

PART VII.  
1862-72.  
Chap. 68.

in that year, signed "J. B. H.,"\* in which, curiously enough, Venn's picture of Xavier is rather severely criticized. "J. B. H." complains of Venn's leniency towards the great Jesuit. "Xavier," he says, "comes out from Mr. Venn's hands as a kind of incomplete Henry Martyn—with similar excellencies and similar faults—with all that singular man's purity of motive and zeal for the truth, so far as he knew it." That is a perplexing sentence in itself; and the whole article, though distinctly an able one, is more or less strange.

Venn on  
Royal Com-  
missions.

Perhaps the most unexpected duty that ever fell to Henry Venn was his membership in two Royal Commissions on Church matters. Statesmen and journalists, even then, supposed the Evangelical body to be dead; and in each case the list of the Commissioners was made up before some one pointed out that the Evangelical clergy had no representative among them. And then, presumably, the authorities woke up to the fact that even if they imagined that there were no Evangelicals left who were known in home circles, the Church Missionary Society was still alive, and it had a Secretary. It is difficult otherwise to account for the choice of Venn. In the "dead" party there were Bishops Baring, R. Bickersteth, Waldegrave, and Pelham; there were Deans Close and Goode; there were Dr. McNeile, Dr. Miller, Ryle, Garbett, and the Bardsleys; yet not one of these was chosen. Either the statesmen were unaware of their existence, or some astute wire-puller had warned them against appointing "party men." Suddenly, at the last moment in each case, the name of Henry Venn was added. In the first of the two Commissions, that on Clerical Subscription, in 1864, the absence of Evangelicals did not much matter. There was a general feeling that relief must be given to sensitive consciences, and the new form of subscription did not require much trouble to arrange; but Venn and others had to contend for an adequate recognition of the Thirty-Nine Articles as the true standard of Church of England teaching—in which contention they were successful, defeating Dean Milman, who proposed to exclude the Articles from the terms of subscription. But the Ritual Commission of 1867 was a different matter.

Commis-  
sion on  
Clerical  
Subscription.

Ritual  
Commis-  
sion.

It will be remembered that this Commission was appointed by Lord Derby's Government to evade the necessity of dealing with Lord Shaftesbury's Bills for checking the advance of Ritualism. It was to inquire into and report upon the "differences of practice" which had arisen from "varying interpretations put upon the Rubrics, Orders, and Directions for regulating the course and conduct of Public Worship . . . more especially with respect to the ornaments used in the churches, &c., and the vestments worn by ministers during the time of their ministration"; also to revise the Lectionary. The list of Commissioners, twenty-eight in

\* No doubt the Rev. J. B. Heard.