

LIFE OF VENN.

Continued.

In the year 1763, Mr. Venn published "The complete duty of Man." Of this work above twenty editions have been sold: it has proved highly useful to many. Several remarkable instances of the good which it has produced, fell, in a very unexpected manner, under the author's own observation.

A year or two after its publication in the west of England, he observed while sitting at the window of an inn, the waiter endeavouring to assist a man who was driving some pigs on the road, while the rest of the servants amused themselves only with the difficulties which the poor man experienced from their forwardness. This benevolent trait in the waiter's character induced Mr. Venn to call him in, and to express to him the pleasure which he felt in seeing him perform this act of kindness. After shewing him how pleasing to the Almighty every instance of good will to our fellow-creatures was, he expatiated on the love of God in sending his Son, from the purest benevolence, to save mankind. He exhorted him to seek for that salvation which God in his infinite mercy had given as the most inestimable gift to man. He promised to send him a book which he himself had published; and, taking down the directions of the waiter, he sent him a copy of the "Complete Duty of man." Many years after this, a friend travelling to see him, brought him a letter from this very person, who then kept a large inn, in the west of England—having married his former master's daughter. In this letter he expressed the obligations which he owed him, and the happiness which himself, his wife, and many of his children and domestics, enjoyed daily, in consequence of that conversation Mr. Venn had had with him, and the book which he had sent him, which he had read again and again with increasing comfort and advantage. Another instance occurred at Helvoetsluy's whilst he was waiting for a fair wind to convey the packet to England. Walking upon the sea shore, he observed a person who, from his address and manner, he supposed to be an Englishman, and addressed him therefore, in English, as such. The gentleman informed him that he was a Swede, though he had lived many years in England, and was well acquainted with the language and manners of that country. This induced him to converse with him; religion was introduced. The stranger invited him to sup with him, and then after much interesting conversation, took out of his portmanteau a book, to which he said he owed all his religious impressions: and presenting it to him, asked if he had ever seen it. This was his own work, and it cost Mr. Venn no little effort to suppress those emotions of vanity which would have induced him at once to discover that he was the author of it. It would be needless to recite all the instances of the benefits obtained from its persual, which fell continually under his own observation. From Scotland, Ireland, and America, as well as in England, he received numerous testimonies to its usefulness.

In 1767, he was visited with the severest domestic calamity—the loss of his affectionate wife—whose prudence had guided him, whose zeal had animated him, whose sound judgment had directed him, and whose kindness and affection had been his great stay and support amidst all the heavy trials with which he had been surrounded. A heavier trial than this could not have been laid upon him; and nothing supported him under it but that perfect confidence in God, and that blessed hope of immortality which it was his great employment to make known to others. He was now left with the sole charge of five small children; and immediately began to discharge assiduously the duties which he owed to them. The manner in which he endeavoured to turn the minds of his children to the contemplation of the highest subjects, was most affectionate and judicious. During a thunder storm, he expatiated to them upon the power of that God whose will the thunder and lightning obeyed. He taught them to fear his power, and adore his majesty; and finished his address by kneeling down and solemnly adoring that God whose perfections they had seen so signally displayed. At another time, he informed them that in the evening he would take them to an interesting sight. They were anxious to know what it was: but he deferred

gratifying their curiosity till he brought them to the scene itself. He led them to a miserable hovel—How, said he, can any one that lives in such a wretched habitation as this, be happy? Yet this is not all: a poor man lies upon a miserable straw bed within it, dying of disease, at the age of only nineteen. How wretched a situation they all exclaimed. He then led them into the cottage, and addressing the poor dying young man, said, "Abraham Midword, I have brought my children here, to show them that it is possible to be happy in a state of disease, poverty and want: and now tell them if it is not so." The dying youth with a sweet smile of benevolence and piety, replied, "Oh, yes Sir! I would not exchange my state with that of the richest person on earth, who was destitute of these views which I possess. Blessed be God! I have a good hope, thro' Christ, of being admitted into those regions where Lazarus now dwells, having long forgotten all his sorrows and miseries—Sir, this is nothing to hear whilst the presence of God cheers my soul, and whilst I can have access to Him by constant prayer, through faith in Jesus. Indeed, Sir, I am happy, truly happy."

In the year 1771, having accepted the rectory of Yelling in Huntingdonshire, Mr. Venn finally quitted Huddersfield. It was not for the sake of greater emolument that he took this step, for the income of Yelling was little superior to that of Huddersfield, but it was solely on account of his health, which was so exhausted by his continual labours, that he required rest. He was deeply wounded in his feelings at leaving a flock amongst whom he had laboured so successfully. The last two or three months of his residence was peculiarly affecting—many came from a distance to take leave of him, and to express how much they owed to him for benefits received under his ministry, of which he had not been aware. Mothers held up their children, saying, "There is the man who has been our best friend, our most faithful minister." The whole parish was deeply moved; and when he preached his farewell sermon, an impression was made which did not soon wear off. Twenty years after a stranger, passing through that place, and inquiring about their former pastor, heard blessings showered down upon him and his family.

Mr. Venn made a great point of the due observance of the Sabbath in the town and parish, and endeavoured to repress the open violation of the day, by persuasion, rather than by legal intimation. He endeavoured also to preserve the utmost reverence and devotion in public worship. He read the service with peculiar solemnity. The "Te Deum," especially, was recited with a triumphant air and tone which often produced a perceptible sensation throughout the congregation. He succeeded in inducing the people to join in the responses and singing. Twice in the course of his ministry at Huddersfield, he preached a course of sermons in explanation of the Liturgy. On one occasion, as he went up to church, he found a number of persons in the church-yard, waiting for the commencement of the service. He stopped to address them, saying he hoped they were preparing their hearts for the service of God—that he himself had much to do to preserve a right frame, &c. He concluded by waving his hand for them all to go into the church before him, and waited till they had all entered. He took great pains in catechising the young persons in his congregation, chiefly those who were above fourteen years old. He wrote out for their use a very copious explanation of the church catechism.

When Mr. Venn came to Yelling, his feelings were deeply excited by the striking contrast between the church at that place and Huddersfield. Twenty or thirty rustics composed the congregation; but when his strength was recruited he laboured in that humble sphere with at least a proportionable degree of success.

Mr. Venn continued his ministerial labours till he began to find his faculties impaired by age. He then had wisdom and fortitude enough to retire from that work, which he said, required all the highest and noblest faculties of man. He used to observe that the Levites, under the old Testament, were dismissed from their service at the age of fifty, and collected from it that God, who is the most gracious and tender of masters, did not require that his servants

should exert themselves any longer than while their full faculties and powers continued.

The age of sixty-eight may seem a very early period for withdrawing from the public duties of his office: but his constitution had never recovered from the effects of excessive exertions at Huddersfield, and old age came prematurely upon him. Ever after Mr. Venn was disabled from the discharge of ministerial duties: he knew not what it was to have a tedious or vacant hour. He declared that he never felt more fervency of devotion than whilst imploring spiritual blessings for his children and friends, and especially for those who were still engaged in the ministry of the blessed Gospel, from which he was himself laid aside.

For himself, his prayer was that he might die to the glory of Christ. "There are some moments," he once said, "when I am afraid of what is to come in the last agonies: but I trust in the Lord to hold me up. I have a great work before me—to suffer and to die to his glory."

About six months before his death, he removed to Clapham where his son was now settled as Rector. His health became very precarious: he was often upon the brink of the grave, and then unexpectedly restored. A medical friend who frequently visited him at this time, observed, that the near prospect of dissolution so elated his mind with joy, that it proved a stimulus to life.

Upon one occasion, Mr. V. himself remarked some fatal symptoms, exclaiming, 'Surely these are good symptoms.' The medical friend replied, "Sir, in this state of joyous excitement you cannot die."

At length, on the 24th June 1797, his happy spirit was released, and entered into the long-anticipated joy of his Lord.

CHRISTIAN CONTENTMENT.

A christian may be concerned to act in character, and adorn the profession of the Gospel, without any imputation of vanity; and opportunities, though in obscurity and retirement, will not be long wanting. The late pious John Newton is said to have endured a very severe operation without a groan. The operator expressed surprise at his fortitude. 'Why, Sir,' said he, 'I have preached some years from my pulpit about Divine support, and shall I live to negative all by my cowardice?' Great and trying occasions, which attract the eyes of all men, rarely occur; but every good man frequently finds something to exercise his faith and patience. 'Perhaps,' says Mr. Cecil, 'it is a greater energy of Divine power, which keeps the christian from day to day, from year to year, praying, hoping, running, believing, against all hindrances, which maintains him as a living martyr, than that which bears him up for an hour in sacrificing himself at the stake.'

If the data from which our estimate is made be correct, and we have no reason to think otherwise, there is now consumed in the United States more than one hundred million pounds of Tobacco every year which gives about SEVEN POUNDS to every man, woman and child, or about fifty pounds a year to every family of seven persons! And the sum annually paid by those who use it, in a manufactured state, is not short of \$20,000,000!

Twenty million dollars paid for—what? why, for the purpose of making disgusting members of society—of filling heads with noisome powder from which bugs flee by instinct—for making the breath fetid, and destroying the functions of the stomach—for abstracting the mind by puffing narcotic fumes, and unfitting it for every useful purpose. In short, for making sensualists in the strictest sense,—disregarding the sensitive feelings of those who are compelled to be associates—and of being bound with more than iron manacles to the grim tyrant Tobacco.—*Portsmouth Journal*.

THE GOSPEL MESSAGE.

What message can come from God to guilty sinners? can any thing else be expected than that he should speedily come to execute on such rebels the fierceness of his just displeasure? Behold, the goodness and mercy of our God! He sends forth his ambassadors, not bearing denunciations of vengeance, but charged with the ministry of Reconciliation. "Comfort ye; comfort ye my people;" is the gracious tenor of the Gospel message.