

Reminiscences of the Hon. and Right Rev. Henry Ryder

Successively Bishop of Gloucester and Lichfield

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Henry Law

The propensity to disparage present times has always existed, and shows no symptom of discontinuance. We hear this complaint especially in reference to the offsprings of the press. In one branch of writing, however, there is no deficiency. Biographies slumber not. They spring up in lively activity. Characters of eminence are seldom allowed to sink into the grave unnoticed—unhonoured—uncommended. The breath of life is scarcely extinguished, and mourning eyes have scarcely wiped away regretful tears, when the departed are again before us in admiring memoirs. The labours, exploits, distinguishing qualities, which had awakened admiration in the living, are themes of posthumous praise. Readers are called to contemplate the events of the life now ended, and to learn much from the example and the walk.

This is especially true of worthies in ministerial life. No country exceeds ours in such biographical treasures. It is an instance of God's abundant goodness to our land, that it has been the home of such pre-eminence. It is an additional subject for gratitude that some friendly pen forbids oblivion. We cannot over-estimate the value of such memorials. These faithful pictures teach—exhort—admonish—strengthen—comfort. We see in them how men of like passions with ourselves—exposed to the same difficulties—harassed by the same trials—assaulted by the same temptations—similarly exposed to the fiery darts of the Evil One—enfeebled by the common weaknesses of body—disheartened by the saddening treachery of false friends, have persevered, through grace, and have been made more than conquerors through Him whose love is the same yesterday, today, and for ever. In harrowing circumstances, many have been sustained by the memorials of support afforded to preceding sufferers. Thus the lesson is inculcated to lean on the strengthening arm which never fails the true believer; joys brighten; faith is armed for trials; and believers rise from such perusals animated to run the race which is set before them, and are encouraged to fight more valiantly the good fight of faith, and to grasp more firmly the hope of eternal life.

Let not these observations seem for one moment to assume that the lives of men can take the place of the precepts and directions of the Word of God. These precepts are the chart and compass of Christian life. With earnestness they should be studied. By constant perusal they should be made the mould in which our inner life is formed. "The Word of Christ should dwell in us richly in all wisdom." Our contention only is that example deepens precept and invigorates the effort to obey. We may learn much by clear directions: but we learn more when we see these directions in active work. A machine of many and of intricate parts may be tolerably understood by delineation of its composition: but how vastly is the intelligence increased when it is seen in motion! Thus the preceptive portions of Scripture become more vivid when displayed in the obedient walk of a child of God. Hence it is a blessing never to be disregarded, that so many precious volumes are within our reach exhibiting the Word of God embodied in examples. Such perusal inspires us not to be sluggards in the Christian race—not to be shortcomers in the heavenward march—not to be cowards in the Christian warfare—not to be loiterers in the godly path—not to look backward in the flight from the accursed cities of the plain: but rather to gird up the loins for the holy struggle—to anoint the shield for the inevitable combat—to put on the whole armour of God, and to be followers of

them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. It is recorded of that eminent servant of God, Charles Simeon, that he would often fix his eyes on the picture of Henry Martyn and smilingly exclaim, "I will not trifle—I will not trifle." The earnest man became more earnest when dwelling on the features of that heavenly-minded missionary.

But while we are thankful that our libraries are so enriched, regret may sometimes arise that there are vacancies in our shelves. In this feeling I have been disposed to participate. Deep personal attachment, ardent affection, and profound reverence have led me to desiderate a continuous memoir of Bishop Ryder. Affectionate remembrance gives conviction that such a work would have been an inestimable treasure. But such was not constructed when materials were at hand: and it would now be vain to attempt the search. A complete record of his instructive career cannot be disinterred. Doubtless when his days on earth were ended, contemporaneous obituaries contained both truthful and grateful mention of his distinguished course. Especially the *Christian Observer* gave a most interesting sketch; but this periodical was limited in its circulation, and the mention of the deceased prelate was given in four disjointed papers, and thus continuity was interrupted. I had the great privilege of personal intercourse with the bishop for a brief period: and I have found his reminiscences revived and strengthened by reference to the above-mentioned articles. Thus I am bold to contribute this notice, which will not have been written in vain if it gives gratification to the reader at all in proportion to the delight with which I record my grateful respect.

Henry Ryder was the youngest son of Nathaniel, Lord Harrowby, of Sandon, in the county of Stafford. His mother was a daughter of Dr. Terrick, Bishop of London. The year of his birth was 1777. His early life was not remarkable, except for sweetness and amiability of disposition. The ready smile which usually gladdened his features could not fail to attract kindly regard. He received the rudiments of his education at Harrow. From this school he passed to St. John's College, Cambridge. It has been related by one who had thorough acquaintance with the University, that at the entrance of young Ryder at St. John's, the sons of our nobility were regarded as almost exempt from strict attention to the studies of their colleges; and too often passed their time with little intellectual improvement. It was not so with this youth. His regularity and submission to college discipline, and his blameless demeanour, were influential to produce a marked reform among undergraduates of his social position. He was early designated for the work of the ministry; and when the accustomed age was reached, he was ordained by Cornwallis, Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, to the curacy of Sandon, his paternal abode. He was appointed to the living of Lutterworth almost as soon as age permitted him to hold a benefice. Many hallowed reminiscences clustered round this place. Here Wickliffe, "the morning star of the Reformation," exercised his enlightened ministry; and here the same truths dawned on the mind of Ryder. It is not given to us to reveal with particularity the mode of the Spirit's working in his heart. In general these modes are diversified. In some cases a soft and gentle whisper reaches the dormant conscience, and leads by the bands of loving-kindness to the Redeemer's Cross. Sometimes appalling terrors, as of the earthquake and the storm, shake the affrighted penitent. Lydia can scarcely trace the first ray of the Gospel-hope: the jailer can mark the moment when the cry issued, "What must I do to be saved?" But whenever the soul is brought to Jesus, though the particulars of the change cannot be portrayed, it is always true that supernatural power has been put forth; and thus self-righteousness is dethroned, and the finished work of Jesus is clearly seen and fervently embraced. The effect is, that faith flees to the all-cleansing blood—washes in the fountain opened for all sin and uncleanness—puts on Christ as the justifying robe which is the plea for heaven, and strives to adorn the doctrines of the Gospel by a life devoted to the Saviour's service. The change at first may not be exhibited in startling manifestations; but it

is always real. A new character is formed. The convert feels that he is bought with a price, and therefore is no more his own. To him to live is Christ, as surely as to die is gain.

Details of this saving work in the case of Ryder may be hidden from external view; but the change produced its fruit. Christ became the mainspring of his future ministry—the centre around which his thoughts revolved—the lustre of his bright life—as well as his hope of everlasting glory. There was one text to which he was known to have adverted with singular emphasis when his views of divine grace were controverted. He feelingly stated that he entirely received the Gospel declaration, “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof: but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit.” He experimentally responded to the essential truth, “By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” Hence Ryder laboured lovingly and indefatigably in his important parish, pointing to Jesus, and calling sinners to repent, believe, and live.

In the year 1808 he was advanced to a canonry at Windsor. It is scarcely needful to state that he, who preached Christ so faithfully and fully in his parochial charge, was the same ambassador when he stood before nobles and princes in the Boyd Chapel of St. George’s. Here among his auditors he had occasionally the pious and exemplary monarch George III., and the writer of the sketches in the *Christian Observer* states that the King expressed in very emphatic terms his admiration of the young Canon’s sermons. The Royal listener remarked that “they reminded him of the divinity of former days.”

It would indeed have been marvellous if such faithfulness and devotedness had excited no hostile feelings. If sweetness and gentleness could have averted the offence of the Cross, it would have been so in the case of this most amiable of men. But it is an unchangeable truth, “If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.” In various ways Ryder had to meet this unkindness. An instance was much noticed at the time. He proceeded to Cambridge to go through the steps necessary for the reception of the degree of Doctor of Divinity. On this occasion he boldly evidenced that he was not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. He consented to appear in the pulpit of Charles Simeon, at that time so much reviled for his proclamation of Gospel-truth. I recall the circumstance not merely to record that this conduct was regarded with hostile feeling, and made the ground of objection to his promotion to higher office in the Church, but to prove how firm and consistent Ryder was in maintaining what he believed to be the true cause of Christ, and how utterly he disregarded all semblance of compromise. He would not swerve from the path of conscientious duty to avert opposition, and to procure external advantage. He had learned “If I yet pleased men I should not be the servant of Christ.” Like the great Apostle, he counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord. Happily, the adverse representations were regarded as frivolous, and were no barrier to the approval of the Crown.

In the year 1812 Ryder relinquished the Canonry of Windsor, and accepted the Deanery of Wells, which at that time was a post of much influence. The writer in the *Christian Observer* remarks that he “carried with him the same decision of character, the same conscientious sense of responsibility, deepened and strengthened by his more experimental acquaintance with the truths of the Gospel. And here he found that neither dignity of station, nor courtesy of demeanour, nor disinterested labour, can prevent, or even materially abate, the offence of

the Cross. His known adoption of Evangelical views, his association with men of marked religious character, and especially his public patronage of some religious societies which were at that time looked upon with no friendly eye, had excited considerable prejudice against him before his coming to the Deanery.”

Instances might be adduced: but Christian charity would fain leave them to slumber in oblivion’s grave. One only shall receive present notice. He consented to preside at Bath at a public meeting of the Church Missionary Society. On this occasion the Archdeacon of Bath of that day entered the place of meeting to protest against Ryder’s occupancy of the chair. The occurrence obtained wide notoriety in the public journals. The uncourteous demeanour—the insulting expressions—the extravagant warmth of the Archdeacon, were contrasted with the Christian gentleness, meekness, and humility of the assaulted chairman. General indignation was aroused. Enlarged attention to the claims of the Society was called forth, and increased contributions flowed into its revenue. Thus the violence of the assault redounded to Ryder’s fame and the Society’s more acknowledged importance. Shortly after, tidings reached him of the severe illness of his assailant. The opportunity was instantly seized, and access was requested to the sufferer’s chamber. Assurance was given by him that no unkindness existed, but that true sympathy was felt for the pains of sickness, with no recollection of preceding difference. Thus, the more Ryder became known, the more brightly did the sincerity of his Christian character shine.

On the occasion of his elevation to the Episcopate, the pious Simeon addressed him with much affection. The letter and the reply are so precious, and so indicative of Christian character, that no apology is offered for their introduction. They are extracted by permission from the invaluable Memoir of Mr. Simeon, for which we are indebted to the Rev. W. Carus, his faithful curate and devoted friend.

To the Hon. Dr. Ryder, Dean of Wells, on his Appointment to the Bishopric of Gloucester.

May 24, 1815.

MY DEAR SIR,—Whilst all your friends are congratulating you on the attainment of your new dignity, I, though not worthy to be ranked in that number, take the liberty of expressing to you my feelings on the occasion. There are two grounds only on which I consider the congratulations of your friends due personally to yourself; the one is, that when God has given to you so strong a desire to serve him, He has now enlarged your means of glorifying His name: and the other is, that this honour has not been obtained by any sacrifice of principle, or dereliction of duty on your part; so that you may assuredly expect the blessing of God upon all your exertions in his service. In all other points of view, especially when I consider the difficulties which you will have to encounter through life, so far beyond those which attach to the discharge of the pastoral office in a lower sphere, I feel inclined to think my congratulations due to the Church rather than to you.

That tender and enlightened conscience, with which you have executed the ministerial office hitherto, will, I doubt not, conduct you safely through the arduous duties which you are now called to perform: but in many respects your circumstances will be altogether new, especially with regard to what I may call the religious world. You have hitherto seen religion only as on the day of Pentecost: but now you will on some occasions be constrained to see it rather as portrayed in the Epistles to the Galatians and Corinthians; and there is danger lest the pain occasioned by these discoveries should have an unfavourable influence upon your mind. Indeed, the very fidelity which, through the grace of God, you have hitherto displayed, will probably expose you to a larger measure of assaults from this quarter than would, under other circumstances, have fallen to your share. Professions of religion may be expected to be made

with a view of conciliating your regard: and in some cases an irreverent and disrespectful boldness may take occasion, from your very condescension, to show itself; similar to that which the Apostle refers to when he charges servants not to despise their masters, because they are brethren.

You have hitherto seen religion as it exists in a Wilberforce, and a Babington; but you will now have to behold it with many sad mixtures of human infirmity. Sometimes it will require a great degree of charity to admit its existence at all; as when it shall appear connected with disingenuousness and duplicity. And, where its existence cannot well be doubted, it will often be found to operate to a far less extent than might be reasonably expected. Its effects are very gradual; it does not leaven the whole lump at once; it will not immediately give wisdom to one who is naturally weak, or prudence to one of a sanguine temperament, or meekness to one who is naturally bold and forward. The very circumstance of its operating powerfully on the human mind will frequently occasion it to produce an unfavourable course of action, where the judgment is not sufficiently enlightened to decide between apparently opposite and conflicting duties. All this, and far more, you will now have to see, to feel, to regulate, to correct: and, after all your labours, you will have little else from man than a comment on that proverb (to which you are already no stranger) *bene facere, et male audire regium est*.

Nor will you be without trials even from some of your dearest friends: for piety is not always attended with discretion: and you may be sometimes urged to things which, though desirable in themselves, are not expedient: and if you will not see with their eyes, they may manifest, in a way painful to your feelings, their disappointment and chagrin; and constrain you to seek your comfort in the testimony of your own conscience, and in the approbation of your God.

As for the offence that will be taken at the most wise and prudent exercise of your own discretion, by the men of this world, you have already shown that you are well armed on that side; but on the other sides the assaults have not yet been made, nor the necessity for armour been experienced. But I trust that “as your day is, so will your strength be;” and that the same high principle which has guided you hitherto, of acting to God only, will still serve, like the mariner’s compass, to conduct you through all the difficulties and dangers of your course. My prayers, such as they are, will, I hope, be incessant for you, that God may guide you by his counsel, and strengthen you by his grace, and make you long a blessing to the world, and give you to see abundant fruits of all your labours. It was with prayers to this effect that I first received the tidings of your appointment; and I doubt not but that similar petitions are, and will continue to be, offered for you by all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.”

Forgive, my dear sir, this free communication of my sentiments, and believe me,

With most respectful and most affectionate regard,
Your obedient servant,
C. SIMEON.

The following is Dr. Ryder’s reply:—

Lutterworth, May 31, 1815.

MY DEAR SIR,—Your truly valuable letter only reached me this morning. I hope and desire to undertake the awful office about probably to be committed to my charge, with the exact views which you recommend, and with expectations which your unusual degree of experience in these matters enables you to lay before me. Persevere, my dear sir, in your prayers for your friend about to be so severely tried. Pray that I may ever have inward peace—peace by the blood of the Cross, applied by the power of the Holy Spirit, and that I may be enabled to spread the knowledge of it; and then all will be well.

Domestic calamities, united with grief for my approaching departure from those I have so long loved, and fears on account of my approaching connexion with those whom I do not know—these things, with an immense load of business, almost weigh me down, but *Sursum corda*. I shall treasure up your written counsel, and hope to have it often confirmed by personal intercourse.

Believe me, dear sir,
With cordial respect and regard,
Your sincere friend,
H. RYDER.

and O! that I may ever say, Brother in Christ,

His consecration took place at the Archbishopial Chapel of Lambeth, on July 30, 1815. On this occasion Archbishop Sutton was assisted by Howley, Bishop of London, and King, Bishop of Rochester.

I must now advance to a brief mention of my privilege of personal intercourse. This commenced in 1824. In the summer of that year I attended my father to wells, to the charge of which diocese he was then called. I found Bishop Ryder, who has recently been translated from the See of Gloucester to that of Lichfield, in residence as Dean of Wells. His high reputation as a prelate, and his character for zeal and piety, were not unknown to me. I had heard of his faithful advocacy of the Gospel—of the boldness with which he had appeared at Cambridge as an advocate of the truths of which Simeon there was the well-known champion—and of the enlightened zeal with which he had administered the See of Gloucester. I knew that when nearly all the prelates of our Church viewed with suspicion the noble societies which were labouring to propagate the Gospel at home and abroad, and had in consequence withheld their patronage from them, he had avowed his conviction of their worth, and had availed himself of frequent opportunities of giving them his support. It required no common firmness to adopt a course from which at that time his brethren had stood apart: but when the cause of Christ required, all inferior considerations vanished. Therefore, when I knew that I should meet him at Wells, I was full of happy anticipations. But I was not prepared for the combination of excellences which then charmed me. He received me with a sweetness and winning condescension which instantly told me that I was in the presence of a friend. His manners indicated the amiability of his heart, for though he never laid aside the dignity which belonged to the Episcopal office, his gentleness and humility seemed to remove all distance. While I revered him as a bishop, and revered him as a father, I felt that I could always converse with him as with a brother.

During his residence in Wells, he was indefatigable as a preacher. He always occupied the cathedral pulpit on the mornings of Sunday. It is superfluous to say that large congregations flocked to hear him. There was something in his appearance in the pulpit which at once proclaimed that he felt his responsibility as an ambassador for Christ. Simplicity and earnestness, and anxiety for the good of souls, and devotedness to his high calling, were his pre-eminent characteristics. His predominant desire seemed to be that every sermon should so clearly state the Gospel-scheme that no hearer should depart without clear intelligence of the way of salvation. He scarcely ever concluded without earnest appeals to hearts and consciences. Eternity alone will show how hallowed were these opportunities in the cathedral of Wells. But his sermons on each Sunday were not limited to the cathedral. He established an evening lecture in the grand old parish church of St. Cuthbert. He seemed to have especial delight in addressing the crowds who there thronged to hear him. His anxiety for souls led him also to seek opportunities of preaching on days of the week. He had decanal connection with the parishes of Wedmore and Mark. In one of these he endeavoured to be a preacher

every week. Moreover, he seldom refused an invitation to carry the truths of the Gospel to other parishes in the county. I have returned late in the evening with him from such occasions; and in winter mornings, before the dawn of day, I have set out with him that he might discharge similar work. Though he had all the duties of the episcopal office to fulfil, he laboured as a preacher as if preaching was his sole employ. He was indeed “a workman who needed not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

He was always zealous in promoting the interests of the societies which, as has been already stated, were especially dear to him. He was ready to endure great inconvenience to attend their meetings in various places. These efforts were great proof of his firmness and sincerity, as he had often to encounter the opposition of too many of the clergy. Great has been my pain when I have witnessed the unbecoming conduct to which he was not infrequently exposed. But he realized that he was moving in the path of Christian duty, and I never knew his meekness or his patience to desert him.

Amid all his labours, which were indeed incessant and immense, he exercised very large hospitality. The Deanery seemed ever open to receive the visits of persons distinguished for Christian excellence. At his table he had the happy art of casting off all semblance of care, and I have known him diffuse most lively and cheerful entertainment when I well knew that his heart was heavy with many anxieties. It was his delight to show attention to those whom he believed to be truly religious. Thus, I have known him, with disregard of self, hasten to refresh Mrs. Hannah More with his visits. These efforts to give pleasure were among his distinguishing characteristics. I have scarcely known a man of whom it could be said with greater truth, that he lived above all personal considerations.

In the year 1827, Bishop Tomline, of Winchester, died suddenly at Kingston Lacy, the seat of Mr. Banks. At that time Viscount Goderich was the Premier, and with very little delay, the bishopric of Winchester was offered to Bishop Sumner, who, at that time, was presiding over the see of Llandaff. There was a general expectation that the vacant preferment would be offered to Bishop Ryder. His acknowledged excellencies and his thoroughly established character seemed to give him a commanding claim. Shortly after the arrangements for Winchester had been completed, I met Bishop Ryder in the company of many of his friends. The recent translation was named. There was a disposition to give utterance to disappointment, but the Bishop with eager haste checked all such notice, and warmly called upon us to be devoutly thankful that a prelate, though much younger in years, who had given such proof of piety, zeal, and administrative power, had been selected. Thus the Bishop's disinterested feelings were manifested. He had, in truth, heeded the apostolic injunction, “In lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves.”

He was by no means indifferent to the responsibilities which belonged to him as a member of the House of Lords. I remember with what anxiety he thoroughly weighted the provisions of the Roman Catholic Relief Bill. He condescended to discuss the conflicting arguments with me; and I am persuaded that the vote which was led to give in opposition to almost all his friends at Wells, while it gave him great pain, was most conscientious.

But the time of my happy intercourse with this most delightful of men was soon brought to a conclusion. It was not before he discovered that the labours of the large diocese of Lichfield, and the time which he was compelled to pass in London, left scarcely any interval for the Deanery of Wells. He felt, therefore, that he must retire from scenes so long endeared to him. He resolved to take in exchange for the Deanery a prebendal stall at Westminster. He hoped

that he might combine the duties of that stall with his parliamentary residence in London, and he told me, with evident satisfaction, that he would thus be able to preach the Gospel to the large congregations at the Abbey. He did not, perhaps, sufficiently reflect, that by adding these labours to his residence in London he denied himself any period of repose. His friends soon perceived that malady was invading his frame, and that his valuable life might find an early close.

I have received a tender account of his last appearance in the chapter at Westminster. His weakness now gave alarm, and his medical advisers urged him to seek the seaside. He took, however, lively interest in the disposal of one of the livings belonging to the chapter, and he resolved, though scarcely equal to the effort, personally to express his wishes. When this business was concluded, he rose to thank the canons and to retire. When he left the chapter-room, there was a pause of sorrow. His brethren felt that they would see his face no more, and the senior, not remarkable for tender feelings, burst into tears. Here was evident proof how Bishop Ryder won hearts.

He shortly after removed to Hastings. Ardent were the hopes entertained by his devoted relatives and friends that his malady might be arrested, and the life so precious might yet be prolonged. But it was not to be so. The time was at hand for him to be admitted to the inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them who are kept by the power of God through faith unto eternal life. His own feelings at this solemn time are thus expressed:—

I am under good and attentive medical care, thank God: and good hopes are given of my ultimate recovery: but I sometimes doubt, and wish to leave all in his hands who knows what is best for me and mine. When any of my friends and clergy inquire after me, pray tell them so, and beg their prayers. I hope, I humbly and earnestly desire, to be found only in Him who must be all my righteousness and all my strength: and in whom alone, whatever I may appear before men, I must, after all, be justified and saved, before God.

He breathed his last on March 31, 1836.

Deep was the feeling throughout Wells, when the cathedral bell announced that he, who was so dear to the inhabitants, had brought his earthly career to an end. Tender was the allusion made to this event from the pulpit of St. Cuthbert's. Deep, too, was the feeling which pervaded his bereaved diocese. Tears were shed when congregations were informed that he who was so loved and honoured had passed to his eternal rest. As appropriate tokens of attachment, memorial churches were erected at Birmingham and Derby, to transmit his beloved name to succeeding times. There was an expression of regret that his remains did not rest in the Cathedral Church of his diocese; but in that church a monument of exquisite sculpture was erected by his friends, and the following epitaph records how truly he was valued and beloved:—

To the Memory of the
Honourable and Right Reverend
HENRY RYDER, D.D.,

Successively Bishop of Gloucester, and of Lichfield and Coventry,

This monument is erected in testimony of affectionate respect by many who revered and loved him.

His unsparing self-devotion to the duties of his high office, his unaffected humility, his Christian simplicity, his expansive charity, his fervent and cheerful piety, endeared him to his friends, and conciliated universal regard.

Constrained by the love of Christ, he strove to extend the means of worshipping and serving Him, both at home and abroad, and to diffuse the light of the Gospel among Jews and Gentiles.

As a preacher, affectionate, faithful, earnest, persuasive, practical: as a bishop, paternal, vigilant, apt to teach, given to hospitality, mild and forbearing, yet when duty called, inflexible.

He exhibited in his daily walk and conversation a bright example to the flock over which the Holy Ghost had made him overseer.

In meek reliance on the grace and intercession of the Redeemer, he lived, he laboured, he died, entering into his rest in the fifty-ninth year of his age, and twenty-first of his Episcopate, March the thirty-first, One Thousand Eight Hundred and Thirty-Six, at Hastings, where his mortal remains are deposited.

At the risk of seeming to retread ground already traversed, and of marring the sequence of continuous narrative, I adjoin a brief postscript. It supplies proof that the memory of the great and good survives the effacing touch of time.

In the year 1862 I removed from Wells to Gloucester. Here the affection which had always lived in my heart was charmingly revived. I found that Bishop Ryder's memory was here dear to those who had known and loved him as their bishop. A few of the aged inhabitants held him in vivid recollection and told with delight of his works among them. I heard of the Magdalen Asylum, the aged matron of which never wearied in speaking of his encouraging visits. Christ Church was pointed out as built by his efforts, to perpetuate the preaching of the Gospel; and to this day there is remembrance of his frequent ministrations at the Church of St. Michael. He preached his farewell sermons in Gloucester on February 29, 1824. This year was remarkable as containing five Sundays in the month of February. The same has occurred this year: and the present rector of St. Michael's, taking advantage of the occasion, read to his congregation the sermon preached in that church by the beloved bishop fifty-six years ago. An aged member of the congregation was present on each occasion. Marked attention pervaded the audience. A solemn feeling seemed to say, that the Bishop, though long since dead, still speaketh.

England's Church boasts indeed of a grand chain of illustrious rulers. We have had prelates of glittering talent, of gigantic powers of intellect, of multiplicity of gifts, of vast stores of learning, of stirring eloquence, of indefatigable industry, of winning meekness, of retiring humility; but since the days of the saintly Leighton, we can scarcely point to one in whom Christian worth shone, with more lovely lustre than in the beloved Henry Ryder. But while we thus do honour to the memory of one to whom honour is justly due, we fully recognize that all his excellence was the free gift of God, who thus sanctified him and made him a blessing to his generation.

Before the pen is laid aside, a concluding thought seems to claim utterance. The study of the memoirs of worthies in the Christian faith is undoubtedly a profitable exercise. But there is a memoir always open for our inspection which should not be neglected. Our own lives are a relation of God's unfailing dealings with us. They record a series of interpositions, deliverances, mercies—which should be inscribed deeply on our hearts. If we learn much by contemplating his goodness and truth to those who have preceded us, may we not learn more by inward perception, and by the current of ever-flowing experiences? It is a good lesson to perceive how prayers have been answered in the case of others. Should we be indifferent to the realization of like truthfulness to ourselves? Shall we marvel at interpositions which have

raised others from the lowest depths, and made them more than conquerors when apparently in extremest need? and shall we turn with indifference from instances as real in the catalogue of our own mercies? The Psalmist bids his soul to forget not all God's benefits. Let us be wise, and strive to treasure up this wondrous history of his dealing with ourselves. We may be low and obscure in the estimate of others: but high is our position if we can realize that our names are written in heaven, and that God is dealing with us as with His children, as heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.

HENRY LAW