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ART. I. PHILOSOPHY OF THE MIND.

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NUMBER II.

Recapitulation as to mental faculties. *Disposition, inclination, susceptibility, &c.* considered.

THE remarks made in the previous essay on the manner in which mental operations are classified, and then referred to the mind as possessed of faculties adapted to the different classes of those operations, show I think clearly and satisfactorily, the truth of what I suggested at the beginning of the discussion, that what we call the *faculties* of the mind are not to be considered as distinct parts into which the mind is divided, and which, by being united together, constitute the mind, as different parts or ingredients make up a complex material substance. Locke well observes, that the ordinary way of speaking of the faculties of the mind is apt to breed confusion in men's thoughts, by leading them to suppose that the words denoting those faculties "stand for some real beings in the soul;" or, as he says in another place, for "so many distinct agents in us, which have their several provinces and authorities, and command, obey, and perform several actions, as so many distinct beings; which has been no small occasion of wrangling, obscurity and uncertainty." The mind is a simple, indivisible, spiritual being. And when we speak of it as having different *faculties*, we do nothing more than to say, that the *mind itself*, a simple, immaterial being, performs so many different kinds of actions, and of course has *power* or *ability* to perform them; for how could it act in these different ways, without power to do so. But what we call a power or faculty of the mind is no more a distinct agent, than the faculty of speaking or

ART. VII. REVIEW OF THE MEMOIRS OF MATTHEW HENRY.

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Memoirs of the Life, Character, and Writings, of the Rev. Matthew Henry. By I. B. Williams, L. L. D. F. S. A. First American from the third London Edition.

THERE are some names that die, in spite of all that can be done to keep them alive; there are others that live, whoever may combine to blot them out of existence. Be it that no monument tells where their ashes repose; that no orator commemorates their fame; that no memoir proclaims to the world their character or their doings; yet let them, by the greatness of their intellectual efforts or public services, identify themselves with the character of the age in which they live, and it were scarcely a more hopeless task to undertake to pluck a star from the heavens, than to quench the lustre of their names, or to limit the usefulness of their lives.

It will hardly be questioned at this day, that the name of Matthew Henry belongs somewhere on the comparatively small list of names, which are not destined to lose their lustre with the lapse of ages. Passing by all the other important services which he rendered to the great cause of truth and piety, his commentary is an imperishable monument both of his greatness and his goodness.

Though much more than a century has passed since he was gathered to his fathers, yet his name is as fragrant in the church as ever; and perhaps it is scarcely too much to say that, by his writings, which may now be considered as the representative of his person on earth, he is actually accomplishing more at this day for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ, than he did during the period in which he lived by the diversified influence of his unremitting personal exertions. It must be left for the ages of eternity to reveal the amount of blessing which his writings will have been instrumental in securing to each successive generation; and no doubt there are multitudes now around the throne, whom he never saw in the flesh, who have already recognised him as the instrument by which their minds were first brought in contact with the light of heavenly truth, and their

faith confirmed in the gracious promises of God, and their goings established in the ways of holiness, until by grace they have reached their destined home.

Several of the most eminent men of his day, preached and published sermons in reference to his death; some of which are preserved in the volume containing his miscellaneous works, and are alike creditable to the authors and the character they are designed to commemorate. A memoir of his life also was published not long after his death, written by his intimate friend, the Reverend W. Tong; which, though it contained much that must always be deeply interesting, seems never to have been considered as a happy delineation of Mr. Henry's character. A memoir that should do full justice to this extraordinary man, has always been a desideratum in the church until within the last few years; and the honour of supplying this deficiency in a manner which the Christian public has pronounced entirely satisfactory, has been reserved to a gentleman whose literary and religious character eminently qualified him for this work, who came to it with every advantage which could be furnished by a ready access to all the family manuscripts, and who has also, if we mistake not, a portion of the blood of this great and good man flowing in his veins. Doctor Williams, the author of this memoir, is a nephew of the late Rev. Dr. Edward Williams, whose character is well known in this country. He is a lawyer of great distinction in Shrewsbury; and is well known in England, not only for his professional eminence, but for his zealous attachment to the interests of literature and religion. Besides the work which forms the subject of this article, he has published a volume containing memoirs of Mrs. Savage and Mrs. Hulton, sisters of Matthew Henry, and has also given the world an enlarged and improved edition of his works, including the Biography of his father, Philip Henry, and many of the outlines of his father's discourses. In all these works, as they now appear, Doctor Williams is entitled to the gratitude not only of the present generation, but of posterity; and it is a circumstance in which the good providence of God should be devoutly acknowledged, that, at a period so remote from that in which these illustrious men and women lived, there should be found a descendant of the same family to erect so worthy and noble a monument to the distinguished ability and excellence of his ancestors.

We shall limit ourselves in this article to a brief outline of the life and character of Mr. Henry, in the hope of directing the attention of all our readers to the invaluable work in which this great man is so fully and faithfully exhibited.

Matthew Henry was the second son of the Reverend Philip Henry and of Katharine his wife, and was born at Broad Oak, in Flintshire, Oct. 12, 1662; the year which was rendered memorable in the ecclesiastical history of England by the exclusion of about two thousand of the best ministers with which any country has ever been blessed, from the duties of the sacred office.

Though the name of Philip Henry is less known, in this country at least, than that of Matthew, from the fact that the published works of the latter are much the most extensive, yet we are inclined to think, from the biography of the father, and from the few of his writings that have come down to us, that he was in every respect equal, perhaps in most superiour, to the son. There seems indeed to have been a surprising resemblance of character between them; owing, no doubt, in a great measure to the forming influence of parental instruction and example. Both were remarkable for their humility, benevolence, self-denial, and cheerful submission to the will of God. Both were distinguished for an ardent thirst for knowledge, for high intellectual powers, for originality of conception, and for a style of singular quaintness, and yet uncommon beauty. And we may add, both were trained in an unusual degree in the school of adversity; though in this latter particular the lot of the father was more eminently distinguished than that of the son, as he was subject, during a considerable part of his ministry, to the complicated inconveniences and trials of a most malignant persecution. It would rather appear also that the father had the advantage in respect both to original genius and intellectual culture; for his opportunities at the university were probably better in some respects, than those which his son enjoyed, even under his own instruction; and a comparison of the writings of the two is fitted to leave the impression that, while both minds are cast substantially in the same mould, and are gifted with uncommon powers, yet, to a certain extent, the one is to be considered as sustaining to the other the relation of a splendid copy to a splendid original. In confirmation of this sentiment, we may cite the fact that the son gratefully acknowledges himself indebted to the father

for many of the valuable thoughts contained in his commentary ; and it is not improbable that the habit which the latter was always in, of commenting upon a portion of Scripture in connexion with family worship, suggested to the former the idea of that great work which will cause his name to be embalmed in the church to the end of the world. Of the remains of Philip Henry, we have met with nothing except portions of his diary, incorporated into the memoir of his life, and the outlines of a considerable number of sermons which form the appendix of the volume containing Matthew Henry's miscellaneous works ; but these unfinished productions evidently indicate a mind of the highest order ; every paragraph bears the impression of an original genius ; and one hardly knows which to admire most, the power and beauty of the thoughts, or the heavenliness of the spirit which breathes in them.

But to return to the memoir. The uncommon powers of Matthew Henry began to develop themselves at a very early period ; insomuch that at the age of three years he could read the Bible with facility and intelligence. His education for several of the first years of his life was conducted chiefly under the eye of his parents ; and while he enjoyed here a favourable opportunity for the culture of his mind, he had also the advantage of the best religious instruction, aided by the power of an eminently holy example. From an extract of one of his letters which has been preserved, written when he was only nine years old, it appears that at that early period his thoughts were seriously employed upon spiritual subjects ; but it was not till two or three years after, that he seems to have been in any tolerable degree satisfied that he was the subject of a gracious renovation. In a manuscript dated Oct. 18, 1675, when he was thirteen years old, he records the experience which he had had two years before ; and the examination of his own heart which he then instituted with a view to decide whether religion had actually been formed in his soul ; and it is not easy to find a more correct epitome of the evidence of Christian character than this paper exhibits. It is hardly necessary to say, that the parental and other domestic influences to which he was subject, were eminently adapted, not only to prepare his heart for the reception of divine grace, but to cherish and mature the sacred principle after it was implanted ; and to this happy state of things, it was no doubt owing in no in-

considerable degree, that his Christian character was subsequently developed in such beautiful proportions, and operated with such powerful attraction.

The commencement of Matthew Henry's Christian experience was just such as might have been expected from the circumstances in which he was placed, and forms a striking illustration of the great importance to be attached to a healthful parental influence. The principles of religion were instilled into his mind as soon as he was capable of comprehending them, and he saw them constantly embodied in living action in the example of both his parents; and every thing was done that could be, which was adapted to impress upon him the truth that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." The consequence of this cautious and faithful training was, that the evil propensities of the unrenewed heart, which, in other circumstances, might have been developed in full strength, were never brought into vigorous exercise; and before the period had arrived in which we ordinarily expect to find a settled character, or even a very full developement of constitutional tendencies, we find this youth comparatively secure against the influence of temptation, from having a living principle of religion implanted in his heart.

It were of course more difficult in such cases to trace the operations of the Spirit in conviction and conversion, and especially to fasten upon any particular time when the great change is supposed to take place, than in those cases in which the mind is more suddenly brought in contact with divine truth, and the conscience wakes in a moment from the dream of ignorance or delusion, to the blackness of its own guilt. But the cases of hopeful conversion which occur under the former circumstances are by no means to be less relied on, than those which take place under the latter: on the contrary, if there is any thing proved by experience, it is that the children of pious parents, who have been trained up from their infancy in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, when they make a profession of religion, usually exhibit a far more consistent Christian character, and much less frequently give occasion to painful suspicion in respect to the genuineness of their piety, than do those whose minds have not been previously stored with truth, and whose first religious exercises are more rapid and powerful. And the reason is obvious; for admitting the conversion in each case to be

genuine, in the one case, the materials out of which the Christian character is to be formed have been accumulating under the influence of sound scriptural instruction; and the very truths are already in the mind which the Holy Spirit uses in accomplishing his work; and the consequence is, that its religious exercises are from the beginning far more intelligent, and the Christian character assumes better proportions, than if there had been no previous habit of reflection. But in the other case, the mind has not been before conversant with the truth, and at first takes but a partial and often a distorted view of it; and though it may comprehend enough at a single glance to secure, through the agency of the blessed Spirit, a genuine conversion to God, yet in order to the formation of a symmetrical religious character, all the doctrines of the gospel must be known, and their different relations understood, and each must exert its legitimate influence on the feelings of the heart, and the actions of the life. A little observation might satisfy any one, that a large part of the eccentricity which pertains to many professed Christians, and a considerable proportion of the fanaticism which prevails in the church, and very many of the ill-judged movements which are made in connexion with religion, are to be referred to ignorance of God's truth: the individuals concerned in most instances, never enjoyed the advantages of a Christian education, or if they did, they neglected the opportunity of becoming acquainted with the Scriptures; and this evil has never been in any tolerable degree remedied by any efforts they may have made subsequently to their conversion.

It has often occurred to us as one of the peculiar errors of the present day, that there is a tendency to judge of Christian character, rather by a reference to its accidental qualities, than its substantial elements; rather by looking back to the agony or the rapture in which the foundation of it was supposed to be laid, than by observing the consistency, the activity, the spirituality by which it has been subsequently marked. There is great reason to fear that there are many in the religious community with whom so simple a story of conversion as that which Matthew Henry has told concerning himself, would scarcely pass current; they would want something more imposing, and thrilling, and heart-stirring; would wish to know more definitely the very time of his birth into the kingdom; and to hear something more of the depths of misery into which he fell in his conviction, and of

the heights of glory to which he rose when he first became a new creature in Christ Jesus. It does not appear that this excellent man, in estimating his own Christian character, ever attached any special importance to his early exercises: on the contrary he seems to have looked at them only in connexion with his subsequent life; and to have taken the comfort of believing himself a disciple, not because he was more or less agitated, or more or less enraptured, at any given time, but because he found himself living habitually in the fear, and love, and service of God.

Mr. Henry seems to have continued at Broad Oak under the instruction which was communicated in his father's house, until 1680, when, at the age of eighteen, he was placed in the family and under the tuition of Mr. Thomas Doolittle of Islington, who is represented as having been an uncommonly faithful and excellent minister. How long he continued here is not known; but not very long after he came, it is ascertained that Mr. Doolittle was driven from Islington by persecution, and his pupils were most of them scattered among private families in a neighbouring village. Mr. Henry however returned to his paternal residence, and resumed his studies with his accustomed diligence under the instruction of his excellent father. During his study at Islington there is evidence of his having made rapid improvement both in learning and in grace; and he was introduced to a numerous circle of friends in whom he became deeply interested, and many of whom seem to have retained a most affectionate regard for him during the residue of life.

It would seem that Mr. Henry in early childhood—at least as soon as he had any satisfactory evidence of having felt the power of religion in his own soul—formed the purpose of ultimately devoting himself to the work of the Christian ministry; and no doubt he had this great object prominently before him in the whole course of his studies. But from some cause or other, he determined, with the approbation of his father, and by the advice of an intimate and valued friend, to leave for a while the studies which were designed more immediately to prepare him for the sacred office, and give himself to the study of the law. It is not improbable that he was influenced mainly to this determination, by a conviction that the general knowledge which he would acquire by such a course, and particularly the acquaintance which he would gain with the world under different aspects,

would qualify him for the more successful discharge of the ministerial office. We should not think it best as a general rule to advise young men to engage in the study of the law as a preparation for the work of the ministry; nevertheless we are far from believing that the knowledge which might be acquired by such a course could be turned to no account in the discharge of ministerial duties. Indeed there is no species of knowledge which a minister may not, in some way or other, render subservient to his great work; and he who thinks of entering the ministry without having his mind enlarged in some degree by general science, satisfied with having always kept in the path of *direct* preparation for his work, will find himself often embarrassed by his ignorance, and far less likely to attain the great objects of the ministry, than if his mind were stored with a large fund of general knowledge. Pursuant to the determination which he had formed, Mr. Henry commenced the study of the law at Gray's Inn, London, in 1685, being in the twenty-third year of his age.

He entered upon this new course of study with exemplary diligence; insomuch that some of his friends began to fear for the fate of his early resolutions in respect to the ministry. But their fears were quite groundless; for even then he devoted a portion of his time to theological studies, and frequently met some of his friends for Christian conference, and expounded to them portions of the word of God. During his residence here, he also maintained an active correspondence with his father, than which nothing could have been better fitted to quicken his devout affections, and establish him in the ways of truth and holiness.

It was in the year 1685 that the excellent Richard Baxter, a man of whom the world was not worthy, was sentenced by Jeffreys, at Guildhall, "to pay five hundred marks, to lie in prison till they were paid, and to be bound to his good behaviour for seven years." Mr. Henry being in the vicinity of the place where this venerable saint was imprisoned, went to pay him a visit; and he subsequently describes the interview he had with him, in a letter of great interest, addressed to his father. Mr. Baxter's remarks to him show, that he was enabled to rise completely above the malignity of his persecutors, and that there was no sacrifice which he accounted dear for the honour of that Master whom he had

pledged himself to serve, and who had called him to virtue and glory.

After having prosecuted the study of the law somewhat more than a year, during which time he availed himself of an opportunity for acquiring the French language, he returned to Broad Oak in June, 1686; when his friends had the satisfaction of finding him still keeping himself unspotted from the world, and as firmly resolved on devoting himself to the ministry as ever. Shortly after his return, he was invited by one of his clerical friends in that neighbourhood to exercise his gift of preaching for the benefit of his congregation; and though he had not been formally separated to the ministerial office, he complied with the request, and preached several times with great acceptance, and some visible success. Being on a visit at Chester about the same time, he consented to preach there also; and so strong and general was the interest he excited in the congregation which he addressed, that they immediately resolved on an attempt to secure permanently his ministerial services. After receiving the advice of his excellent father, which was in favour of his acceding to their proposal, he resolved on returning to their call an affirmative answer; and shortly after set his face again towards London, with a view to close up his concerns at Gray's Inn, and make the necessary arrangements for entering on the active duties of the ministry. He appears at this time to have been most deeply impressed with a sense of the magnitude of the work to which he was giving himself; and his diary contains a record of his own secret communings in reference to this subject, which shows how richly he was anointed for his office by the Holy Ghost, and how fearful he was lest he should enter it without the requisite spiritual qualifications.

Notwithstanding Mr. Henry had been educated a non-conformist, and his predilections were evidently in favour of Presbyterian ordination, he was unwilling to come to a practical decision on this important subject, without going over the whole ground of evidence for himself; and hence he gave himself to a deliberate and thorough investigation of this whole subject; and that he might be the more likely to arrive at an impartial conclusion, he committed to paper the most important things that occurred to him on both sides of the question; and the result was that, though he was fully

satisfied of the validity of Episcopal ordination, yet he was equally satisfied that in view of all which at that time it involved, he could not with a good conscience consent to it: in other words, he was, from sober investigation and honest conviction, a dissenter. Though his reflections on the subject, as recorded in his diary, relate in some important respects to a state of things which no longer exists, yet the great principles which he maintains, and on which his ultimate decision was founded, admit of general application; and it would seem that no person could read over these reflections without at once admiring the honesty and intelligence by which they were dictated, and gathering some sound and practical maxims for the regulation of his own conduct.

Mr. Henry, having become fully satisfied of his duty, applied to several of the leading Presbyterian ministers of London, to whom he was best known, for ordination; and accordingly, on the 9th May, after having submitted to an examination, and gone through with the prescribed exercises preparatory to the occasion, he was *privately* set apart to the office of a gospel minister. The necessity for this service being performed in a private way, grew out of the illiberal spirit of the times; for though there was more of the semblance of toleration at this period than there had been a few years previous, yet even now dissenters were barely endured, and were at the mercy of an arbitrary power, whose tender compassions were cruelty.

In June 1687, Mr. Henry returned to Chester, with a view of making it the place of his permanent residence. Having become happily settled in his work, with promising prospects of usefulness, he formed a matrimonial connexion with Miss Hardware, a lady of highly respectable family and uncommon excellence of character. Though her mother was not at first in favour of the connexion, from an ambitious desire, as she afterwards confessed, that her daughter might be placed in a more easy worldly condition; yet she ultimately not only became reconciled to it, but regarded it as a great blessing to her family. But notwithstanding the event seemed auspicious of good to all who were concerned, the hopes which were connected with it were destined soon to give place to the bitterness of disappointment; for within about a year and a half after their marriage, the union was suddenly broken by Mrs. Henry's death. She died of the

small-pox, Feb. 14, 1689, aged twenty-five; having only for a short time sustained the relation of a mother.

A little before the close of the next year, Mr. Henry entered a second time into the marriage relation. The lady with whom he was now united, was Miss Warburton, a relative of his former wife, and alike respectable in her family connexions and her personal character. She proved every way worthy of the station to which she was introduced; and the happy results of the union were an enlargement of Mr. Henry's usefulness, and a small family of children, which, however, were successively taken from their parents by death before they had reached maturity.

The example of Mr. Henry in this respect, deserves to be seriously considered by all ministers who, in the providence of God, are placed in similar circumstances. It admits of no question that in all ordinary cases a clergyman's usefulness is greatly promoted, by his being the head of a family; and as a general rule, it were desirable that every young minister should enter into the matrimonial relation as soon as may be, after he has become settled in his work. But it is best that all premature arrangements in reference to this should be avoided; and it is all the better if a minister can select his wife with some reference to the station she may be called to occupy. But on no subject, perhaps, are young ministers so much in danger of mistaking their duty and their interest, and of greatly limiting their usefulness, as on this; and who needs be told, that many a man who has early given promise of being a most efficient helper of the cause of Christ in the ministry of reconciliation, has actually passed not only a most uncomfortable, but comparatively useless life, in consequence of his having early and rashly committed himself in some foolish love speculation, which has resulted in his union with a female who had neither the ability nor the disposition to be a fellow-helper with him unto the kingdom of God. We would say then, let every one who contemplates the ministry as a profession, make his calculations at a proper time, unless there are some *special* reasons to the contrary, for entering the marriage state; for while such a step will exempt him from numberless inconveniences in his intercourse with society, and especially with his own flock, it will contribute not a little to his dignity, comfort and usefulness. But let him take heed that all his arrangements in reference to this

subject are made with cautious deliberation and true wisdom; remembering that a serious error here will extend its influence to all the departments of his professional activity, as well as domestic enjoyment.

The year 1696 was rendered memorable to Mr. Henry by the death of several of his valued relatives and friends, and especially of his truly excellent and revered father, the Rev. Philip Henry. This great and good man was suddenly arrested by disease in the midst of health and usefulness, and within a few hours was taken up to his heavenly home. His son had only time to reach his dying bed, after the news of his illness was communicated to him, and to receive the paternal blessing just as the earthly house of this tabernacle was going to ruin. He describes the last interview, and his father's dying scene in these words—"As soon as he saw me he said, 'Oh son, you are welcome to a dying father; I am now ready to be offered up, and the time of my departure is at hand.' A little after midnight, my mother, holding his hands as he sat in bed, and I holding the pillow to his back, he very quietly, and without any struggling, groan, or rattling, breathed out his dear soul into the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ, whom he had faithfully served." On the Friday following his death, while his remains were yet unburied, the son preached on occasion of a public fast, which had been appointed by the father on the preceding Sabbath; and immediately after the funeral returned to his family and flock at Chester, with his mind full of seasonable reflections, and his heart of pious feelings, in view of the afflictive dispensation which had called him from home. The thoughts which he committed to his diary on this occasion indicate a most quiet and humble spirit, a truly filial confidence in God, and a deep and practical recognition of his goodness in allowing him for so long a time the blessing of such a father. The resolutions which he formed, and which he was evidently enabled to carry into his subsequent life, show that it was good for him to be afflicted.

Mr. Henry's uncommon popularity as a preacher, as well as the distinguished excellence of his character, drew upon him from time to time, the eyes of distant congregations which were bereaved of their ministers. Though he had been but two or three times at London, from the period of his settlement at Chester, yet his preaching there in a few instances had not failed to awaken a deep interest, and a

strong desire, if possible, that he might be induced to accept a call to some vacant congregation in the metropolis. The first invitation which he is known to have received was from the church in Hackney, in 1708, immediately after the death of the learned and eloquent Doctor Bates, who had been its pastor; but though some special efforts were made to secure the acceptance of the call, he seems to have declined it without hesitation. Shortly after, he was invited to succeed the Reverend Nathaniel Taylor, a man of great celebrity, and one of the lecturers in Salter's hall; but here again, though the place was one of the greatest respectability, and though the call was accompanied by private communications of the most urgent kind from such men as John Howe and Doctor Daniel Williams, yet it all did not avail to induce him to think seriously of leaving Chester. Subsequently to this he was invited to Manchester to take charge of the church which was rendered vacant by the death of Mr. Charlton, who is described as "a divine of singular eminence and attainments;" and scarcely had he had time to decline this invitation, before he received yet another to a joint partnership with Mr. Shower, at the Old Jewry; and about the same time a still more troublesome proposal came to him from the church in Silver-street, to which Mr. Howe had formerly sustained the relation of pastor. Up to this time, however, he appears to have been inflexible in his determination not to leave Chester; and his attachment to his congregation there, seems to have furnished him with a ready answer to all the applications which were made; though the case last mentioned, seems on account of the decisive opinion which was entertained by many of his most judicious friends in favour of a removal, to have been taken into much more serious consideration, and to have been the occasion of greater perplexity than any similar case in his previous experience.

But notwithstanding the numerous invitations which Mr. Henry had declined to what were considered wider fields of ministerial labour, he did at length, though not without great deliberation and anxiety, consent to a removal. The congregation at Hackney whose call he had declined after the death of Doctor Bates, repeated their invitation with an earnestness which would not be denied, after the death of his successor; and the result of a somewhat protracted negotiation, and of no little conflict of mind on

the part of Mr. Henry, was the dissolution of his pastoral relation at Chester, and his introduction to a new field of labour at Hackney. He has recorded in his diary at considerable length the reasons which influenced him to this unexpected step; and they are such as evince the most affectionate attachment to the congregation from which he was separated, the most watchful attention to the leadings of Providence, and the most earnest desire to serve his Master to the extent of his ability.

Mr. Henry's ministry at Chester was distinguished by a most laborious and faithful discharge of all the duties pertaining to his arduous vocation. He was especially attentive to the moral and religious interests of the young; catechising them regularly every Saturday afternoon, frequently preaching sermons with special reference to their benefit, and associating with them in a more private way with a view to bring them under the influence of religion. In his pastoral relations he was uniformly affectionate and exemplary; regarding no personal sacrifice by which he might contribute to the spiritual interests of those committed to his care. Nor was he contented merely with labouring for the benefit of his own flock; but he extended his views and his efforts abroad and caused his influence to be most benignly and delightfully felt through the whole surrounding country.

The devoted attachment of Mr. Henry to his congregation at Chester, not only rendered it exceedingly difficult for him to break the tie by which he was bound to them as a pastor, but caused him, soon after it was actually broken, to look back upon them with unutterable feelings of tenderness, and to indulge painful apprehensions lest, after all, he had mistaken the path of duty. Even before his removal to Hackney he writes in his diary thus—"I see I have been very unkind to the congregation, who love me too well;" and on his arrival at his new habitation he utters himself in such language as this—"Lord, am I in my way? I look back with sorrow for leaving Chester: I look forward with fear, but unto thee I look up." This doubtless is to be considered as rather indicating a momentary victory of feeling over judgement, than any settled conviction that he had done wrong in making the change.

The labours of Mr. Henry at Hackney commenced with the Sabbath, May 18, 1712. It became manifest at once

that he was the same zealous and devoted pastor here, as he had been while he was connected with his former charge ; and that he counted not his life dear to him, if the Master whom he served might be glorified by the sacrifice. The high reputation which he had long possessed rendered it a matter of great interest to procure his services on public occasions ; and there was scarcely any important object connected with the advancement of Christ's kingdom, which was to be carried forward by dissenters, to which his aid was not solicited. But under the pressure of his pastoral and public duties, his health soon began seriously to decline ; and a disease that had discovered itself occasionally for two years, and had given his friends considerable anxiety respecting him, now began to be developed in a way to excite much additional alarm. Before leaving Chester he had promised his congregation that he would make them an annual visit ; and as his health had become so seriously impaired after having been at Hackney a little more than a year, as to require the relaxation which would be furnished by a journey, he resolved to avail himself of the opportunity to redeem his pledge by passing a little time with his former charge. Accordingly he set out for Chester, July 20, 1713 ; delighted with the prospect of another meeting with those who had so long received the gospel from his lips, and to whom his heart was still bound by the tenderest associations. He stopped at Broad Oak, the spot where he had first seen the light, and preached to the congregation of which his father had formerly been the pastor ; and thence proceeded to Chester, where he was met on every side with the most cordial expressions of respect and affection. During the few days he passed here, he preached several times, observed a congregational fast with his former charge, and administered the Lord's supper ; and his spirit seems to have been truly refreshed by being thus permitted to mingle again with those, many of whom he had reason to believe were his spiritual children, and were destined to be gems in his everlasting crown of joy. After an absence of about three weeks, he returned to his family and flock at Hackney, with his health not at all improved by the journey. He continued his labours, however, though not without some abatement, and occasional interruptions ; and it gradually became more and more manifest, both to himself and his friends, that the time of his departure could not be far distant.

In May of the succeeding year (1714,) he visited his friends in Chester again, and notwithstanding his continued bodily indisposition, he preached frequently. The subjects which occupied him on the two last Sabbaths of his life, respected the rest which remains for the people of God; and if he had selected his topics in the full knowledge of his approaching departure, it is not easy to see how they could have been more appropriate to the circumstances in which he was placed. On the 21st June, he set out to return to Hackney, though he was so much enfeebled by disease, that the friends he left behind had scarcely a hope of meeting him again on this side the grave. And it turned out that their painful apprehensions respecting him were fully realized. Before he had proceeded far on his journey, he was thrown from his horse, but at the time did not appear to suffer materially from the fall, and hastened forward, in spite of the urgency of his friends to the contrary, to fulfil an appointment which he had made to preach at Nantwich. This appointment he actually fulfilled; though it was remarked by some who heard him, that his preaching on that occasion, was by no means characterized by his usual vivacity. He had accepted an invitation from a gentleman in the neighbourhood, distinguished for hospitality and piety, to go to his house after the service; but he immediately became so ill that he was unable to fulfil this engagement, and threw himself upon the bed, at the house of one of his old friends, not to be removed from it but as a corpse. For several hours his reason and speech were continued to him, so that he was able to testify to the sustaining influences of religion in the prospect of death; but early the next morning, he was seized with apoplexy, and after lying speechless, with his eyes fixed, for three hours, his spirit calmly took its flight for better worlds. His funeral which took place three days after, was marked by every expression of affectionate respect for his memory, and his remains were carried to Chester and interred by his former flock, who counted it a privilege to have his venerable dust in the midst of them.

The latter part of Doctor Williams' highly interesting work is occupied with a minute and charming delineation of Mr. Henry's private and public character; but it is impossible to bring within *our* limits much more than the heads of *his* several chapters. It would seem that, independently of the influence of divine grace, there were peculiar attractions be-

longing to his character : The God of *nature* had cast his mind in a mould of superiour excellence, imparting to him qualities which were peculiarly fitted to draw towards him the kind and grateful regards of his fellow men. But so early was his character brought under the transforming influence of religion, that it is not easy to draw the line between the original elements of his moral constitution, and those qualities which were superinduced by the agency of the Holy Spirit. But it is certain that whatever belonged to him originally was greatly refined and improved by being brought under the moulding influence of an active and elevated piety ; while on the other hand, his Christian graces were rendered far more attractive by being engrafted upon the most lovely natural disposition.

His religious character appears to have been marked in an eminent degree by consistency. We do not find him attaching a disproportionate importance to some one of the Christian graces, as if in a single quality were embodied every thing that belongs to religious character ; but we see him taking the Bible as his standard in every thing, endeavouring to conform himself to *all* God's requirements ; and the result was, that his character was formed in goodly and beautiful proportions. He was eminently diligent in the improvement of time ; and seems never to have been satisfied unless he was doing something for the benefit of his fellow men and the glory of God. He was unusually free from censoriousness ; and though he opposed error with decision, yet it was always in a spirit of compassion and kindness towards the errourist ; and his object evidently was to advance the cause of truth, and not to secure a personal victory. He exhibited on all occasions a spirit of the most exemplary benevolence ; distributing liberally of his moderate income to the necessities of his fellow men, and entering with the utmost vigour and alacrity into all plans which were designed to aid the great cause of human improvement. He was accustomed to form an exceedingly humble estimate of his own spiritual attainments, and habitually cultivated a deep sense of dependence on the influences of divine grace. There was nothing in any of his doings as they are recorded by his biographer, or in any of his exercises as he has himself set them down in his diary, to indicate even a lurking conviction that he could make any progress in religion, or render any acceptable service to God, unless he were assist-

ed from on high: on the contrary, every thing that he projected, and every thing that he attempted, whether it had respect more immediately to his own growth in grace, or the religious improvement of his fellow men, was marked with a devout recognition of entire dependence on the blessing of God. In his afflictions, (and they were by no means few or small,) he exemplified most delightfully a spirit of submission to God's will; and while he was enabled to pass through them in such a manner as to evince the sustaining power of Christian faith, it was evident that their legitimate effect upon his own character was realized, in rendering him more dead to the world, and more alive to invisible realities and all the great and holy interests of Christ's kingdom.

It is evident that Mr. Henry never could have made such large attainments as he did in evangelical piety, without the most faithful and uninterrupted discipline of his own heart; and this is in accordance with all the representations in his Biography. In all his religious habits he was uncommonly exact; and even those necessary employments which partook of a secular character, were generally rendered subservient in some way or other to his growth in grace. One circumstance which doubtless contributed much to his uncommon spirituality, was the amount of time and study which he expended upon the Scriptures. The peculiarly experimental character of his commentary shows that the spiritual beauties of the Bible were what chiefly occupied his thoughts; and it was impossible that his mind should have had such a direction, and for so long a time as was necessary to produce that incomparable work, without becoming imbued in a high degree with an evangelical spirit. It was also a part of the economy of his religious life, to mark with devout attention the dealings of Providence not only towards himself, but his friends, and the church at large, and to connect with them such reflections as were fitted to impress upon his mind the lessons they were adapted to teach. He was in the habit also of noticing with great solemnity the annual return of seasons which commemorated important events; and the anniversary of his birth day particularly was never suffered to pass without some seasonable and devout reflections. In a word, the great secret of his eminent spirituality seems to have been, that he was distinguished for his fidelity in all the duties of devotion. He realized habitually that his springs of spiritual enjoyment and action were all in God; and he felt

that he could not suspend intimate communion with him, but at the peril of turning away from the fountain of all spiritual life and strength.

We have already had occasion to advert to the peculiar character of Mr. Henry's intellect. We have seen nothing from his pen which would indicate that his mind was particularly adapted to philosophical research; and we do not perceive that any such talent is claimed for him in the Biography. But his mind *was* eminently adapted to the common sense realities of life; and its thoughts on the most common subjects acquired a tinge of originality and freshness which must forever prevent satiety in those to whom they are communicated. It does not appear that he was specially distinguished in any particular department of learning; though in no department does he appear to have been deficient. Such a mind as he possessed could not indeed have been satisfied with moderate attainments; it would always be gathering knowledge from some source or other; and there is much reason to believe that, while he pursued his studies in a legitimate use of the works of other men, and derived from them much important information, yet some of the most valuable of his acquisitions were the results of his own independent and unaided reflection.

The published works of Mr. Henry are numerous, and are, we believe, without exception of a theological character. His miscellaneous works which have been already referred to, have been published within a few years under the supervision of the accomplished and excellent author of his memoir, in a neat volume royal octavo, of upwards of 1300 pages. A considerable portion of this volume consists of single sermons which he preached on various public occasions, all of which must be read with deep interest, as bearing strongly the impression of his peculiar genius, and breathing in a high degree the pure spirit of the gospel; while some of them are scarcely surpassed in point of interest by any other sermons within our knowledge. His little work on "the pleasantness of a religious life," is extremely happy both in its design and execution, and is specially adapted to attract the young to a life of virtue and piety. But his *magnum opus*, that on which his reputation as an author chiefly depends, and by means of which his name is destined no doubt to be transmitted to ages yet to come, is his Commentary on the Holy Scriptures. It is well known

that this favourite work was not completed by his own hand, his earthly labours being terminated by death, when he had only reached the Epistles; the residue however was subsequently supplied by several distinguished ministers, who were familiar with his peculiar mode of thought and expression, and who seem to have aimed in some degree at imitating it, though it must be confessed they have followed him *haud passibus aequis*. It would be quite difficult to communicate an adequate idea of this work, to one who had never perused it. We do not mean that it is a faultless production, for there are certainly some things in it which we cannot approve; particularly the pressing of analogies in some cases to what seems to us an unwarrantable extreme, and thus making the Bible speak what we do not suppose was the real mind of the Spirit in those particular passages. But this was an error into which such a mind as Mr. Henry's would be likely sometimes to be betrayed; for it resulted directly from the fertility of his invention, and his unconquerable passion for analogies; and it is after all nothing more than an excess of the very quality which gives to his work its greatest charm. But in general he is to be regarded as a most judicious and sober expositor; and in the few cases in which fancy prevails over judgement, his fault is, not that he inculcates error, but that he brings out an excess of truth; that is, gives us the very truth which the sacred writer designed to teach in the particular passage he is considering, and connects with it some other truth which he did *not* there design to teach. In some instances too, it must be acknowledged that he indulges his propensity for quaint expressions, at the expense of good taste; and yet every one would feel that if this quality were to be lost from the work, no small part of its beauty, and impressiveness, and interest, would be lost with it. The truth is that, with all its incomparable excellence, it has its defects, and yet those defects are of such a character, and are so inwrought into the very structure of the composition, that an attempt to remove them would jeopard the simplicity, the proportion, the power, by which the work is characterized. If we were asked to say in one word, what we regard as the peculiar excellence of Matthew Henry's commentary, we should say that it brings out divine truth in the most simple and attractive form; that it fastens itself by its originality in the reader's memory, and by the elevated spirit of devotion and piety which breathes in it,

finds an easy passage to the heart. Other men have brought large stores of learning to the illustration of the sacred Scriptures, and have gone more deeply into the investigation of real or supposed difficulties, and in some respects have no doubt rendered greater service to the church than Mr. Henry; but we may safely say, that no other man has brought to this work a mind more fertile in bright and beautiful thoughts, or a heart more richly imbued with the grace of the Holy Spirit, and that no one has contributed more to render the study of the Scriptures attractive and delightful. It is a work which may be recommended without qualification to every class of readers, from the most learned and accomplished minister down to the unlettered peasant; and he who can read it without interest and profit, has no eyes to discern the most beautiful simplicity, or no heart to relish the purity of heaven.

Notwithstanding Mr. Henry's character was in some respects peculiar, even in the age in which he lived, yet in the most material points, and especially in regard to his piety, he may be considered a fair representative of the great and good men of his day. To those who are at all acquainted with the peculiar developements of religious character in the seventeenth and first half of the eighteenth centuries, especially among the Reformed and Congregational churches of Great Britain, it is manifest that the piety of the present day, though of course the same in all its essential elements, is yet in some important respects different from that which then prevailed; and this difference is no doubt to be traced in no small degree to a difference in the general circumstances and habits of the times. The piety of that day was more contemplative, and probably more deep: it discovered itself more, so far as we are able to judge from the writings which have come down to us, in exercises of devotion, in faithful self-communion, and in the diligent study of God's word. The piety of the present day, on the contrary, is more active, more busy in devising plans of general usefulness, more disposed to go abroad on arduous and holy enterprises, more encouraged to labour by a prospect of the speedy fulfilment of the great promises of God. In the former case, there seems to have been more attention to the inner man of the heart, more diligent and constant efforts for growth in personal holiness: in the latter, the spiritual improvement of *others* seems to be the commanding object which fills the eye

and the heart of the church ; and Christians now look for the evidence of their having been regenerated, far more than formerly, in a course of active effort for carrying salvation through the world.

And if we look at the different circumstances which marked that age, and see how different they were from those by which our own is characterized, we shall be at no loss to understand why the two periods sustain a different religious character. The period in which Baxter, and Owen, and Bunyan, and Flavel, and the Henrys lived, was signally marked by the spirit of persecution : several of these illustrious men, whose names are destined to be the common property of the church to the end of the world, were actually forbidden to preach the gospel, and deprived of their personal liberty, and some of them were subjected to the inconveniencies and sufferings of a long imprisonment, not to mention the noble company of martyrs who not many years before had left their testimony to the truth written in their own blood. Such a state of things was fitted above any thing we can conceive, deeply to imbue the hearts of true Christians with the love of Christ ; to bring them to cultivate the most intimate communion with him, and to cherish practical Christianity as an all-sustaining principle, by the aid of which they might be enabled to triumph in their peculiar trials. There was every thing to carry them out of themselves, and to lead them to an implicit confidence in God, as their protector and Redeemer ; for amidst all the uncertainty and suspense which marked their condition, with the arm of secular or ecclesiastical domination continually stretched over them, and liable every hour to be arrested and imprisoned for the exercise of their ministerial functions,—what under their circumstances could sustain them, but the arm of Almighty strength ? And hither they came and rested with the simplicity and confidence of children : and their close and intimate communion with God was the channel through which were communicated to them those large measures of grace, which enabled them to contemplate with calmness the prisoners' dungeon and the martyrs' stake. And as the trials to which they were called, naturally led them to cultivate a deep and earnest piety as a means of triumphing over them ; so the legitimate effect of their trials was fully accomplished in their experience, in cherishing especially the more retired graces of the Christian character. That Scripture

was delightfully fulfilled to them, which declares that "tribulation worketh patience;" and that also which assures us, that the affliction of the righteous worketh out for him "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

But while the circumstances of the age were eminently adapted to cherish in Christians a habit of devotion and spirituality, and to keep up an intimate intercourse between them and their Redeemer, they were fitted to repress that expansive spirit of Christian benevolence which aims more directly at the renovation of the world. Christians were occupied necessarily, to a great extent, in a kind of self-defence. They had as much as they could do to sustain themselves even partially in the exercise of their Christian rights, and to concert plans for softening the ferocious character which an unhallowed bigotry had imparted to the age. If they could labour within their own limited sphere, and be permitted to meet unmolested their respective congregations on the Sabbath, to dispense to them the word of God, it was as much of public service as they could expect to be indulged in; and even this privilege, when it was enjoyed, was often held by a precarious tenure. And then again, there was no door open in Providence for prosecuting any great effort for evangelizing the world. The nations were separated from each other to a great extent by impenetrable barriers; and the difficulty of access to the more benighted portions of the earth, seemed to discourage the formation of any of those noble projects of benevolence which have since come into existence, and which may be said emphatically to have the world for their field. Indeed, Christians of that day, notwithstanding they were many of them giants in piety, and more distinguished for many of the graces of the gospel than perhaps any who have succeeded them, seem to have regarded the conversion of the world altogether as a work for future ages; and amidst all their bright visions of faith, it does not appear that they ever had a distinct conception of that magnificent system of moral machinery, which constitutes the most distinctive characteristic of the period in which we live.

Very different are the circumstances of Christians at the present day, especially in Great Britain and our own country. The spirit of persecution has been, to a great extent, driven back to the pit; and men may not only think and feel, but speak and act, for themselves, in respect to all that belongs

to religion, without any to molest or make them afraid. But this great blessing has no doubt been perverted by the church, in a degree at least, to foster a spirit of religious apathy, and to induce a comparatively superficial piety. Not being trained up, as our fathers were, in the rough school of adversity, we are wanting, there is reason to believe, in that depth of Christian experience, that stern self-denial, that unquenchable thirst for communion with Christ, by which they were so much distinguished. Our theological writings of the present day exhibit less of holy unction, of that devout and lively sense of divine things, which results from a constant impression of the presence of God, than we find in the works of the divines to whom we have already referred; and in going back to the latter, though we find them with the imperfections of the age to which they belonged, yet we get our hearts refreshed by breathing a holier atmosphere, and we seem to be in communion with spirits who, while they were on earth, were yet always near the gate of heaven. But then it must be acknowledged, that there is much more of activity belonging to the character of this age than of the period to which we have been referring. While Christians are exempted to a great extent from those evils which in other days have palsied the energies of the church, and kept her labouring and struggling in order to sustain herself in existence, the Providence of God has been working mightily in removing the obstacles to the propagation of the Gospel, and in opening a field for the efforts of Christian benevolence as wide as the world. Blessed be God, the church has heard the voice of her Almighty Head, and has surveyed this field in the whole length and breadth of it, and there is a spirit of benevolent action going forth, which is no doubt destined to live, and brighten into more vigorous exercise, until nothing shall remain to be done for the consummation of God's great and holy purpose of giving the heathen to Christ for his inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession.

Let not the present generation of Christians conclude that they have nothing to learn from those who have gone before them; and especially let them not imagine, in the indulgence of a self-confident spirit, that the great and good men of other days are all cast into the shade by the superiour lights of the present age. What if those men displayed less of Christian activity than is exhibited by many of the friends of Christ

now;—yet that no doubt was owing to the circumstances in which they were called to act; and had they lived at this day, with the spirit of deep devotion and ardent love to Christ, which glowed in their bosoms then, they would unquestionably have showed themselves mighty in religious action, and have been foremost in the ranks of those who are enlisted to send the gospel to the ends of the earth. Let the church then, while she retains all her activity, and becomes more and more active, cultivate a deeper spirituality, a more entire dependence on the influences of divine grace, a more constant and intimate intercourse with her Redeemer and her Head. Let the Christian ministry especially endeavour to become more richly imbued with that spirit of enlightened and fervent piety, which glowed in the bosoms, and breathed in the lives, of the Baxters, the Flavels, the Henrys, of other days. And let both ministers and private Christians remember, that there never was a period in which this spirit was more imperatively demanded, than it is at the present; for nothing else will be a pledge even for the continued activity of the church; nothing else will keep her humble under the success which has already attended her efforts; nothing else will secure to her activity the blessing of God. Let every Christian then consider it his duty to do all that he can to improve the character of this age by imparting to it a greater degree of spirituality; and then it will be, in a still greater degree than it has yet been, an age of benevolence, an age of glory.

ART. VIII.—REVIEW OF CHANNING'S WORKS.

By Rev. LEONARD WITHINGTON, Pastor of the Church in Newbury, Mass.

Discourses, Reviews, and Miscellanies, by William Ellery Channing, Boston, published by Carter & Hendee, 1830.

THERE are certain writers who might be appropriately designated as the nightingales of the moral grove. They charm the ear, they delight the fancy, without directing the reasoning powers. Their loveliest strains leave no definite impression behind. Among these writers we must place the distinguished author, whose works we have undertaken to review. For musical diction, for the poetry of prose, he