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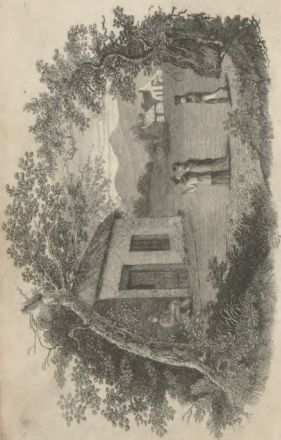
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(6.)

# ACTIVE GOODNESS

BEAUTIFULLY EXEMPLIFIED,

IN THE

## Life and Labours

OF THE

### REV. THOMAS GOUGE, A. M.

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By a Minister of the Church of Scotland.

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## PREFACE.

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THE sources from which the following Memoir has been compiled, are, Neale's History of the Puritans, Brook's Lives of the Puritans, Palmer's Non-Conformists' Memorial, Bogue and Bennet's History of Dissenters, Baxter's Life and Times, and Archbishop Tillotson's Funeral Sermon on Mr. Gouge. It was highly creditable to the liberality of the Primate, that he felt no unwillingness to give a public tribute to the worth of a non-conformist minister; and it speaks volumes in favour of Mr. Gouge, that such a tribute was actually paid to him. In drawing up the life of such a man, it has been the object and aim of the Author to exhibit a practical pattern of that active goodness which becomes the followers of the Redeemer, and which cannot fail to recommend the religion of the Gospel to respect and love. The *great principle* of all active goodness, is here exhibited, and its *practicable modes of operation* specifically pointed out. Although nearly one hundred and fifty years have elapsed since the death of Mr.

Gouge, it is now for the first time that his Life and Labours have been exhibited in a distinct form of detail. If, in even a single instance, this narrative shall be the means of exciting to greater zeal in the labour of love, or of directing the energies of Christians, and of Christian ministers, into channels hitherto overlooked, the labour of the Author in collecting and arranging the materials of his narrative, shall not pass without a recompense.

*October, 1822.*

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## Active Goodness

BEAUTIFULLY EXEMPLIFIED.



IN an age like the present, when benevolence, under every form, abounds, it may be thought altogether unnecessary to recommend the duty either by precept or example. And yet, the very fact of the extensive prevalence of the virtue, imposes on us a higher necessity to inquire into its character; to examine, with jealous care, its diversified modes of expression; to ascertain the principles which lead to it; and to suggest those rules and cautions which seem to be essential to its most profitable exercise. The extensive prevalence of a particular virtue carries along with it a presumption that all is not real; that tares have imperceptibly mingled themselves with the wheat; and that a careful scrutiny is absolutely requisite to distinguish between the genuine and the counterfeit. In the case of such a corrupted creature as man, and in such a mixed scene as that which our world at all times presents,

we may almost take it for granted, that habits, originally excellent in themselves, will lose some portion of their native excellence in exact proportion as they become extensively prevalent, or generally fashionable. And hence the jealousy with which the Christian observer will contemplate them, and the caution with which he will award the meed of *unqualified* approbation.

Our country and our age stand high in the annals of disinterested benevolence. Misery in all its forms finds a refuge and a relief among us; and a kind and generous ingenuity is constantly in exercise, to devise and to carry into execution some new scheme of patriotic and Christian enterprise. We respect the charity which thus feels for the woes of a friend and a brother; and we would have nothing in common with that cold and contracted selfishness which knows no pursuit but the pursuit of gain. We hail the charity of the age as one of its most pleasing features; and we shall never forget, that *one* distinguishing part of "religion pure and undefiled," is to "visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction." Still we are at liberty to maintain, that *this* is the very reason why the prevalent disposition, thus commendable in itself, should be made the subject of careful and impartial scrutiny; and why those who are the prominent heroes in the elevated walks of benevolence, should

be put on their guard against dangers which may beset them on their right hand as well as on their left. Is there no danger, lest the *real principle* of Christian benevolence should be confounded with the mere emotion of animal feeling? Is there no danger lest indiscriminate almsgiving should enfeeble the growth of the manly virtues of sober industry, and independence of spirit? Is there no danger lest, in anxiety for the external wants of man, we should overlook the higher and the more pressing necessities of his spiritual and immortal nature? Is there no danger lest the exercise of one favourite virtue should be held, practically at least, as a "*receipt in full*," for every other; and lest the comparatively easy and self-gratifying exercise of *giving*, should take place of the more painful, but not less important habits of self-denial—of mortification to the vanities of the world—and of active diligence in the minuter and less ostentatious departments of Christian duty.

We would not wish to say one word that might damp the energies of benevolence, or grieve the hearts of those who are in the spirit of their great Master, "going about continually doing good." We wish to be rather their humble attendants in the walk of love; and to share in their luxury of benevolence; while by way of a small return, we shall be on the watch to detect im-

positions; to ascertain the comparative merits of different claims; to survey the new fields of Christian enterprise which may open, and to direct that enterprise in its aims. In doing so, we do not mean to deal in cold and abstract precepts; but to please and to edify by the exhibition of appropriate example. Few men, in any age or country, have stood higher in the ranks of active benevolence than the individual who forms the subject of the following memoir; and the schemes which he devised, and the unostentatious deeds which he performed, still remain to "praise him in the gates."

We are accustomed to claim the praise of enlarged benevolence, as exclusively *our own*; and we are too prone to look back on our pious forefathers with a kind of contemptuous pity. *Here* is one specimen, at least, of the benevolence of a former age, and it stands not alone on the roll of Christian fame. Moreover, let it never be forgotten, that our forefathers, if they *did less* than we, were far *more earnest in devotion*, and far *more strict in practice*. *Theirs* was a *pains-taking* piety; a religion of self-denial; a "godliness with contentment." If they were not so prominent in visiting the "fatherless and the widows in their affliction," and even this is questionable, they were at least more careful than we are in attending to the other part of the description—"in keeping themselves unspotted from the world."



THE father of Mr. Thomas Gouge, was that very learned and celebrated divine, Dr. WILLIAM GOUGE, minister of Blackfriars' Church, London, at the commencement of the 17th century. He was endowed with great powers of mind; and the progress which he made in the different departments of literature corresponded with the vigour of his talents, and the extent of their application. While at King's College, Cambridge, the unwearied ardour with which he prosecuted his studies, and the strict and holy deportment which he uniformly held, obtained for him the reproachful, though really honourable designation of the *arch-puritan*.

To the people of London, over whom he presided, his labours were particularly acceptable. He devoted himself to the advancement of their best interests, and from real love to them, declined several offers of preferment in the church. He used to say, "It is my highest ambition, to go from Blackfriars to heaven." Multitudes stately resorted to his ministry, and many strangers attended his Wednesday morning lectures, which he kept up for not less than *thirty-six* years. Indeed, so great was his fame, that when religious persons, from distant parts of the country, went to London, they did not think their business finished, unless they had attended Blackfriars' lecture. As might have been anticipated, the success of his

ministry was remarkably great, and we have the testimony of his cotemporaries, that thousands were brought to the knowledge of the truth, and built up under his pastoral labours.

His conduct accorded in all respects with the doctrine which he preached; and although his zealous opposition to false principles, and to spiritual intolerance, subjected him to severe persecution, none of his adversaries dared to breathe a suspicion either of the sincerity of his aims, or the purity of his whole character. He was a man eminent, as in other graces, so in this of charity, especially to the household of faith. He maintained some poor scholars in the University, wholly at his own charge; and contributed largely towards the maintenance of others. He set apart a sacred fund, as he called it, as a portion for the poor, proportionable to his income, which also he faithfully distributed. He used to say, that the tenth part of a rich man's estate was a fit proportion to be devoted to God for charitable uses; but he himself gave at least the *seventh* part of all his annual income towards maintaining poor scholars, relieving poor and distressed families, and other works of benevolence.

He was deeply concerned for the honour of the Redeemer's cause, in foreign countries, as well as in his own land. He felt

particular compassion for the foreign Protestants, under all their afflictions and privations. When public collections for the poor and distressed ministers of the Palatinate failed in accomplishing the object in view, he united with his brethren in promoting a private subscription for their relief; thus giving a substantial testimony that he felt, as every Christian ought to feel, for the afflictions of his brethren.

In the famous assembly of Divines at Westminster, Dr. Gouge acted a very conspicuous part. He was distinguished by the soundness of his judgment; the moderation of his spirit; and the spirituality of his views and aims. It was, by such qualities as these, that he was peculiarly fitted for giving advice to his brethren in all cases of doubt and of difficulty. He was often consulted by ministers, as well as by private Christians; and on this account was generally known by the designation of *father*.

He was said to be the very picture of Moses for meekness and quietness of spirit. As he was not easily provoked, so he was never inclined to provoke others. When he received any injury, he always prayed for his enemies, and said "that revilers and evil-doers always hurt themselves most." His humility indeed shone conspicuous among all his other eminent endowments. He was never lifted up by multitudes flocking to hear him, nor

by the applause he received from them ; but used to say, “ I know more to *abase* me, than others to *exalt* me.”

He was through the whole of life remarkably exact and conscientious in the improvement of time. If at any time he heard other persons at their work before he was in his study, he would complain of himself, saying, “ I am much troubled, that any persons should be at their calling before I am at mine.” In the decline of life, he was much afflicted by bodily ailments ; but, although he *groaned*, he never *murmured*. In the midst of excruciating agony, he would say, “ Soul, be silent : soul, be patient. It is thy God and Father who thus ordereth thy estate ; thou art his clay ; he may tread and trample on thee as he pleaseth ; thou hast deserved much more. It is enough that thou art kept out of hell. Though thy pain be grievous, it is tolerable. Thy God affords some intermissions. He will turn it to thy good, and then put an end to all. None of these things can be expected hereafter.” When his friends endeavoured to comfort him, by reminding him of his gifts and usefulness, he replied, “ I dare not think of any such thing for comfort. Jesus Christ, and what he hath done and suffered, is the only ground of comfort. I, being a great sinner, comfort myself in a great Saviour. When I look upon myself I see nothing but weakness and

emptiness, but when I look upon Christ, I see nothing but sufficiency and fulness."

This eminent person died full of faith and hope, on the 12th of December, 1653, in the 79th year of his age, having been minister of Blackfriars', nearly forty-six years. Of him it was emphatically said, that he was so laborious, so exemplary, and so much beloved, that "none ever thought or spoke ill of him, excepting those who were inclined to think or speak ill of religion itself." He left behind him many valuable writings, on various subjects of practical theology; and his Sermons are classed by the pious Bishop Wilkins, in his Discourse on Preaching, among the "most excellent of his time."

## CHAPTER II.

*Birth and early education of Mr. Gouge—his residence at Cambridge—attention to literature in those days—early religion of Mr. Gouge—Remarks on the occasional failure of parental exertions—State of education in England at the beginning of the 17th century.*

THOMAS GOUGE, the son of Dr. William Gouge, was born at Bow, near Stratford, in the county of Middlesex, on the 19th September, 1605. He received the rudiments of his education at the celebrated Eton School; and from thence was chosen to be a scholar of King's College, in the University of Cambridge, in the year 1626, when he was in the 21st year of his age. In both these seminaries, he distinguished himself by his exemplary diligence; and rose to the honours generally conferred on those young men, who stand in the higher ranks of literary attainment. He devoted his time with scrupulous exactness, to the purposes of mental improvement; and did not, like too many young persons, in all seats of learning dissipate his thoughts in the pursuit of trifles, or in the amusements of folly. He set on knowledge its appropriate value. He lis-

tened to the lessons of his instructors with zealous care and humble submission, and, duly sensible of the high advantages which he enjoyed in a literary point of view, was anxious to improve these advantages to the glory of the great Giver, and to the best interests of himself, and of those who might afterwards be committed to his charge.

It is a gross mistake to suppose, as some have done, that the Christian ministers of those days, particularly the stricter part of them, were unfriendly to the culture of the understanding, or to the pursuits of elegant literature. Whether we look to the Puritans in England, as they were called, or to the Reformers of Scotland, we find that the very reverse of this was indeed the fact. The ministers of those days we find to have been pre-eminent in point of learning; and if they had less of the polish and of the graces of elegant literature, they possessed all that is solid and substantial in the acquirements of the mind. In general, they were familiarly acquainted with the ancient languages of Judea, Chaldea, Greece, and of Rome; and could write and speak in the latter of these with fluency and correctness. They never countenanced the idea that solid learning was inimical to real religion; but, both by sentiment and by example, inculcated that the one was a most useful handmaid to the other. Learning, indeed, when allied with

infidelity in principle, or licentiousness in practice, they detested as one of the most powerful engines for carrying forward the devices of Satan; and hence the anxiety with which they studied to associate *mental* with *spiritual* progress, and to consecrate all their acquirements to the glory of the cross.

Under the paternal care of such a father as Mr. Gouge had the happiness to possess, he must have enjoyed every advantage in point of spiritual improvement. At what particular time of life he began to think and to feel aright on the great subjects of religion and eternity, we are not precisely informed; yet there is every reason to think, that his religious impressions and feelings were early and deep. Of him, as of the children of eminently pious parents, it may with truth be said, that from the very first dawn of reason, he breathed, and lived, and walked in an atmosphere of piety. The instructions, and the example, and the predominant spirit of his parents, and of the domestic circle in which they moved, were all powerfully adapted to promote the growth of piety in the members of the family, and to allure to an early and strong attachment to the things of God. The occasional failure of the very best means which the best of parents can employ, is no argument for their discontinuance; but it furnishes a most powerful reason for their more strenuous and



persevering application. If the use of the best of means is sometimes unsuccessful, what may be expected from the neglect of means altogether, or from their partial and desultory use? That the most promising plans should occasionally fail, is exactly what might be expected in the present state of human nature, and of human affairs. It accords with the analogy of other departments in the great scheme of Providence. It reminds us of the danger of depending on human skill and energy, to the neglect of *his* blessing, who operates with or without means as he pleases. It affords a melancholy illustration of the depravity of human nature, and should stimulate to faith and prayer. It is the great and powerful remark of Dr. Owen, that while "prayer without exertion is presumptuous hypocrisy, exertion without prayer is practical atheism."

At the period of Mr. Gouge's early life, it is well known that the spirit and the exercises of piety, held a far more prominent place in the business of elementary education, than they are found to do in the present day. In the smaller, and in the more extensive seminaries, religion was found to occupy a station worthy of its incalculable importance; and that course of education was considered to be miserably defective in which the claims of religious truth, and of holy practice, were systematically overlooked. The instructions

and lessons of ordinary scholarship, generally flowed in a sacred channel; and to fit the young for the discharge of those duties which they owed both to God and to man, was the direct aim of every conscientious teacher. Now, the state of things in this respect, has changed. In many public institutions for elementary instruction, the form of religion is scarcely to be found; and in still more, the form alone remains. Among the qualifications required in teachers, *real piety* does not seem to find a place; and if the pupils advance in the attainment of ancient and modern literature, little anxiety is felt lest that literature should be perverted by infidel sentiment, or prostituted to frivolity and vice.

At the University of Cambridge, Mr. Gouge took the customary degrees in the Arts and in Divinity; and he obtained one of the fellowships in the gift of his college. Had it been his wish to lead an academical life, he might have enjoyed such a life, with all its advantages; and there is reason to think that he might have risen to the first rank in point of literary distinction. But the mind of Mr. Gouge was otherwise inclined. Deeply impressed with a sense of divine truth, and regarding the glory of God as the grand object of all his studies, and of all his endeavours, he devoted himself to the ministry of the gospel. By whom he was inducted into

the vineyard of the church, we do not know, but we have no doubt, that of Mr. Gouge it could with the strictest propriety, be said, that he "was inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost, to undertake such a charge." With him worldly interests had no place in determining his procedure; and his single aim in venturing on the threshold of the temple, was, to "spend and to be spent," in the "work of faith, and in the labour of love." To this he sacrificed all his prospects of academical promotion; and his highest ambition was, to promote the glory of his God, and the welfare of his brethren. Good would it be for the church of Christ, were every minister to undertake the care of souls with the same principles and feelings; and happy are those people, whose spiritual interests are superintended by ministers of such a character.

## CHAPTER III.

*Mr. Gouge admitted into the church—his settlement at Colsden in Surrey—translation to London in 1638—his general style of preaching—pastoral address to his people—visitation of the sick—charity to the poor—instruction of poor children—circulation of the Scriptures and religious books—public catechising—union of alms and prayers—encouragement of industry—account of Mr. Thomas Firmin of London.*

ABOUT the year 1635, Mr. Gouge was appointed to the charge of the parish of Colsden, in Surrey, where he remained for two or three years; performing all the duties of a parochial minister with exemplary diligence, and deservedly conciliating to him the affections of his people. It was not, however, the will of the great Head of the Church, that such a "burning and shining light," should be limited to such a contracted sphere of influence. In the year 1638 he was translated to St. Sepulchre's in London, a large and populous parish, in which, with solicitude and pains, he discharged all the duties of a faithful minister for twenty-four years. Of his general style of preaching, we are enabled to judge from the works

which he published, and which are all of a practical nature. While the great doctrines of revelation are brought forward with a prominence to which they are justly entitled, they are not exhibited in a dry and systematic form, but in close connection with all that is important and valuable in the departments of practical godliness. The characteristic features of his public labours, seem to have been, plainness and fidelity in "stating the whole counsel of God;" warmth and unction in pressing home divine truth on the hearts and consciences of his hearers; and energetic liveliness in applying his instructions to the various classes and characters of men. In the "Address to his dearly beloved friends, the inhabitants of Sepulchre parish in London," which is prefixed to his Sermons on "the Nature and Necessity of Regeneration," published after his separation from his people, we have the following warm and truly pastoral view of his feelings and wishes, in regard to the best interests of those whom he addressed.

"Most of these truths," says he, "have been preached in your hearing, and now they are presented to your eyes; that thereby you may be put to remembrance of them, and more thoroughly affected by them. Though I cease to be your minister, yet I shall not cease to do what in me lieth, to further your eternal happiness. It was my

sincere desire for your everlasting welfare, that first put me upon preaching on this subject; and the like desire hath engaged me to present the same unto your view.

“ Therein have I set before you heaven and hell, happiness and misery. O that you would be so wise as to choose heaven rather than hell, happiness rather than misery.

“ That I should adventure these notes into the world, is not out of any conceit that there is any thing extraordinary in them; but merely out of that strong affection I bear to your souls' welfare, for my heart's desire is, that you may be saved. Avoiding all affectation of words, I have used plainness of speech; it being always my chief design, in the whole course of my ministry, to affect the hearts and consciences of my hearers, rather than to itch their ears, and please their fancy.

“ That I may not detain you longer, I shall close this epistle, with these requests unto you, 1. That you kindly accept of this small book, which treats on a subject so necessary to your everlasting happiness. 2. That you would be pleased as to peruse it yourselves, so to take some time to read it to your families; and if you cannot find leisure on the week days, then to read some part of it each Lord's day, till you have read it through. 3. That you would not lock it up in your closets, but suffer it to lie in your

houses, where your children and servants may peruse it as they find an opportunity. Who knoweth how successful and fruitful this plain treatise may prove, if the Lord shall be pleased to accompany it with his blessing? That the Lord would therefore bless these my poor and weak endeavours, that such as are yet in their natural state may be converted; that converts may be improved and built up in that grace wherein they stand, is the unfeigned desire and hearty prayer of your servant in the work of the gospel, who hath been and still is desirous of your spiritual welfare,

THOMAS GOUGE."

Besides his constant and weekly labours in preaching, together with the various public duties connected with his official ministrations, he was uncommonly diligent in visiting the sick, the aged, and the poor. In such a city as London, the calls to these departments of pastoral labour, must be incessant, and the difficulties and fatigue connected with them, must be such as to deter the worldly and the indolent from prosecuting them with energy and perseverance. Considerations of this nature had no weight with Mr. Gouge; for we are informed, that he allowed no opportunity of approaching the chambers of sickness and the bed of death, to pass unimproved. His qualifications for these valuable spheres of usefulness, were

of the very best kind. With the knowledge, the judgment, and the discrimination which are necessary to guard against mistakes, and to apply the instructions which the peculiarities of each case require, he united the gentleness and the benevolent sympathy which give to these "visits of mercy" their most valuable and endearing charm. In such a wide field as that which was now opened to him, a vast variety of character and of scene must have met his eye. At one time, the triumphs of faith and of hope, would cheer and encourage; while at another time, the darkness of unbelief, and the horrible issue of a life spent in the service of sin, would depress and grieve his mind. The contrasted features of spiritual knowledge, and of spiritual blindness; of poverty, associated on the one hand with the riches of the kingdom, and on the other, imbittered by the wretchedness of vice; of sickness, at one time cheered by the anticipations of a blessed immortality, and again heightened and rendered infinitely more distressing by the gloom of an unknown and justly alarming futurity, must have grieved his soul, while they furnished him with the most salutary lessons of spiritual instruction. It is in such scenes as these, that active piety, whether in ministers or in private Christians, may be the instrument of most extensive usefulness. Its course is not preceded nor accompanied in-



deed with the glare, and the noise, and the bustle of a public display; but, like the fertilizing stream, it moves slowly along, diffusing a gentle and a kindly influence. Its triumphs are not enshrined in the temples of this world's renown; but they are acknowledged with respect in the inmost shrine of many a heart, and they are registered in the annals of heaven.

It appears that Mr. Gouge's father left him, at his death, a handsome estate; and that by marriage in 1639, with one of the daughters of Sir Robert Darcy, the representative of an ancient and excellent family, his temporal provision was materially improved. Accordingly, we are informed, that while he possessed the means, he had also the will to do good; and he embraced every opportunity which Providence presented for alleviating the evils, and increasing the happiness of his fellow-creatures. This indeed was the quality which appears to have shone most conspicuously in him; and many shared in its practical effects. His was not the charity of mere feeling; but of Christian principle. It was influenced not by caprice, or by fashion, but by a sacred regard to the dictates of piety and of truth.

While Mr. Gouge administered spiritual counsel to the sick, he likewise afforded liberal relief to the wants and necessities of those who were poor, and destitute of friends

to assist them. In his occasional alms to the poor, the relief he gave them was always mingled with good counsel, and as great a tenderness for their souls, as for their bodies. By the liberality with which he administered to their outward wants, a most substantial proof was afforded of his real regard to them; while by the spiritual instructions with which he accompanied his gifts, the relief of outward want was rendered subservient to the salvation of the soul.

A large part of his charitable fund was expended on the instruction of poor children in the elementary branches of education, and in the great principles of religion. He also purchased, and distributed among those who were able to read, many copies of the sacred Scriptures, and other good books; inculcating on those to whom he gave them, the diligent perusal of them; and when he had opportunity, exacting of them an account of the instruction and improvement they may have derived from them.

Every morning throughout the year, he held an exercise of *public catechising* in his church, for the benefit of all his parishioners and hearers; but particularly for the poorer classes, who were generally found to be the most ignorant. In this most important ministerial exercise, he adapted himself in a peculiar manner, to the capacities of all; and by plain and familiar expositions of divine

truth, brought down to the level of the meanest understanding, he contributed in no small degree to the wider diffusion of scriptural knowledge; and fitted the minds of his hearers for the more profitable perusal of the Scriptures at home, and for the more intelligent hearing of the gospel when addressed to them from the pulpit. Indeed, there is too much reason to think, that the neglect of this most interesting exercise, is one great cause of the prevalent increase of religious ignorance, and the little benefit which the ordinary classes of hearers are found to derive from the public ministrations of the sanctuary. No doubt the want of due encouragement on the part of the people may, with some appearance of reason, be pleaded as an excuse for the neglect of it on the part of their ministers; but we strongly suspect that in by far the greater proportion of cases, this want of encouragement is rather the *effect* than the *cause* of ministerial indifference and neglect. At any rate, the way of duty is to be chosen and pursued, whether the people give encouragement or not. *The loss is theirs*; and the satisfaction of having begun and steadily prosecuted a Christian enterprise, must be no slender reward to the man "whose praise is not of men, but of God."

On one feature of Mr. Gouge's pastoral labours, there will be among judges equally

competent, a diversity of opinion. To encourage the poor, and the ignorant, to come to him for instruction, he was in the habit of making a weekly distribution of alms; not on a certain and fixed day, but changing it on purpose as he thought best, that he might secure their regular attendance. Of course, those who were thus assisted and relieved by his bounty, were chiefly the more aged poor, who, being unfit for labour, had leisure enough to attend on the catechetical exercise regularly. In the opinion of some, the propriety of such inducements may be questioned; and yet there is certainly nothing unreasonable nor unscriptural in the union of charity to the body, with the care of the soul. Cornelius was honoured of his Lord, with a high testimony of approbation, because "his prayers and his alms ascended up together, as a memorial before God." The Apostles of the Lord, while they "preached the Gospel to the poor," healed their diseases, and supplied their bodily necessities. Even a greater than all "went about doing good," alike to the bodies and the souls of men; healing the diseases of the one, and securing the salvation of the other. That *mercenary* feelings may influence in such a case, is certain; but where is the benevolent or the Christian scheme which possesses a power of evading, or of repelling the approach of every sinister mo-

tive; or which is in the literal sense of the terms, *incapable* of being perverted or abused? One thing is certain, that they who came with no other view than to share in the good man's bounty, were undesignedly brought within the reach of Scriptural instruction; and the same benevolence which supplied their external wants may, by the blessing of heaven, have been rendered instrumental in leading them to the possession of the "pearl of great price."

While Mr. Gouge was liberal in his alms, he took effectual care to avoid the danger of that indiscriminate charity which may encourage the growth of the very evil which it wishes to remove. While he gave liberally to the victims of disease, and by the "staff of bread" upheld the tottering steps of the aged and afflicted poor, he taught the habits of sober industry to the young and the healthful. All those poor persons who were capable of working for their own support, he set to work upon his own charge; buying flax and hemp for them to spin, and the produce he took off their hand, paying them for their work; and then got it wrought into cloth, and sold it among his friends and acquaintances. The loss, whatever it might be, he cheerfully bore. "And this," says Archbishop Tillotson, "was a very wise and well-chosen way of charity, and in the good effect of it, a much greater charity than if he had given

thèse very persons freely and for nothing, so much as they earned for their work ; because by this means he took many of them off from begging, and thereby rescued them at once from two of the most dangerous temptations of this world, *idleness* and *poverty* ; and by degrees reclaimed them to a virtuous and industrious course of life, which enabled them afterwards to live without being beholden to the charity of others."

This scheme of industry, begun by Mr. Gouge at his own hand, and carried on by him on a scale comparatively small in itself, but large when considered as a private undertaking, was the first thing that gave the hint to Mr. THOMAS FIRMIN, a wealthy and excellent citizen of London, so well known to those who have perused the annals of benevolence, as the distinguished supporter of a house of Industry, on a more extensive scale, for the industrious poor of London, and its vicinity. The leading principle of his scheme was exactly the same with that of Mr. Gouge ; while, having greater facilities of commercial and manufacturing enterprise, he was enabled to carry on the details of it with greater energy, and more extended effect. Many hundreds of poor children and others, who lived idle before, unprofitable both to themselves and the public, were continually maintained at work, and taught to earn their own livelihood on the

wages of honest industry. Mr. Firmin was enabled by his own resources, and by the generous assistance of many well-disposed persons of all ranks, to bear the unavoidable loss and charge of such a vast undertaking; and by his own energy and zeal, extraordinarily fitted to go through the incredible fatigue and anxiety attendant on such a complicated concern. The Plague in 1665, and the fire in 1666, furnished to the benevolent mind of Mr. Firmin, many objects of sympathy and kind regard; and he failed not to "do good where he had opportunity." In 1676 he erected a large warehouse for the employment of the poor in the linen manufacture; and in 1682, when the revocation of the edict of Nantz, by Louis XIV. drove so many French Protestants into Britain, he erected another factory of the same kind, for their employment in the town of Ipswich. When the Irish clergy, nobility, and others, fled from their native country to England, on occasion of the persecution and proscriptions of James II. he exerted himself so energetically in their behalf, as to receive a letter of thanks for his diligence and kindness, signed by the Archbishop of Tuam, and seven of the Irish Bishops. He died in 1697, and the following inscription is placed on a stone, in the wall near his grave, in one of the cloisters of Christ's Church Hospital, to which he had been a distinguished bene-

factor. The statements of the inscription are just, and instructive.

“ Under this Stone, near this place, lyeth the body of THOMAS FIRMIN, late citizen of London, a Governor of this, and St. Thomas' Hospitals; who, by the grace of God, was created in Christ Jesus unto good works, wherein he was indefatigably industrious, and successfully provoked many others thereto; becoming also their almoner; visting and relieving the poor at their houses and in prisons, whence also he redeemed many. He set many hundreds of them to work, to the expending of great stocks. He rebuilt, repaired, and added conveniences to hospitals, weekly overseeing the orphans. The refugees from France and from Ireland, have partaken largely in the effects of his charity, pains, and earnest solicitation for them. He was wonderfully zealous in doing good works, beyond the example of any in our age. Thus showed he his faith by his works, and cannot reasonably be reproached for that which brought forth such plenty of good fruits. He died December 20th, 1697, and in the 66th year of his age.”\*



## CHAPTER IV.

*Separation of Mr. Gouge from his pastoral Charge—Continuance of his labours in London—Great plague and fire, 1665, 1666—Mr. Gouge directs his attention to Wales—State of Religion in that principality—Efforts to remedy prevalent evils—Labours of Mr. John Penry—Vavasor Powel, and others—State of Wales in 1552–1660—Effects of the Restoration on Wales—Labours of the ejected Clergy—Commencement of Mr. Gouge's labours in behalf of Wales, 1662—Establishment of Schools—Circulation of good books—Origin of circulating schools—Account of the Rev. Griffith Jones—Success of his plan—The Rev. Thomas Charles, of Bala—Present state of Education in Wales.*

WHILE Mr. Gouge was in the height of his usefulness, as a citizen and as a minister of London, he was suddenly interrupted by a train of unforeseen circumstances, which affected him in common with many others of his brethren. It is well known, that soon after the restoration of king Charles II. to the throne of his ancestors, in 1660, an act of uniformity was passed, by which every person who held a living, or officiated as a

clergyman within the church, was called on, under severe penalties, to declare his cordial assent to every part of the established system of discipline and worship, and to adhere to it rigidly, even in the smallest particulars. It was not to be expected, that such a sudden transition from the more free scheme of independency, which had been introduced under the protection of Cromwell, would accord with the views or feelings of the more conscientious and decided part of the clergy. And hence we find that the result, while it was honourable in no small degree to them, was disastrous to the church and to the kingdom. By the famous act of 1662, commonly known by the name of the Bartholomew act, upwards of 200 of the most enlightened, conscientious, and laborious ministers then in England, were compelled to resign their charges, and to throw themselves and their families on the care of Providence. Among these excellent men was Mr. Gouge; and although he did not make the same sacrifice, in point of external advantages, which the greater number of his brethren did, still it must have been a painful stroke which separated him from a large and affectionate flock, to whom he was much attached, and who had enjoyed the benefit of his valuable ministerial labours for the space of twenty-four years.

After his separation from his people, he

continued to reside in London, preaching occasionally when he had it in his power to do so, and carrying forward his schemes of benevolence, with the same alacrity as before. The loss of his living in the church, which was a very valuable one, no doubt contracted his means of doing good; but as he possessed considerable resources from other quarters, he was enabled to lay himself out for extensive usefulness, while the greater leisure which he enjoyed, put it in his power to devote a larger portion of his time and thoughts to plans of benevolence.

As the chief part of his private property seems to have consisted of houses and tenements in the city of London, we are informed that he suffered very severe losses by the great fire which, in 1666, laid a great part of the metropolis in ashes. After his wife's death, which took place about the same time, and after settling some of his children in the world, he had not above £150 per annum remaining of his income; and of this, he constantly devoted £100 to works of charity. So great was his modesty, that it never appeared either by word or action that he put any value upon himself. This was often remarked of him, that the charities which were procured chiefly by his application and industry, when he had any occasion to give an account of them, he would rather impute them to any one who had but the least hand

and part in obtaining them, than assume any thing of them to himself. Dr. Calamy says of him at this period, "It was his daily wish to do all the good he could, with as great diligence and constancy as other men laboured at their trades. He visited the poor, and stirred up the rich in whom he had any interest, to devote, at least, the tenth part of their estates to works of charity." Although we have no particular information respecting it, we have reason to believe, that during the awful period of the plague, in 1665, he, like the excellent Samuel Shaw, and other eminent non-conformist ministers, remained in the city to comfort the sick and the dying. A kind Providence preserved them "from the pestilence that walked in darkness, and from the destruction which wasted at noon-day."

When prevented, by the act of uniformity, from preaching publicly in London, Mr. Gouge directed his attention to a part of the kingdom where his public and private labours, as they were more needed, so would, in all probability, be more highly esteemed. This was the principality of *Wales*. Of the spiritual state of this part of the Empire, Mr. Neale, in his history of the Puritans, gives this account, under date 1649: "The inhabitants of the principality of Wales were destitute of the means of Christian knowledge. Their language was little under-

stood; their clergy were ignorant and idle, so that they had hardly a sermon from one quarter of the year to another. The people had neither Bibles nor Catechisms; nor was there a sufficient maintenance for such as were capable of instructing them. The Parliament, taking the case of these people into consideration, passed an act for the better propagation and preaching of the gospel in Wales, for the ejecting scandalous ministers and schoolmasters, and redress of some grievances; to continue in force for three years; and so instant were they on the subject of religion at this time, that they devoted the Friday of every week, to consult ways and means for promoting it." It ought to be recollected, however, that previous to this period, considerable exertions were made by pious individuals for promoting the spiritual welfare of this interesting portion of the British people. Towards the latter part of the sixteenth century, Mr. John Penry, M. A. a native of Wales, and a celebrated preacher at both the seats of learning, having returned to his native country, is supposed to have been one of the first who preached the gospel there in purity. The seed which he sowed brought forth fruit. More effectually to serve the Welsh, he sought to interest the government in their favour, by publishing an account of their deplorable condition. He was a learned and a pious

man: but neither his learning nor his piety, could excuse him to the Bishops, for having embraced the principles of independency. It is said that, for this crime, he suffered death, in the year 1593, in the 34th year of his age.\* He was succeeded in his evangelical labours in Wales, by Messrs. Wroth, Erbury, and Cradock, who, while they met with much opposition, were eminently successful in planting the standard of the cross. But perhaps the most zealous labourer in this field, in the early part of the seventeenth century, was Mr. Vavasor Powell, so well known to those who are conversant in the religious history of Wales. He was born in the county of Radnor, and was educated at Jesus College, Oxford. When he left the university, he preached up and down in Wales, till, being driven from thence for want of Presbyterial ordination, which he scrupled, he came to London, and soon after settled at Dartford in Kent. In 1646, he obtained a testimonial of his religious and blameless conversation, and of his abilities for the work of the ministry, signed by eighteen of the Westminster Assembly of Divines. Furnished with these testimonials, he returned to Wales, and became a most indefatigable and active instrument of promoting the

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*Journal of the Rev. Mr. Neale, Vol. V. p. 37-49.*

gospel in these parts. There were few, if any of the churches or chapels in Wales, in which he did not preach. He very often preached to the poor Welsh in the mountains, at fairs, and in market-places, for which his secular recompense was very scanty. Having embraced peculiar sentiments in politics, he was subjected to imprisonment; and after he had been confined for about eleven years, he died in the year 1671.

In consequence of the act of 1649, for promoting religion in Wales, and the appointment of commissioners for carrying it into execution, it is delightful to learn that, so early as the year 1652, there were one hundred and fifty good preachers, in the thirteen Welsh counties, most of whom preached three or four times a week; that in every market town, there were placed one, and in most great towns two schoolmasters, able, learned, and university men; that the tithes were all applied to the maintenance of godly ministers, to schoolmasters, and the wives and children of ejected clergy. As it was not possible to find a succession of pious and learned preachers in the Welsh language, six itinerant preachers were appointed for each county; and, as assistants to them, several eminent laymen, members of churches, were allowed to travel through the country, and in a quiet way to assist the devotions of the people. After all, it must

be confessed, that at first the number of itinerants both scholars and others, was, by no means, equal to their work. The parishes in that mountainous country are large and wide, and there being but one itinerant to several of those parishes, the people must have been neglected, and their children left without instruction; but this was owing to the necessities of the times.

When the act of uniformity was passed, a painful interruption was put to the progress of the good work in Wales. Most of the more zealous and able labourers in the vineyard were forced to retire from their livings, and their places were supplied, in general, by men of very opposite characters. The ministers ejected were, in general, men of learning; and when deprived of their livings, while they continued to preach as they had opportunity, they set up schools and were eminently useful in diffusing knowledge among the rising generation. They likewise rendered considerable service to the cause of religion, by instructing young men for the ministry of the gospel, and for literary professions in civil life.

It was in 1662, that Mr. Gouge began his useful labours in behalf of the principality of Wales. Having made a journey into South Wales, he inquired into the state of the people as to the means of instruction, and set himself vigorously to afford them



help. In every town where he came, he inquired what poor people there were that had any children whom they were willing to have taught the English language, and to read, and to write, and to learn the catechism; and when he met with a competent number, he inquired for fit persons to instruct them, a man for the boys, and a woman for the girls; agreeing with them at a certain rate of salary, which he undertook to pay. He also used means to provide, with suitable books, those who were able to read. He procured a translation into Welsh of the Church Catechism, the Practice of Piety, and the Whole Duty of Man, besides several other pious and useful books; and great numbers of these he sent to the principal towns in Wales, to be sold at easy rates to those who were able to buy them, and to be freely given to those who were not.

In both these designs, through the blessing of God upon his unwearied endeavours, he found very great success. "By the large and bountiful contributions which, chiefly by his industry and prudent application, were obtained from charitable persons of all ranks and conditions, from the nobility and gentry of Wales, and the neighbouring counties; and from that perpetual fountain of charity, the city of London, led on and encouraged by the most bountiful example of the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor, and Court of Aldermen, to all which he constantly added

two-thirds of his own estate,—by all these together,” says Archbishop Tillotson, “there were every year eight hundred, sometimes a thousand poor children educated; and by his example, several of the most considerable towns in Wales, were excited to bring up, at their own charge, the like number of poor children in the same manner, under his inspection and care.” Dr. Manton calculates the number of schools thus established, and encouraged by him at three or four hundred, and the young persons benefited by these valuable institutions must have amounted to many thousands.

Those who have attended to the interesting history of the progress of education in Wales, will, by these statements, be reminded of the successful efforts which, during the last century, have been made by the successors of Mr. Gouge, in the same walk of Christian benevolence. It was not to be supposed that the exertions of a single individual would prove sufficient to supply the moral wants of the principality; and it need not surprise us to find, that fifty years after Mr. Gouge began his useful career, the inhabitants of Wales were still exceedingly destitute of the means of instruction. Besides, it does not appear that his immediate successors embarked in the scheme with the same portion of liberal and active zeal which characterised his exertions. We must also recollect, that although

Mr. Gouge was not one of those who, from narrow and illiberal prejudices, opposed the instruction of the native Welsh in their mother tongue, still it is certain that the greatest share of his attention was directed to the establishment of *English* schools, in the principal towns; and from this circumstance, it necessarily followed, that the evil could only be partially remedied. Besides, we must take into consideration the peculiar localities of the country requiring a mode of treatment different from what is commonly applied. A mountainous country, with a widely scattered population, cannot be expected to derive the ordinary share of benefit from seminaries stationed in particular towns and districts. These stationary schools, indeed, would serve as so many luminous points to diffuse around their immediate range, a mild and salutary light. But there must have been many sequestered regions unexplored, and many remote glens, and vallies, and mountains, unvisited by the cheering influence of knowledge and improvement. Hence originated the idea of *circulating schools*, applied with such pleasing success to the wants of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland and Ireland.

It was not till 1730, that the plan of circulating schools was first adopted in Wales. The plan originated with a clergyman, the Rev. Griffith Jones, of Llandower, Carmar-

thenshire, in a poor country congregation, with no other fund to defray the expense than that which could be spared out of the charitable contributions of the people of his own parish. This money was expended first in supporting *one*, and in a little time afterwards *two* schools. After this, assistance was received from various quarters, particularly from the society in London for promoting Christian knowledge; and in the course of seven years, the number of schools had increased to thirty-seven. The same clergyman continued to superintend the schools till his death, in 1761; but before that event, the schools had increased to the amazing number of *two hundred and eighteen*, which, in the course of a single year, had been the means of instructing nearly *ten thousand* persons to read the Scriptures in their native language.

At these circulating schools, so anxious were the people to learn their own ancient language, that persons of all ages attended from six years of age to above *seventy*. In several places, indeed, the elder people formed about *two thirds* of the number in attendance. Persons above sixty attended every day, and often lamented, nay wept, that they had not learned forty or fifty years sooner. Not unfrequently the children actually taught their parents, and sometimes the parents and children of one family re-

sorted to the same circulating school, during its short continuance in a district, while various individuals who, from great age, were obliged to wear spectacles, seized the opportunity, and learned to read the Scriptures in Welsh, at that advanced period of life.

The *number* of persons taught by this cheap and expeditious method, was also very remarkable. By an abstract, at the end of the account of these schools, published in 1761, it appears that, in the course of twenty-four years only, viz. from 1736, to 1760 inclusive, there were instructed in the Welsh Bible, not less than *one hundred and fifty thousand two hundred and twelve persons*.

After the decease of Mr. Jones, the schools were continued on the same plan by a pious lady of fortune, an intimate friend of Mr. Jones, and a constant attendant on his ministry, her name was Mrs. Bevan. In her will, this lady, who lived several years after Mr. Jones, left *ten thousand pounds*, the interest of which was to be applied forever towards perpetuating these schools. Her executrix, a niece of hers, disputed the validity of the will, so far as it applied to this money, and it was thrown into Chancery, where it continued *thirty* years before a decret was obtained. About the year 1809, a decret was granted in favour of this charity, and the interest of the ten thousand pounds, with the accumulation of it by interest, all the years

it was in Chancery, ordered to be applied, under certain specific regulations and restrictions to the support of *circulating charity schools* through the whole principality. The country had been gradually reverting to its former state of ignorance and barbarism, and its best friends had begun to despair of ever seeing such a pleasing consummation effected. The change on the moral aspect of the country, during the last fifteen years, has been remarkably striking. Both before and since the decision in favour of this charity, the Rev. Thomas Charles, of Bala, in Monmouthshire, exerted himself with unremitting assiduity in the work of instruction, and his efforts were remarkably blessed. The schools have since gone on with increasing success, and the effects of them, in many parts of the country, have been very visible in the increase of the knowledge of the sacred Scriptures, and the amelioration of the morals of the people in general. As a decisive proof of the beneficial effects of the schools, we may just notice that, by the last Report of the London Sunday School Union, the number of Sabbath scholars in Wales, amounted to nearly *one hundred thousand*.\*

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\* The above account of the circulating schools in Wales, has been compiled from the first Report of the society in Edinburgh, for the support of Gaelic Schools in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland.

## CHAPTER V.

*Mr. Gouge preaches in Wales—persecuted—History of the Welsh Translation of the Bible—Exertions of Mr. Gouge in circulating the Scriptures in Wales—His labours among the inmates of Christ's Hospital, London—His success—Death of Mr. Gouge.*

THE efforts of Mr. Gouge in behalf of the principality of Wales, were not confined to the business of education. He paid particular attention to the other “two great instruments” for advancing the purposes of truth and godliness; I mean, the preaching of the Word, and the circulation of the Scriptures. For many years before his death, he was in the habit of travelling into Wales, and dispensing what money he could spare himself, or collect from others, among the poor persecuted ministers there. He also laboured incessantly in preaching the gospel, wherever he found an opportunity. It appears, that by an old university license, which had been renewed by some of the bishops, he was authorised to preach occasionally in Wales. Availing himself of this liberty, he preached in the parish churches and chapels to which he obtained access, and his labours were remarkably blessed. At length, the

arm of persecution was stretched out against him. He was excommunicated from the church at the very time when he was doing so much good, in a quiet and inoffensive manner, and was obliged to fly from place to place, at the risk of his life.

It might have been expected that a man like Mr. Gouge, so respected by all who knew him, so quiet and unostentatious in his deeds, so little disposed to intermeddle with the contests and tumults of the times, and so eminently useful to the temporal and spiritual interests of men, would have been, at least, overlooked, and not positively hindered in his "work of faith and labour of love." But we must remember, that the hostility to evangelical truth was, at that time, very strong in England; and immorality in practice was sanctioned by royal and noble example. Such a man as Mr. Gouge was thus felt to be a living and standing reproof to the manners of the age; and those who were thus practically reprovèd by him, became the more keen in their violent persecution. Thus was exhibited a striking illustration of our Lord's words, that, "men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil."

In regard to the circulation of the *Welsh Scriptures*, Mr. Gouge was eminently useful. Although some partial efforts had been made by individuals previous to that



period, it was not till 1563, that an Act of Parliament was passed, enacting that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament should be translated into the old British or Welsh tongue, and this work was committed to the charge of the Welsh bishops. In 1567, was first published the Welsh translation of the New Testament; and in 1588, the whole Bible was printed in the Welsh tongue, under the charge of Dr. William Morgan, bishop of St. Asaph. A corrected edition was published at London in 1620; but as these several editions were all in *folio*, their use was principally confined to cathedrals and churches. The honour of having furnished the first supply of Bibles on a cheap and portable scale, for general use in families, belongs to one or more citizens of London, at whose private expense an octavo edition was published in 1630. In 1654, and 1678, two other octavo editions appeared; and it was to the last of these, consisting of 8000 copies, that Mr. Gouge contributed so liberally out of his own resources, and procured ample subscriptions from numerous opulent and benevolent individuals. Of this beautiful edition, one thousand copies were freely given to the poor, and the rest were sent to the principal cities and towns in Wales, to be sold at very reasonable rates. The price was *four shillings*, sterling, which was much cheaper than any English Bible, up to that

period, had ever been afforded. The good example was followed by others. In 1690, an edition of ten thousand copies was published under the patronage of Thomas Lord Wharton, by Mr. David Jones, assisted by several citizens of London. During the eighteenth century, six editions were published at the expense of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge. In 1802, the want of Bibles was still so great, as to suggest the idea of that great undertaking, the British and Foreign Bible Society, by whom, in 1806, a very large impression of the Welsh Bible, was published. Various editions have since been published; and the last in 1821, was printed at the charge of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and is one of the most beautiful specimens of typography ever exhibited. It is now considered, that the inhabitants of Wales are at present abundantly supplied with the Scriptures in their native tongue.\*

While Mr. Gouge was actively engaged in promoting the interests of religion in the principality of Wales, he did not overlook the claims of those who were more immediately within the circle of his observation. Although the frequent journeys of benevo-

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\* Horne's Introduction to the Study of the Scriptures, Vol. II. p. 260, 269.

lence which he undertook, occupied by far the greater part of his time, he still considered London as his head quarters; and during his residence there, he laid himself out for extensive usefulness both in public and in private labours. We are informed by Archbishop Tillotson, that, considering the large number of learned, and godly, and laborious ministers in the metropolis, he did not feel himself called on to interfere with their labours, but rather to devote himself to those districts of the country where the want of public ordinances, and of a zealous evangelical ministry, was more severely felt. Thus did he set an example of that considerate benevolence which selects its objects with discretion, and proportions its efforts to the peculiar exigencies of every case.

But he adopted a different rule in regard to *private* Christian exertion. In his beloved work of visiting the sick, instructing the ignorant, and disseminating useful publications, he considered the city of London as presenting to him many appropriate fields of operation; and these he did not fail to cultivate. In addition to what has been stated in an earlier part of this narrative, he now felt himself called on to embrace a new opening which Providence seemed to present. One of the oldest charities in London is the foundation commonly known by the name of

Christ's Hospital. It was founded by that pious young king, Edward VI. and to the ample endowments bestowed on it by him, many valuable additions have been made by private individuals at different periods. Its specific designs were the relief of aged and sick poor, and the moral and religious education of the children of those burgesses of the city whose circumstances did not admit of their giving them the ordinary advantages of early instruction; and also those orphans who may be left on the bounty of the public. In the prosperity of this valuable establishment, Mr. Gouge took a deep interest; and during the latter years of his life, he was, while resident in London, in the habit of giving frequent attendance for the purpose of catechising the children, and administering spiritual instruction to the old. He used to say often, that he had two livings, which he would not change for two of the greatest in England; meaning Wales, where, as we have seen, he used to travel every year to spread knowledge, piety, and charity; and Christ's Hospital, for the spiritual good of whose inmates, he laboured with incessant care.

In these good works he employed all his time and care, and his whole heart was in them, so that he took very little interest in any thing else, and seldom minded or knew any thing of the strange occurrences of

that troublesome period. He had selected with judgment his sphere of active charity, and to *that* he adhered with undeviating constancy. Like his great Master, he counted it "his meat and drink to do the will of God his father;" and the large success which he had in his labours of love, was a continual feast to him, and communicated a perpetual serenity to his soul, and even to his countenance. The great delight which he felt in the work of doing good, lightened all its difficulties. He rose early, and sat up late, and continued to exercise the same vigilance and industry even to a good old age. In his yearly journeyings in the wild and rugged parts of his favourite principality of Wales, he endured no small portion of bodily fatigues, and the extremities of heat and cold which, in their several seasons, are in that country very great; and he endured, not only with patience, but with pleasure. He gloried in trials and difficulties; and his highest ambition was, "to spend and be spent for the souls of his brethren."

He died in the seventy-seventh year of his age, on the twenty-ninth of October, 1681. It so pleased God, that his death was very sudden, and so quick, that in all probability he himself was not conscious of the change. He died while in a sound sleep, without any sickness, or pain, or struggle. One groan,

only did he utter, and was gone. So that, we may say of him, as was said of David, that, "after he had served his generation, according to the will of God, *he fell asleep.*"

## CHAPTER VI.

*Character of Mr. Gouge—his Piety—Humility—Liberality of spirit—Expansive charity—Testimonies in his favour by Archbishop Tillotson and others—Lines to his memory, by Dr. Isaac Watts.*

THE character of this estimable man stands recorded in the best of all memorials, the deeds and habits of a truly Christian life. Of his piety towards God, which is the only sure foundation of all other graces and virtues, we shall only say, in the words of one of his eulogists, that it was great and exemplary, and yet very still and quiet, without stir and noise, and much more in substance and reality, than in show and ostentation. It did not consist in censuring, and finding fault with others, but in the due care and government of his own life and actions, and exercising himself continually to have a conscience "void of offence towards God, and towards man." One of his friends said of him, that after long acquaintance and familiar conversation with him, it was not easy to observe any thing that might deserve blame. The famous Richard Baxter, in his "History of his Life and Times," says, that he never heard any one person, of what

rank, sort, or sect soever, speak one word to his dishonour, or name any fault that they charged on his life and doctrine.

He was clothed with *humility*, and had in a most eminent degree, that ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which St. Peter says, "is in the sight of God, of great price;" so that there was not the least appearance either of pride or passion, in any of his words and actions. He was not only free from anger and bitterness, but from all affected gravity and moroseness. His conversation was affable and pleasant. He had a wonderful serenity of mind, and evenness of temper, visible in his countenance. He did not indulge in the merriment of the fool, but he was never melancholy or sad. He was on all occasions the same, always cheerful and kind; of a disposition ready to embrace all men as his brethren, and to do them every kind office. He was of a liberal and truly Catholic spirit, allowing others to differ from him without feeling any alienation of affection; and provided they did fear God, love the Redeemer, and work righteousness, he cherished for them the feelings of brotherly kindness, and of that charity which is "the bond of peace." He recommended, by the strictness and purity of his whole life, the doctrine which he held; and men could not fail, "to take knowledge of him, that he had been with Jesus." "All things considered," says



Archbishop Tillotson, "there have not, since the primitive times of Christianity, been many among the sons of men, to whom that glorious character of the Son of God, might be better applied, "that he went about doing good." He made his light to shine before men, with such a bright and steady lustre, that "they beholding his good works," were constrained "to glorify their father, who is in heaven." Dr. John Owen saith of him, that "he abundantly manifested himself to have lived in the faith of that truth which he endeavoured to implant in the mind and consciences of others, and did but invite men into the same belief and practice with himself."

It is no slender testimony to the eminent worth of Mr. Gouge, that not less than *six* most competent and yet independent witnesses, have recorded their high estimate of his excellencies. When we mention the names of Dr. John Tillotson, Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. John Owen, Mr. Thomas Manton, Dr. Edmund Calamy, Mr. Richard Baxter, and Dr. Isaac Watts, we believe we may safely infer, that from *such* a court there can lie no appeal. Of the statements and testimonies of the first five of these eminent men, we have already availed ourselves: and now, in conclusion, we shall enrich our narrative with the following beautiful

tribute of the muse of Watts, to the pre-  
eminent excellence of Mr. Gouge.

“ No vulgar mortal died  
When he resign'd his breath.  
The Muse that mourns a nation's fall,  
Should wait at GOUGE's funeral:  
Should mingle majesty and groans,  
Such as she sings to sinking thrones,  
And in deep sounding numbers tell,  
How Zion trembled, when this pillar fell.”

FINIS.

3:10.86

