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and ceremonies, lopping off some of the worst excrescences of vulgar superstition, the restoration of the cup to the laity, a married priesthood, are all steps in the right direction; but some of these things are especially offensive to Romanists, and there is the retention of too much to interest Protestants. We in England acknowledge the value of these improvements on the Romish system, but if this is all we had our gain would not be very great. It is the Protestant and Evangelical element infused into our Church at the Reformation which constitutes its strength. If it had been merely an improved ecclesiastical system, with some of the worst corruptions of Rome removed, it would not have survived the shocks to which it has been exposed, nor would it have been found in accordance with English conceptions of liberty and of God. Assuredly the project will not meet the necessities of France. It may serve as a plaything for dilettante antiquarians, who would like to see a Gallican Church restored, although they have little conception of what that was. But even they have little heart in it. Some who have promoted it have misgivings as to whether after all, upon their own theories, they are doing quite right. The scheme itself has no root in the affections or sympathies of any class of the community in France. It will be matter of much surprise if it does not pass away, perhaps even before the founder, without having done either harm or much good to anybody.[1]

But is there any other resource? are there any other means by which there can be reconcilement between "God and Liberty" in France?

*(To be continued.)*

## ART. VII.—HENRY VENN.

*Memoir of the Rev. H. Venn.—The Missionary Secretariat of Henry Venn, B.D., Prebendary of St. Paul's, and Honorary Secretary of the Church Missionary Society.* By the Rev. WILLIAM KNIGHT, M.A., Rector of Pitt Portion, Tiverton, and formerly Secretary of the C.M.S. *With an Introductory Biographical Chapter and a Notice of West African Commerce,* by his Sons, the Rev. JOHN VENN, M.A., Senior Fellow of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, and the Rev. HENRY VENN, M.A., Rector of Clare Portion, Tiverton. pp. 550. Longmans, Green & Co. 1880.

HENRY VENN, whose Memoir is now published, was born at Clapham, of which parish his father, the Rev. John

[1] Since this was written some discreditable revelations which have come to light confirm this augury.

Venn, was rector, in the year 1796. He lost his mother in early childhood, and being much thrown into the society of those older than himself, he acquired a degree of maturity and manliness of character which seems to have struck all those who became acquainted with him. The eldest son, he soon became to an unusual extent, while a youth, the guardian and adviser of his brothers and sisters, In the year 1805, Samuel Thornton went to be his father's pupil; and he remained at Clapham Rectory till he went to sea, in 1812. Another "dear and constant companion" was Charles Shore (the first Lord Teignmouth's eldest son); and in the year 1812, the two sons of Sir Thomas Baring, Thomas and John, became his father's pupils. Henry's recollections of his early years were "all of unmixed happiness." His father was always pleased with him and most tender to him; and from all his father's friends he "met with universal kindness and attention." The few survivors from the inmates, or constant visitors, at the Rectory at Clapham, would say, that for sunny cheerfulness, few family circles could compare with it. The estimation in which Evangelical opinions were generally held, of course prevented any great degree of intimacy, on the part of the rector's family, with persons outside the so-called "Clapham Sect." In those days, indeed, the breach between the Evangelical clergyman and the rest of his clerical brethren often amounted to a chasm. One instance was related by Henry Venn himself. In the seventy-fourth year of his age, writing in the *Christian Observer*, he noted with thankfulness the great change in the estimation of Churchmen generally towards the Evangelical revivalists of the last century:—

> Here [in Canon Liddon's sketch of Bishop Hamilton's life[1]] is one of the most prominent representatives of High Church principles doing homage to the memory of Cecil, Venn, and Martyn. Those of us whose recollections extend sixty years back can well remember how the High Churchmen of that day held these names in the lowest estimation, and how jealously they kept themselves aloof from all association with them. In the present day it will hardly be credited, but one of these early recollections may serve as a specimen. One of the most prominent repre-

[1] In concluding this *Christian Observer* article, Mr. Venn remarks:—"Our main object has been to protest against a very common assertion, that the Evangelical religion of the last generation had a work to perform which it accomplished, but that it now needs to be superseded by a more advanced system. Let the standard of Evangelical truth and ethics be studied in the biographies of its acknowledged representatives, and then compared with the standard of Holy Scripture. We do not fear or doubt the result. It needs only to be adapted to the prevailing modes of thought and phraseology of the present generation, and it will be found as efficacious, as in the days of our forefathers, to arrest the conscience, and to bring man from a life of sin, worldliness, and infidelity, to live the life of faith upon the Son of God."

sentatives of the High Church principles was the Bishop of London. A near relative of the Bishop, after being a guest at Fulham Palace, was to visit Mr. Venn at Clapham. We were ourselves sent to wait at the Bull's Head, a mere public-house, three hundred yards from the rectory of Clapham, and to bring the visitor to the rectory. The truth being that the Bishop of London could not allow his carriage to be seen to draw up at Mr. Venn's rectory, though it might be seen to set down a lady at a small public-house. Such was the estimation in which Evangelical names were then held.

In early boyhood, Henry Venn went to "the African Seminary," at Clapham, one Sunday afternoon, and heard the boys examined in the Bible by Mr. Zachary Macaulay, Mr. Henry Thornton being an interested spectator, while Mr. Wilberforce, going from boy to boy, patted them on the shoulder as they gave good answers. Eight of these African boys were baptized in Clapham Church, by the Rev. John Venn, in the year 1805. About this time, the two first missionaries, Messrs. Renner and Hartwig, were sent out by the C.M.S.; and before they sailed for Sierra Leone they spent a few days in the Clapham Rectory.[1] In March, 1813, Henry became a pupil of Mr. Farish, Lucasian Professor of Mathematics, who resided at Chesterton, near Cambridge, whilst in regard to Classics, his "cousin H. V. Elliott, kindly undertook to superintend" his studies. In the month of June, 1813, he was summoned back to Clapham, to his father's death-bed:—

It was upon this or upon a similar occasion that Mr. Venn, as he afterwards told some of his family, lifting up his heart to God, solemnly pledged himself in dependence upon His grace, to give himself wholly up through life to the service of his God and Saviour.

What an opinion his father had already formed of his ripeness and judgment and prudence, is indicated by the fact that he appointed him executor at this early age of seventeen. Amongst other duties to which this appointment introduced him, was the collection and publication of his father's sermons, a rather unusual employment for one who was not a freshman at college.

With Professor Farish he remained till he commenced residence at Queens' College, in October, 1814. Dean Milner, the celebrated President of Queen's, was then an old man, and infirm. Among the resident dons, the general tone prevailing

[1] Lord Teignmouth has written to the authors of the biography before us:—"My latest remembrance of your father at Clapham, was on my visiting him some time after we ceased to reside there (1808), when we ranged the neighbouring commons with his gun, the only instance in which he occurs to me in the character of a sportsman." Lord Teignmouth refers to the more than seventy years of "affectionate intercourse:"—"I shall ever feel that it has been one of the happiest circumstances in my life, and one of its chief privileges, to have enjoyed during so many years your father's uninterrupted and valuable friendship."

was "of a kind to startle a young man brought up in a strict household, and accustomed by the society of his family and friends to look for courtesy and refinement as a matter of course." Roughness and eccentricity of behaviour among the Tutors and Fellows, in those days, was—to say the least—no rarity. The Vicar, who remarked, on hearing that his church in Cambridge was being filled to crowding during his absence by a popular young substitute, "that it did not matter, for he could soon empty it again," was a resident fellow of Queen's at this time. Between a "religious man" and one that was not so, the distinction was still very sharply marked. At the close of the eighteenth century, Christians who were in earnest had been termed "Calvinists," or "Methodists," or "*Serious* Christians;" but in Mr. Venn's undergraduate days they were commonly called Simeonites:—

Charles Simeon was then in full enjoyment of his power and influence, and to attend his church regularly, and his Friday evening classes in his rooms in college, was the natural course for those who had any kind of leaning towards Evangelical views. In the case of Henry Venn, there were, of course, special reasons for this, owing to what may be called his hereditary connection with Simeon. It was to his grandfather, when rector of Yelling, that Simeon owed much of his change of views. His father was a college contemporary, a friend of Simeon, and remained in close intimacy with him through life. To these of course, was added his own personal admiration for Simeon's character, and his agreement with all that was essential in his religious opinions.

Of religious revival in the University there were encouraging signs. Simeon had, to a great extent, lived down the bitter opposition that marked the commencement of his career; but of the customary employments and oppportunities of a religious student at the present day scarcely any were then available. The Jesus Lane Sunday School was not established till some years later; and a Cambridge Association of the C.M.S. was not founded until 1818, Simeon "trembling" in regard to the public meeting. "With the exception of Simeon's parties, religious sympathy probably found almost its only experience in the private intercourse of intimate friends."[1]

[1] In a letter from the late Rev. E. B. Elliott, concerning Henry Venn, occurs this sentence:—"Looking back, what my memory mostly rests on regarding him is a long walk and conversation, in which the spirituality of his mind and earnest interest in the religious state and religious progress of those he was with (myself especially at that time) so came out that I never lost the recollection of it." It is added in the Memoir before us:—"The only approach to any public testimony to his views which we know him to have given during his student-days, was an address at a small Bible Society meeting at Haslingfield, a village six miles from Cambridge. The curate in charge there was a Mr. Clarke, a connection of his through the Stephens."

In the spring and summer of 1815, fever prevailed at Cambridge to such an extent that there was a general break up on the part of the University, almost resembling those which the plague had caused in the time of Cranmer and of Newton. Undergraduates were, by Grace of the Senate, excused their residence for that May time, and permitted to depart whither they pleased. Henry Venn went, with his sisters, to Cromer; and, at this time, by visits to Earlham, where one of his sisters was staying, he laid the foundation, of a long and intimate friendship with various members of the Buxton and Gurney family.

In January, 1818, he took his B.A. degree, coming out 19th Wrangler; the Tripos list being headed by Lefevre (afterwards Sir John Shaw Lefevre). "The following long vacation was one to which he ever afterwards looked back with affectionate remembrance. A considerable portion of it was spent at Rydal, with the Wilberforce family," and there he was introduced to Wordsworth and Southey. Wilberforce, then, of course, an old man, had been an intimate friend of the rector of Clapham, and the son had secured much of his love and esteem. In 1819, after a year devoted to classical study, he obtained a Fellowship, and was shortly afterwards ordained by the Bishop of Ely. "Having no notion of remaining in College, he began immediately to look about for a curacy. A suitable curacy, however, was not so easily to be procured at once by a young clergyman of decided Evangelical convictions." For a time he took occasional duty in or near London. When not preaching himself, he mostly attended Mr. Daniel Wilson's chapel in St. John's, Bedford Row. In 1821 he became curate of St. Dunstan's, Fleet Street; and Mr. R. B. Seeley, who was then resident in that parish, has given some reminiscences. Thus we read:—

> I heard from Mr. Venn in those years an exposition of the Lord's Prayer, so full and so clear, that nothing I have since listened to from the lips of more celebrated pulpit orators has obliterated it from my memory. . . . . Few people would have been able to anticipate the position which he occupied half a century later. The quietness of his demeanour, the absence of everything pretentious or aspiring, and his freedom from that sort of perhaps allowable ambition, which is so common nowadays, all tended to prevent the thought from arising, that in the curate of St. Dunstan's, Fleet Street, in 1821-2, men beheld one who would possess a degree and extent of influence in the Church, which no other man, apart from rank and official dignity, could pretend to wield.

The post was a most laborious one, and Mr. Venn spared no pains in regard both to preaching and to pastoral work. The larger portion of his working hours was spent in courts and alleys. He found time, however, to attend the committee

meetings of the C.M.S., and occasionally he assisted in the neighbourhood of London at public missionary meetings. Towards the close of the year 1824 he resigned his curacy, and returned to Cambridge, intending to go through the exercises for a B.D. degree, as required by the College Statutes. In 1825 he became Proctor. In 1827 he held the newly-created office of Evening Lecturer at St. Mary's, to which he was appointed by the Vicar, Mr. Musgrave, Fellow of Trinity, and afterwards Archbishop of York. The lectureship was popular with the townspeople, but doubtless it gave a shock to many tutors and heads of houses. Simeon's evening service in his own church, our readers will remember, had been instituted some thirty years before, and had excited strong and lasting opposition. In the same year (1827) he received from Mr. Wilberforce an offer of a living—viz., Drypool, near Hull, as uninviting a parish as could easily be found in England; the income was about £200 a year. Mr. Venn threw himself heartily into the work, and soon made his mark, forming many friendships:—

> It was here that he made the acquaintance—or rather renewed it, for there had been some previous connection through the family of Henry Thornton, Esq., of Battersea Rise—of Martha Sykes. This acquaintance soon ripened into a love which never knew any check or change until its visible bonds were broken eleven years later at Torquay. Martha was the fourth daughter of Nicholas Sykes, Esq., of Swanland, Yorkshire. Another daughter married Matthew Babington, Esq., of Rothley Temple, Leicestershire, the second son of Thomas Babington, the well-known companion of Wilberforce and the other Clapham leaders of the anti-slavery struggle.

In January, 1829, he attended a College meeting for the last time, and then resigned his Fellowship. A few days later he was married. "How intimate and happy their moral union was, how mutual the spiritual assistance and support which they were able to yield to one another, none but their nearest relatives could gain the faintest idea." For the next five-and-a-half years he was busily employed at Drypool with the ordinary routine of parish work:—

> He established a complete system of district visiting there, a plan, it is believed, first adopted by his father at Clapham, so far as the Church of England is concerned, and still so little known and practised anywhere at the time in question, that he used often to receive letters from clergymen in various parts of England asking for information about the details of the plan. He also started Church Missionary Society meetings, clothing clubs, and the other now familiar agencies so well known in most town parishes.

In a letter from Mrs. Venn to Miss Venn, Feb. 1832, we read:—

I seem to tell you every time I write that the lectures are better attended, and the Sunday evening ones especially; and it really is so. The room is crowded, and they are very attentive. There seems to be a remarkable degree of (I hardly know where to get a right name for it) inquiry amongst the people, more particularly amongst the soldiers and their wives. I cannot tell you how many of this class have come to this house desiring to see Henry; not a week passes without two or three, sometimes more. They are all of them of the upper class, if I may so call them—that is to say, they are generally officers' servants, sergeants, or so—people removed above want, which does away with all fear of their coming from other motives. They attend his lectures, and in almost every instance they mention them as a means of their being brought to think seriously; they also now come to the Sacrament. Certainly Henry has much encouragement; and it makes him doubly anxious to secure an assistant who would thoroughly co-operate with him.

Such leisure as he could command during his Dryport career was employed in editing his grandfather's "Life and Letters,"[1] a work which had been commenced by his father.

After some six years of active work in Hull, Mr. Venn received the offer of St. John's, Holloway. The offer came from Daniel Wilson, trustee with Simeon, and Archdeacon Hodson. The venerated vicar of Islington has rendered many and remarkable services to the Church; his selection of Henry Venn, forty-five years ago, showed his sagacity. From this time Mr. Venn's attendance at Salisbury Square became, of course, much more regular and systematic. It was in 1834 that he came to Islington, and up to 1838 his life was on the whole a singularly happy one. A great change, however, came over his prospects. "Dark clouds gathered about his path, which, though they did not change the characteristics of a naturally cheerful and buoyant temper, or for a moment shake his perfect resignation to the Divine Will, left their impress upon his feelings, and contributed, doubtless, to that earnest and lifelong devotion to one great cause, which soon became so marked. The first of these events was his own severe and dangerous illness, which for nearly two years laid him totally aside from all regular work." Following his own attack of illness, an affection

[1] In his account of Henry Venn ("Christian Leaders of Last Century") Dr. Ryle has written:—"Few men certainly have been so fortunate in their biographers as the Evangelical Vicar of Huddersfield. In the whole range of Christian memoirs I know few volumes so truly valuable as the single volume of 'Henry Venn's Life and Letters.' I never take it down from my shelves without thinking of the words which our great poet puts into the mouth of Queen Katharine:—

> After my death I wish no other herald,
> No other speaker of my living actions,
> To keep mine honour from corruption,
> But such an honest chronicler as——."

of the heart, came the illness of his wife. Mrs. Venn died of consumption, at Torquay, in the year 1840.[1] Thirty-three years later he also entered into rest.

And here we must pause. We have given a slight sketch of Henry Venn's earlier career condensed, with a few quotations, from the biographical chapter in the interesting and important work before us. In the letters, and in the private journal, occur many touching and instructive passages, which, did space permit, we should gladly quote. After his bereavement, his life became more and more absorbed in the work of the Church Missionary Society.[2] With what loyalty to Evangelical Church principles; with what statesmanlike sagacity; with what courtesy, sympathy, liberality, and meekness of wisdom; with what unsparing devotion; with what prayerfulness and hopeful trust he conducted affairs, has long been well and widely known. But in the account of his Missionary Secretariat, given by Mr. Knight, his confidential coadjutor for several years, and in the valuable documents appended, many readers will observe welcome evidences of these things.

## Art. VIII.—CEREMONIES.

IT is obvious to the eye of the most cursory observer of religious movements that the Church of England is in danger of becoming a church of ceremonials. Not that at any period of her history she has ever depreciated or denied the value of ordinances in their proper place in proportion to the other means of grace. That is sufficiently attested by the place she gives to the sacraments, to confirmations, and to ordinations. These are all in one sense ceremonials, included in the services of her Prayer Book, and studiously guarded by her Articles, canons, and rubrics. But in her provisions for public worship, and for the edification of her people, they hold only a place proportionate with other means of grace, such as the reading of the Holy Scriptures, the morning and evening prayer, and the instruction of the

[1] In a letter written two days after her death, Mr. Venn says:—"Such mercy has glittered in every part of this dark dispensation, such 'abundance of the gift of grace' was vouchsafed to her, that I can scarce admit any other feeling into my mind than that of thankfulness. . . . . There was 'perfect peace,'—not a care for husband, children, all was cast upon the Lord."

[2] He became Honorary Clerical Secretary in 1841, which post he held (always without pecuniary remuneration) until the close of life, though consenting a few weeks before his death to become a Vice-President.