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PHILIP DODDRIDGE AND THE EVANGELICAL REVIVAL OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

On August 1st, 1714, Queen Anne, the last of the Stuart Sovereigns of England, made history by departing this life. The first public intimation of the event was given in a prayer of thanksgiving in a nonconformist meeting house in London. Thomas Bradbury, who had received the news by means of a pre-arranged signal while he was preaching, ended the service by fervently thanking God for the deliverance of these kingdoms from the evil counsels of the wicked, and imploring the divine blessing upon his majesty King George.

After all, no man is past praying for; and it is evident that George of Hanover, with all his faults and vices, was a welcome change after Anne Stuart, in whose reign Protestant Dissenters had suffered cruel injustice and vindictive persecution. W. M. Thackeray, after a faithful, if restrained, delineation of the character and habits of George the First, added, " Cynical and selfish as he was, he was better than a king from St. Germain's, with the French King's orders in his pocket and a swarm of Jesuits in his train." Unlike the Stuarts, the Hanoverian kings were not inclined to tolerate, much less to initiate, interference with their subjects in spiritual matters which were beyond their own comprehension.

The news of the Queen's death spread quickly. Men ran through the streets shouting " Queen Anne is dead." This is no longer news, but it is one of those snippets of history enshrined in a catchword, and consequently remembered by many people who fail to realise that the decease of this lady at an opportune moment changed the course of events and cleared the way for the Evangelical Revival of the eighteenth century. G. M. Trevelyan writes, " The domestic crisis precipitated by the death of Queen Anne divided and ruined the Tory party, saved the dissenters without resort to arms, and established the full eighteenth-century era of domestic peace, latitudinarianism and toleration."

In the early eighteenth century, the taking of the sacrament in an Anglican Church was an essential qualification for the holding of any state or municipal appointment. Until the year

1711, certain gentlemen, who were nonconformists at heart, regarded this condition of their employment as a mere formality to be observed with such frequency as might be deemed expedient, but considered themselves free to hear a nonconformist preacher whenever they felt disposed to do so. This was not good enough for the Queen and her advisers; and, three years before Anne died, the Occasional Conformity Bill was passed, to punish with ruinous fines any public servant who so conveniently interpreted his obligation to commit himself to the religious opinions of his pious sovereign.

Even this, Trevelyan tells us, was not the worst. Three years later a Schism Bill was passed by Parliament, received the Royal Assent, and was to become operative on August 1st, 1714.

> It took away from dissenters the education of their own children, which was to be handed over to persons licensed by bishops of the Established Church. The many excellent schools that the nonconformists had established at their own cost were to be suppressed, and their teachers turned adrift. Even teachers licensed by bishops might teach no catechism save that of the Church. Without directly repealing the Toleration Act, it was intended to circumvent it by extirpating dissent in the next generation, through this peculiarly odious and unnatural form of religious persecution . . . If the Schism Act had come into force, it must have led to the abolition of varieties of religious belief, or else to civil war.

On the very day when the Schism Act was to be put into force Queen Anne died, and her infamous Act of Parliament died with her. At the next meeting of Thomas Bradbury's congregation, the text of the sermon was " Go, see now this cursed woman, and bury her, for she is a King's daughter ".

Bernard Lord Manning has stressed the effect on the national life of the change of dynasty.

> The end of the Stuarts and the accession of the house of Hanover marked the failure of the Tory attack on the settlement of 1688, an attack aimed especially at dissenters, but promising revival of popery too . . . The constitution was saved from Divine Right. Protestantism was saved from France and the Pope. Dissent was saved from toryism and persecution.

This was all to the good, but it is not the whole story. The nonconformists were in no condition to use their deliverance for the glory of God and the good of their neighbours. Isaac Watts lamented the decay of vital religion in the hearts and minds of men, and declared that this was a general matter of mournful observation among all who laid the cause of God to heart. Dr. J. C. Ryle has given a vivid impression of the condition of the Churches and of Society in the early years of the eighteenth century.

> The state of this country in a religious and moral point of view was so painfully unsatisfactory that it is difficult to convey an adequate idea of it . . . England seemed barren of all that is really good. Christianity seemed to lie as one dead. Morality, however much exalted in the pulpits, was thoroughly trampled under foot in the streets. . . . The Church of England existed with her 10,000 clergy. The nonconformist body existed, with its hardly won liberty and its free pulpit. But one account may be given of both parties. They existed, but they could hardly be said to have lived. They did nothing. They were sound asleep. Sermons were little better than moral essays, utterly devoid of anything likely to awaken, convert, or save souls. Both parties seemed at least agreed on one point; and that was to let the devil alone and do nothing to save souls. And as for the weighty truths for which Hooper and Latimer had gone to the stake, and Baxter and scores of puritans had gone to jail, they seemed forgotten and laid on the shelf. . . . When such was the state of things in the churches and chapels, it can surprise no one to learn that the land was deluged with infidelity and scepticism.

On June 26th, 1702 Philip Doddridge was born in London. The bi-centenary this year of his death on October 26th, 1751 affords an occasion to refresh the memory concerning his life and work. Although he was overshadowed by George Whitefield and John and Charles Wesley, three men endowed with spectacular gifts, Philip Doddridge was inferior to none of them in intellect, steadfastness of character, and devotion to the common cause. During the years when John and Charles Wesley were filled with religious zeal while as yet strangers to the regenerating grace of God, and while George Whitefield was still in his childhood, Doddridge was holding forth the Word of Life, and encouraging the small faithful minority in the professing churches who were praying for that direct divine intervention which alone could revive the Church and stop the rot in the nation.

Philip was the son of Daniel Doddridge, a London shopkeeper, and of his wife Monica. Daniel Doddridge's great-grandfather, John Doddridge, was a man of exceptional ability who achieved distinction at Exeter College, Oxford, and subsequently received the honour of knighthood from James I in recognition of his services as Solicitor-General. He became a justice in the King's Bench division and was respected as a judge learned in the law, although it appears that he was ready on occasion to accommodate his judicial conscience to the king's wishes. Sir John's grandson, the Reverend John Doddridge, vicar of Shepperton-on-Thames, the father of Daniel Doddridge, was a man of less accommodating character when principles were involved. Shortly after the passing of the iniquitous Act of Uniformity in 1662, he resigned his comfortable living, and suffered heavy loss for conscience' sake. Dr. Calamy declared

him to be "an ingenious man and a scholar, an acceptable preacher and a very peaceable divine."

On his mother's side also, Philip Doddridge inherited a tradition of loyalty to the evangelical cause. Monica Doddridge's father, when a young man, had been expelled from his native country, Bohemia, with many other ministers of the gospel whose faithfulness to the Protestant cause made them obnoxious to the Roman Catholic hierarchy.

The brief reference to the ancestry and parentage of one who was to play an important part in a great spiritual awakening may be considered relevant, as revealing the means by which Providence fashioned the man for his work. Philip Doddridge, in his childhood, could not fail to be deeply impressed by the stories told by his parents of the sacrifices made by his grandparents in the cause of liberty of conscience. He was bred and born and educated in an atmosphere of love of freedom and hatred of ecclesiastical tyranny; and to the end of his life he treasured the memory of the instruction in the Scriptures which he had received from his mother even before he was old enough to read the Bible for himself.

At the age of ten years Philip was sent to school at Kingston-on-Thames. Throughout his school-days he continued to be under the powerful influence of faithful men. Not one of his teachers was related to the prolific family of Mr. By-Ends who brought up their children never to strive much against wind and tide, and always to watch when Religion was walking on the sunny side of the street in his silver slippers, and then at once to cross over and take his arm.

The schoolmaster at Kingston was Daniel Mayo, a son of a Protestant vicar of Kingston who had been ejected from his living for nonconformity. Mr. Mayo was a friend of Matthew Henry, the great expositor of Scripture whose commentary has stood the test of two and a half centuries. While Philip Doddridge was still at this school, grievous sorrow came upon him, when his father's brother Philip, steward to the Duke of Bedford, suddenly died. The boy had been a frequent and welcome visitor to this uncle during school holidays; and the loss of such a friend caused him deep distress. Even greater calamities were to follow. Shortly afterwards his beloved mother died, and on July 17th, 1715, he was bereft of his father. Philip Doddridge was now only thirteen years of age. Forty years later, after his

death, his journal was found in which, at this time of distress, he had written, " God is an immortal Father; my soul rejoiceth in Him. He hath helped me and provided for me. May it be my study to approve myself a more affectionate, grateful, and dutiful child."

A Mr. Downes assumed the guardianship of the orphan, and removed him to a school near his own house at St. Albans, conducted by Dr. Nathaniel Wood, the nonconformist minister of a small congregation in a neighbouring village. Philip here attended the ministry of the Reverend Samuel Clark, a man of God who saw great possibilities in the boy, and who proved later to be a friend in a time of desperate need. On January 1st, 1718, at the early age of fifteen and a half years, Philip Doddridge was received by Mr. Clark into the membership of the church. In those days admission to membership of an Orthodox Independent Church was no casual matter, and it is clear that the grace of God in the heart of the youth had borne fruit in life and conduct.

His troubles were not even yet at an end. Mr. Downes was a reckless speculator, and lost his own as well as his ward's money in an unsuccessful venture. He was committed to prison for debt; and young Philip Doddridge sold the family plate to get the wretched man out. By the time Downes had finished with his unfortunate ward, little or nothing was left of the Doddridge inheritance.

Philip then left school and went to live with his sister and her husband, the Reverend John Nettleton, at Hampstead. His heart was now firmly set upon entering the Gospel Ministry; but a young man could not in those days walk into a pulpit and begin preaching without proper training and credentials, and there was no money available for further education. At this time of crisis a great opportunity was presented. The Duchess of Bedford, who remembered Philip as a child and had retained her interest in him, generously offered to bear the entire cost of his education at either of the English Universities, and further undertook that, if she should survive until he had taken holy orders, she would provide for him in the Established Church.

So a penniless young man, with no parents to advise or help him, was called upon to make a great decision. The way was open for him to enter Exeter College, Oxford, where his ancestor

had been a distinguished scholar and where his family name was held in reputation. He would be free from financial anxiety, and his future would be assured. With his undoubted abilities he might well aspire to a bishopric. The one condition was that he must stifle his conscience, turn his back upon his best friends, and conform to the Church of England. It was not good enough for Philip Doddridge. He chose the reproach of Christ and affliction with the despised people of God, rather than a life of ease and comfort in the ecclesiastical system from which his grandfather had been cast out. He told the Duchess that he was grateful for her kindness, but that he could not comply with the condition.

He then consulted Dr. Calamy, a highly respected dissenting minister; and the great man advised him to turn his attention to some calling other than the ministry. About three weeks after this discouragement, an opportunity was presented for entrance into the legal profession. A well known solicitor, who had long been intimate with the Doddridge family, was convinced that Philip's industry and ability would be likely to lead to eminence at the bar, and introduced the young man to a successful barrister named Eyre. Mr. Eyre was so impressed with his personality, that he forthwith made him a handsome proposal. It is not surprising that Doddridge was perplexed to know whether this proposition, following so quickly upon Dr. Calamy's advice, was an indication that he had been mistaken in believing that he had been called by God to the Christian ministry. Nevertheless, he could not put his heart into any other calling. In his perplexity he resorted to prayer; and one day when he was earnestly asking that the purpose of God in his life might be made clear, he received a letter from his old friend and pastor, the Reverend Samuel Clark, inviting him to live at the manse in St. Albans, until a place could be found for him in a suitable academy. "This", said Doddridge, "I looked upon as an answer from heaven. . . . I have sought God's direction in this matter, and I hope I have had it. My only view in my choice has been that of more extensive service; and I beg God to make me an instrument of doing much good in the world." A few months later, in October 1719, Mr. Clark procured for him admission to the academy conducted by the Reverend John Jennings, at Kibworth Harcourt, in Leicestershire, and accepted responsibility for the entire cost of training Philip Doddridge for the ministry.

Several such academies for dissenters existed at this time. Ministers who had been ejected from their livings in the Church of England, and were not allowed to teach in the Universities, had set up establishments in different parts of the country to educate young men, not only in preparation for the ministry, but also for other professions. Instruction was given in theology, and in Greek, Latin, Hebrew, mathematics, logic, ethics and metaphysics. A high standard of scholarship was attained in many of the academies. A candidate for ordination in the nonconformist ministry was required to defend a thesis in Latin; and the examiners required grammatical and theological criticisms on difficult places in the Greek Testament. Students were under the influence of men who had renounced the honours and privileges reserved for persons willing to conform to the worldliness of the Established Church, and had cast in their lot with the despised nonconformists and dissenters.

Mr. Jennings was an Independent minister of good reputation, well qualified to prepare young men for the ministry. His book on *Preaching Christ*, published in 1723 with a preface by Dr. Isaac Watts, then at the height of his fame, was recommended by two Anglican bishops in charges to their clergy. Commendation by distinguished representatives of two widely differing ecclesiastical parties may be considered as evidence of the learning and ability of Mr. Jennings. There is evidence that Doddridge owed much to this evangelical tutor.

Early in 1722, nearly three years after Doddridge entered the academy at Kibworth, Mr. Jennings accepted a call to the Independent church at Hinckley, and took his students with him. On July 22nd of that year Philip Doddridge preached his first sermon, in the Independent Meeting House at Hinckley, from the words, " If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema. Maranatha." It was recorded in his diary that two persons ascribed their conversion to the blessing of God upon that sermon, and that he was much affected and encouraged. As a student, he was allowed to preach only in the chapel to which the academy was attached. On the completion of his training, he was examined at Leicester by three experienced Independent ministers, who signed a certificate on January 5th, 1723, upon which he became eligible for a pastorate. A few months later he received two calls, one from a congregation of 1200 people at Coventry, and one from his tutor's former flock at Kibworth.

It is characteristic of Philip Doddridge that he accepted the call from the small village church, and did not leap to the opportunity offered by the influential congregation at Coventry.

From Kibworth he wrote to a friend:

> I am now with a plain, honest, serious, good-natured people, and I meet with genuine expressions of an undissembled affection on their side. I would hope that God is among us, and I desire to mention it with a great deal of thankfulness, that I already see some encouraging effects of my poor attempts to serve them. I do not go very much abroad, and when I am at home I can conveniently spend twelve hours a day in my study. I have now many good books of my own, and my friends that are still better furnished are very ready to oblige me with the use of theirs. As to the salary, though it does not certainly amount to forty pounds a year, it is a tolerable subsistence for a single man.

A month after Doddridge's settlement in the pastorate at Kibworth, his friend and tutor, Mr. Jennings, died of smallpox on July 8th, 1723, in the prime of life, and the academy at Hinckley was closed.

In 1725 Doddridge was chosen as assistant to Mr. Some, the Independent minister at Market Harborough, and the two men divided their services between the two congregations. Mr. Some, who knew that Jennings had hoped that Doddridge would succeed him as head of the academy, had already set his heart upon reopening it with Doddridge in charge. His confidence was confirmed in close association with his young colleague in their joint pastorate; and in due time he went to town and called on Dr. Watts, asking his opinion of the project and his advice as to the most suitable tutor. At the same time he placed in the Doctor's hands a paper which Doddridge had written setting out a scheme of academic education. Dr. Watts read this document, and gave his opinion in these words:

> The diversity of genius, the variety of studies, the several intellectual, moral and pious accomplishments, the constant daily and hourly labours necessary to fill such a post can hardly be expected from any one person living. Yet if there be one person capable of such a post, perhaps it is the man who has so admirably described this scheme of education; and as he seems to have surveyed and engrossed the whole comprehensive view and design, together with its constant difficulties and accidental embarrassments, and yet supposed it to be practicable, I am sure I can never think of any person more likely to execute it than himself, although, if an elder person joined with him, for the reputation of the matter at least, it would be well.

In other words, it was a work to be undertaken only by a man of genius, profound learning, sincere piety and abundant energy; and Philip Doddridge, in spite of his youth, was the man. In those leisurely days brevity was not the soul of wit.

On April 10th, 1729, a number of dissenting ministers met at Lutterworth to spend a day in humiliation and prayer for a spiritual revival. Mr. Some preached a sermon on the words, "Be watchful, and strengthen the things that remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found thy works perfect before God." Mr. Some then advised the representatives of the churches to attempt the revival of the lapsed academy, and to place it under the care of Mr. Doddridge. This advice was accepted with urgent unanimity, and, in the summer of 1729, Doddridge opened his academy at Market Harborough.

A few months later he was called to the pastorate of the Independent Church at Castle Hill Meeting House in Northampton, and began his ministry there on the seventeenth of March 1730. The academy was transferred from Market Harborough, and quickly became known for the high standard of its work. Young men were trained, not only for the ministry, but also for other professions. Enemies as well as friends heard of it, and Doddridge was not left for long unmolested.

The vicar of a neighbouring village, a certain Mr. Wills, a Jacobite, was an implacable enemy of dissenters, and took upon himself to write to Doddridge, claiming that he himself was the only person responsible for giving religious instruction in his own parish. Mr. Wills used his influence to such effect that the chancellor of the diocese, Dr. Reynolds, visited the parish in which Doddridge was living and, at a meeting of churchwardens, said that he had heard that a fellow in their parish was teaching a grammar school which he had the assurance to call "my academy", without any licence from the bishop. If this was true, the fellow must be prosecuted.

This might have been a perfectly sound legal proposition in good Queen Anne's time; but unfortunately for Dr. Reynolds the Schism Act had been repealed in the reign of George I. The best the chancellor could do was to try to enforce a dead ecclesiastical law of 1603. Doddridge was summoned to appear, on November 6th, 1733, before a consistory court, a bishop's court for trying ecclesiastical causes. The Church of England was to be judge as well as plaintiff in its own cause. It was a test case. By its issue would be decided the fate of every nonconformist seat of learning in the country.

It appears that Dr. Reynolds was not too confident of the issue, for he took the trouble to assure Doddridge that his only

object in the prosecution was to vindicate the authority of his own court. If Doddridge would recognize this authority and apply for a bishop's licence to teach, the licence would be granted forthwith and the proceedings stopped. As a matter of personal courtesy the chancellor would waive the exercise of his authority in Doddridge's case. Doddridge, who was by no means lacking in humour, must have been amused when he received from the wily Dr. Reynolds this extremely polite invitation to walk into a trap. He refused to create such a dangerous precedent. He would neither recognize the authority of the ecclesiastical court, nor apply for a licence to teach.

The case was eventually tried in a civil court at Westminster Hall, and was decided in Doddridge's favour on January 30th, 1734. The chancellor contested the decision, and litigation seemed likely to be prolonged: but King George II, who was determined that there should be no religious persecution in his reign, intervened personally, and the proceedings came to a sudden end.

Meanwhile, other methods were available. In the days of Queen Anne and of George I, riots had been organised and much damage caused to nonconformist buildings. Dissenters and nonconformists were a pitifully small minority, and persistent efforts had been made to intimidate and overwhelm them by the savage assaults of infuriated mobs. It now remained to be seen whether Doddridge's activities could be brought to an end by the use of similar methods of argument. It was easy to find ardent Jacobites who could be incited to avail themselves of any opportunity to harm influential persons known to be supporters of the House of Hanover. Doddridge, and indeed all the dissenters, had good cause to be loyal to the Hanoverian Kings. Memory was still green of the pillory and the stocks, of cruel mutilation, and of fines and imprisonment, the means used by the Stuarts for the discouragement of people who did not conform to the religion of the Sovereign. The dissenters were under no illusion as to the personal character of the first Georges; but the Georges had what the Jameses and Charleses and Anne never had, sense enough to leave their decent law-abiding subjects alone. George II even would go so far as to see that bishops and chancellors also left them alone.

So it came to pass that in September 1733, while the litigation against Doddridge was still pending, a Jacobite rabble, with the

connivance of the Mayor of the town, attacked the academy house. This was alarming, to say the least of it, but Doddridge and his students refused to be intimidated.

The attacks on the academy, both by process of law and by lawless methods, resulted ultimately in enhancing the reputation of its Principal. His fame as a man of learning spread through the country, and in 1736 the two colleges of Aberdeen, King's and Marischal (which in those days were two completely distinct Universities), presented him, in two separate diplomas, with the degree of Doctor of Divinity. The work grew and prospered. During the twenty-one years of its history, the number of pupils in one year ranged from thirteen to forty-six. The usual term of study was five years. Many distinguished men, laymen as well as ministers, received their higher education in Dr. Doddridge's academy.

In May 1739, George Whitefield visited Northampton, and recorded in his journal that he was " most courteously received by Dr. Doddridge, master of the academy there". By this time the flame of the revival was well alight, and to appreciate the significance of this meeting it is necessary to trace the history of God's dealings with Whitefield and his friends during the years in which Doddridge had been preparing the way for them.

Whitefield was the son of a poor woman, an innkeeper. He found his way to Pembroke College, Oxford, as a servitor at the age of eighteen. At Oxford he met with Charles and John Wesley, and with them lived a life of asceticism and good works and self-denial. Later, when the Wesleys were in Georgia, trying to save souls and to live to the glory of God, while their own souls were still fettered in the bondage of asceticism, Whitefield was delivered from the bondage and experienced the new birth. The burden of sin was removed, and, to use his own words, " an abiding sense of the pardoning love of God and a full assurance of faith broke in upon my disconsolate soul ".

Whitefield was then called to the ministry and was ordained in the Church of England, and preached his first sermon on June 27th, 1736, in St. Mary-le-Crypt, Gloucester. A large congregation gathered to hear the young man of twenty-one preach in his native town. He wrote in his journal, " I was comforted with a heartfelt sense of the divine presence . . . As I proceeded I felt the fire kindled . . . till at last I trust I was able to speak with some degree of Gospel authority."

This was the beginning of the great revival. Two years later the same fire strangely warmed John Wesley's heart, only a few days after his brother Charles had found rest in Christ to his own soul.

The power of Whitefield's preaching, first in churches and then, when the churches were closed against him, in the open air, soon made him the wonder and the embarrassment of the Church of England. The Wesleys, hesitant at first, followed his practice of open air preaching, when they had seen the grace of God in Whitefield's unconventional ministry. The power of the Holy Spirit was in Whitefield's preaching wherever he went. Vast audiences gathered to hear him, composed of members of all classes. Hundreds of people, many of them the poorest of the poor, the victims of social injustice, were brought under deep conviction which ended in sound and thorough conversion.

This was the young man who called upon the renowned Dr. Doddridge, on May 21st, 1739, at the academy in Northampton. Dr. Doddridge's courteous reception of the now celebrated young evangelist was no less significant than Whitefield's impulse to call at the academy. Whitefield was an ordained minister of the Church of England and, in spite of the failure of most of the bishops and clergy to appreciate him, was as yet firmly attached to that church and its sacraments. The dissenters had good reason to observe extreme circumspection in any contact with the Established Church. Yet Whitefield felt constrained to call on Doddridge, and Doddridge was glad to see him. They were drawn together in the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace; and the sympathy between them, although at first tempered with caution, increased with the passing years.

Philip Doddridge was the first of the influential leaders of the dissenters to be convinced that the Methodists had been chosen and called by God to rouse the churches and the nation from the sleep of death.

Early in October 1739, he invited Whitefield to preach in his pulpit in Northampton, so bringing upon himself reproaches from orthodox dissenters in many parts of the country, and a solemn expostulation from Mr. Coward's trustees who were generous supporters of his academy.

Such protests were tempered by the respect in which the Doctor was held. He answered them at first in a mildly apologetic tone. Some years later, on an occasion when he was dining

with Lady Abney, in company with the Countess of Huntingdon, Lady Frances Gardiner, and Mr. Price, the conversation turned upon the remarkable effects in the country of the ministry of Whitefield and the Wesleys. Doddridge affirmed his own intense conviction, saying, " Such are the fruits that will ever follow the faithful proclamation of divine mercy. The Lord our God will crown His message with success, and give it an abundant entrance into the hearts of men. It is a blessing that such men have been raised up."

Nevertheless, strange to relate, the dissenters generally were in no hurry to embrace the Methodists. When Doddridge prayed in Whitefield's tabernacle, Dr. Watts was gravely concerned at the company his good friend Doddridge was keeping; but he came to see later that his friend had been right after all, and gave his opinion in a company of ministers that " Whitefield does more good by his wild notes than we do with our set music."

The last twenty-one years of Doddridge's life were years of growing influence. He was welcomed as a visitor at the English Universities and consulted by eminent men of learning, both at Oxford and Cambridge. Many Anglican clergy valued his counsel; and John Wesley sought his advice concerning the establishment of a library for the use of young preachers. During these years he wrote many books of permanent value. The first volume of *The Family Expositor* appeared in 1739, and the sixth and last two years after its author's death. Competent contemporary critics thought well of this work which was widely read in the eighteenth century and may still be found in evangelical libraries. *The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul*, published in 1745, has been translated into many languages, and is still recognized as an evangelical classic. Unfortunately, in these days of the endless making of books, the classics, with few exceptions, are allowed to accumulate dust on the shelves; and Doddridge's *Rise and Progress* is not, as it deserves to be, one of these exceptions.

Doddridge's first published work (1730) is of special interest. An anonymous writer, observing, as he thought, some decline both in the number and the influence of the dissenters, published a pamphlet entitled *An Enquiry into the Causes of the Decay of the Dissenting Interest*. Doddridge perceived at once that the author was not, as he pretended to be, a candid friend of the dissenters. Professing anxiety concerning an alleged decline in the dissenting

interest, the Enquirer charged the ministers with poverty of scholarship, bigotry and lack of refinement. Their sermons, he said, were too long, and their prayers too short. He suggested a remedy. " Many gentlemen have left us because they are ashamed of our interest, and nothing can recover them but the study of learning and politeness."

The writer of the *Enquiry* was discovered later to be a Mr. Gough, who subsequently took orders in the Church of England, and doubtless found opportunity to indulge his inclination to short sermons, long prayers and politeness.

Doddridge's reply, bearing the title *Free Thoughts on the Most Probable Means of Reviving the Dissenting Interest*, is a superb blend of courtesy and plain speaking. After praising the author's candour and humanity, Doddridge added, " I have the happiness of agreeing with you in far the greater part of what you advance." He conceded that dissenters had not always acted in full accordance with their principles, and continued:

> I hope many of us have seen our mistakes here, and shall be careful for the future, to avoid what has been attended with so many unhappy consequences. . . . After having thus declared my agreement with you in the greater part of your discourse, I hope, Sir, you will pardon me, if I add that I cannot think you have exhausted your subject. To speak freely, I think you have omitted some causes of the decay of our interest which are at least as important as those you have handled. . . . And I persuade myself, Sir, that you will be no more offended with me, for offering this supplement to your enquiry than I imagine I should myself be with any third person, who should fix upon others which may have escaped us both. You will the more readily excuse the freedom which I take, as I imagine that the scenes of our lives have been widely different, and consequently I may have had an opportunity of making some useful observations which have not fallen in your way: though I question not but if you, Sir, had been in my circumstances, you would soon have remarked them, and perhaps have communicated them to the public with much greater advantage.

After this conciliatory opening, Doddridge proceeded to answer the opinion that " nothing but the study of learning and politeness " could win back refined people who had left the dissenting congregations.

> I am not much charmed [he wrote] with your proposal, allowing it ever so practicable, and the prospect of success ever so fair. You suppose the gentlemen whom you describe have not left us upon principles of conscience (for then no alteration in our manner of preaching could bring them back) but merely from a delicacy of taste, and because they were ashamed to continue amongst so unpolished a people. You must then suppose, either that they acted in direct opposition to the dictates of conscience, or else that they did not consult them at all in the affair, nor regarded anything more than fashion or amusement in the choice of the religious assemblies with which they have joined. The former supposition

charges them with an outrageous contempt for truth and honour; and the latter with a shameful mixture of pride and weakness which has little of the gentleman and less of the Christian. And I freely declare that I think an honest mechanic, or day-labourer who attends the Meeting from a religious principle, though perhaps it may expose him to some ridicule among his neighbours and be in some measure detrimental to his temporal affairs, is a much more honourable and generous creature, and deserves much greater respect from a Christian minister than such a gentleman, with all his estate, learning and politeness.

Again:

Surely there is a dignity and a glory in every rational and immortal soul which must recommend it to the regard of the wise and the good, though it may be destitute of the ornaments of education, or splendid circumstances in life. Let us think of it in its lowest ebb of fortune, or even of character . . . as the purchase of redeeming blood.

Doddridge then reminded the Enquirer that the generality of the dissenters were people who had felt the divine energy of the Gospel to awaken, and revive, and enlarge the soul. If a minister should neglect to preach this Gospel in a way plain to be understood, he would soon find that " all the penetration and eloquence of an angel could not make him agreeable to our assemblies".

The Enquirer was then reminded that he had overlooked in his recommendations the necessity of consistency in the life of the minister and of conduct answerable to his public discourses.

On the charge of bigotry, Doddridge defended his friends by declaring that he had found in them very excellent qualities mingled with excess of zeal.

I think we, who are ministers, should labour to discover to them, more and more, the beauty and fulness of the Word of God. . . . It is a subject on which we might speak, and they would hear with pleasure; and it would not only divert their attention and their zeal from other things, but would have a tendency to enlarge their views, and sweeten their tempers, beyond . . . all our satires on bigotry and imposition.

This answer to a clever attempt to discredit the dissenting cause reveals the gracious character, keen spiritual discernment, and literary ability of young Mr. Doddridge. He ended as he began, on a note of courtesy so exquisite that it deserves to be quoted in full:

And now, Sir, I have done with my subject, and must conclude with assuring you that it is not the design of one line which I have writ merely to prove that you are mistaken in any thing that you have asserted. . . . You will infer from what you have read, that I differ from you in some other particulars, which are not mention'd, but they apparently depend on what I have debated at large; and I chose to omit them, not only because my letter is already longer than I intended, but from a general observation, which I have had frequent occasion to make; that if a man desires to do good by what he says, he must oppose and contradict as little

as possible. If I am mistaken in what I have advanced, I shall be heartily thankful for better information; and, if it come from you, it will be peculiarly agreeable, as I shall have nothing to fear from your reproaches, and much to hope from your arguments.

In the year when the pamphlet was written, Doddridge met Miss Mercy Maris, and entered upon twenty-one years of ideal married life ending with his death in 1751. His letters and entries in his diary reveal a man of tender affection, constantly praying for and with his children. He not only prayed, but played with them. In the sixth year of married life, Doddridge and his wife were drawn together more closely than ever in grief when their first daughter died at the age of three years. It was an agonising experience. Doddridge wrote at the time of his wife, "She bore the affliction in the most glorious manner, and I discovered more wisdom, piety, and strength of spirit than I had ever in six years had an opportunity of observing before."

Dr. Doddridge is now more widely known as the author of certain choice and familiar hymns than as a preacher and a learned theologian. It is therefore unnecessary to enlarge here upon his great contribution to the hymns of the church; but it may be relevant to observe that Philip Doddridge has been deprived of his rightful place in many professedly evangelical hymn books. In this he is in the company of Isaac Watts, Charles and John Wesley, Joseph Hart, Anne Steele, John Newton, A. M. Toplady, William Cowper, and James Montgomery. B. L. Manning observed the tendency of compilers of modern hymn books to substitute later compositions for many of the masterpieces of the eighteenth century. He writes "I am at a loss when I am asked to explain why, holding these treasures, we turn so often from them—the great, passionate, doctrinal, emotional hymns—to the pedestrian rhymes of ethical commonplaces." He laments that "To-day, the Orthodox will sing hymns by Unitarians and Theosophists without turning a hair," and contrasts "the wretched stuff" of the verses of "that casual Papist rhymer Faber" with the incomparable hymns of Charles Wesley. Such words carry the more weight by reason of B. L. Manning's catholicity and wide tolerance. Is it too much to hope that evangelical protestants may yet rouse themselves to produce a hymn book, reinstating the many neglected evangelical classics, while eliminating those compositions which are inconsistent with the protestant and evangelical tradition?

When Dr. Watts died in 1748, Doddridge was the most influential and highly respected minister among the Independents. In 1750 he made renewed efforts to promote interest in foreign missionary enterprise which had been much in his heart for many years. At this time his friends noticed signs of his failing health, a consumptive cough and a low, hoarse voice. His last sermon was preached in Northampton on the fourteenth of July, 1751 on the words, " For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." He spent some happy weeks at Shrewsbury with his old friend and former pupil, Mr. Orton, before visiting Bath and Bristol to try the Hot-Wells. His condition became worse and, on his physician's suggestion, he took a sea voyage to Lisbon, the expense of which was met by Lady Fanny Shirley, Lady Chesterfield, the Countess of Huntingdon, and a few other friends. When Doddridge was staying at Lady Huntingdon's house in Bath, on his way to Falmouth, she found him one day reading the book of Daniel, chapter X, verses 11 and 12, and said to him, " You are in tears, Sir." " I am weeping, Madam," said the Doctor, " but they are tears of comfort and joy. I can give up my country, my relations, and friends into the hands of God: and as to myself, I can as well go to heaven from Lisbon as from my own study at Northampton."

Doddridge was " a man greatly beloved ". His friendship was valued far beyond the compass of his own denomination. It is worth recording that when, a very sick man, he was at Bristol, Dr. Maddox, Bishop of Worcester, visited him and placed his own carriage at the invalid's disposal. Dr. Warburton, Bishop of Gloucester, who had a rough tongue for dissenters, was so moved by affection for Doddridge, that he and a friend used their influence to obtain for him the exclusive use of the captain's cabin on the voyage to Lisbon. He sailed on September 30th, with his anxious wife and a servant. He enjoyed the voyage, and his last days were radiant in the joy of the Lord. After a short period of illusive appearance of improved health, he relapsed and died on October 26th, 1751 in his fiftieth year. Mrs. Doddridge, in the midst of her grief, wrote to her children, three daughters and a son, " God all sufficient and my only hope, is my motto; let it be yours." She lived in widowhood for forty years, and died at the age of eighty-two.

George Whitefield, when he heard the news, said, "Doddridge is gone; Lord Jesus, prepare me to follow." More than sixty years later, the last survivor of the students in the Northampton academy recalled, on his death bed, the days of his youth, and said to his friends, "I shall soon see the blessed, blessed Redeemer and the dear Dr. Doddridge."

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