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ART. I.—*The First Miracle of Christ.*

[Continued from page 434.]

IN our July number we brought to a close the exegesis of the evangelical account of the first miracle. We now fulfil our promise, and propose to glance at the explanations that have been given of this miracle, to notice some of the leading objections, and to state the principle on which this miracle, and all the miracles of the New Testament, should be treated by believers in the divinity of Christ and the inspiration of the New Testament.

Lange, in his Commentary on John, p. 72, has a classified account of the explanations given to this miracle, which, for convenience' sake, we may adopt as the frame-work of ours.

I. NATURAL EXPLANATIONS. *Venturini, Paulus, Langsdorf, Gfrörer, Kern.*

Paulus makes the miracle a merry wedding-jest on the part of Jesus, who intended to prepare the company an agreeable surprise by the sudden production of the wine which he had secretly brought along. His solemn words addressed to Mary are to *Paulus* uttered jocosely, and designed to prevent her spoiling his contemplated joke by her over-hastiness. The *δόξα* is "the free humaneness of Jesus," which "inspired con-

the days of the year, the biography of every saint in the Catholic calendar, as composed by the Bollandists, down to the 15th of October, together with all the acts of canonization, papal bulls, and other ancient documents belonging thereto, with learned treatises and notes, and that not in the style of popular legends, but in the tone of thorough historical investigation and free criticism, so far as a general accordance with the Roman Catholic system of faith would allow. It was interrupted in 1773 by the abolition of the order of the Jesuits, then again in 1794, after a brief re-assumption of labour, and the publication of two more volumes (the 52d and 53d), by the French revolution and invasion of the Netherlands, and the partial destruction of the literary material; but since 1847 (or properly since 1837) it has been resumed at Brussels under the auspices of the same order, though not with the same historical learning and critical acumen, and proceeds tediously towards completion. It will always remain a rich mine for the history of Christian life in all its forms of health and disease, but especially also in its ascetic excesses and monkish distortions.

ART. IV.—*Annals of the American Pulpit; or Commemorative Notices of Distinguished American Clergymen of the various denominations, &c.* By WILLIAM B. SPRAGUE, D. D. Vol. VIII. Unitarian Congregational. New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 530 Broadway, New York.

WHEN it was first announced that these Annals would include an account of the most eminent Unitarian preachers, some excellent friends of ours were somewhat stumbled by this proposed feature of the work. Though they afterwards saw reason for changing their minds, we were not surprised that they for a time felt as they did, when we considered that the doctrines rejected by Unitarians have ever been regarded by the mass of Christians as of fundamental importance, and more especially that so many of their prominent preachers have openly avowed a thinly disguised infidelity. For ourselves we may say that we had never a doubt as to the propriety of bringing the Uni-

tarian pulpit within the scope of the *Annals*; and now that the work is in our hands, we are very glad that Dr. Sprague was not induced to abandon his purpose to prepare and publish it, through the needless fear that some persons might perchance look upon it as being in some sense an endorsement of Unitarianism.

Indeed, the volume now before us, is, to say the least, one of the most valuable and attractive of the series. The sketches of Chauncy, Abbott, Freeman, Packard, Channing, and Buckminster, with the appended letters of recollections of them, are alone worth the price of the book, which contains no less than eighty distinct biographies. These are arranged in chronological order, and are preceded by an Historical Introduction, presenting a brief but complete history of Unitarianism in our country.

It would have been a very serious undertaking for an orthodox author to prepare such a volume as the present one, if the subjects of it had always formed a distinct denomination with a definite doctrinal symbol; but the task was made one of extreme delicacy by the circumstances under which the Unitarians assumed their present position as a sect, and from the fact that they have no recognized creed. We use no flattering words when we say that no other man within the limits of our orthodox churches could have accomplished the work so successfully as Dr. Sprague has done. The Unitarians, certainly, not only have no reason to be dissatisfied, but they rather owe him a large debt of gratitude, while, on the other hand, the orthodox cannot complain that he has in any way compromised their principles. Perhaps the orthodox Congregationalists might demur to the definition of Unitarianism in the Historical Introduction, and the giving this name to the ministers who lived and died before the separation of the two parties. With all respect, we think that the definition is somewhat wanting in exactness, and is thus made to include theories regarding the nature of the Godhead, to which the term Unitarian is not usually applied.

The series of biographies covers the period extending from 1717 to 1844, and thus embraces a very considerable number of ministers, who, as we have already stated, lived and died not only before the Unitarian denomination was formed, but before

the name itself, in any sense of it, was known in New England. While there can be but one opinion as to the admirable manner in which these sketches are written, there is room for doubt, as we have before intimated, as to the propriety of the principle of classification which has placed them in this volume. Of course, no other rule could be applied to those who lived after the disruption, who, however evangelical their sentiments in the main, and however reserved in the expressions of their views respecting the doctrine of the Trinity, allowed themselves to be classed with the Unitarian denomination. For example, Dr. Lowell, of Boston, in a note addressed to the editors of the *Spirit of the Pilgrims*, in 1829, went so far as to say, that while he enjoyed the friendship and fellowship of many who called themselves Unitarian, for himself he "neither took their name, nor belonged to their party." We have no doubt that most of the sermons of Drs. Pierce of Brookline, and Tuckerman of Boston, were such as would have met the warm approval of the most decided Presbyterian, in a word, that they were thoroughly evangelical in tone and tendency. So of Dr. Packard, of North Bridgewater. Converted himself "in a remarkable season of refreshing," he was through life a zealous friend of revivals. Probably not one of these excellent men ever uttered a word in the pulpit which could have been taken as a confession of Unitarianism, but they chose to identify themselves with the Unitarian body and to remain in its fellowship during their whole ministerial career. In classing them among Unitarians, therefore, their biographer is only doing after their death what they themselves did while in life.

But the case of those who flourished while the body of the Congregational churches of New England was undivided, it seems to us is different. For while there can be no doubt that the two parties were in the process of formation during the last century, it is equally certain that the process was a slow one, that the line of demarcation between these parties was for many years very indistinct, and that their ecclesiastical fellowship was undisturbed. The elder President Adams, writing to Dr. Morse in 1815, said, "sixty years ago my own minister," and five others whom he names, "were Unitarians." His words imply that he neither knew nor had then heard of any other

Unitarians besides these six ministers. Up to the time when Mr. Adams had his correspondence with Dr. Morse, and indeed long afterwards, the term Unitarian, both in England and America, was understood to denote a simple humanitarian, and was carefully distinguished from Arian, Semi-arian, Sabellian, and other like names, and it is therefore to be supposed that he used the word in this definite and well-known sense. Now one of the six so-called Unitarians was Dr. Gay, of Hingham, who published a sermon on the Transcendent Glory of the Gospel, in which he utters sentiments and employs language respecting the person and the work of Christ, so decidedly orthodox that we are compelled to regard the statement of the old ex-President as being by no means trustworthy. That all the ministers named by Mr. Adams belonged to the "liberal and rational" party of that day, that they disliked or even denounced the damnatory clauses of such creeds as the Athanasian, and that they were not clear respecting the nature of the subordination of the Son to the Father, may be granted, without supposing that they were Unitarians,—an appellation, which, if any one had applied it to them during their own lifetime, they would have indignantly repelled it as an injurious calumny. We know that Dr. Watts, in his latter years, engaged in some speculations on the subject of the Trinity, on the ground of which Dr. Lardner claimed, and Mr. Bradbury brought the charge, that he had abandoned the cause of orthodoxy on this vital point, and from time to time since his death, the question has been raised whether or not he was a Trinitarian. If Dr. Watts had removed to New England before his decease, the Unitarians would undoubtedly have claimed him as one of the fathers of their denomination, yet we cannot for a moment suppose that the claim would have been recognized as just.

Now among the ministers of dubious orthodoxy, who lived and died before the close of the eighteenth century, we apprehend that none were looked upon with more suspicion by their contemporaries than Drs. Chauncy and Mayhew, of Boston. In his latter years Dr. Chauncy was an earnest and open advocate of Universalism, and is generally regarded as the father of that system in our country. He might therefore have been placed, not unfitly, at the head of those who have adorned

the Universalist pulpit. But on the doctrine of the Trinity he held language which no Unitarian would or could adopt, for he speaks of the Holy Spirit as "the third of the Sacred Three," and he adds that, "He is often represented in the Bible as an agent, a person as truly and properly so, as either the Father or the Son." On the other hand Dr. Mayhew, in his published sermons, taught the doctrine of salvation through the atoning death of Christ, with a clearness and an emphasis such as, we venture to say, no avowedly Unitarian congregation in Europe or America has ever listened to. We know that the Unitarians have always claimed these old pastors, but their claim has not gone unchallenged. About thirty-five years ago the editors of the once well-known *Spirit of the Pilgrims* earnestly maintained that the Unitarians of our time had no right whatever to speak of Gay, Chauncy, Mayhew, Lathrop, Howard, and others of a past age, as Unitarians, and the fathers of their sect; and to make good their assertion, they gave an extended series of passages taken from the published sermons of these men, to show "that *they* taught a system of religion, which, in all important particulars, Unitarians reject and despise." "They taught that all Scripture is given by inspiration, and is to be regarded as the word of God,—that man is a fallen, depraved creature, and needs to be renewed by the power of the Holy Spirit in order to be admitted to the heavenly kingdom,—that Christ came down from heaven, assumed our nature and our flesh, and died upon the cross to make expiation for our sins,—that his atonement is the great object of faith, and the sole foundation of hope for fallen man." They admit that some of them had "swerved not a little from the holy doctrines of their fathers, and were preparing the way for the defection which followed," but they insist that "they were a totally different class of men from those who now profess to be their admirers and followers."

We cannot help thinking that this protest is well founded. We have carefully examined the letters appended to the sketches, and in the case of those who died before the close of the last century, we must say that we have not been able to discover any decisive evidence that they were Unitarians in the accepted sense of that term. The utmost that is said by those

who give their personal recollections, or the result of their inquiries regarding these departed worthies is, that they "were thought to be Arians or Semi-arians," or that they were doubtful on the subject of the Trinity, and never formally preached it. No witness testifies that they distinctly and openly denied the doctrines of the divinity of Christ, of his vicarious atonement, of the fall of man, and of the necessity of regeneration, while there is abundant reason for believing that if there had been any such avowed departure from the old Puritan faith, it would have involved an immediate forfeiture of ministerial and ecclesiastical fellowship. These men, undoubtedly, sowed the seeds of declension; but if they were now living, and were organized as a distinct sect, we venture to say that they would be popularly deemed one of the evangelical denominations; or if they had survived the disruption of 1815, and had chosen to adhere to the orthodox section of the Congregational churches, we fancy that their peculiar views would not have been considered a bar to communion. There certainly is now as wide a diversity of theological opinion in the Congregational body as there was in the undivided churches of New England a century ago. Hence, as these men never took themselves, nor would allow others to give them the name of Unitarian, as they lived and died in the fellowship of Trinitarian Congregationalists, in the communion of a body whose symbol of doctrine was the Savoy Confession, we must confess that we do not see why the rule laid down in the General Preface of the Annals, "to place the individual with the denomination in which he closed his labours," should not have been applied to them.

Let us, however, grant that these subjects are properly exceptions to this rule,—that, as there were Reformers before the Reformation, so these men are to be regarded as Unitarians before Unitarianism; in this view of them, their history is full of instruction and warning with reference to the tendencies of "liberal Christianity," as Unitarians are fond of calling their system. It illustrates the wisdom and enforces the necessity of the old maxim "*obsta principiis*," or of the more precise and imperative rule of Scripture, "*abstain from all appearance of evil.*" Who, according to this theory, were the fathers of American Unitarianism? As we have already seen, they were men who,

in their published sermons, earnestly insisted upon some of the most distinctive and vital truths of the gospel,—men who, if living in our day, would be recognized as in principle and in their style and tone of preaching akin to evangelical Christianity rather than to Unitarianism, and who would have free access to every Congregational pulpit in Massachusetts. They had become disgusted with the extravagance of some of the earnest revivalists of their time; they had conceived a dislike for creeds; they desired a wider range for free inquiry than the older Puritans had been disposed to grant; they were indifferent in regard to the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity; they doubted, or perhaps privately rejected some of the formulas in which some parts of that great mystery are expressed, at all events, they did not consider the doctrine, as commonly stated, one of essential importance, and hence they rarely, if ever, adverted to it in their pulpit ministrations. This appears to have been the extent of the divergence of the most advanced of these early liberals, from the received orthodoxy of their times.

But how stands the case with those who claim to be their sons, especially since the time of their formal enrolment under the Unitarian banner? As a body they have been steadily advancing towards what the universal church has ever held to be infidelity, until now some of them, pastors in good standing of Unitarian societies, retain hardly a shred of Christianity except the name. Not many months ago, in a solemn convocation of Unitarian ministers and laymen, one of the former is reported, with unequalled effrontery, to have insisted that the Lord Jesus Christ was not and should not be “lord over him,” and to have gone the length of saying that our Divine Saviour should be called, not the Lord Jesus Christ, but—we blush to write the words—“Mr. Jesus Christ”! Individuals who were present expressed their personal disgust at the shameful irreverence, but it received no public and official rebuke. Another member of the same convention, though still claiming to be a Christian preacher and pastor, not long ago delivered an elaborate discourse to prove that “Christianity is a Failure.” Such are the legitimate, because the actual results of liberal Christianity.

In saying this we are very far from thinking that all who

call themselves liberal Christians would countenance or even listen with indifference to such statements as the above; on the contrary, we are confident that there are very many who would denounce and protest against them with the utmost energy. But with all respect for the more sober and serious portion of the denomination, we make bold to affirm that these manifestations are the natural fruits of the rationalism of which the Unitarian body has always boasted as one of its most distinctive features. Such startling developments as Parkerism, Emersonism, and their various imitations, are of quite recent date, and we have no doubt that the first generation of avowed Unitarian ministers, who could never wholly eradicate the impressions made upon them by their early religious New England training, would have been really horrified by these displays of free inquiry. In determining what are the legitimate tendencies of Unitarianism, we should not forget that in the days when Kirkland, and Buckminster, and Channing, were preparing for the ministry, the spirit of the old Puritan institutions of New England was declining, it was still strong in Massachusetts; we must remember that these men and their contemporaries were not educated under Unitarian influences; and accordingly in their ordinary pulpit services, during their earlier ministry, a stranger would have heard nothing that marked them as Unitarians, or that in any way distinguished them from the most orthodox preachers, unless it might have been that their sermons were a little more ethical in matter, and a little less impassioned in delivery. The same remark might be made in regard to the mass of Unitarian preachers for a considerable period after the breach. But, meanwhile, a new generation sprang up that had never known orthodoxy in any form except as something to hate or despise,—a generation trained under Unitarian masters,—and now we are beginning to see the matured fruits of the system. If Dr. Channing had lived long enough to witness some of the later developments of the system, it is more than probable that he would have been shocked by them, and would have felt that he and Theodore Parker held positions separated from each other by an impassable gulf. We insist that as “rational Christians,” as Unitarians, they occupied precisely the same ground, the only difference between

them being simply this, that the younger and bolder representative of the "liberal faith" carried out their common principles farther than the older and more conservative one ventured to do. Theodore Parker, in his famous Letter to the Committee of the Unitarian Association, on the occasion of their attempting in a rather underhanded way to set up a Unitarian creed, and to excommunicate him and his followers from the Unitarian body, maintained that his extreme and alarming radicalism is simply the natural and logical product of liberal Christianity, as they had themselves defined it.* The series of questions

* As we have never before met with a formal Unitarian Creed, and as such a document will be as new to our readers, we append the creed in question. It was designed to show both what "we as a body *disbelieve*," and what "we as a body *do believe*." The articles of *disbelief* are:—1. The Triune nature of God. 2. All those commonly defended views of principles and results of the Divine Government, which appear to us to involve a vindictive character. 3. The current dogmas of the total depravity and helplessness of human nature, and the dogma of the dislocation and degradation of the material world, and the causal introduction of physical death into it, by the sin of the first man. 4. The Deity of Christ. 5. An Infinite sacrifice vicariously expiating for, and purchasing the pardon of, the sins of mankind. 6. The arbitrary election of some to eternal life, and condemnation of others to eternal torture. 7. The Resurrection of the fleshly body at any future day of judgment. 8. That Christianity is any after-expedient devised for the magical salvation of men. 9. That the Scriptures are plenary inspired, that is, are the literal composition of God. The articles *believed* are, viz.—1. In the unity, and in the paternal character and merciful government of God. 2. In man's natural capacity of virtue and liability to sin, and in the historic and actual mingled sinfulness and goodness of all human character. 3. In the divinely ordained laws and orderly development of the world, admitting the facts of imperfection and the ravages of sin as incident to the scheme. 4. In the supernatural appointment of Christ as a messenger from God. 5. In the originally given and never wholly forfeited ability of man to secure his salvation by a right improvement of his faculties and opportunities, whether in Christian or in Pagan lands. 6. In the immediate and unreturning passage of the soul, on release from the body, to its account and reward. 7. In the remedial as well as retributive office of the Divine punishments. 8. We regard Christianity, not as in contradiction to, but as in harmony with, the teachings and laws of nature—not as a gracious annulment of natural religion, or a devised revision of it, or antidote to it, but as a Divine announcement of its real doctrines, with fulfilling completeness and crowning authority, its uncertainties being removed, its dim points illuminated, and its operative force made historic, through the teachings, life, character, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, of which we reverently receive the Scriptures as furnishing an authentic and reliable record, to be *studied and discriminated under the guidance of reason, in the light of learning, and by the laws*

which he proposed to them as to the meaning of those "great essentials" embodied in their very magniloquent if not intelligible creed, were exceedingly searching, and must have been felt to be exceedingly awkward, for not one of them was ever answered. We insist that Mr. Parker was right, and even his most conservative brethren tacitly confess that he was, for with all the disgust which his undisguised infidelity caused them as individuals, they have never dared to fix a limit to "free inquiry," nor, though its lawlessness is as obvious as the noon-day, to say to it, "hitherto, but no farther." If their hearts are failing them for fear of the things that are coming out of their own system of "rational religion," those who cleave to the faith once delivered to the saints may well regard such results as supplying a fresh reason for holding with a firmer grasp to their own venerable form of sound words, and for guarding with a sleepless vigilance against the inroads and influences of a "rational philosophy," falsely so called.

As we have already stated, this volume, in addition to its many charming biographies, has furnished an important contri-

of universal criticism. 9. We believe in the absolute perfection of the one living and only true God,—in the omniscient scrutiny of his providence, the unspeakable nearness of his spirit, accessible to every obedient soul as the medium of regeneration and element of eternal life. 10. We believe in the supernatural authority of Christ as a Teacher, in his divine mission as a Redeemer, in his moral perfection as an example. 11. We believe *in the Scriptures as containing the recorded history of the promulgation of a revelation.* 12. We believe in the existence and influence of hereditary evil, but hold that man is morally free and responsible, living under a dispensation of justice and mercy, wherein he is capable by piety, purity, love, and good works, of securing the approval of God and fitting himself for heaven. 13. We believe that in the immortal life beyond the grave, just compensations of glory and woe await us for what is left incomplete in the rewards and punishments of the present state. 14. We conceive *the essence of Christianity to be the historic and livingly continued exertion of a moral power from God, through Christ, to emancipate the human race from the bondage of evil;* it is the sum of intelligible and experimental truth and life incarnated in and clothed upon the historic person of Christ, sealed by the authority of his divine commission, recommended by the beauty of his divine character, stealing into prepared hearts and winning the allegiance of the world. "Such are the great essentials by which we stand," say the most sober minded Unitarians, viz., those who wished to excommunicate Theodore Parker, but who did not dare to pronounce the sentence. All who read *their* creed, we think, will concur with us in the opinion, that their timidity is easily explained.

bution to American ecclesiastical history, in the shape of a succinct but comprehensive account of the rise and progress of Unitarianism in our country. The author, of course, confines himself to the simple statement of facts about which there could be no question, as he could not discuss either their causes or their consequences without giving to his narrative a partisan character, which he has properly and successfully aimed to avoid.

Each one of the prominent branches of the evangelical church has had its history written by one or more of its own sons. In all of them, the Episcopal, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Baptist, and Methodist, the utmost pains have been taken to gather and preserve all sorts of historic materials, everything, in short, that may in any way serve to illustrate the past. It is, however, a singular fact that no Unitarian has ever yet written a full and formal history of Unitarianism. For aught we know such a work may have been undertaken, but it certainly has not seen the light. Yet remarkable as the fact is in some respects, we must confess that it does not surprise us, since it seems impossible to us for a truly upright and honest man (and we are sure that the Unitarian denomination has many such in its membership) to write the earlier chapters of the history of "liberal Christianity," without feeling his cheeks, ever and anon, mantled with shame. If he told the story with truthful candour, he would be compelled to record that the fathers of his faith, those especially who were most active in introducing it into Geneva, Britain, and New England, were men who, to use a phrase of Dr. Paley's, "could not afford to keep a conscience," and whose course, for years, was marked by moral cowardice, concealment of opinions, and even disregard of solemn vows. He would have to tell how they did not scruple to accept, or rather thrust themselves into trusts, whose conditions they could not faithfully fulfil,—trusts, whose founders would as soon have thrown their money into the sea, as have given it for the maintenance of doctrines which they regarded as fundamentally false; and that while demanding the largest toleration, and the right of free inquiry for themselves, they could inflict pains and penalties on others who loved the old faith of the true catholic

church. These are strong statements, but we can bring to their support strong and abundant proofs.

Let us look, for example, at the early history of "liberal Christianity" in Geneva, where it obtained a footing during the first half of the last century. By the law of the Genevan church no man could be admitted into the venerable company of pastors, or obtain a professional chair in her Academy, without subscribing the Confession of Faith drawn up by her Reformers. The public acceptance of this Confession, made under circumstances that gave the act the nature of an oath, was a virtual declaration that this document embodied the doctrines which the subscriber received *ex animo* as taught in Scripture, and which he purposed to preach. How then did the fathers of Genevan Unitarianism succeed in gaining, as we know they did gain, these positions? It could be done fairly, in one of two ways only, viz., by effecting a change in the old law, or by a frank avowal of their peculiar opinions, leaving it for others to determine whether these opinions should or should not be a bar to admission. But they entered through neither of these doors. If they were not Unitarians in the sense in which the word is usually understood, they were at least in the sense in which the author of the Annals employs it; and therefore in signing, as they did, the Genevan Confession, they subscribed and promised to teach doctrines which they did not believe. Having in this way become pastors and professors in the church and academy of Geneva, they acted apparently on the principle that the best way to spread the truth is studiously to conceal it. One thing they certainly accomplished by their silence,—in the course of years, they almost completely eradicated evangelical religion from the city in which Farel, Calvin, and Beza, amid the greatest perils and struggles, had planted it. Voltaire, who lived near to Geneva, and was well acquainted with its religious condition, thus wrote in 1757: "In the town of Calvin, with its four-and-twenty thousand thinkers, there are still a few Calvinists, *but they are very few, and well abused* (*assez bafoués*). All genteel people are Deists." In 1758, when D'Alembert revealed the real opinions of the Genevan pastors on the fundamental article of the Trinity, the latter were made exceedingly angry as well as alarmed by the publication of their philosophic

friend, and at first they were inclined to denounce the statement as a calumny, but they finally concluded that discretion was the better part of valour, when both D'Alembert and Voltaire dared them to deny the charge. "If they assert—said D'Alembert—that I have *betrayed their secret* and called them Socinians, I reply to them, and if need be, I will maintain it before the whole world, that I have told the truth—a truth so notorious that I thought I was doing honour to their reason and judgment by telling it." Voltaire wrote in reply to the above quoted letter: "Have we not heard these ministers declare twenty times that they did not regard Jesus Christ as God? We will see whether they will have the impudence and baseness to prevaricate."*

Under the ministration of such pastors, it is not surprising that the religion which had two centuries before regenerated Geneva, and had given to that little Swiss town a world-wide renown, disappeared from its church. This result was precisely that which they desired, and at which they aimed. But after many years the breath of a new life was felt by that church, and one or two young pastors, who had been brought to a knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, began to preach boldly and earnestly the old faith of the Reformation. How did the advocates of free inquiry, the friends of liberal Christianity, who then had a commanding influence in church and state, deal with these few, feeble, but outspoken heralds of a long-buried gospel? They commanded them that they should not teach nor preach that there "is no other name given under heaven, whereby we must be saved, but the name of Jesus." When Cæsar Malan proclaimed from the pulpit of the cathedral, the doctrine which he had himself recently learned, of redemption through the

* Rousseau, who was also on familiar terms with the pastors and professors of Geneva, in one of his letters to D'Alembert, thus describes them: "On demande aux ministres de l'église de Geneve, si Jésus Christ est Dieu; ils n'osent répondre. Un philosophe jette sur eux un rapide coup d'œil; il les pénètre, il les voit Ariens, Sociniens, Déistes; il le dit, et pense leur faire honneur. Aussitôt alarmés, effrayés, ils s'assemblent, ils dissentent, ils s'agitent. O Genevois! ce sont en vérité des singuliers gens messieurs vos ministres. On ne sait ce qu'ils croyent, ni ce qu'ils ne croyent pas; on ne sait pas même ce qu'ils font semblant de croire. Leur seule manière d'établir leur foi est d'attaquer celle des autres."

atonement blood of Christ, his sermon excited as great a stir among his colleagues as the famous article of D'Alembert had made half a century before. For this reason alone the young preacher was expelled both from his pulpit and his academic chair. The venerable company of pastors, the avowed enemies of creeds, the special friends of free inquiry, in the name of charity, immediately enacted a rule by which the introduction of the doctrines of the gospel into the pulpit was peremptorily forbidden, and every minister and candidate for the sacred office was required to sign this "reglement," under pain of deposition or exclusion from the ministry, if they refused so to do. The iron rigour with which this rule was for a long time enforced, justifies the suspicion, to say the least, that these liberal pastors would have willingly inflicted a still heavier penalty upon men, against whom no charge could be brought except this,—that they steadfastly maintained the old faith of the catholic church.

In England, Unitarianism began to show itself about the middle of the last century, in the Episcopal church and among some of the Nonconformists. Here, too, as in Geneva, the movement in its early stages was marked by the careful concealment of real opinions, and by playing fast and loose with creeds. In 1772, those clergymen of the established church who had abandoned, or were doubtful of the doctrine of the Trinity, made a vigorous attempt to obtain what they styled "relief to their consciences," through a change in the law requiring subscription to the Articles of the Church of England, and the use of the Liturgy in public worship. A petition to this effect, signed by two hundred and fifty ministers, was laid before the House of Commons. That period was, in a religious point of view, confessedly one of the most dismal in the annals of the Church of England,—it was an age when the great mass of her membership, clerical and lay, seemed to be spiritually dead, and the marvel therefore is, that the movement for the abolition of subscription did not succeed. It failed, not so much from love of the truth as from hatred of change. When the petition came before the Commons, it was resisted mainly on the ground that it tended to "disturb the peace," which, said one of the members of the House, "ought

to be the subject of a fortieth article, that would be well worth all the thirty-nine."

How did these two hundred and fifty "liberal" clergymen act in this emergency? Let it be remembered that the thing which they had asked the legislature to grant them was, "*relief of their consciences*," and that such relief was peremptorily refused. Did they exhibit the courage, or follow the example of the illustrious men, who, in the preceding century, at the call of conscience, not only gave up dignities and stipends, but braved the fury of the persecutor, and went forth from their comfortable rectories, not knowing where or when they would find shelter and sustenance for themselves and their families? By no means. With a solitary exception, they quietly went their several ways, with the old yoke upon their consciences, submitting to subscribe Articles which they did not believe, and to employ a Liturgy, which, as they had affirmed, gave divine honours to a mere creature. When allegiance to truth demanded the resignation of rich rectories, of social position, of pleasant collegiate homes, they certainly seemed to act as if they "could not afford to keep a conscience." Of the whole number, the Rev. Theophilus Lindsay was the only one who had the manliness to withdraw from the established church. Mr. Belsham, his biographer, absurdly styles him "the venerable confessor," while Mr. Job Orton, the friend and biographer of Doddridge, still more absurdly says of him, "that his name deserved to be put in the list of the ejected" Nonconformists, although this "venerable confessor" has been for several years before his resignation a Socinian, had repeatedly signed the Articles, and had been in the constant use of the Liturgy; in circumstances which caused even his admiring biographer to wonder how his conscience allowed him to do such things. But he deserves the credit of finally acting like an honest man, although, strange to say, Dr. Priestley suggested to him that he might retain his living and continue to officiate in his parish church, by changing on his own authority the language of the Liturgy so as to make it suit his views. Mr. Belsham testifies that this very thing was done by several Unitarian Episcopalians of that day, though they must have known that in so doing they violated their own solemn promise, and the

law of the land. Mr. Lindsay, after he became a Dissenter, indignantly, and not without reason, complained that out of "the very large number" in the establishment who concurred with him in his Unitarian sentiments, only one person ever contributed a single farthing to the erection of his chapel.

It was not possible for Unitarians permanently to possess themselves of an Anglican parish church, but among the Dissenters there was an open field for the exercise of their peculiar methods of working, and they have succeeded in getting hold of a large number of the old Presbyterian chapels in England. This was all the more easily accomplished as most of these churches were Presbyterian only in name, as there existed no such organic bond of union as a proper Presbytery or Synod, and as each congregation managed its own affairs in its own way. Many of these churches had endowments of greater or less value, and in not a few instances, the settlement of pastors who sooner or later avowed themselves to be Arians or Socinians, was effected by the trustees of these endowments usurping the power of patrons. Even the Independent churches, which at that time had little corporate wealth, and whose membership consisted of a poorer class of people than that of the Presbyterian, did not wholly escape the invasion of heresy. Indeed there were in every branch of the English church manifest tokens of declension, a cold, lifeless formalism was spreading among all the leading branches of dissent as well as in the established church, the results of which must have been fearful indeed, if such men as Whitefield, Wesley, and their co-workers had not been raised up to sound the alarm.

There are in England about two hundred and twenty-five Unitarian chapels, all of which, with the exception of thirty-six, were originally orthodox. Many of them have endowments whose trust-deeds expressly provide that the ministers who are to enjoy them must be "sound in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ,—according to the doctrinal Articles of the Church of England, or of the Assembly's Catechism." Of course, their incumbents must have made, in some form, a confession that they held these doctrines, at the time of their installation as pastors of these congregations, but after a longer or shorter period of "silence," the masque was thrown aside and they

were found to be Arians, or Socinians. What has been the result of this policy? Our space will not allow us to answer this question as fully as we could wish. Unitarians themselves admit that scores of chapels have been emptied which were once filled to overflowing, and a great multitude of once flourishing churches reduced almost to extinction. Some seventy years ago, Toxteth Park chapel near Liverpool was one of the most crowded in all that region. A pastor was called who proved to be a Unitarian in an orthodox garb, who, to secure the position promised to preach doctrines conformable to the Articles of the Church of England, but who never meant to perform his promise, and the consequence was that the congregation was so diminished that it often consisted only of the sexton, the singers, and the preacher. Nor was this an extreme, nor a solitary example of the desolating influence of Unitarianism.

The history of the Lady Hewley charities affords one of the most striking illustrations of the readiness with which English Unitarians have usurped and perverted the most sacred trusts. The estates belonging to this charity and yielding £4000 a year, were bequeathed to maintain Almshouses in which the Assembly's Catechism was to be taught,—to relieve poor, godly preachers of Christ's gospel and their widows,—to educate young men for the ministry,—and to sustain the preaching of the gospel in poor places. For many years the Unitarian trustees of this princely charity devoted its income exclusively to the furtherance of their own sectarian ends. This fact was put beyond dispute in the course of the famous legal investigation into the management of the Hewley charity, and which resulted in wresting from the hands of Unitarians a large portion of the property. Another old Presbyterian, Dr. Williams of London, bequeathed for pious purposes, property worth £50,000, and in his last will used this language in regard to his bequest: "I beseech the blessed God for Jesus Christ's sake, the Head of his church, whose I am, and whom I desire to serve, that *this my will* may by his blessing and power, *reach its end* and be *faithfully executed*. Obtesting in the name of the Great and Righteous God, all that are, or that shall be concerned, that what I design for his glory and the good of mankind, may be

honestly, prudently, and diligently employed to those ends." Who would suppose it possible that an honest and high-minded Unitarian, after reading this solemn "obtestation" of a well known Calvinist, could entertain the idea for a single instant, of his assuming such a trust? Yet in process of time Unitarians did contrive to get hold of the Williams charity, and for many years have used it to maintain their peculiar dogmas.

In New England, Unitarianism exhibited in its rise and progress essentially the same features as those which marked its development in Geneva and Britain. We have the express testimony of its friends to the fact, that at the very time when Boston was "full of Unitarianism," not one avowed Unitarian could be found there, with the exception of the late Dr. Freeman of King's Chapel. Nay, when the charge was made by Drs. Morse and Worcester, that some of the pastors of that city had become Unitarians, even such a man as Dr. Channing had the amazing hardihood to denounce the statement as a falsehood and a calumny. So late as 1812, the Rev. Francis Parkman—for many years subsequent to that date one of the Unitarian ministers of Boston—addressed a letter to the organ of the English Socinians, in reply to certain statements which its editor had made in regard to the progress of "liberal Christianity" in Boston, in which he says, "With the ministers of the Congregational churches I am well acquainted. I have always heard their preaching, and as a student of theology I have constantly attended for two or three years their monthly meetings, when they frequently conversed upon their religious opinions. Of these gentlemen, about twenty in number, there is only one, whom from anything I have ever heard him offer, either in private or in the pulpit, I, or anybody else, would have a right to call a Unitarian. Even this gentleman did not preach Unitarianism systematically. I never heard him express such views of the person of Christ, and *it was rather from inference* that I could say he held them. Many of his people are widely different from him, and with the exception of two or three, or at most four or five heads of families, I may safely say that there is scarcely a parishioner in Boston who would not be shocked at hearing his minister preach the peculiarities of Unitarianism. There is one more gentleman in Boston, who, *with*

his intimate friends may perhaps be considered a Unitarian, but he maintains the same cautious reserve, and from neither his prayers, his sermons, nor his private conversation, could I infer that he was a Unitarian. You (the English editor) say that Dr. Kirkland is a professed Unitarian, and mention him as if his election to the presidency of Cambridge University was a decisive proof of the prevalence of your sentiments among us. Whatever his particular friends may think of his opinions, he never preached these sentiments. Nay, I may venture to say, that had Dr. Kirkland been an acknowledged defender of Unitarianism, he would not have been elected to that place. Unitarianism is too unpopular in the country."

Just one month after the date of this remarkable paper, Mr. W. Wells, one of the most prominent of the lay members of the church in Boston, wrote to Mr. Belsham of London, a letter, in which he, on the other hand, asserts that "most of our Boston clergy and respectable laymen are Unitarians," with a great many more affirmations to the same purport. Not long after its receipt, Mr. Belsham published this letter in the appendix to his Life of Lindsay, and for this reason the more discreet and "cautious" friends of Mr. Wells long tried to keep Mr. Belsham's book out of the Boston bookstores. But in due time the letter of the over-zealous layman was republished, and then the secret so long and carefully kept was revealed. Those wonderfully reserved gentlemen who, as Dr. Parkman had said, "were utterly opposed to the spirit and sentiments of Unitarianism," though it was impossible to gather their real opinions from their prayers, or their sermons, or their private conversation, were now compelled to appear in their true colours, and then the whole world discovered that with the solitary exception of the Old South, all the older Congregational pulpits of Boston were occupied, as they have been indeed ever since, by Unitarians.

If it be said that these transactions belong to a period when the banner of Unitarianism had not been formally unfurled, and be they good or bad, they are matters for which those who have openly enrolled themselves under that standard, and now constitute a distinct denomination, are no way responsible; we reply that these facts are not only an integral part of the his-

tory of the Unitarian system, but they also serve to illustrate its innate tendencies. For example, if we allow that the Unitarian ministers of Boston, fifty years ago, were not wanting in moral courage, and were not afraid of the consequences of preaching unpopular doctrines, how can we explain their "cautious reserve," in which they so closely imitated their Swiss and English brethren, or how account for the persistent and studied carefulness with which they covered their sentiments with the thickest veil of secrecy, unless we suppose them to have been indifferent to objective truth, and that they deemed their own views of it to be of too little practical value, to disturb the peace of the churches by publishing them. Well, has Unitarianism become more sensitive in this respect? On the contrary, its sons of to-day are more indifferent than were their fathers. It welcomes, or at least professes to welcome, to its liberal fellowship, Christians of every name and creed, even those who worshipping Jesus as "very God," must be idolaters, if what it teaches concerning him is the truth. Every man who comprehends the meaning and force of words, sees that there is "a great gulf fixed" between the Unitarian and the Orthodox systems, yet Unitarianism professes to regard it as a very small affair, and it insists that there can be communion between light and darkness. In the last convention of its friends, held only a few months ago, there were men who devoutly called "Jesus, Lord," and there were others who boldly denounced the very phrase "Lord Jesus Christ," and with a shocking irreverence declared that "Jesus Christ is no Lord over them," that his proper appellation was not Lord, but "Mister;" there were men who claimed to receive the Bible as a divine revelation, and the supreme standard of faith, and there were others who utterly denied its inspiration in any sense of the term in which it could not be applied equally to the Koran, and who are accustomed to quote Göthe with as much respect as they quote the words of Jesus. Can men so irreconcilably at war with each other in matters of religion, walk together? It is impossible under any other banner but that of Unitarianism. Beneath its folds the strange spectacle is exhibited of such men joined in fraternal communion, members of the same body, and bearing a common name. Now if such fellowship does not

indicate indifference to truth, we cannot imagine in what way that feeling can be expressed.

There is another feature of the Unitarian system, which, as it seems to us, even its own thoughtful and candid friends must recognise as one illustrated by its history, viz, its apparent want of power to develop the heroic Christian virtues. We see it in the cautious reserve, the timid silence so rigidly maintained by the patriarchs of the sect in Geneva, Britain, and New England. If sincere in their convictions they must have regarded the received doctrines concerning the person and work of Jesus as gross corruption of the gospel, marring its beauty, and hindering its beneficent design. We must suppose that they deemed their peculiar views as the necessary means of quickening and purifying the stagnant life of the church, and of giving to Christianity universal and enduring triumph. In a word, a divine truth that had been lost for centuries was placed in their keeping, for the benefit of humanity. What did they do with the precious deposit? They covered it with a bushel! They hardly dared, as Dr. Parkman assures us—to whisper even to their most intimate friends, that they were in possession of it. The fact is beyond dispute, and the reason of it as given, not by an enemy but a friend, was, that the truth “was too unpopular.” How striking the contrast between their conduct and that of all other Christian reformers of every age and every land. The language of the original heralds of the gospel, and of the noble army of Confessors gathered by their means was, “we believe, therefore do we speak.” They did speak so as to make Jew and Gentile hear them, in the face of bonds, and imprisonment, and death in its most cruel forms. In later times Huss and Wicliff, Luther, and Zwingle, and Calvin and their fellow labourers in the same heroic spirit, “spake” in such trumpet tones as to arouse Europe from the slumber of ages. Now if Peter, and John, and Paul were Unitarians, how happens it that the preachers of a corrupted Christianity, corrupted in one of its most vital points, Reformers, Puritans, Nonconformists, have with one accord copied their illustrious example, while their own sons in the faith of these latter days have with equal unanimity departed from it. Has the gospel lost its power, or has brave confession of the

truth ceased to be a Christian virtue? Can there be a broader contrast than that which exists between the outspoken but to themselves costly courage of those whom the world hails as the heroes of Christendom, and the timidity of men who believing that Jesus is not God, or is a mere man, never through a long course of years, once "spake" as they believed, even to the people to whom they had promised to keep back no truth!

If we survey the history of Unitarianism since it assumed an organized form, and unfurled its own proper standard, we discover the same lack of the heroic virtues that marked the fathers of the sect. We find it so in America, we find it so in Europe. The rise of the Unitarian body as a distinct denomination was nearly coeval with the commencement of a period which promises to be one of the most wonderful in the annals of Christianity. The closing years of the last century ushered in a new age to the church,—a new age of activity and of conquest, when her sympathies and works of love would be seen, as they had not been since apostolic times, to embrace the wide world of humanity. We need not describe how the spirit of missions has spread from sect to sect until it has pervaded nearly the whole of Christendom, nor do we need to enumerate the noble institutions to which it has given birth in every Christian land, for the diffusion of light and liberty, or to tell of the glorious victories they have won in the darkest lands of Paganism.

But we may ask what part has Unitarianism ever taken in any one of these beneficent schemes, these crusades of Christian zeal and love? Individual members of the denomination, a Pierce, a Packard, a Tuckerman, have doubtless cooperated with them, but in proposing this question we refer to the body as a whole. We utter the simple truth when we say that it has never had, it has never sought a place among those sacramental hosts that have been and are now seeking to turn the heathen from dumb idols to serve the living and true God. The fields on which Unitarianism is employing all its energies are the perfectly safe and comfortable ones of Protestant Europe and Protestant America. In this missionary age it could not avoid having its mission boards, or associations for "diffusing the pure light of rational Christianity," how comes it to pass then that

its messengers are unknown in every heathen land,* and have rarely, if ever, visited the poor and scattered frontier settlements of our own? “There never was a system”—said a Unitarian writer—“which bore *so invasive* a character as Christianity in its earliest days. Every preacher was a missionary, proclaiming the acceptable year of the Lord. We are sure, therefore, that the spirit of missions is the spirit of Christ.” Now if Unitarianism be primitive Christianity, it must stand on the page of church history, for the astonishment of all thoughtful minds; *first*, that the bigoted and deluded professors of a corrupt and idolatrous creed went forth to convert the nations in the East and the West, that they boldly took up their abode in the darkest regions of the earth, amid filthy and savage cannibals, and after years of toil, privations, suffering, saw thousands of these once degraded barbarians elevated into the dignity and purity of Christian men; and *secondly*, that the only true Christians of the missionary age *were the only men who took no part in the glorious enterprise.*

Again we say, the fact is undeniable, and we ask how it is to be explained? It cannot be pretended that the door of entrance into the Pagan world is not open, for the missionaries of every other sect have been on the ground for more than half a century, and have gathered hundreds of churches there. It cannot be urged that the Unitarians are too poor to bear the expense of such a work, for the denomination is in proportion to its size one of the wealthiest in Christendom. It surely will not be said that it is more important to utter a feeble protest against the unsound theology prevalent in the Christian world, than to convert the heathen, who are well enough off as they are, for this would look very much like setting aside that supreme command of the Author of Christianity, “Go, teach all nations.” Is it owing to the pervading and incurable indifference of the Unitarian body to the moral condition and prospects of the heathen nations? Or is it to be ascribed to the secret but settled conviction, that if its missionaries were sent out to measure arms with the Brahmins and Boodhists of the East, or to con-

* Within the last thirty years the English and the American Unitarians have each sent one missionary to India. But neither of them ventured beyond Calcutta, and we believe that both have long ago ceased from their work.

vert the savages of Africa, they would find themselves, with their system of religion, really powerless for good? Be the cause what it may, the fact itself is beyond dispute that the spirit of Unitarianism; as the Unitarian writer before-quoted sorrowfully confessed, is not now and never has been the spirit of missions; and it is equally certain that, to this hour, neither in Europe nor America has it given a solitary recruit to the company of heroic Christians who have borne the banner of the cross into Pagan lands, and the lamp of life to the darkest regions of the earth.

As we intimated in an early part of this article, not a few of the portraits in this volume are exceedingly venerable and lovely, and we were therefore not surprised to find a notice of the work in a rather "liberal" yet orthodox journal, in which the critic said that, on the whole, Unitarian and Orthodox piety seemed to be essentially the same, and that the one system appeared to be about as favourable to its culture as the other. With all respect, we insist that this judgment is unfair to orthodoxy, and it attributes to Unitarianism, *i. e.* the system as defined by its own modern advocates, results to which it has no proper claim. It is a judgment founded on the biographies of men who, in that sense of the name, were not Unitarians; who, indeed, for reasons which we need not discuss, allowed themselves to be ranked with that body, but who in their views of the gospel and in their manner of preaching it were far more nearly allied to Trinitarian than to Unitarian Congregationalism.

We have only to add the expression of our unfeigned delight that Dr. Sprague has been enabled to bring out this admirable volume even before the confusion and alarm of civil war had ceased to be heard in our land. It is a pleasing proof that his "natural force is unabated." And our hearty desire and hope is, that by the close of another year he may have it in his power to complete that noble array of Annals of the American Pulpit, which, we are confident, will secure to its author enduring usefulness and fame.