

PART VII. significant glimpse of the condition of the great national cathedral at that time :—

1862-72.
Chap. 68.

Cold ser-
vices at
St. Paul's.

(1849) "Dec. 21st.—This is my turn for preaching at St. Paul's. My only connexion with the public ministry of the Church of England is comprised in a single sermon on the shortest day in the year, each alternate odd year, to the handful of people whom curiosity brings to the Morning Service. In the afternoon, the anthem and saint's day without preaching collects a respectable congregation, tenfold that of the morning; so low has the Protestantism of the Church of England sunk in the present day."

These services, it must be remembered, were in the choir only. Dome and nave were not used till the Special Sunday Evening Services began in 1858. We Evangelicals do not like all that goes on at St. Paul's now; but surely, with all deductions, we may thank God for the change from what Venn describes.

Venn as an
Evangelical.

Venn's influence among Evangelical Churchmen has been illustrated again and again in the pages of this History, and need not be further dwelt upon. It was for the most part exercised privately, because he felt that he could not appear before the world as a party leader without compromising the Society. He would not sign Protestant declarations and the like. He said, "H. V. and C.M.S. are synonymous." He never sympathized with the common complaint that "Evangelicals are a rope of sand." "Thank God it is so," he would say; "so is the sea-shore." He did not wish Evangelicals to be a "party," and preferred their acting independently, although on the same principles.

Venn
writes the
Life of
Xavier.

It is difficult to imagine Venn writing a book in the midst of such pressing duties as constantly came upon him. Yet he did write one book of great value, *The Missionary Life of Francis Xavier*.* At first sight the subject seems a strange one for a Protestant Missionary Director; but Venn had a singularly candid and open mind, and he really desired to study for himself the career of the greatest of Roman missionaries. Was all that was said of him true? What work did he really accomplish? What manner of man was he personally? Was he a pattern, or a beacon? or was he something of both? For fourteen years Venn was carefully studying, searching, inquiring, regularly devoting his holiday hours to the work, year by year. There was no English Life of the great Jesuit; but there were two biographies, one in Latin and one in French, compiled by Jesuits in 1596 and 1682. These works, however, proved to be full of geographical and other blunders and confusions of dates, quite sufficient to discredit the legendary wonders they contained, even if the legends had been credible in themselves. But Xavier's own letters were accessible, having been published in various forms abroad, and particularly in a carefully-edited Latin translation of one hundred and forty-six

Materials
for the
book.

* He also wrote the *Life* of his grandfather, Henry Venn of Huddersfield and Yelling; but that was before he was Secretary.