

THE  
NEW ENGLANDER.

No. XXIX.

~~~~~  
FEBRUARY, 1850.  
~~~~~

ART. I.—THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY.

*God in Christ: three discourses delivered at New Haven, Cambridge and Andover*; by HORACE BUSHNELL, Hartford.

*Theophany; or the Manifestation of God, in the Life, Character, and Mission of Jesus Christ*; by REV. ROBERT TURNBULL, Hartford.

*On the Character and Works of Christ*; by WILLIAM B. HAYDEN.

WE have placed before our readers the titles of these several works, not with the design of reviewing and discussing their particular contents, but rather as affording the occasion for presenting some thoughts upon the general subject thus indicated.

The attention of the religious community has been very generally drawn of late to the long agitated, much disputed, much calumniated doctrine of the Trinity. Recent discussions have given new interest and importance to the subject;—a subject which can never be without interest indeed to the reflecting mind, but upon which, at the present moment, the most diverse and conflicting opinions are found to prevail, among those who are at once the sincere friends, and the earnest champions, of truth. By some the divine tri-personality, by others the divine unity is regarded as the element of chief importance, and is earnestly contended for, as in danger of being overlooked. The minds of men are enquiring more earnestly now, than at any time, perhaps, for the last fifty years, for some definite, true and solid ground of belief touching these matters. A patient and careful *re-examination* of the whole subject, seems to be demanded. We hope that the present article will contribute in some degree to this result, at least by inducing the reader to enter for himself upon such re-examination.

## ART. II.—THE BUCKMINSTERS, FATHER AND SON.

*Memoirs of Rev. Joseph Buckminster, D.D., and of his son, Rev. Joseph Stevens Buckminster.* By ELIZA BUCKMINSTER LEE. Boston: Crosby & H. P. Nichols.

THIS book is, so far as we know, entirely unique. We doubt whether there is to be found in our own or any other language, another biographical work in which the same peculiar circumstances concur to awaken curiosity and to excite interest. The individuals who are here commemorated are acknowledged, on all hands, to have been among the greater lights of their time. The relation that existed between them was that of father and son. They were both consecrated to the holy ministry; but they held different and in some respects opposite views of divine truth. The father was an honest believer and vigorous defender of the Puritan orthodoxy; the son, without being known in the ranks of controversy, embraced some one or other of the forms of Unitarianism. Between the two there existed an affection that rose almost to enthusiasm, and that seems to have suffered no diminution from the difference in their religious views; and yet often and sadly did the heart of the father bleed at what he regarded the apostasy of his son, while the son manifested the keenest regret that his religious opinions were a source of so much grief to his father. The person who undertakes the task of exhibiting these two characters in the delicate and even painful relations which they mutually sustained, is the daughter of the one and the sister of the other; a lady of the finest talents and accomplishments, whose filial reverence and gratitude render her tenderly jealous for her father's reputation, while yet her religious sympathies evidently are chiefly with her brother. The work that she has produced will be read by different classes with different impressions; and though the number may be small who will pronounce it *exactly* such a book as they would have asked for, we are inclined to think the number will be still smaller, who begin to read it and lay it by before they are thoroughly possessed of its contents.

In the notice which we propose to take of it, we shall confine ourselves almost entirely to a delineation of the two characters as here presented; especially the character of the father, which seems to us in some of the notices of the work that has appeared, to have received quite a disproportionate share of attention and honor. Nor shall we suffer any difference of religious opinion, however serious we may view it, to prevent us from doing justice, so far as we are able, to the son; for we regard it as both impolitic and wrong to refuse to recognize either intellectual or moral excellence, because we may find it in some respects in different

associations from what we could desire. We are aware that it would be no difficult thing to digest from this work an argument that would bear powerfully upon one of the great religious controversies of the day ; and this use we perceive has actually been made of it, on the one side and on the other ; but we confess for ourselves that what we have to say upon the Unitarian controversy, we prefer to say in a different connection. Our sympathies have been too much awakened in reading the work to allow us to write about it controversially ; and we shall be satisfied if we can present to our readers a faithful epitome of it, leaving to their own reflection the lessons of truth and wisdom which it suggests.

Dr. BUCKMINSTER was born at Rutland, Mass., Oct. 3, 1751. He was a descendant of Thomas Buckminster, who emigrated to this country in 1640 and died at Brookline, near Boston, in 1656. He was the son of the Rev. Joseph Buckminster of Rutland, a highly respectable clergyman who figured somewhat in some of the religious controversies of his time. His mother was a daughter of Rev. Wm. Williams of Weston, a niece of Rector Williams of Yale College, a grand-daughter of Solomon Stoddard, and a cousin of Jonathan Edwards. She seems to have been in every respect worthy of her distinguished ancestry ; and in the character of both the mother and the father was there a pledge that whatever parental fidelity could do, should be done, for the right development and training of the intellectual and moral faculties of their son. Happily their efforts were rewarded in his becoming everything that parental affection could desire.

As he was the eldest son, his parents seem from his birth to have intended him for the ministry. His early years, however, were spent upon a farm ; and to this no doubt was owing much of that vigor of constitution, and fine development of the physical powers, for which, in after life, he was not a little distinguished. Where or by whom he was prepared to enter college is not known ; but he became a member of Yale College at the age of about fifteen. As his father had been graduated at Harvard, it is supposed to have been through the influence of his mother's relatives, the Williamses and Stoddards, that he was sent to New Haven. He sustained himself in every part of his collegiate course with great credit, though he was more particularly devoted to the classics, and especially to the Latin, in which his attainments were very uncommon. He graduated in 1770 ; and after that, continued three years at college upon the Berkeley foundation, pursuing such studies as his taste and inclination dictated. The whole period of his connection with the college, as a student, a resident graduate, and subsequently as a tutor, was signalized by one of the brightest constellations of genius that Yale can boast in any part of her history ; and it was no doubt owing in a measure to the peculiarly favorable intellectual atmosphere he was privi-

leged. to breathe, that his own mind became so vigorous, elastic and symmetrical.

His tutorship commenced in 1774 and continued till 1778; so that the whole period of his residence at the college was eleven years. During this period he formed friendships with many individuals who afterwards attained to great eminence and usefulness, which he most gratefully cherished to the close of life. His attachment to the college also was exceedingly strong; and one of the greatest luxuries with which he could indulge himself was to return to it on an occasional visit.

Sometime during his residence at New Haven, his mind was so intensely directed to the subject of religion as a matter of personal concern, that for a while, it had well nigh lost its balance. That he had an uncommonly nervous temperament there is no doubt, nor can it reasonably be questioned that such a temperament modifies the religious as well as other exercises of the mind; and yet we see nothing to indicate that his sense of the evil of sin or of the depth of his own corruption, was greater than we suppose to be often experienced by individuals who are not chargeable with any tendency to enthusiasm. He seems to have regarded this as the period of his conversion to God; and accordingly he drew up for his own satisfaction a somewhat minute confession of faith, together with a form of self-consecration to God and his service. His confession of faith is an epitome of the Assembly's Shorter Catechism; and to this system of doctrine he held with unyielding tenacity, connecting with it all his hopes for eternity, as long as he lived.

Having gone through a course of study at New Haven, preparatory to the ministry, and commenced his labors as a preacher with great acceptance, he received a unanimous invitation from the North Church in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, to become its pastor. This invitation he accepted, and was ordained January 27, 1779. It was a circumstance of some interest that he should have succeeded two men of so much note in the literary and theological world, as President Langdon and President Stiles; and yet he has little to fear from a comparison with either of them; for in the graces of oratory, in fervent and pathetic appeals, in almost every thing that gives one power over an audience, he cast them both greatly into the shade.

By his settlement at Portsmouth, Dr. Buckminster was introduced not only to a highly important field of ministerial labor, but to one of the most opulent, fashionable and highly cultivated circles in New England. But whatever temptations to lower the standard of duty or of piety may have been involved in his relations to the surrounding world, he seems never in the least degree to have relaxed his high sense of obligation as a Christian minister. While he did not hesitate to avail himself of the legitimate

benefits of mingling freely in the most refined and elegant society, he never made himself all things to all men in any sense that implied the least dereliction of duty. While he always stood firm to his honest convictions, and never even seemed to look complacently on what he deemed an undue conformity to the world, while he always showed himself the spiritually-minded Christian as well as the faithful and dignified Christian pastor, he was not wanting in those innocent and graceful amenities which at once recommend religion and constitute much of the charm of social life.

Between three and four years after his settlement, he was married to a daughter of Dr. Stevens, of Kittery Point, a man of great dignity of character, and so much distinguished in his profession that he was at one time chosen President of Harvard College. His daughter, who became the wife of Dr. Buckminster, was a lady of the rarest endowments and graces both intellectual and moral, and had been educated entirely by her father, and with all that vigilance and care which the most fervent parental devotion towards an only child could inspire. By this marriage he had four children, the first of which died in infancy, the second was Joseph, of whom we shall presently speak more particularly, the third was afterwards the wife of Professor Farrar, of Harvard College, and the fourth was Mrs. Lee, the gifted biographer of her father and brother. Mrs. Buckminster died in 1790, when Joseph, her only son, was six years old. The widowed husband was well nigh overwhelmed by the shock occasioned by this bereavement, and for a time, owing no doubt to a constitutional mental malady, he sank into the deepest spiritual gloom.

About this time, (1790,) he was chosen Professor of Theology of Phillips Academy at Exeter, but his attachment to his parish and to the duties of a parish minister was too strong to allow him to listen to the invitation. In due time he emerged from the cloud which had temporarily settled over him, and for many years held on, without interruption, in a course of cheerful and successful devotion to his work.

In the year 1793 he became connected in marriage with a daughter of the Rev. Isaac Lyman of York, and sister of the late Theodore Lyman, Esq., of Boston. This connection proved an eminently happy one, not only as it gave to him a companion every way fitted to a person of his temperament and to a clergyman occupying so responsible a station, but also as it gave to his children a mother whose kind solicitude and guardian care they never ceased most gratefully to appreciate.

Dr. Buckminster lived with his second wife about twelve years. She was removed by death in 1805, and this bereavement, like the preceding one, occasioned him such deep distress that serious apprehensions were entertained by his friends that it might in-

volve the sacrifice of his reason, if not of his life. The second Mrs. Buckminster left several children at an age especially to require a mother's care ; but this exigency was happily met by the mature and well-developed characters of his elder daughters, who addressed themselves to the additional duties that were thus devolved upon them in the family, in the loveliest spirit of devotion and self-sacrifice. The father, in due time, recovered his accustomed spirits, and passed along through several years, without any return of the mental malady by which he had previously been so much afflicted. He formed a third matrimonial connection in 1810. The lady to whom he was united was the widow of Col. Eliphalet Ladd ; and though by this marriage he came in possession of a handsome estate, he evinced his magnanimity by returning it to his wife by bequest, the very day after they were married. The third Mrs. Buckminster survived her husband, and has died within the last few years.

Notwithstanding the several years of health and cheerfulness which Dr. Buckminster now enjoyed, giving promise, as it seemed, of an extended and vigorous old age, at the close of the year 1811 his friends began to observe indications of the return of his old malady, and to entertain fears that his sun might go down in dire eclipse. He was now evidently the subject of deep seated physical disease ; though it manifested itself chiefly in its effect upon the nervous system. In May, 1812, it was proposed that he should try the effects of a journey into the western part of the state of New York ; and though he seems to have had no expectation that the result would be favorable, yet to gratify his friends he was induced to make the experiment. On the last Sabbath in May, he preached and administered the communion to his church, with great solemnity and unction, and under a strong impression that it was the last time his voice would ever be heard within those walls. The next day he left home, accompanied by his wife and one or two other friends, with a view to extend their journey only as far as Saratoga Springs. They traveled by short stages for several days ; but it soon became apparent that they had little to hope from the effect of the journey. Though he occasionally conversed with great animation and interest, it was evident that his disease was doing a rapid work, and that the silver cord must quickly be loosed. On the 9th of June, they stopped at a solitary inn in the town of Readsborough, Vermont, where they were visited by a tremendous thunder-storm. During this time he sat in a chair, uttering the most tender and touching petitions, and fully aware that he was on the borders of the world unseen. His tranquillity was now complete, and he scarcely uttered himself but in expressions of devout submission and grateful confidence. When his wife entered the chamber the next morning, (for she was not apprehen-

sive that his end was so near,) he said to her with perfect composure, "My son Joseph is dead." Mrs. B. assured him that it was not so, and that he had only dreamed it. "No," he replied, "I have not slept nor dreamed; he is dead." Shortly after this, Dr. Buckminster gently breathed away his spirit; and the intelligence was soon received from Boston, that his son had died, as the father had so confidently declared, a few hours before. Dr. Buckminster was interred at Bennington, and a sermon was preached on the occasion by the Rev. Mr. Marsh. A discourse was subsequently addressed to the bereaved congregation at Portsmouth by the Rev. Mr. Parker, minister of the South Church, which was published. The event seems to have spread the deepest gloom over not only his own immediate society but the whole town; and many of us remember the strong sensation of grief which the intelligence excited even in distant parts of the country.

Dr. Buckminster, it is conceded on all hands, was no common man. We suppose that if, for more than a quarter of a century, the half dozen most popular preachers in New England, or perhaps we might add in the whole country, had been named, he must have been included in the list. It is understood that he was never remarkable for profound investigation, and that his sermons were not distinguished for that high intellectual tone by which the pulpit productions of a few of our greater lights have been marked; nevertheless they were rich in evangelical truth, brought out in a perspicuous and attractive form; they were as far as possible from being tame or common-place,—for so ready was his invention, and so fertile his imagination, that he would throw an air of novelty around the most familiar truth or the most common event; and they were delivered with a glowing fervor and an almost matchless ease and grace, which gave them a power alike over the most intelligent and the least cultivated of his hearers. His discourses on the Sabbath were usually written, but he was never doggedly chained to his manuscript, and he could at pleasure, and often did, leave it altogether, and expatiate with great beauty and force in some field which had suddenly opened up to his contemplation. He was remarkable for aptness in the choice of his subjects; and would often bring out the peculiarities of an occasion so strikingly in his text, that the first impression on his hearers would be that the text must have been made for the occasion. He was eminently felicitous in prayer; indeed for copiousness, freedom, appropriateness, in his devotional exercises he was perhaps unsurpassed. As an illustration of this, we have heard the following anecdote. After he had offered a prayer in connection with some public service,—if we mistake not, it was a service commemorative of Washington,—Chief Justice Parsons remarked on leaving the church,—“Well, I give him no credit at all for that prayer.” “Why not?” said the

person to whom the remark was addressed. "Because," answered the other, "it must have been the effect of immediate inspiration."

Dr. Buckminster published during his life somewhat more than twenty occasional sermons, several of which had an immediate relation to the "Father of his country," with whom he was on terms of considerable intimacy. All these discourses are highly reputable, and some of them of marked excellence; and yet we imagine that they give but an imperfect idea of their author's power in the pulpit. There was that in him that made him a splendid as well as a highly effective and useful preacher; but his printed sermons might have been produced by many a mind much less richly endowed than his own.

Dr. Buckminster's theological views, as we have already had occasion to state, were strictly conformed to the standard of orthodoxy indicated by the Assembly's Catechism; and he looked with the most painful apprehension upon any departure from that general system. One of the greatest trials of his life, as we shall hereafter see, was the departure of his son from that system of doctrine in which he had been educated; and the last of his published sermons was a somewhat extended exposition of those views of evangelical doctrine which he held dearer than life. He however consented to preach the sermon at his son's ordination, and frequently exchanged pulpits with the Rev. Mr. Parker, (a Unitarian,) and maintained an intimate and affectionate intercourse with him to the close of life. There may be different opinions as to the entire consistency of his course in some respects, and different ways of accounting for it; we are concerned at present only with the facts.

---

JOSEPH STEVENS BUCKMINSTER, who is the subject of a large part of the volume before us, was born on the 26th of May, 1784. His early developments were remarkable, perhaps in some respects unprecedented. He began to study Latin at the age of four, and was so desirous of studying Greek also, that his father taught him to read a chapter in the Greek Testament by pronouncing the words to him. He was distinguished also for the utmost conscientiousness and purity of intention. When he was less than six years old, his father being about to leave home on a journey, remarked to him that he must take his place in the family, so far as he could, during his absence. Joseph accordingly spent most of the time in the study among his father's books, and when the hour for family prayer returned, he regularly called the family together, read a chapter in their hearing, and then knelt down and offered a prayer so fervent and touching that even the domestics of the household found it difficult to refrain from tears.



Until the age of ten, Joseph remained at the Grammar School at Portsmouth; but in the year 1795, he was sent to Phillips Academy, Exeter, which, at that time, and for nearly half a century after, was under the care of that eminent instructor, Dr. Benjamin Abbot. Here he was scarcely less under the influence of his father than while he was under the paternal roof; for he was constantly receiving from him letters of the most judicious and affectionate counsel, descending to every minute circumstance that could have a bearing on his conduct or happiness. So rapid was his progress that, at the age of twelve, he was well prepared to enter college; but his father fearing that the influence of temptation incident to college life would be too much for his extreme youth, was unwilling to risk him at so early an age, and accordingly kept him back till the next year. Meanwhile it was a matter of anxious doubt with both the father and son, whether his collegiate course should be at Harvard or Yale; the son preferring the former on account of some associations which he had already formed at Exeter, and the father inclining to the latter as his own Alma Mater, and as most likely to secure to his son the religious influence which he considered most desirable. The result, however, was that the father waived his scruples, and at the commencement in 1797, Joseph was admitted, at the age of thirteen, one year in advance, to Harvard College. His examination for admission revealed his remarkable powers and left those of the government of College who witnessed it in no doubt that if his life was spared, he was destined to become a star of no common brilliancy.

His college course fully realized, in its progress, all that was promised at its commencement. He was not indeed distinguished for his attainments in the abstract sciences, nor could he be said to be fond of them; and yet he made conscience of getting each lesson well in every department. It was in the study of belles lettres and whatever pertained to the department of criticism, that he made the most marked proficiency. His college "themes" showed a richness and gracefulness of mind, and sometimes an extent of reading, that was truly remarkable; and his reading and speaking were so inimitably beautiful and perfect, that it was very commonly regarded as a high privilege to listen to them. His oration delivered at the commencement when he took his first degree, taken in connection with his very youthful appearance and beautiful form and face, quite captivated and entranced the audience.

After leaving college, he accepted the appointment of assistant teacher in Exeter Academy. His mind seems now to have taken a more decidedly serious direction, and it was about this time that he offered himself as a candidate for membership in his father's church. His father addressed to him a faithful and excellent letter on the occasion, reminding him of the solemnity of the

act which he was about to perform ; but seems to have had no scruples about complying with his request. It does not appear that up to this time, he had formed any definite views of Christianity different from those in which he had been educated.

During his residence in Exeter as an assistant teacher, he commenced a course of study with reference to the ministry ; and it was here probably that his mind began first to diverge from the faith of his fathers. It was here also, in the autumn of 1802, that he was visited with the first attack of that terrible malady, (epilepsy) which finally carried him to his grave. The following passage which he wrote in his journal, evidently intended for no eye but his own, evinces a frame of feeling in reference to this afflictive visitation which every one must approve and admire :—  
“ Another fit of epilepsy. I pray God that I may be prepared, not so much for death as for the loss of health and perhaps of mental faculties. The repetition of these fits must at length reduce me to idiocy. Can I resign myself to the loss of memory, and of that knowledge I may have vainly prided myself upon? O my God, enable me to bear this thought, and make it familiar to my mind, that, by thy grace, I may be willing to endure life as long as thou pleasest to lengthen it. It is not enough to be willing to leave the world when God pleases ; we should be willing even to live useless in it, if he in his holy providence, should send such a calamity upon us. O God ! save me from that hour !”

As the labors which devolved upon him as an assistant teacher at Exeter were considered an overmatch for his constitution, especially after the fearful malady above referred to had made its appearance, it was thought desirable that he should occupy some place where his faculties would be less severely tasked ; and a favorable opening just at that time presented itself in the family of his relative, Theodore Lyman, who was glad to put his services in requisition in preparing two of his sons to enter college. Mr. Lyman soon removed from Boston to Waltham, and Buckminster accompanied him ; and here he was surrounded with all the elegance and luxuries of the most refined society. At this period he was accustomed frequently to visit Boston, and he became particularly intimate with Dr. Freeman, minister of the Stone Chapel, who was his relative by marriage ; and his father seems to have thought it owing, in a degree at least, to this intimacy, that his mind had received a bias in favor of Unitarianism. His admiration of Dr. Freeman seems to have been well nigh unbounded ; and proposals were made to him by the Doctor, to which he seems to have been somewhat inclined to accede, to become associated with him in the services of the Chapel. It was now that his father became fully aware of his defection from the orthodox creed ; and a correspondence commenced between them which was continued for a considerable time, and which evinced

the strongest parental affection and the bitterest disappointment on the one hand, and the deepest filial reverence and sensibility on the other. The father more than once advised his son to direct his attention to some other profession, not dissembling at all his conviction that he lacked the most essential qualification for the ministry; and the son, merely from a regard to his father's feelings, had, at one time, nearly determined to devote himself to literary pursuits; but as the father's opposition seemed somewhat to relax, in the hope probably that his son's views might change, he was finally examined and approved as a candidate for the ministry, by the Boston Association. His first sermon was preached at York, Maine, in the pulpit of his venerable relative, the Rev. Isaac Lyman.

His intellectual developments had previously to this been so remarkable and so well known, that the congregation in Brattle Square, Boston, then recently rendered vacant by the death of Dr. Thatcher, immediately fixed upon him as a suitable person to fill that important vacancy. Here again, his anxious father was distressed at the idea of his occupying, at so early an age, so public and responsible a station; but his wishes were overruled by the importunity of the congregation, who, from the beginning, were enraptured by his eloquence, and even resolved to leave no means unemployed to secure him as their minister. The result was that he was called with great unanimity to the Brattle street church, accepted the call, and was ordained their pastor, January 30, 1805, when less than twenty-one years of age.

His father, though not without some reluctance, consented to preach the ordination sermon; and it must have been, in view of all the circumstances, a severe tax upon his parental sensibilities. In the course of the sermon he addressed the pastor elect in the following significant and touching manner:—

“My son, the day has arrived in which you are to be completely invested with that office, divine in its origin, important in its design, and beneficent in its influence, of which you have been emulous from your earlier years, and which you have always kept in view in your literary pursuits. While I have endeavored to restrain your ardor and check the rapidity of your course, motives of concern for the honor of God and for your reputation and comfort, influenced my conduct. But a power paramount to all human influence has cast the die, and I bow submissively. God's will be done!

“In the hours of parental instruction when my speech and affection distilled upon you as the dew, you have often heard me refer to the cheering satisfaction with which I presented you at the baptismal font in the name of the sacred Trinity, and enrolled you among the members of Christ's visible family; would to God I might now lead you with the same cheering hope to the altar

of God, and lend you to the Lord as long as you shall live. But the days are past in which you can depend upon the offering of a parent. To your own Master you stand or fall. God grant the response may be,—‘He shall be holden up, for God is able to make him stand.’”

And thus he addressed the congregation in behalf of his son:—

“The heart of a father, alive to the interests of a son and not indifferent to the honor of the gospel, recoiled from the idea of his beginning his ministerial efforts upon so public a theatre and before so enlightened an audience; and the hope that longer delay and greater experience would render him more equal to the duties of the ministry, and more worthy of the esteem and respect of his fellow men, induced me to yield with reluctance to your early request to hear him as a candidate. But since your candor and charity have silenced my scruples, and your affection and judgment have become surety for the youth, and he himself hath said, ‘I will go with you,’ I yield him to your request. Bear him up by the arms of faith and prayer. Remember him always in your devotional exercises. May God have you and your pastor within his holy keeping! May he shed down upon you unitedly his celestial dews, that you may be like a watered garden, and like a spring whose waters fail not.”

On the very next day after his ordination, Mr. Buckminster, owing probably to the fatigue and excitement incident to the occasion, was seized with a severe fever by which he was kept out of his pulpit till the beginning of March; and the first sermon which he addressed to the congregation, as their pastor, instead of having special reference to the newly constituted relation, was a sermon on the “advantages of sickness.”

As soon as his health permitted him to return to his active duties, he made it his business to become acquainted with all the families and individuals of his congregation, and recorded the names of all in a manuscript book, together with such remarks in respect to various characters, as might serve to aid him in his pastoral intercourse. In addition to his numerous duties as a parish minister, he was connected with many of the public interests of the day, and especially was one of the most active members of a literary association known as the “Anthology Club,” which at that time concentrated much of the literary talent of Boston and the vicinity. It was by this association that the “Monthly Anthology,” a well known periodical which was continued through a series of years, was conducted; and it is understood that a considerable proportion of the ablest articles contained in it were from the pen of Mr. Buckminster. Though the Anthology was chiefly a literary publication, it was not altogether silent upon theological subjects; and the history of the Unitarian controversy for several years, is to be traced very much through its pages. It

sustained at one time an attitude of pretty decided antagonism to the *Panoplist*, long the accredited organ of the orthodox party, and conducted by the venerable Dr. Morse.

The labors of the first year of his ministry had so far affected his health, and his terrible constitutional malady returned with so much frequency, that in the spring of 1806, his physician, the elder Dr. Warren, recommended that he should try the effect of a voyage to Europe. This measure was finally concluded upon; for his congregation were so much devoted to his interests, that they counted no sacrifice dear that seemed necessary to his health or comfort. Accordingly, a little before the middle of May, he embarked for Liverpool, where he arrived on the 6th of June, and proceeded thence immediately to London, where he was received as a most welcome guest in the family of Samuel Williams, Esq., the brother of his friends, the Lymans. Early in August he was joined by his intimate friend, the Rev. Samuel Cooper Thatcher of Boston, and shortly after they embarked together for the continent, and landed at Harlingen, on the Zuyder Zee. They passed rapidly through Holland and part of Belgium, ascended the Rhine, and partly on foot, made the tour of Switzerland. Thence they proceeded to Paris, where they were detained more than five months, in consequence of nearly all correspondence with England being cut off by the operation of the Berlin and Milan decrees. About the middle of February, he returned from France to England, and after spending the intervening months in traveling in different parts of Great Britain, reached Boston on the 10th of September following.

Mr. Buckminster's tour in Europe, he found a source of rich and constant gratification. In the different countries which he visited, new scenes and objects were constantly passing before him, all of which he contemplated as a most careful and intelligent observer. He made the acquaintance of many of the most distinguished persons both in Great Britain and on the continent, and on some of them at least we know that he left an impression that led them to rank him among the most remarkable men of his time. One important object which he kept constantly in his eye was the selection of a library; much of his time and money were spent in this way; and the result was, that he brought with him to this country, perhaps the rarest collection of books that was then to be found in any private library in New England. He was often solicited to preach in Great Britain, and finally in a few instances consented to do so; though the reason which he gave for it was, not that he supposed his services were particularly needed, but that he might not lose all familiarity with the pulpit. His health, during most of the time that he was absent, was quite vigorous, and his spirits buoyant, though the occasional returns of his malady, could not but fill him sometimes

with gloomy forebodings in respect to what might be its final issue.

On his return to his pastoral charge, it is hardly necessary to say that he was met with the most enthusiastic demonstrations of good will and affection. He seems to have been regarded by his congregation as if he had been a son or a brother in each family which it contained; and his first meeting with them in the church, was signalized as a sort of religious jubilee. His address on that occasion, (for it could scarcely be called a sermon,) was perhaps one of the most beautiful of all his productions. It was the simple effusion of a splendid mind, and a confiding, loving and grateful spirit. But with all the rejoicings of the occasion, there was mingled somewhat of sadness; for it could not be concealed that however his general health might have been improved by a year's rest and recreation, yet there was no evidence that that disease which had so long been acting as a mysterious canker upon his constitution was dislodged.

From this period to the close of his life, there were few incidents in his history of special moment. While he gave himself laboriously to the duties of his profession, he cultivated continually his taste for literature, and was ready to lend the aid of his pen to every effort designed to promote the literary interests of the country. He became a vigorous student of the German language; and he drew upon his accustomed hours of sleep, that his German studies might not occupy time that was needed for his professional duties. He superintended the printing of Griesbach's edition of the New Testament, and corrected several errors which had escaped in previous editions. In 1811 he was appointed first lecturer on Biblical criticism upon the foundation in Harvard College, established by the Hon. Samuel Dexter. This appointment he accepted; but while he had yet scarcely begun his preparation for the duties of the place, death put an end to all his earthly labors.

Mr. Buckminster was at last arrested suddenly in his career. There had been apparently no waning of his brilliant powers; though he himself felt, in common with all his friends, that the seeds of early decay, perhaps even of idiocy, were germinating in his constitution. "Election week," as it used to be called,—now the "week of the anniversaries,"—came, bringing with it to him more than the ordinary routine of duty; for he was the preacher that year before the "Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, Piety and Charity." The sermon which he preached on that occasion, he repeated in his own pulpit on the succeeding Sabbath; and it was the last sermon that he ever preached. On Wednesday succeeding, the 3d of June, his malady returned upon him with a crushing weight, extinguishing in an hour the last gleams of reason, and impressing on his case, the stamp of

absolute hopelessness. During the six days that intervened between the commencement and the termination of his illness, his house was continually thronged with anxious and distressed visitors; and when he died, it seemed as if the whole town went into mourning. It may safely be said that few cases of mortality have occurred, which have proved the occasion of such universal and protracted grief; for even now, after the lapse of nearly forty years, some who had but a transient acquaintance with him, can hardly speak of his death without manifest emotion. The sermon at his funeral was preached by the Rev. President Kirkland, a part of which has been preserved in Dr. Palfrey's discourses on the History of the Brattle street church.

Mr. Buckminster's publications during his life were not numerous. The first was a sermon published in January, 1809, on the death of Governor Sullivan. It was one of his most splendid efforts; though it seems to have been the subject of some animadversion at the time on account of its supposed political bearings. In July of the same year, he wrote the address of the Massachusetts Bible Society at its first formation, which was afterwards republished with high praise, in the Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society. In August succeeding, he delivered the annual address before the Phi Beta Kappa Society at Cambridge, which was published in the Anthology. This address was much spoken of at the time, and illustrates at once his fine powers and his various reading, better perhaps than any other of his printed productions. In May, 1811, was published his sermon on the death of the Rev. William Emerson. This contains splendid passages, but bears marks of haste not discoverable in any other of his acknowledged publications. Beside the preceding, he published part of a sermon on the death of Governor Bowdoin, and was a liberal contributor to the Anthology, and an occasional contributor to some other periodicals.

In describing Mr. Buckminster in some of his relations, we are permitted to draw upon our own personal recollections, though they are the recollections of early youth. His person, as we remember him, was rather below the medium size, and perfectly symmetrical in its formation. His face, which is admirably represented by Stewart's portrait, was a beautiful compound of intelligence and benignity. His manners were as simple as childhood: there was an openness, a gentleness, a gracefulness about them which made him quite irresistible. You felt yourself in contact with a mind of rare endowments, and yet felt nothing of the restraint which acknowledged superiority often inspires. In the intercourse of society he was as far as possible from being obtrusive, and yet sustained himself in all circumstances with freedom and dignity. In the pulpit, he had almost unparalleled attractions. With a voice that spoke music, and a face that beamed

light and love, and a calm self-possession and winning gracefulness of manner, he held his audience as if by a spell; and though one might dissent from his opinions, he would find it difficult to resist the power of his oratory. He prayed with his eyes open, elevated at an angle of about forty-five; and yet there was every thing in his manner to indicate the highest mental abstraction. His gesture in the delivery of his discourse was not very abundant; and it was so natural and significant, that it seemed to have its effect almost without being noticed. He belonged to a different school of pulpit orators from that of his father, or Dr. Mason, or President Dwight; but it may reasonably be doubted whether a more bland and attractive manner has ever been possessed by any American clergyman.

In regard to Buckminster's religious opinions, we should be inclined to say, from all the evidence before us, that on most questions which have since divided the Unitarians and Orthodox, they were not thoroughly fixed. The commonly received doctrine of the Trinity he evidently rejected; and in regard to the person of Christ, his mind probably reposed in the Arian hypothesis. Mrs. Lee has furnished extracts from several of his discourses on other doctrines, such as regeneration, atonement, &c., which, however, rather oppose what we should regard a caricature of orthodox views, than attempt to defend any other distinct system. In some of his discourses he speaks of the death of Christ as "the ground of the sinner's pardon;"—as "that which rendered it *just* for God to forgive sin;" though we are inclined to think that his later sermons evince less of sympathy with the system in which he had been educated, than his early ones.

The greater part of Mr. Buckminster's preaching would not have been complained of except for its omissions by any orthodox audience. It sometimes reached a point of the most impressive and overpowering eloquence. Witness the following extract from his sermon on "Habit."

"It is impossible to dismiss this subject without considering a common topic, the inefficacy of a death-bed repentance. It is to be feared that charity which hopeth and believeth all things, has sometimes discovered more of generous credulity, than of well-founded hope, when it has laid great stress and built much consolation, on the casual expressions and faint sighs of dying men. Far be it from us to excite suspicion, or recall anxiety in the breast of surviving friendship, or to throw a new shade of terror over the valley of death; but better, far better, were it for a thousand breasts to be pierced with temporary anguish, and a new horror to be added to the dreary passage of the grave, than that one soul be lost to heaven by the delusive expectation of effectual repentance in a dying hour. For, as we have repeatedly asked, what is effectual repentance? Can it be supposed, that, when the vigor of life has been spent in the establishment of vicious propensities, when all the vivacity of youth, all the soberness of manhood, and all the leisure of old age, have been given to the service of sin, when vice has been growing with the growth



and strengthening with the strength, when it has spread out with the limbs of the stripling, and become rigid with the fibres of the aged, can it, I say, be supposed that the labors of such a life, are to be overthrown by one last exertion of a mind, impaired with disease, by the convulsive exercise of an affrighted spirit, and by the inarticulate and feeble sounds of an expiring breath? Repentance consists not in one or more acts of contrition; it is a permanent change of the disposition. Those dispositions and habits of mind, which you bring to your dying bed, you will carry with you to another world. These habits are the dying dress of the soul. They are the grave-clothes in which it must come forth, at the last, to meet the sentence of an impartial judge. If they were filthy, they will be filthy still. The washing of baptismal water will not at that hour, cleanse the spots of the soul. The confession of sins, which have never been removed, will not furnish the conscience with an answer towards God. The reception of the elements will not then infuse a principle of spiritual life, any more than unconsecrated bread and wine will infuse health into the limbs, on which the cold damps of death have already collected. Say not, that you have discarded such superstitious expectations. You have not discarded them while you defer any thing to that hour, while you venture to rely on any thing but the mercy of God, toward a heart, holy, sincere and sanctified, a heart which loves heaven for its purity, and God for his goodness. If, in this solemn hour, the soul of an habitual and inveterate offender be prepared for the residence of pure and spotless spirits, it can be only by a sovereign and miraculous interposition of omnipotence. His power we pretend not to limit. He can wash the sooty Ethiop white, and cause the spots on the leopard's skin to disappear. We presume not to fathom the counsels of his will; but this we will venture to assert, that if, at the last hour of the sinner's life, the power of God ever interposes to snatch him from his ruin, such interposition will never be disclosed to the curiosity of man. For, if it should once be believed that the rewards of heaven can be obtained by such an instantaneous and miraculous change at the last hour of life, all our ideas of moral probation, and of the connection between the character here and condition hereafter are loose, unstable, and groundless; the nature and the laws of God's moral government are made, at once, inexplicable; our exhortations are useless, our experience false; and the whole apparatus of gospel means and motives becomes a cumbrous and unnecessary provision."

Not long after Mr. Buckminster's death, a selection from his sermons was very carefully made and given to the public in an octavo volume. A few years later, another volume was published; and at a more recent period his "works" have appeared in two volumes duodecimo, in which are included various extracts from his sermons which were published through a succession of years in the "Christian Disciple." With the first selection of his sermons was published an interesting biographical sketch of him, from the pen of his intimate friend, the Rev. Samuel Cooper Thatcher.

For many years Mr. Buckminster's remains reposed in the family vault of Mr. Lyman, at Waltham; but they have been lately transferred to Mount Auburn Cemetery, where a fitting monument has been erected to his memory.

We now take our leave of this remarkable book and of these remarkable men. We think it fortunate that Mrs. Lee had the materials for such a volume at command, and that she was induced at this late period to make such provision for perpetuating

the memory of many events in the lives of her illustrious relatives which would otherwise have remained unknown or been forgotten. As a literary production, it is enough to say of the work, that it is worthy of her reputation and her name; and even those who differ from her in their religious views will thank her for a rich entertainment, and especially for the beautiful spirit of filial reverence which she has manifested towards the memory of her orthodox father.

---

ART. III.—WRITINGS AND OPINIONS OF THOMAS CARLYLE.

*Past and Present, Chartism, and Sartor Resartus*; by THOMAS CARLYLE. New edition, complete in one volume. New York: Harper and Brothers, publishers, 82 Cliff street. 1848.

THIS recent edition of some of the most characteristic works of this very remarkable author, induces us to offer at this time some views, which we have desired an opportunity to present, of his literary merits, and of his opinions on social and religious questions.

Since the death of Coleridge, no man in the British Islands has had so many followers this side of the Atlantic as Carlyle. Macaulay and Dickens have had more readers, but neither of them has raised up a school. The reason is obvious. Carlyle is more of an innovator upon established modes of thought. He has more peculiar and salient points to be the nucleus of a sect. He writes more on abstract and philosophical subjects. He has set afloat more original thoughts, and thus quickened more minds. He writes more in earnest, and thus draws after him the earnest spirits of the age.

The originality of this author is perhaps more apparent than real. Much that is new to us, may be merely German thought transferred into English. Carlyle does not conceal his admiration of German literature. He reveres Goethe as the wisest of the moderns, and in one place asks boldly, "What work nobler than transplanting foreign thought into the barren domestic soil; except indeed planting thought of your own, which the fewest are privileged to do?"

But wherever the ideas came from, by which this writer is possessed, and to which he is laboring to give utterance; whether from his own capacious and fruitful brain, or from his vast range over the whole field of English and continental literature, the form at least, in which they appear, is original. And they are