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A Golden Chain of Five Links

A HISTORICAL NOTICE OF MEN AND BOOKS.

(By the Rev. R. Shindler, in 'Light in the Home'.)

The printed page has often supplied the place of the living messenger. It was by no preaching or preacher that the light of God shone into the mind and heart of Luther, but by the bible which he found in the monastery. And so, in tens of thousands

beautiful chain. To trace the connection of these several links, and to show in a somewhat fuller detail how the good seed of the kingdom, disseminated in well-known books, has been the production of a succession of rich harvests is our purpose here.

We begin with the author of 'The Saints' Everlasting Rest,' the saintly and much-suffering Richard Baxter. This takes us back to the time of James the First. Richard Baxter was a son of a gentleman of the same name, residing at Eaton Constantine, about one mile from the famous Wrekin Hill, and five miles from Shrewsbury. At the time of young Richard's birth his mother was stay-

discouraged preaching except on special occasions. At eighty years of age, this good man, for such we may hope he was, became blind. He could repeat the usual prayers from memory, and for the reading of the psalms and lessons he engaged whom he could: one year it was a common laborer, and another it was a tailor.

The elder Richard Baxter became a very devout man, and took pains to read the Word of God—generally the historical portions—to his son, who was very fond of play and amusement, and though not generally wild in his habits, was addicted with other boys to visit in a clandestine way the neigh-



SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES.

of instances, the tract, the book, and especially the bible, has been the means of light and salvation to men and women of all ranks, who had not had the advantage, or had not availed themselves of the privilege, of the ministry of the gospel. In some cases we can trace successive links in a chain, of circumstances, or as we may say, causes and effects, by which men who have attained to great eminence and usefulness in the Church and in the world have been more or less directly benefited by means of printed books.

One such case has been often referred to, in which names and men no less distinguished than Dr. Sibbs, Richard Baxter, Dr. Doddridge, the great Wilberforce, and the excellent Legh Richmond, are linked in a

ing with her father at High Erccall, in the same county.

The elder Baxter had been recently awakened and converted by the private reading of Holy Scripture, without any preacher or teacher. Indeed, it seems that there was no preaching or teaching of any kind, except the reading of common prayer and the psalms and epistles. Many of the men who held benefices were unable to preach, and not a few were men of scandalous lives, and some were only less ignorant than their flocks.

The incumbent of Eaton Constantine held another living twenty miles away; but in neither did he ever preach. He was not equal to this duty, and he had lived through the reign of Elizabeth, who, it is well known,

boring orchards. Indeed, he consumed so much raw, and unripe fruit, especially apples, that he afterwards attributed his life-long trouble in his stomach to those early excesses.

His school days were spent at a public school in the village of Wroxeter, which occupies the site of the ancient Uriconium. When about fifteen years of age he was awakened to a sense of religion and of his sinful state by reading a book lent to him by the laborer who read the lessons in church, called 'Bunny's Resolutions.' It was not strictly speaking a book teaching the evangelical faith, and possibly was both legal and Romish in its tendencies; but it showed him the folly of sinning, the misery of the wicked, and the magnitude of eternal