel Palmer, 2nd edn, 3 vols (London, 1802), II, p. 438; and W[illiam] S[coffin], *An Help To the Singing Psalm-Tunes, By The Book. In a method more easy than is generally taught. With directions for making an instrument with one string, by which any tune may be easily learn'd* (London, 1725), p. iv.

[19]TNA, PRO, PROB 11/840/287 (Will of Samuel Brookes of Dorchester, Mass., 20 August 1757). See Peter Wilson Coldham, *American Wills Proved in London* (Baltimore, MD, 1992), p. 212.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000059 Published online by Cambridge University Press

friends, the Rastricks also had several holdings of property besides their house and gardens in Spinner Lane in King's Lynn, including in Heckington, Sutton St Mary (now Long Sutton), and Kirton in Lincolnshire.

Death

John Rastrick died on 18 August 1727 and was buried on 21 August at St Nicholas's Chapel, King's Lynn. His funeral sermon was preached on Matthew 25:21 by John Ford, who had succeeded Ishmael Burroughs as Presbyterian minister of Wisbech in 1724 and who would move to Sudbury in 1729. Rastrick's epitaph was apparently drawn up by his son William and revised by the Presbyterian minister of Boston, George Ault (d. 1733), and a Presbyterian minister at Cambridge, James Duchal (d. 1761). It read:

> Here lies buried, John Rastrick M.A. born at Heckington, near Sleaford, in the county of Lincoln, and educated at Trinity College in Cambridge. He was formerly Vicar of Kirkton, in the same county. And afterwards, as he could not with a safe conscience comply with certain requirements of the church of England, was an indefatigable preacher of the gospel to a christian church in this town, in separation from it.
>
> He was a man of eminent piety, charity, and modesty: of approved integrity; of remarkable study and industry; and well versed in almost every part of learning, but especially the mathematics. A truly christian divine: an eloquent and striking preacher; a faithful and vigilant pastor: an intrepid reprover of vice, and a most zealous encourager of virtue.
>
> Having finished his course, imbittered alas! with various trials, he joyfully yielded up his soul to God, August 18, 1727. Aged 78.[20]

In addition to his epitaph, Rastrick's will demonstrates his steadfast religious moderation. Even after forty years outside it, Rastrick's religious and cultural identity still owed as much to the established

[20] I follow the abbreviated translation in Calamy, *The Nonconformist's Memorial*, II, pp. 476–477, with some obvious mistakes corrected. The Latin text, printed on p. 437, reads: 'H. S. E. Johannes Rastrick, A.M. Heckingtoniae, juxta Sleaford, in agro Licoln natus; et in Coll. SS^{tae} Trin. apud Cantab. educatus. Olim annos 14 Vicarius de Kirkton in Hollandia in agro jam dicto: et denique (quoniam Ecclesiae Anglicanae, praeceptis quibusdam, conscientia illaesa, obtemperare nequibat) Gregi Christiano, ab Ecclesia publica separato, in hoc oppido, annos 26 Evangelii praeco indefessus. Vir eximiae pietatis, charitatis, ac modestiae; spectatae integritatis, studii et industriae, singularis, omnique fere doctrinae genere instructus; mathematica vero imprimis peritus Comes audivit facetus, theologus vere Christianus, concionator facundus et acer, pastor vigilans et fidelis, vitii reprehensor intrepidus, atque virtutis fautor amicissimus. Peracto demum vitae cursu, aerumnis eheu! non paucis obsito, spiritum Deo laetus reddit, Aug. 18, 1727, aetat 78.'

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000059 Published online by Cambridge University Press

church as it did to nonconformity. In his will, he left his books and manuscripts to his son William on condition that he remain a minister. If, however, neither William nor any of his sons-in-law were a minister, whether conformist or nonconformist, Rastrick willed that his books should form the core of a new public library for the use of the dissenting ministers of Norwich, which was to be managed by the dissenting clergy and an equal number of conforming clergy of their choice. Likewise, he willed that, if William Rastrick died without heir, his four acres of land in Kirton should be given as an augmentation to the vicarage there, in part remembering a legacy once left to him when he was minister there. William Rastrick did continue a minister, although he was never ordained and had to exchange with the minister of Wisbech at communion times. Nevertheless, he was regarded as a cultivated intellectual, who drew up an important plan of King's Lynn and compiled a significant index of the ejected ministers of 1662, which he appears to have circulated in manuscript and which was used by Samuel Palmer in his updated edition of Calamy's *The Nonconformist's Memorial*.[21]

Little is known of what became of Rastrick's other children, beyond that which can be extracted from the volume of family letters and verse that is now in the Lincolnshire Archives.[22] When John Rastrick died, Samuel Rastrick was a silk dyer in London; he died in 1750. Rastrick's eldest daughter, Elizabeth, had married Edmund Burton of Wisbech at Spalding in 1695. In 1727, as mentioned above, Rastrick did not know if his eldest son, John (b. 1675), a stocking weaver who had gone to Carolina, was still alive. The five daughters of Rastrick's third marriage outlived both their parents. It seems likely that the continuation of the account of Rastrick's children was kept up to date by either his daughter Sarah (b. 1698) or Deborah (b. 1709). The last death recorded in the manuscript is that of Martha Rastrick in 1756. John Rastrick's immediate family line came to an end with the death of Deborah in 1779. As her inscription in St Nicholas's Chapel, King's Lynn testified, it was the end of an era: she was, it stated, 'the last of the Rev^{d}. Mr. John RASTRICK'S Family'.[23]

[21] William Rastrick (1697–1752), *ODNB*; Calamy, *The Nonconformist's Memorial*.

[22] Lincolnshire Archives, Lincoln, MS 2 Cragg 4/7 (Letters and Verse of the Rastrick Family). This volume contains copies of many letters and meditations written by Rastrick's daughter Elizabeth, as well as scattered items from other family members.

[23] E.L. Grange and J.C. Hudson (eds), *Lincolnshire Notes and Queries: volume 1* (Horncastle, 1889), pp. 228–229, records the inscription for Deborah Bayley (née Rastrick) (1709–1779).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000059 Published online by Cambridge University Press

John Rastrick's publications and manuscripts

Works printed

1. *An Account of the Nonconformity of John Rastrick, M.A. Sometime Vicar of Kirkton, near Boston, in Lincolnshire; containing the occasions and circumstances of his secession from that place. In a letter to a friend* (London, 1705).

   Printed separately and, with separate title-page, in the third volume of Edmund Calamy, *A Defence of Moderate Non-conformity*, 3 vols (London, 1703–1705).

2. *A Sermon Preach'd at the Ordination of Mr. Samuel Savage, at St. Edmund's-Bury, in the county of Suffolk, Apr. 22. 1714* (London, 1714).
3. Letter (unattributed) in *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, 23 (1702), pp. 1156–1158; concerning Roman coins found at Fleet in Lincolnshire and other discoveries.[24]

Surviving manuscripts, letters, etc.

1. Huntington Library, MS HM 6131, 'A NARRATIVE; OR AN Historicall Account Of The most Materiall passages In the Life of John Rastrick'.
2. Marginalia in John Rastrick, *An Account of the Nonconformity of John Rastrick, M.A.* (London, 1705). British Library, shelfmark 698.g.23.1–8, pp. [2], 38, 44.

   This marginalia, in Rastrick's distinctive hand, is a transcription on p. 2 (the blank reverse of the title-page) of the part of the preface to the third volume of Calamy's *A Defence of Moderate Non-conformity* that related to Calamy's publication of Rastrick's work. It explains how Calamy had come to know about Lincolnshire's after-dissenters and had written to Rastrick at King's Lynn to find out more, receiving the *Account* in reply, which Rastrick permitted Calamy to publish. As well as minor typographical corrections on p. 44, Rastrick inserted an extra paragraph relating to his removal to Spalding as a marginal note on p. 38.

3. Dr Williams's Library, London, MS 24.115, letters from John Rastrick to Mr William Steevens, factor at Queen-Hithe, London (24 December 1721; 1 August 1724; 21 July 1725), pp. 44–46 (irregular pagination).

[24]The subsequent letter of Ralph Thoresby (*Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, 23 (1702), pp. 1158–1160) continued to cite Rastrick's account without attribution. See also the further letter of Thoresby (*Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, 32 (1722), pp. 344–346). For Rastrick's authorship, see [Nathaniel Kinderley, the younger], *The Ancient and Present State of the Navigation of the Towns of Lyn, Wisbeach, Spalding, and Boston* (London, 1751), pp. 8–9.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000059 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Three autograph letters from John Rastrick to William Steevens, all written at King's Lynn. Steevens had evidently been brought up in Spalding, at the time when Rastrick was a minister there. By 1721, Steevens was a corn factor at Queenhithe, London and the letters show that he was also acting as a banker for Rastrick and other Norfolk nonconformists. Among other things, the letters concern Steevens sending Rastrick pictures, the close links between Rastrick and the elder Nathaniel Kinderley, Rastrick's financial dealings, and the distribution of charitable bequests among nonconformist ministers.

4. Lincolnshire Archives, Lincoln, MS 2 Cragg 4/7 (Letters and Verse of the Rastrick Family, early eighteenth century).

A composite volume of Rastrick family papers, consisting mainly of letters and verse, from the early to mid-eighteenth century. Includes a long autograph letter of John Rastrick to his cousin Elizabeth Ayre, fos 24r–25r.

A separate gathering of pages at the end of the manuscript, which are separately foliated, appear to have originated from one of John Rastrick's cousins. They include: a copy of a poem by John Rastrick, beginning 'Lord, if Thou but hide thy Face', fo. 1v; 'The Advice of a Minister to his Daughter', probably by John Rastrick, fos 3v–4r; and a copy of William Pell's Table and Directions for reading the Scriptures, written out for his cousin by John Rastrick, fos 4v–5r.

Missing manuscripts

1. 'Plain and Easy Principles of Christian Religion and Obedience; or the necessity of keeping Christ's Commandments, in order to our preserving an interest in his favour, demonstrated from John xv. 10. By John Rastrick, M.A. sometime Vicar of Kirkton, near Boston, and now Minister of the Gospel at King's Lynn, Norfolk.'

Described in *The Gentleman's Magazine: And Historical Chronicle*, 59 (1789), p. 977, and in William Richards, *The History of Lynn* (1812), pp. 1063–1064, who was in possession of the manuscript. Richards remarks that it would make duodecimo of 250–300 pages. It included a letter, pinned to the manuscript, instructing William Rastrick to publish it after his father's death. Apparently written in response to the Salters' Hall dispute of 1719, the manuscript included letters from Samuel Wright and an appendix detailing Rastrick's 'last Thoughts about the Trinity and Son of God'.

2. 'A Short Catechism; containing the chief heads of the Christian religion, and faith of Christ. By John Rastrick.'

Brief description in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 59 (1789), p. 977, and in Richards, *History of Lynn*, p. 1064.

3. 'The Dissolution'.

Poem, apparently attached to 'A Short Catechism', and reproduced, with some variations, in Richards, *History of Lynn*, pp. 1065–1066; *The Gentleman's Magazine*,

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000059 Published online by Cambridge University Press

59 (1789), pp. 1033–1034; and John Evans, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Rev. William Richards* (Chiswick, 1819), pp. 160–163.

4. 'An Evening Hymn'.

Poem, apparently attached to 'A Short Catechism', and reproduced in Evans, *Memoirs*, p. 163.

Further writings mentioned in the 'Narrative'

fo. 1v 'Two bundles of loose papers', one containing further passages from his life
'Adminiculum Concionatorium'
fo. 2v Diary
fo. 69r 'A Disswasive from Church Merchandize'

'A NARRATIVE; OR AN Historicall Account Of The most Materiall passages In the Life of John Rastrick'

Date of the manuscript

Rastrick's manuscript is undated, and internal evidence provides the best clues as to the date of composition. It is possible that the surviving manuscript is an autograph copy and/or that certain sections of the manuscript, notably the prefatory letter to William Rastrick (fo. 1v) and the account of his children (fo. 89r), were written at different times.

The earliest date at which the main body of the manuscript can have been written, assuming that it was written continuously, is around the summer of 1713. Within the narrative, Rastrick recorded the deaths of Seal Peast in February 1713 and of Mr Waters 'three or four Months' later (fo. 73r). The only later date mentioned within the body of the text is a marginal note that refers to Rastrick's acquisition of Stephanus's Greek Concordance in 1714, when he was aged sixty-four (fo. 76v). There is therefore a good case for accepting a date around the latter end of 1713. This would mean that the narrative of events of his ministry in King's Lynn was brought up to date and that the note on Stephanus was added in 1714, since the text stated that he had not been able to acquire the volume. Such a date is not complicated by any of Rastrick's references to printed books. None of these were published after 1713 and the vast majority were published (at least for the first time) well before 1700.

Further circumstantial evidence for this date concerns the ages of his children. In his prefatory letter to his children, Rastrick expressed his concern that he might die while many of them were still young

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000059 Published online by Cambridge University Press

and that his passing might prompt in them a desire 'to know what your Poor Father was' (fo. 2v). His youngest child, Jeremiah, was born in 1710, while Deborah was born in 1709, Ann in 1704, Hannah in 1700, Martha in 1699, Sarah in 1698, and William in 1697. A date significantly after 1713 would not seem to fit with this desire for vicarious immortality. For a number of other reasons, a later date than around 1713 is unlikely, not least the lack of any narrative relating to this period and the absence of any mention of his publication of his sermon at the ordination of Samuel Savage in 1714.[25]

Such a date is, however, complicated by Rastrick's 'An Account of my Children', a table of the dates of the births and deaths of his children by each of his three wives. This table (fo. 89r, and see Figure 2) appears at the end of the manuscript and includes an entry in Rastrick's hand recording the death of his son Jeremiah in April 1722 and his burial early in May of that year. The entries relating to the period after 1727, recording the deaths of Rastrick's children until 1756, are written in two different hands. It seems likely that Rastrick kept this list up to date long after he wrote the rest of the manuscript and that additions were made after his death, perhaps by his daughter Deborah.

A Comparison of 'A NARRATIVE; OR AN Historicall Account Of The most Materiall passages In the Life of John Rastrick' and An Account of the Nonconformity of John Rastrick

'Hearing of Some Ministers in and about Lincolnshire who formerly had Livings in the Church of England', Edmund Calamy wrote to John Rastrick at King's Lynn, 'desiring him to favour me with the History of his Treatment in the Church and the Grounds of quitting his Living'. The result was what he thought an 'instructive Narrative', made all the more remarkable in Calamy's mind because 'had he not been urg'd to it, his Case would hardly ever have fallen under general Notice'.[26] This narrative, *An Account of the Nonconformity of John Rastrick, M.A. Sometime Vicar of Kirkton, near Boston, in Lincolnshire; containing the occasions and circumstances of his secession from that place. In a letter to a friend*, was published in 1705. It appears to have been printed, with its own title-page, both as part of the third volume of Edmund Calamy's *A*

[25]Rastrick, *A Sermon Preach'd at the Ordination of Mr. Samuel Savage*. The style of Rastrick's description of the shutting up of his meeting-house in this sermon mirrored that in his manuscript 'Narrative'.

[26]Edmund Calamy, *A Defence of Moderate Non-conformity. In answer to the reflections of Mr. Ollyffe and Mr. Hoadly, on the tenth chapter of the Abridgment of the life of the Reverend Mr. Rich. Baxter*, 3 vols (London, 1703–1705), III, pp. xiii–xiv.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000059 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Defence of Moderate Non-conformity (London, 1703–1705) and as a stand-alone work.[27]

Much of Rastrick's *Account* is recycled and adapted in his manuscript narrative. He clearly had recourse to either a printed copy of the *Account* or a copy of the manuscript that he had sent to Edmund Calamy when he wrote his manuscript narrative. The overlap between the *Account* and the narrative is not described in the footnotes to the main transcription, but a brief description is provided here. Of the fifty-two pages of the *Account*, pages 4–40 are reused in large part in the manuscript between folios 39r and 51v. In general, the manuscript provides a slightly fuller version of Rastrick's decision to leave the Church of England, adding the names of his problematic parishioners, the names and positions of the Lincolnshire conforming clergy whom he admired (fo. 42r), and an account of the Popish Plot (fos 42v–43r). Occasionally the printed account includes a little material not included in the manuscript, but the differences are mainly minor variations of phrasing, style, and punctuation.

Description of the manuscript

HM 6131 is bound in vellum, contains eighty-nine folios, and measures approximately 15.5 × 9.5 cm. Rastrick wrote on loose sheets of different types of paper of varying quality. He probably sewed the volume himself. The tightness of the binding renders it impossible that the volume was bound before the narrative was written.

The narrative was and remains a beautiful *thing*, a bespoke object crafted with considerable patience, care, and effort. As can be seen in Figure 1, the title-page was crafted to mirror the aesthetics of print. It includes a hand-drawn border, a title that mimics those of printed books, and a biblical quotation beneath a ruled line. Facing it, and also resembling the conventions of printed publications, a letter to Rastrick's son William has been pasted into the manuscript. The narrative was, above all, designed to be read and cherished in the Rastrick family.

There is no contemporary pagination or foliation; at a later date the manuscript was foliated in pencil, and these folio numbers are followed in this edition. Both the flyleaf and the endpaper have been glued to the cover. Each is a letter to John Rastrick, pasted so that only part of the side bearing the address now remains visible. The visible portion of the flyleaf reads 'astrick att' and, below, 'in'. The endpaper

[27] For an example of the work as a stand-alone publication, see John Rastrick, *An Account of the Nonconformity of John Rastrick, M.A.* (London, 1705), British Library, shelfmark 698.g.23.1–8.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000059 Published online by Cambridge University Press

is torn but the visible portion reads 'To Mr R [. . .] his House [. . .] Kirkton [. . .]'.

Although a printed clipping attached to the inside cover of the manuscript describes the volume as a duodecimo, its composition is in fact irregular. Rastrick numbered the first page of eighteen sheets with an arabic numeral centred at the bottom of the recto of the sheet. Many of them have been written heavily as if to indicate that they were to be printed in bold type. These numbers have not been reproduced in the edited text but are positioned as follows:

1 – fo. 2r	7 – fo. 38r	13 – fo. 54r
2 – fo. 10r	8 – fo. 40r	14 – fo. 56r
3 – fo. 18r	9 – fo. 42r	15 – fo. 58r
4 – fo. 20r	10 – fo. 46r	16 – fo. 62r
5 – fo. 28r	11 – fo. 50r	17 – fo. 66r
6 – fo. 36r	12 – fo. 52r	18 – fo. 70r

The volume is thus a composite of sheets folded as if folios, quartos, and octavos.

Both the tightness of the volume and the quality of the paper, which has resulted in considerable show-through on some sheets, make reading the manuscript difficult in places and this problem is exacerbated by Rastrick's pathologically small and closely packed writing. As will be discussed in the editorial conventions below, the size of the writing makes determining some capital letters particularly difficult. Despite this, with a magnifying glass the narrative reads well and Rastrick's writing is exceptionally even and consistent. The main body of the manuscript is written with wide margins and in clear paragraphs with centred headings at the start of titled sections, while in other places a change of tack in the narrative is indicated by writing the first word of a passage in a slightly larger hand. Rastrick uses a smaller hand for full passages of quotation and at times slants his hand slightly to indicate short passages of quotation, presumably to specify that they were to be printed in italics. There is very little underlining, only a few words of reported speech to which Rastrick draws attention and which he presumably intended to be printed with such underlining. There are a considerable number of marginal notes throughout the manuscript, from short references to longer discursive comments. In some cases, Rastrick simply wrote his comment in the margin. In others, he indicated the position in the text to which a note referred with a marginal note with an asterisk and began the note itself with the asterisk (or other symbol). These features of the manuscript are identified in the footnotes.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000059 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Rastrick wrote on both sides of each folio of the manuscript in a fair-quality black ink. In places, particularly those written on poor-quality paper, the ink has spread somewhat, making reading more difficult. In these places there is considerable show-through, although little that means that doubtful readings occur. The consistency of the colour of the ink suggests that the manuscript was written up onto these sheets in long stretches. Such consistency makes it quite obvious when Rastrick has changed or re-cut his pen. Some sections of the manuscript are written in an ink that has faded to a more brownish colour. The use of brown ink on pages otherwise written in black ink clearly shows Rastrick reading over and checking the manuscript, adding missing words and marginal notes. Where changes of ink give clues to revisions, they are remarked in the footnotes. The quality of the hand and the relatively small number of cancellations and interlineations make it very likely that the manuscript was a fair copy, written from loose papers or perhaps a rough draft.

Provenance

Little is known with certainty about the provenance of Rastrick's manuscript. As we have seen, his will stipulated that his books and manuscripts were to go to his son William 'provided and upon condition that he continue a minister and preacher of the Gospell whether in a Conforming or nonConforming Capacity'. William Rastrick succeeded his father as Presbyterian minister at Spinner Lane and so fulfilled the condition of the will. That he received the manuscript on his father's death is suggested by the character of the prefatory letter that is pasted into the volume.

In his *History of Lynn*, William Richards noted that he possessed Rastrick's 'Plain and easy principles of Christian religion' and 'A short catechism', together with some of his poetry. He also suggested that Rastrick's manuscripts were dispersed after the death of his son William:

> His unprinted, or unpublished works appear to have been much more numerous and considerable; but they got into different hands after the son's death, and most of them perhaps have been since lost. Some of them were in the possession of the son's successors Messrs. *Mayhew* and *Warner*, and some in that of the late Dr. *Lloyd*. What became of them we know not.[28]

[28] Richards, *The History of Lynn*, II, p. 1063. William Rastrick's successors were Anthony Mayhew (d. 1783) and William Warner (d. 1802); David Lloyd (d. 1794) was master of King's Lynn Grammar School.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000059 Published online by Cambridge University Press

There is no reason to doubt Richards's account of the dispersal of Rastrick's manuscripts and it is very unlikely that he had seen the narrative: he would surely have commented upon and used the manuscript. In any case, the volume was certainly not among those of his printed books and manuscripts that were sent to Brown University after his death in 1818.[29]

At some stage, however, the manuscript did indeed cross the Atlantic. Although the Huntington Library has no record of the acquisition of the manuscript, a small printed clipping describing the manuscript, with the pencilled date '9 F[ebruary] [19]20' pinned to it, provides some clues. On the clipping is stamped in very small letters 'Anderson'. It transpires that the manuscript had come up for sale as lot number 805 in a general sale at the Anderson Galleries in New York on the evening of Tuesday 10 February 1920. The sale catalogue described it as:

AN INTERESTING UNPUBLISHED MANUSCRIPT

805. RASTRICK (REV. JOHN). A Narrative; or an Historical Account of the most Materiall passages in the Life of John Rastrick; An Unworthy Minister of Jesus Christ at Kirkton in Holland in Lincolnshire. And Afterwards Preacher to a private Congregation at Spalding in ye same Country, & Rotheram in Yorkshire, and at Lyme-Regis [*sic*] in Norfolk. 12mo, original vellum. In half morocco slip case. Circa 1692

THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT ENTIRELY IN HIS AUTOGRAPH, closely, but beautifully written on 174 pages. Facing the title is a memorandum of the narrator to his son William, in which he states that his desire was that each of his children should have one narrative of the passages of his life, 'yet I desire and charge you that it be not wrote as you find it, here in my name or first person singular; but, that you compose a Narrative out of it yo'self in the third person.'

At the end is an account of Rastrick's children. He married three times, and had in all 24 sons and daughters. There is a long account of Rastrick in the Dictionary of National Biography.[30]

[29]For the bequest of Richards's library to Brown University, see John Evans, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Rev. William Richards* (Chiswick, 1819), pp. 262–263; Charles Coffin Jewett (ed.), *A Catalogue of the Library of Brown University, in Providence, Rhode-Island. With an index of subjects* (Providence, RI, 1843), pp. viii–x. I am grateful to Jay Gaidmore for providing copies of correspondence and catalogues from Brown University Archives.

[30]Anderson Galleries, *English, French and American literature in original manuscripts, first editions, handsome bindings and standard sets from the libraries of Mr Roland R. Conklin of Huntington, Long Island, Mrs Mary E. Plummer of New York, the late Hon. Henry H. Peck of Waterbury, Conn. and other owners and estates: Order of Sale, Monday afternoon, February 9, lots 1–213, Monday evening, February 9,*

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000059 Published online by Cambridge University Press

It is almost certain that Henry Huntington acquired the manuscript at this sale. Unfortunately, the other items in the sale do not shed light on the whereabouts of Rastrick's manuscript before this date: it was a truly general sale, with items from over fifty consignees, of whom just three were named in the catalogue, and with material arranged alphabetically and offered for sale in four sessions.

*lots 214–427, Tuesday afternoon, February 10, lots 428–641, Tuesday evening, February 10, lots 642–855, Wednesday afternoon, Feburary 11, lots 856–1010 [*sic, *for 1070]* (New York: Anderson Galleries, 1920), sale number 1462, p. 171 (lot number 805). I thank Mary Robertson for her help with deciphering the clipping.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000059 Published online by Cambridge University Press