

things, as well as the necessity of a holy life. However, this brought light to him in some things, produced a sense of his sinful character, and a seriousness of purpose to amend his ways.

'Yet whether,' says he, 'sincere conversion began now or before or after, I was never able to know, for I had before had some love to the things and people that were good, and a restraint from many sins. I knew that Christ was the only Mediator, by whom we must have pardon, justification and life, but I had very little sense of the love of God in Christ to the world, and to me, nor of my special need of Him.' But he adds further:—

'About this time it pleased God that a poor pedler came to the door who had ballads and some good books, and my father bought of him Dr. Sibbs's 'Bruised Reed.' This also I read, and found it suited my taste, and was seasonably sent me; which opened more the love of God to me, and gave me a livelier apprehension of the mystery of redemption, and how much I was beholden to Jesus Christ.'

The following sentence or two are worthy of special notice:—

'All this while neither my father nor I had any acquaintance or familiarity with any that had any understanding in matters of religion, or ever heard any pray extempore.

'After this we had a servant that had a little piece of Mr. Perkins's works—that on 'Repentance, and the Right Art of Living and Dying Well,' and 'The Government of the Tongue.' And the reading of that did further inform me and confirm me. And thus, without any means but books, God was pleased to resolve me for himself.'

The next link in this chain is that of the Rev. Philip Doddridge, D.D. His grandfather was the incumbent of Shepperton, near London, and his father was an oilman in that city. His mother was a daughter of the Rev. John Beaumann, of Prague, Bohemia, the city of Jerome's martyrdom. The Romish persecutions that followed the expulsion of the Elector Palatine Frederic compelled him to fly from his country, and after spending some time in Germany he came to England, and became the master of the free school at Kingston-on-Thames.

Philip was his mother's twentieth child, eighteen of whom died in infancy. Philip was laid aside as dead, but there was a tiny spark of life, which the careful nurse kindly nurtured. Of his mother's first lessons given to her feeble boy from the Dutch tiles of the fireplace, the reader has often heard. Doddridge owed something to Baxter, but not so much with reference to spiritual awakening or conversion as to subsequent edification. It was when he was a student under Dr. Jennings, at Daventry, and as a young pastor, that he derived the chief benefit from Baxter's writings, which, with Bishop Tillotson's works, were among his greatest literary treasures.

Doddridge's exposition, or rather paraphrase, on the New Testament, is a portly and useful set of books, but no work of his has been so widely acceptable and useful—excepting perhaps some of his hymns, such as 'Jesus, I love Thy charming name'—as his 'Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul.' It has been translated into many languages, and has been instrumental in leading many to God, and to run for and obtain the heavenly prize,

Among many others the celebrated William Wilberforce may be mentioned, as the next link in the chain. Wilberforce came into possession of riches while yet a young man. He was a member of several London clubs, and a man of the world. Club-life then—a century or more ago—was commonly

associated with gaming and with free, if not fast, living, and fashionable life. Pleasure occupied much of his time. His first visit to the Continent was with the celebrated Mr. Pitt; the second time, in 1784, with Isaac Milner, a Cambridge Senior Wrangler, and afterwards Dean of Carlisle, and his mother and sister. His conversations with Milner did much to prepare him for that radical change of heart and life which soon took place. 'Milner appeared,' says Wilberforce, 'in all respects like a man of the world, mixing, like myself, in all companies, and joining as readily as others in the prevalent Sunday parties.'

But beneath this exterior powerful evangelical influences were at work, and to his great surprise Wilberforce, before they started, discovered this fact. 'Had I known at first,' says he, 'what his opinions were, it would have decided me against making him the offer. So true is it that a gracious hand leads us in ways that we know not, and blesses us, not only without, but against our plans and intentions.'

Just before starting Wilberforce had lighted on Dr. Doddridge's 'Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul,' and had asked Milner what he thought of the book. 'It is one of the best books ever written,' was his reply. 'Let us take it with us and read it on the



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journey.' They did read it, and one of the first results for Wilberforce was that he determined to examine the bible for himself on the momentous points to which the work of Doddridge relates. Another Continental journey was taken, to Switzerland and Italy, and they studied the Greek Testament together, discussing with each other the great truths which came before them.

For a time Wilberforce endeavored to keep up his usual manner in the company of the various people with whom he mixed, but his change in certain things began to attract attention, and beneath his apparent cheerfulness there were working thoughts and sentiments which greatly agitated him, and which deepened from day to day.

'As soon as I reflected seriously on these subjects,' he says, 'the deep guilt and black ingratitude of my past life forced themselves upon me in the strongest colors, and I condemned myself for having wasted my precious time and opportunities and talents. It was not so much the fear of punishment by which I was affected as a sense of my great sinfulness in having so long neglected the unspeakable mercies of my God and Saviour and such was the effect which this thought produced that for months I was in a state of the deepest depression from strong conviction of my guilt.'

But the good seed sprung up and bore fruit. Thus he concludes:—

'What infinite love that Christ should die for such a sinner! and how necessary is it that he should save us altogether, that we may appear before God with nothing of our own. God grant I may not deceive myself in thinking I feel the beginning of gospel comfort!'

We come to one now nearer our own time, whose name has been familiar to us from our childhood as the author of 'The Dairyman's Daughter,' and other small works which have been greatly blessed to the conversion of souls in all parts of the world.

The Rev. Legh Richmond had a son named Wilberforce, and in his own account of his reasons for giving him this name, he says:

'But it was not the tie of ordinary friendship, nor the veneration which in common with multitudes I felt for the name of Wilberforce, which induced me to give that name to my child; there had for many years past subsisted a tie between myself and that much loved friend of a higher, and more sacred character than any other which earth can afford. I feel it to be a debt of gratitude, which I owe to God and to man, to take this affecting opportunity of stating that to the unsought and unexpected introduction of Mr. Wilberforce's book on 'Practical Christianity.' I owe, through God's mercy, the first sacred impression which I ever received as to the spiritual nature of the gospel system, the vital character of personal religion, the corruption of the human heart, and the way of salvation by Jesus Christ. A young minister, recently ordained, and just entrusted with the charge of two parishes in the Isle of Wight (Brading and Yaverland), I had commenced my labors too much in the spirit of the world, and founded my public instructions on the erroneous notions that prevailed among my academical and literary associates. The scriptural principles stated in the 'Practical View' convinced me of my error, led me to a study of the scriptures with an earnestness to which I had hitherto been a stranger, humbled my heart, and brought me to seek the love and blessing of that Saviour who alone can afford a peace which the world cannot give. Through the study of that book I was induced to study the writings of the British and Foreign reformers. I saw the coincidence of their doctrines and with those of the scriptures, and those which the Word of God taught me to be essential to the welfare of myself and my flock. I know too well what has passed within my heart, for now a long period of time, not to feel and confess that to this incident I was indebted originally for those solid views of Christianity on which I rest my hope for time and eternity. May I not, then, call the honored author of that book my spiritual father? and if my spiritual father, then my best earthly friend?'

If any argument were necessary to show the vast importance of a liberal and world-wide dissemination of Christian literature, this would supply it; and it should encourage all engaged in this work, and not least the great society which has done and is still doing so much in this glorious enterprise.

It should teach us, also, a sometimes needful lesson, not to neglect small efforts for doing good, nor omit to use every means for disseminating the truth which brings salvation to all who receive it in the love thereof. The apparently casual call of the pedler at the house of Mr. Baxter's father was the first link in a chain of events by which myriads of souls have been made eternally holy and happy.

The cause of temperance has nothing to hope, but much to fear from a license system.—Daniel Dorchester, D.D.