

PART VII. me of becoming acquainted with so venerable and beautiful a character ;
 1862-72. often differing from him, but more often agreeing, and always finding him
 Chap. 68. the same candid, upright colleague, I learned to value him highly. You
 — will doubtless have many sympathizers who will speak from a far more
 intimate knowledge, but in the outside world you will not have many
 more sincere expressions of sympathy than this.*

Venn
 edits the
 "Christian
 Observer."

If it is surprising that Venn was able in the midst of the busiest period of his secretarialship to write a book, and that amid the infirmities of old age he could give such strenuous labour to the Ritual Commission, it is still more astonishing to find him, while the latter work was on, undertaking the editorship of a monthly periodical, and continuing it almost up to his death. The *Christian Observer* belonged to a small band of proprietors, of whom Venn was one. Since John Cunningham's retirement from the editorial chair, it had not prospered. The editor, J. B. Marsden, was an able man, and no one can now look through the volumes from 1860 to 1868 without being struck by the interest and excellence of many of the articles. But there were old contributors whom it was not easy to shake off, and who were distinctly dull. When Marsden died, there was a difficulty in finding a successor ; and in December, 1868, we find Venn writing to his brother that he himself had been obliged to "do something for the forthcoming January number"; and again, "I have not yet found any one to take the editorship; but with Auriol's help I can get through another number or two." Again, in the following March, "I have scrambled through three numbers, but not satisfactorily: I have had to take articles which my judgment did not approve of." Of course no periodical could go on long in that way; yet Venn, with his indomitable perseverance, actually continued at the helm for more than three years, assisted by his cousin C. J. Elliott, of Winkfield, and by Mr. G. Knox; and it is indisputable that the volumes of those three years show a variety and a brightness, and withal a dignity, which it had not exhibited for years. One is struck, in particular, by the courageous independence of the editorial utterances, especially as shown in the frequently severe reviews of books by well-known Evangelical writers. Venn was a thorough Evangelical, but he could not be a mere party man, to praise what his own side said and did, and to find no good in what came from the other side. Many of Venn's own contributions are easily recognizable. One appears so late as November, 1872, only two months before his death.

Venn in
 old age
 waiting for
 a successor

It will be well understood how anxious Venn would be all this time for the C.M.S. Secretariat to be occupied by capable men, and in particular that his own post should be filled up. We have before seen † how he viewed the frequent changes in the *personnel* in his later years, and how for long there seemed no light on the question who should succeed him. In 1870, the Committee fixed April 5th as a day of prayer on which all the Society's friends

* *Memoir of H. Venn*, p. 268.

† In Chapter LIII. See p. 375.