

J. II. MERLE D'AUBIGNE, D. D.

John Henry Merle D'Aubigne, D. D., was born in Geneva, in 1794. His family is descended from Huguenot ancestors. He was educated in the "Academy" of his native city. The Theological Faculty, when Dr. Merle was a student, was wholly Socinian; but it pleased God to send a faithful servant to Geneva about the time he was finishing his theological training. This was Mr. Haldane, of Edinburgh. He invited a number of the men to his hotel, and endeavoured to teach them the glorious Gospel. God blessed his efforts to the salvation of ten or twelve of them, including M. Merle. One of these was Felix Naff, of blessed memory. Another Henry Pyt. The greater part of them, however, still live. Not long after this ordination Dr. Merle set out for Germany, where he spent a number of months, chiefly at Berlin. On his way to that city, he passed through Eisenach, and visited the Castle of Wartburg. It was whilst gazing at the walls of the room which the great Reformer had occupied, that the thought of writing the *History of the Reformation* entered his mind. From Berlin, Dr. Merle was called to Hamburg to preach to an interesting French Protestant Church. In that city he spent five years. From Hamburg he was invited to Brussels, by the late King of Holland, to preach in a chapel which he had erected in that capital for Protestants who spoke the French language. In the year 1830, a revolution took place in Belgium. The priests joined De Potter and the other "patriots" in their revolutionary measures. The Dutch were driven out; and all who were considered friendly to the King, or intimately connected with him, were in no little danger. Among those who were in this predicament was Dr. Merle. He escaped from Belgium to Holland, where he spent a short time, and then went to his native city. The return of Dr. Merle to Geneva was most opportune. The friends of the truth had been steadily increasing in number, since the year 1816, and had begun to think seriously of founding an Orthodox School of Theology, in order that pious Swiss and French youth, who were looking to the ministry of the Gospel, should no longer be forced to pursue their studies under the Unitarian doctors of the Academy. The arrival of Dr. Merle decided them for immediate action. The next year (1831) the Geneva Evangelical Society was formed, one of whose objects was to found the long-desired seminary. In this movement Dr. Merle took a prominent part, and was placed at the head of the new school of theology. His intimate friend, the excellent Mr. Gausson, so favorably known in this country for his *Theopneustia*, and in Switzerland for many other writings, took an equal part in this important enterprise, and was chosen Professor of Theology. The publications of Dr. Merle have been numerous. Besides the *History of the Reformation*,

he has published thirteen others on various subjects, of from twenty to two hundred pages. But Dr. Merle's great undertaking is his *History of the Reformation in the Sixteenth Century*. The author is now engaged on the fourth volume, in which he is well advanced. It treats of the Reformation in Great Britain, and is expected with very different feelings, by different religious parties in England. The fifth and sixth volumes will not be published for some years.—*Wesleyan Chronicle*.

NONCONFORMIST THEOLOGIAN.

"The Puritans and Nonconformists were men of powerful intellect and ardent piety, whose principles had been tried and strengthened in the fierce collisions of their age, and whose character received in consequence the energy it might else have wanted. The measures of government that threw the Nonconformists out of their pulpits were fitted to produce an admirable class of writings, such as the church has not often enjoyed. Many of these devout men, mighty in the Scriptures and incessant prayer, had they been left to the quiet discharge of their pastoral duties, would have kept the noiseless tenor of their way, and the world would probably have heard little or nought of their authorship. Preaching would have absorbed their minds and consumed all their strength. The mere preacher has little leisure and often little fitness to be a successful writer. Thus the published remains of Whitefield are of little value compared with the writings of many men far his inferiors in the pulpit and in its immediate results of usefulness. Had then the edicts and policy of the Stuarts left the Nonconformist fathers to their own chosen course, they would, many of them, have died and bequeathed no literary remains; or those remains would have been comparatively meagre and jejune, from the want of leisure in a life of active and unremitted pastoral toil. But on the other hand, had the rich and varied writings of that class of men who, from the prison or beside its very gate, sent out their treatises to their peeled and scattered churches, been composed by mere students, men of the lamp and the closet, they would have been deficient in their popular style, their earnestness and their apt familiar illustrations. None but pastors, acquainted with the people, and familiar with the popular modes of communicating religious truth, could thus have invested the deepest truths of theology and morals with a racy vivacity, and surrounded them with such simple and every-day imagery.

"Thus, only men who had been bred pastors could have written some of these works. And, on the other hand, had they continued pastors, they could not have written them for want of leisure, inclination, and even perhaps mental power. But when the prison and the pillory shut them in, and the pulpit had shut