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978-1-108-06716-4 - Memoirs of Dr. Richard Gilpin, of Scaleby Castle in Cumberland  
and of His Posterity in the Two Succeeding Generations

William Gilpin Edited by William Jackson

Excerpt

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MEMOIRS  
OF  
THE GILPIN FAMILY.

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DR. RICHARD GILPIN.

The first person of whom any remembrance is preserved was the great grandfather of the present generation, whose name was Richard Gilpin. He was born in the year 1623,\* the year, in which Charles I. came to the crown. He was the son of a younger brother, and being born to no estate, applied the first years of his life to the study of physic. But feeling a stronger inclination to divinity, he laid aside all thoughts of practising as a physician, & changing entirely the course of his studies, he took his degrees in divinity; but at what university I find no account.

At the conclusion of the civil war, the great question between presbytery & episcopacy was decided in favour of the former, which became the national establishment.

Dr. Gilpin had always been inclined to presbytery, tho' with the greatest moderation: & being now fully determined to enter into the ministry, he took orders, & during the usurpation, was presented to the rectory of Greystock in Cumberland.

Here he lived amidst all the enthusiasm of the times, untouched by the general contagion. The high notions of church power, which Archb<sup>p</sup> Laud had dictated, and which had been carried to a very offensive height, were greatly disgusting to him, as they appeared wholly opposite to the

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\* "October 23, 1625, Richard son of Isaac Gilpin of Strickland Kettle baptised." Kendal Register. (Memoir by the Rev. A. B. Grosart.)

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simplicity, & gentle spirit of Christianity. On the other hand, he was as much disgusted with the violence & hypocritical canting of the prevailing party; & could by no means ever be wrought on to sign the *solemn league, & covenant*. He was very averse also to many of the practices among the ministers of those times. It was usual with them, for instance, to require from every person, before he was admitted to the communion, a particular account of the exact time when his conversion took place. Dr. Gilpin always considered this as a very improper requisition, and therefore omitted it.

But tho', on the whole, in church matters, he was inclined to presbytery, he was highly dissatisfied with the usurpation of Cromwell; as indeed all sober people generally were, of whatever party, or religious opinion: and a general discontent ran thro' the nation. An opportunity however soon fell out, which gave vent to these silent murmurs. In the year 1655, Cromwell dissolved his refractory parliament, & the members of the house, retiring to their several counties, spread every where such new matter of discontent, that measures were no longer observed. Men were levied in many places against the usurper; & a general rising was expected. But Cromwell, who had his eyes in all places, soon dispersed every insurrection, as it made its appearance. It was at that time he sent his Major-generals throughout the kingdom to punish with fines, & proscriptions, all delinquents.

Among the families ruined by the severity of these military magistrates, was Mr. Gilpin of Kentmere-hall, near Kendall, in Westmoreland. He was the head of y<sup>e</sup> family, and lived reputably on an estate, which had been in the hands of his ancestors from the days of King John. It seems probable he had taken an active part against Cromwell, in the king's life-time: but his affairs being composed, he lived quietly, till these new disturbances broke out, on Cromwell's violent measures with the parliament. Having

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join<sup>d</sup> in an unsuccessful insurrection, he became a marked man, & was obliged to provide for his safety as he could. To avoid a sequestration, he gave up his estate in a kind of trust-mortgage to a friend, & went abroad. There he dyed; but in a time of quiet, his heir not being able to get hold of the proper deeds to recover the estate, it was totally lost to y<sup>e</sup> family.\*

In the mean time, D<sup>r</sup> Gilpin lived quietly at Greystock concerning himself only with his own parish, and lamenting those public evils, w<sup>h</sup> he could not remove. His posterity may regret, they have so few anecdotes of his ministry. It might have furnished many excellent lessons.† He was a learned man, & a laborious pastor. The only remains I know of his pastoral care, is a sermon, which he preached at Keswick, before an assembly of the clergy of those parts, & which he printed at their request.‡ The following is a short extract from it; which may give his posterity some

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\* For a more detailed account of this unfortunate transaction, see Note in Pedigræ, under George son of William.

It was not unusual during the Wars of the Roses, for combatants, engaged on either side, wishing to preserve their estates from forfeiture, to convey them to trustees of their own kin or connection of the opposing faction. George seems to have adopted this device with very unfortunate results.

† Our information as to the period of his incumbency, relates almost entirely to the trouble which he had with the rapidly increasing Quaker body. I would not be understood to speak disparagingly of that community, whose services in the cause of freedom of thought and worship ought ever to be remembered; but whoever reads the accounts of the scandalous defamations which Henry Winder of Hutton John, in the Parish of Greystoke, had to undergo from some professed and active members of that Society, as narrated in "The Spirit of Quakerism by Henry Winder 1696," (a remarkably rare work), "The Life of Henry Winder by the Rev. George Benson D.D.," and "The Postscript to the Rev. Samuel Audland's Funeral Sermon on the death of John Noble 1708," will be astonished at the wickedness of some members, who, ultimately, were prevailed upon by the body, partially to withdraw their vile assertions.

Though the affair alluded to did not culminate till after Gilpin's residence at Greystoke had ceased, yet the troubles commenced previous to his removal.

‡ The Temple Re-built. A Discourse on Zachary 6, 13. Preached at a generall Meeting of the Associated Ministers of the County of Cumberland at Keswick, May 19. By Richard Gilpin, Pastor of the Church at Graistock in Cumberland. London, Printed by E. T. for Luke Fawne, at the Parrot, in Paul's Churchyard, and are to be sold by Richard Scott, Bookseller in Carlisle. 1658.

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idea of his mode of preaching, very different from that of the times he lived in.

“Dream not of ease in an employment of this nature. God, angels, and men have their eyes upon you, to see how you will bestir yourselves. It is your *duty*; not a matter of *courtesy*, which you may do, or hold at pleasure. He that hath commanded you, *εἰς τὸς εἶναι*—to give yourselves up wholly to these things, will not take himself *beholden* to you, when you have done your best. God having made the Ox which treadeth out the corn to be the hieroglyphic of *your* profession, he doth thereby teach, that labour and patience are so far from being a disgrace to you, that they are necessary qualifications for the ministry. Opposition I suppose, you all expect, & partly find already. Can any one think otherwise, than that they, who are like bullocks unaccustomed to the yoke, will struggle? Is it a wonder, if they think all bonds, fetters? every restraint to be cruelty; & the dressing of their wounds unsufferable tyranny? But what then? Hath not God called you to oppose the carnal interests, & desires of men? He who thrust into the theatre against the throng of the people rushing out, gave this reason for it, *Hoc in omni vita facere studio*. He thought it the perfection of philosophy to go contrary to the generality of men; & the likeliest way to find out virtue: while Plato shewing himself courteous to all, was thus censured: *Quid illi tribuendum est, qui tot annos in philosophia versatus, nullum hactenus dolore affectit*. You know how to apply this. What a shame would it be, if we who have better instructions, greater obligations, and sure promises of help, should give off with the excuse of the sluggard, *There is a lion in the way*. Let us not fear. Difficulties there will be, but they are only difficulties to those, who do their work negligently. Be courageous, & faithful, & God will make the rough ways plain before you.”

After the restoration, when episcopacy again took the lead, the presbyterian party made what stand they were able. But the act of uniformity passed, & was executed with rigour. Dr Gilpin notwithstanding his moderation, could not subscribe it in all its parts; & therefore resigned his

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benefice, trusting God for the maintenance of himself & family, which consisted of a wife & five children.

The king and his council however seem to have been apprehensive, lest this vigorous step against the presbyterians might have ill consequences. They were much inclined therefore to compound the matter, at least with some of the leaders of the party : & in this view three or four bishopricks & many inferior dignities in the church were offered to them.

Among others Dr Gilpin was represented to the king as a person highly esteemed in the northern parts of England, and as a man of great moderation. Accordingly in filling up the vacant bishopricks, his name was inserted for the see of Carlisle : and it was not doubted by his friends, but he would get over the few scruples he had to the act of uniformity ; & accept the preferment : for he had always spoken favourably of the church of England ; and considered the line between the two parties, with regard to their *religious sentiments*, as almost an invisible one. But to the surprise even of his nearest friends, he declined the offer : being swayed probably by the indecency of *appearing* to desert his principles from lucrative motives ; which would certainly have injured him in the general opinion of men ; & of course made his influence, in his new station, of little weight. It is somewhat extraordinary, that the Bishoprick of Carlisle, sh<sup>d</sup> have been refused by two private clergymen of the same family, for Bernard Gilpin had refused it, when offered him by Elizabeth.

While Dr Gilpin lived at Greystock, he had been tempted by an advantageous offer, to lay out the little fortune he had, on the purchase of the manor of Scaleby-castle in Cumberland. Land was then cheap & often in want of purchasers. As he had not however sufficient to compleat the purchase, he made up the deficiency by a mortgage.

This was the place he chose for his retreat, after he left Greystock, hoping by the little income it produced, and his

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own frugality, to be able to maintain his family. His house was one of those old fortresses, which had been a barrier against the Scots. It had always been inhabited, & was in tolerably good condition, before Cromwell reduced a great part of it to ruins; when he took it from Sir William Musgrave, who held it against a detachment of his troops. The income of a poor outed minister, could not do much to improve it. What he could do however, without much expence he did. He made the house again habitable; and being of opinion, that planting was the least expensive, & one of the most productive modes of improvement, he planted a great number of trees, around his old castle; which in after-times gave it an air both of beauty, and dignity.

Here he was solicitous to be of all the service in the country, he could. He administred medical advice among his poor neighbours, who had not the means of better assistance. He administred also to their spiritual wants, calling them on sundays, into a great arched hall in his castle, which he had fitted up as a chapel, & doing every benevolent action among them, which his means allowed. How acceptable his services were among the poor people of those parts, & how much they revered him for wisdom, & sanctity, appears from the superstitious respect they paid him. During many years after his death, it was believed among them, that he *had laid the Devil*, as they phrased it, in a morass not far from his house. It may be hoped, that a change for the better in the manners of the people, gave some credit to the belief.

The Dissenters having now found, they could get nothing from government, beyond a toleration, began to separate every where into assemblies, & chuse pastors of their own.

Among other places, a large congregation united at Newcastle upon Tyne, where they built a handsome meeting-house, and sent an invitation to Dr Gilpin to be their minister. Tho' he had now taken his measures, & laid

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his plan for a life of quiet, & repose ; he accepted their invitation, & as soon as he could settle his affairs at Scaleby, removed with his family to Newcastle.

Here a new scene of life opened before him. Hitherto he had lived in a country retirement, both at Greystock, & at Scaleby, where party prevailed little. But here he was in the midst of a large town, divided by various opinions, where his candor & moderation had an ample field for exercise. In fact, I have heard it said, that his meeting-house was a kind of center of unity among them all. It was frequented as much by churchmen, as dissenters, & they all found here, what was seldom found in the pulpits of those times, their common Christianity preached ; unsullied by the religious contests which every where prevailed. His preaching was extremely pleasing and popular. His subject-matter, his language, his voice, his manner were all engaging ; & made such an impression on the people, as was never worn out, but with the lives of his contemporaries.

In a faithful discharge of his duty, among this grateful people, he spent the remainder of a long life, dying at the age of 74 in the year 1699.\*

He left behind him a book printed in his lifetime, intitled *Satan's temptations* ; which was in much esteem ; & still is so. It discovers much good sense, great piety, & a considerable compass of knowledge : but it is written in that mode of formal composition, which was more agreeable to that age, than the present.† He left behind him also two sermons. One of them, preached at a visitation of the clergy held at Keswick, I have already mentioned—the other

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\* He died at Newcastle Feb. 13, 1699/1700, and was buried on the 16th at the Church of All Saints there. (Memoirs of Ambrose Barnes, edited by W. H. D. Longstaffe, Surtees Socy., Vol. 50, p. 143.)

† A new edition of this work was published by James Nicholl of Edinburgh, in the year 1867, with a Prefatory Memoir by the Rev. Alexander Balloch Grosart, in which he has embodied the results of much careful enquiry, and to which I am greatly indebted.

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was preached, I believe, before the judges, at Newcastle, but I never saw it.\*

Among his other papers was found a treatise of considerable length, prepared, as it seemed, for the press, *On the pleasures of religion*. This M.S. and several other M.S.S. of Dr Gilpin's consisting chiefly of heads, & divisions of sermons, from which he used commonly to preach, fell into the hands of the author of this memoir; & being deposited in a box with other papers, & placed in the corner of a closet, were attacked by what is commonly called, the *dry damp*, & were almost entirely spoiled. If any thing had been interposed between the bottom of the box, and the floor, so as to have suffered the air to circulate, the mischief had been prevented.†

After Dr Gilpin's death, his widow retired, as her husband had wished, with her family to Scaleby-castle. Great part of the mortgage had, by this time, been payed off; and shee, by her care, & prudent management still lessened the incumbrance.‡ It is probable he had lived upon his income at Newcastle; & left the estate to disincumber itself.

Of the children Dr Gilpin left behind him, little can be said, except of the eldest son. One went into the Navy;

\* It was preached before Judge Twisselton and Serg. Bernard at Carlisle, September the 10<sup>th</sup>, Anno 1660; and published at Newcastle upon Tyne, 1700; so that its composition may be said to have been the last fruits of his Rectorship, as its publication was the last work of his life.

Besides these, there were printed three other works from his pen, of two of which it may suffice to give the leading titles—"The Agreement of the Associated Ministers of Cumberland & Westmerland," and "A Sermon on the death of the Revd Mr Timothy Manlove." His Inaugural Thesis on obtaining his Diploma, "De Hysterica Passione," is dedicated, "Celeberrimo et virtute maxime conspicuo viro Gulielmo Brisco de Crofton, in Comitatu Cumbriæ Armigero, Socero suo venerando, hanc disputationem Inauguralem observantiæ Signum offert et inscribit Richardus Gilpin."

† Charles Bernard Gilpin, the author's grandson, says in a communication to the Revd Mr Grosart, "Nevertheless my mother kept the fragments all the days of her life with great veneration."

‡ The following extract from the Broughton Register shows that Richard Gilpin's widow died when on a visit to her daughter and namesake:—

"Madam Susanna Gilpin departed this Life on Tuesday Jan. 18 abt 11 a Clock at night and interred on Friday following being Jan. 21<sup>st</sup> 1714/15."



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& was killed, or dyed young. Another whose name was John, was a reputable merchant at Whitehaven, where he made a considerable fortune in the Virginia trade. He was esteemed an honest man; but other particulars of his character I never heard: nor have I met with any circumstances relating to the remainder of the family.\*

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\* The precise period at which Gilpin quitted Greystoke, and the exact sequence of the events narrated, are scarcely given with accuracy in the text, much less by any other author. That Richard Gilpin held Greystoke up to Sept. 10, 1660, is clear from his having preached the Assize Sermon at Carlisle on that day. It was either immediately previous to this date, or very soon after, that he was offered the Bishoprick of Carlisle, for Sterne was consecrated Dec. 2nd, 1660; and the following extract from the Greystoke Register, kindly furnished me by the Rev. Thomas Lees, Vicar of Wreay, proves that Gilpin must have vacated that Rectory in favour of Wm. Morland, who had been ejected during the protectorate, at the date given, "Anno Regni Caroli Secundi & decimo tertio Annoq. dom. 1660/1 Mensis Ffebruarii 2 was William Hodgson of Little Blencow chosen Parrish Clarke of Graystocke by William Morland Rector." Gilpin retired to Scaleby, where, however, he could not have remained long, as it is clear from a passage in the Memoirs of Ambrose Barnes, p. 142, that he had been officiating in Newcastle previous to the passing of the Five Mile Act in 1665.

Although there has been some difference of opinion on this point, I do not think that he had, previous to taking his degree at Leyden, July 6, 1676, any medical qualification, because it is stated on the same authority that I have just quoted, p. 154, that "Dr Gilpin was greatly beholden to Dr Tonstall for his improvement in physic after his coming to Newcastle." Of course his early training would enable him to avail himself of the facilities now at his disposal. It must be remembered that the maiden name of Richard Gilpin's mother was Ann Tonstall, and as Dr. T. attended Gilpin's Chapel, the latter may, in more ways than one, have naturally become the doctor's successor.

Edmund Sandford, in his Account of the Families of Cumberland, the original MS. of which is in the Library of the Dean and Chapter of Carlisle, writes with unusual virulence of Richard Gilpin;—"A quondam preacher of the fatall Plament and his wife Mr Briscoe's daughter of Crofton brethren of confusion in their brains: knew what they wolde not have but knew not what they wold have if they might choose." A little moral obliquity in one of the right opinions does not particularly move the old gossip—"He is a brave Monsir, a gentil gallant, a mettled man, a great horse cowper, a noted gamester, &c"; and the passage I have extracted (not quoted for the first time) is the only instance of ill temper he manifests, except when he mentions Oliver Cromwell.

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## WILLIAM GILPIN, ESQ.

William the eldest son of Dr Gilpin,\* was intended for the law, & sent to the inns of court; from whence his father had the satisfaction of hearing very pleasing accounts of his conduct, abilities, & application. By the time he was called to the bar, he had obtained that sort of character, from wh<sup>ch</sup> it was easy to foresee, he would make a distinguished figure in his profession. He had not however the ambition of looking forward to the honours of the robe. He chose rather a quiet, domestic life. Having finished his studies therefore, he retired to his native country; and fixed himself at Whitehaven, where he practised his profession. Here he soon fell into good business: He attended the northern circuit—was employed in most of the causes of any consequence; & was soon considered as one of the ablest lawyers in those parts.

At Whitehaven he married a young Lady—a relation of his own, of the name of Fletcher—the daughter & co-heiress with a younger sister, of Henry Fletcher Esq<sup>r</sup> of Tallantyre in Cumberland.† *Fletcher*, in the northern lan-

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\* Ambrose Barnes and Dr Gilpin “placed out their sons at the Inns of Court together,” and it is curious to note that whilst William Gilpin became Recorder of Carlisle, his fellow student was contemporaneously Recorder of Newcastle on Tyne, and also of Berwick on Tweed. (See *Memoirs of Ambrose Barnes*, p. 142.)

† Mary, the eldest daughter of Henry Fletcher, Esq., of Tallentire Hall, and his wife Mary, the daughter of William Brisco of Crofton, and sister of Richard Gilpin’s wife, Susanna Brisco, was, I learn from “*The History of the Congregational Church of Cocker-mouth*, by W. Lewis, Cocker-mouth,