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"Glory to God in the highest, and on Earth peace, good will toward men."

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BIOGRAPHY.

HON ROBERT BOYLE.

Born at Lismore, in Ireland, Jan. 25, A. D. 1627.

But some to higher hopes
Were destin'd; some within a fair mould
Were wrought, and temper'd with a purer flame,
To these the Sure Omnipotent unfolds
The world's harmonious volume, there is read
The transcript of himself.

AKENSIDE.

Pythagoras was the first who devised the name of Philosophy. He thought no man was wise but God only; and that learned men ought to be considered as lovers of wisdom, as the term referred to implies, rather than really wise. The subject of this memoir was truly eminent in that art or science which leads men to contemplate the nature, causes, and effects; of the material works of God.

He was the seventh son, and the fourteenth child of Richard, Earl of Cork. Two misfortunes happened to him in his childhood: the first was the loss of his mother, and the second, an incurable habit of stammering, which he acquired by mocking some of our children. At Eaton school, where he was educated, he soon discovered a strength of intellect which promised future greatness. He also evidenced a disposition to improve it to the utmost; and three years after he was sent to Eaton, he accompanied his brother Francis in his travels, being then only in the eleventh year of his age.

They settled some time at Geneva, where among other studies, the young Philosopher applied diligently to the mathematics, of which he had before acquired the rudiments. After a stay of near two years at Geneva, they visited Italy, where the studious youth enjoyed himself; & regarded with particular attention the recent discoveries made by the noted astronomer Galileo. Here they resided some considerable time; but their circumstances being straitened, for the want of proper remittances, and their father's affairs being greatly embarrassed, through the rebellion in Ireland, they, after experiencing many difficulties, returned to England in the summer of 1644, and found that their father was dead. To his son Robert, the father had bequeathed the manor of Stalbridge, where chiefly the Philosopher afterwards resided: but when in London, he lived with his sister, the Lady Ranelagh, who, it is said, had a genius and temper similar to his own. He now devoted himself wholly to philosophical pursuits, and made frequent excursions to Oxford, where a philosophical society was held, which afterwards became the famous Royal Society, of which he was one of the earliest members.

For the sake of enjoying the company of his learned friends, Dr. John Wilkins, Dr. John Wallis, Dr. Seth Ward, Dr. Thomas Willis, Mr. Christopher Wren, Dr. Gaddard, and Dr. Ralph Bathurst, he for a season bade adieu to his favourite residence, and fixed his abode at Oxford. Here he applied principally to experimental philosophy, and contrived a more perfect air pump than that which had been recently invented.

But natural philosophy was not the only subject which engaged his attention when at Oxford. He cultivated an acquaintance with the learned Languages, and devoted so much time to the study of theology and sacred criticism, that at the Restoration, he was pressed to enter into orders, with a view of raising him to the episcopacy, a rank which few men would have more adorned. He was solicited to enter on this important office by Lord Clarendon, one of the ministers of Charles the second, who also treated him with particular kindness. Boyle considered the proposal with due attention. He reflected, that, in his present situation of life, whatever he wrote with respect to religion would have greater weight, as coming from a layman; for he well knew that the irreligious fortified themselves against all that the clergy could offer, by supposing, and saying, that it was their trade, and that they were abominably remunerated. He considered likewise, that

in point of fortune and character, he needed no accession: and, indeed, his desire for these was always very limited. But Bishop Burnet, to whom Boyle had communicated many particulars of his life, tells us that what had the greatest weight in determining this judgment was, "the not feeling within himself any motion or tendency of mind, which he could safely esteem a call from the Holy Spirit; and so not venturing to take holy orders, lest he should be found to have lied unto it."

The fame of this eminent man was so great, and his labours so incessant, that, the papers of the Royal Society were greatly enlarged, and abundantly enriched, by the communications of his experiments; and as he was one of the first institutors, so he was the principal support and ornament of that valuable establishment. He also exerted himself in other departments, particularly in advancing works of charity,* and schemes of moral and commercial improvements. He was a Director of the East India Company, and the principal instrument in procuring their charter; for which he only required, as an acknowledgment, that they would sanction measures tending to propagate Christianity in their settlements.

To promote this desirable end, he had printed at Oxford five hundred copies of the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles in the Malabar tongue. He gave a great reward to the person who translated into Arabic Grotius's incomparable book, on the truth of the Christian religion; and had a whole edition printed at his own expence, which he took care to have spread in all the countries where that language is understood. Indeed the great object of his philosophical and other pursuits was to aid the cause of religion, and to discountenance atheism and infidelity. His intimate friend, Bishop Burnet, makes the following observations on this point:—"It appeared to those who conversed with him on his inquiries into nature, that his main design was to raise in himself and others more exalted sentiments of the greatness and glory, the wisdom and goodness of God.† This purpose was so deeply impressed on his mind, that he concludes the article of his Will, which relates to the Royal Society, in these words:—"I wish them a happy success in their attempts to discover the true nature of the works of God; and I pray that they, and all other searchers into physical truths, may cordially refer their attainments to the glory of the great Author of nature, and to the comfort of mankind."

The genius of this truly Christian Philosopher appeared to be equal to almost any attempt within the limits of possibility. The Royal Society thus estimated his ability, and in 1673, designed him the honour of being their President, which, however, he modestly declined. In the same year he published an extraordinary tract, entitled, "An Historical Account of a Degradation of Gold, made by the Anti-chloric." And about 1681, he engaged in promoting the propagation of the gospel among the Indians of North America.‡

His character being known, and his excellence acknowledged, his conversation was greatly prized, and his company much sought, by numbers of different ranks in society. His presence was in such request, that, in 1680, he was obliged to have recourse to an advertisement, to prevent the intrusion of visitors. By this scheme he gained time to per-

* His charities were so extensive, that, it is said, they amounted to more than a thousand pounds sterling every year.

† He had so profound a veneration for the Deity, that the very name of God was never mentioned by him without the praise and praise due to his Deity, in which St. Peter Pett, who knew him for almost forty years, affirms, that he was so exact, that he did not remember to have observed him ever to fall in it.

‡ In and of this attempt, he gave £3000 during his life; he contributed largely also to the impressions both of the Welsh Bible, and of the Irish Bible, for the use of the Highlands in Scotland. In addition to these laudable donations, he spent £700 in an edition of the Irish Bible, which he ordered to be distributed in that country.

fect some important works, particularly those on Chemistry.

He wrote voluminously on numerous subjects; and founded a Lecture at St. Paul's, in defence of the gospel, against infidels of every kind; the effects of which have been very conspicuous in the many volumes of excellent discourses which have been published in consequence of that laudable and pious design. He died December 20, A. D. 1691, exactly a week after his beloved sister, Lady Ranelagh. His remains were interred in the church of St. Martin in the Fields, where a funeral sermon was preached by his friend Dr. Burnet, who says of his piety, & of his zeal for the Christian religion:—"His zeal was unmix'd with narrow notions, or a bigoted heat in favour of a particular sect; it was that spirit which is the ornament of a true Christian."

This most distinguished Philosopher and Chemist was a man of extensive learning; and his stock of knowledge was immense. The celebrated Dr. Boerhaave has passed the following eulogium upon him:—"Boyle was the ornament of his age and country. Which of his writings shall I commend? All of them. To him we owe the secrets of fire, air, water, animals, vegetables, fossils; so that from his works may be deduced the whole system of natural knowledge."

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

PROGRESS OF RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION IN THE WEST INDIES.

(Extracts from an Address to Candidates for Holy Orders, recently published by the Bishop of Barbadoes.)

"The diocese in which your ministry will be exercised is divided into so many and distant portions, that in no one colony can any very numerous body of clergy be collected: and even under the most favourable circumstances, the nature of the climate, the hardness of the roads, and the want of proper conveyance, will prevent that frequent and unrestrained personal communication with members of your own profession, which must ever add so materially to a clergyman's own comfort, and by the mutual interchange of pastoral experience, advance the cause of religion among his people. Much must consequently be left to your own discretion, and you will have need to pray fervently for God's Spirit to be with you, and to consult diligently the Scriptures and the writings of our most approved Divines, and to apply carefully to the Rubrics and Canons of your Church, for direction in the discharge of your ministerial duties.

"Wherever your station may be, you can neither expect much society, nor conscientiously engage in it—Your chief acquaintance should be the flock which you are bound to feed. A clergyman can neither afford the time nor the expence of much company. The little which can be spared out of his annual income, is but barely sufficient for the occasional relief of the poorer members of his flock, for the increase of his own private library, and for subscriptions to those religious societies in connection with his Church, which will be found of such important assistance to him in his pastoral labours. And with regard to time, he has not a moment which he can call his own. A minister's is a Herculean labour: his work ends not but with his life, it has new objects, of his care continually offer themselves. Relaxation, indeed, he must have: but Relaxation not for his own sake, but that he may return refreshed and more vigorous to the work whereunto he has devoted himself.

"In Vol. V. of his works, in the following very important remark—"He is not to maintain their neglect, or swallow greater improbabilities than Christians, to maintain the positive creed of the Apostles. And they must think it fitter to believe, that chance, or nature, or superstition, is, should prefer, not wonderful, and hardly credible things, than that the great Author of nature, God, should be able to do so."