

## Moral and Religious Miscellany.

From the Leeds Freeman.

A MEMOIR AND REMAINS OF THE LATE REV.  
JOHN GREGORY PIKE.Edited by his Sons, JOHN BAXTER and JAMES CAREY  
PIKE. London: Jarrold and Sons.

The production of this memoir does not at all need the apology with which the writers have modestly preface it, and our chief regret on closing the volume is, that they did not throw away their modesty for the occasion, and instead of compiling "Remains," and calling themselves "Editors," venture on biography in the proper sense of the word. For assuredly John Gregory Pike was one of the "excellent of the earth," and pity it would be that through any mistaken delicacy on the part of his sons, the opportunity should be lost of setting before the churches a vivid portraiture,—vivid but not too minute,—of a character that deserves not merely the veneration of a few, but the study and imitation of all. We heartily hope that the demand for the present work will soon make that course inevitable, and we exhort these "worthy children of a worthy sire" to address themselves to the task betimes, regarding it not merely as a duty to their father's memory,—an obligation which they may justly consider they have already honourably discharged,—but as a favour expected by the multitudes to whom his name is so greatly endeared, and as an act of homage to the Redeemer whose image he so largely bore.

A Baptist minister's life in these days is not often eventful, and we are to look to Mr. Pike's own energy of character for whatever incidents give importance and an aspect of dignity to his ministerial career. He was the son of Dr. Pike, a Presbyterian minister, at Highbury, whose doctrinal views did not, however, prevent him from sending his son, at the early age of eighteen, to Wymondley Academy, with the view of his entering the ministry. How far the young student was already a Christian we can hardly perceive from the memoir, but during his stay at Wymondley he became a Baptist, the only other Baptist in the college being our venerable friend, Dr. Murch. Both his own disposition, and the counsels of his father, inclined him to diligence in study, and although the curriculum at Wymondley was not at that time very severe, Mr. Pike left the academy with a mind very fairly furnished. It is to be noted, however, as characteristic of the tuition then thought adequate for a theological student, that throughout the entire term of his college-life, he never composed, much less preached, a single sermon! So far, indeed, was he from being sure of his own qualifications for the work to which his whole soul was directed, that for some time after leaving college he became a teacher in a school.

His becoming a Baptist was not pleasing to his father, and he was painfully uncertain what course to pursue, when an apparent accident threw him into contact with the Rev. Joseph Hughes, of Battersea, to whom he communicated his desire of devoting himself to the ministry of the gospel. Before this period, the complexion of his religious sentiments had been frequently indicated by the admiration he confessed for the writings of Baxter; and Mr. Hughes thought it right to recommend Mr. Pike to attach himself to the General Baptist Body, advice which Mr. Pike readily followed, "because," to use his own words, "they go in the middle way between those who insist wholly or chiefly on the doctrines of the gospel, and those who insist wholly or chiefly on its moral-

ity." We add some judicious remarks on this subject by the editors.

"There was probably some misapprehension in regard to the general strain of preaching that at this time prevailed in the Particular Baptist Denomination. That there were a number of the pastors belonging to that body, who gave an undue and most pernicious prominence to the speculative doctrines of theology, is unquestionable, but there was then a goodly band of able, learned, and devoted ministers, who walked in the middle way between high doctrine and low morality, who esteemed sound doctrine as the true basis of Christian morality, and Christian morality as the legitimate development of sound doctrine, and the number of these has vastly increased during the last half-century. . . . The 'middle way' is now thronged by multitudes. A mutual approximation has been gradually going on, between the two sections into which the body is divided; and for ourselves we can only express regret that any middle wall of partition, in the shape of technical impediments, should be permitted to exhibit those as nominally in twain, whose views of the leading doctrines and ordinances of the gospel render them essentially one."—(P. 38.)

Exactly so! We echo this expression of regret from our inmost soul. Why the severance should longer continue we cannot perceive, and we sincerely believe that for those who are essentially one to be apparently divided is a grievous mistake, whilst for any to wilfully perpetuate the division is nothing less than a sin. As for the "technical objections" alluded to by the editors, we are ignorant of their nature, and should feel deeply indebted to them if they would make *The Freeman* the channel of diffusing what information they possess on the subject. We cannot imagine that in the present state of the denomination, when ministers pass freely without censure and without remark from the pulpits of one section to those of the other, when the oneness is complete in everything but that outward compactness which gives entire unity of action, there can be any permanent or honourably defended barrier to the consummation of a union arising out of parchment conditions or obsolete technicalities. At all events, we invite the Messrs. Pike to a further investigation of the subject, and promise them the full use of our columns and our own hearty co-operation in bringing about an end that we believe to be eminently desirable, and one that would doubtless have been cordially welcomed by their venerated father.

In the year 1809, being then twenty-five years of age, Mr. Pike was invited to accept the pastorate of the General Baptist church at Derby. He had employed himself since leaving college not only in the composition of sermons, but in preaching extemporaneously, an art of which he became eventually a distinguished master. Baxter appears ever to have remained his favourite model, and from the accounts here given, as well as from his several publications, it is abundantly manifest that he acquired much both of the unction and the facility of that eminent preacher. During the first year of his ministry at Derby, no fewer than fifty-eight persons were added to the church, and this remarkable degree of usefulness so constantly characterised his preaching that we find it undiminished after the lapse of thirty years, for in the year 1842, the first year of his preaching in the new and spacious chapel in St. Mary's-gate, fifty-one converts were baptized. Seldom, indeed, has usefulness like this been vouchsafed to any minister, but seldom, it must be confessed, have there been ministers to whom that secret of useful preaching, in Mr. Pike's own words,—"having