



Robert Boyle 1627-1691

Loud claps of thunder woke young Robert Boyle with a fright. The furious storm outside make him wonder if the Day of Judgment were here. If it was, was his soul ready? At that moment the 13-year-old resolved to live a life dedicated to serving Christ, and the next fifty years were proof of his conversion in 1640.

Born into a family of great wealth, Boyle used his time, talents and earthly treasure to advance the cause of Christ. He was a strong supporter of missions to Ireland, the Orient, and the young colonies in America. One of the missions Boyle actively supported was John Eliot's pioneer work among the Algonquin Indians in Massachusetts. But Robert Boyle is most often remembered for his scientific work.

Boyle considered his scientific experiments, like all his other endeavors, part of his Christian service, for it was man's duty to seek for God's purpose in nature. His writing *Skeptical Chemist* was an important work, moving chemistry from the work of alchemy into the realm of science. He believed that the orderliness of the universe reflected God's purposeful design. God established the universe according to certain natural laws, so that it worked like a mechanical clock, once the Designer had set it in motion. The scientist's duty was to discover what laws God had established. Boyle himself formulated what became known as "Boyle's Law;" the pressure of a gas is inversely proportional to the volume it occupies.

Boyle's scientific studies included work on the theory of colors, respiration, gems, and porosity. This work replaced the idea of occult influences in nature with a belief in natural laws established by God in creation. All of Boyle's life, including his scientific work, was to glorify God.

Many of his writings were decidedly theological. He wrote tracts on Divine love, ethics, the evil of swearing, the excellence of theology, and the style of the Scriptures. He even tried his hand at a Christian novel.

In 1662 Boyle was influential in establishing the Royal Society. A majority of the first members were Christians who saw science as a means of understanding God's workings in nature. In his will he established a series of lectureships for proving the Christian religion against its opponents. The Boyle lectureships became an important forum for Christian apologetics, but the strongest apologetic Robert Boyle gave the world was his humble, upright, and dedicated life.