

ANNALS

OF THE

AMERICAN PULPIT;

OR

COMMEMORATIVE NOTICES

OF

DISTINGUISHED AMERICAN CLERGYMEN

OF

VARIOUS DENOMINATIONS,

FROM THE EARLY SETTLEMENT OF THE COUNTRY TO THE CLOSE OF THE YEAR
EIGHTEEN HUNDRED AND FIFTY-FIVE.

WITH HISTORICAL INTRODUCTIONS.

BY WILLIAM B. SPRAGUE, D. D.

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on Elijah ascending before him into Heaven,—“My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!”

His death was as calm and triumphant as his life was pure, disinterested, and lovely; and as pious men carried him to his burial, and as we covered up his remains under the clods of the valley, the prayer arose at least from one heart, “May I live the life of this righteous man, and let my last end be like his!”

There are many scenes in the life of Dr. Miller that memory frequently recalls—scenes in the class-room, in the General Assembly, in the Synod of New Jersey, in the pulpit, in the social party—scenes which occurred during the conflicts of parties, and in the frank and unrestrained intercourse of social life. In them all Dr. Miller was pre-eminently like himself. But the scene by which I most love to recall him, and which memory most frequently brings back, is that parting scene in his study. Oh, may that last prayer be answered!

With great regard, very sincerely yours,

NICHOLAS MURRAY

ARCHIBALD ALEXANDER, D. D.*

1791—1851.

ARCHIBALD ALEXANDER was of Scotch Irish extraction,—his grandfather, Archibald Alexander, having emigrated from Ireland to Virginia in 1737. His father, William Alexander, was a person of great worth and respectability, and was one of the original Trustees of Liberty Hall Academy, which has since become Washington College. The subject of this sketch was born near Lexington, Rockbridge County, Va., April 17, 1772, and was the third of nine children. Among the incidents of his early life, he used to relate that, on his arrival at Liberty Hall, where he went to pursue his studies, he found, on unpacking his trunk, a copy of Soame Jenyns on the Evidences of Christianity, which his mother had placed there without his knowledge. He became at once deeply interested in the work, and did not lay it aside till he had finished reading it.

In 1788, a very unusual attention to religion prevailed in the Congregations in Virginia, South of the James River, and East of the Blue Ridge. In August, 1789, the Rev. William Graham, Rector of Liberty Hall, in compliance with an invitation from the Rev. John Blair Smith, then President of Hampden Sidney College, made a visit to Prince Edward, to attend a Communion in the Briery Congregation. He was accompanied by several of his young students, who, he hoped, might find the visit profitable to them. Archibald Alexander was one of the number; and the following incidents of the visit are related by himself:—

“The sermon of Mr. Graham on the text—‘Comfort ye, comfort ye my people,’ &c., was the first sermon that he preached, on his first visit to Prince Edward, when I accompanied him. It was preached at Briery, immediately after the administration of the Lord’s Supper; and Dr. Smith said to me that he had never heard more than one sermon which he liked as well, and that one was preached by the Rev. James Mitchel. I did not

* Memoir by his son, Rev. J. A. Alexander, D. D.—Presb. Mag., II.—Foote’s Sketches of Va., 2d Series.

hear the first part of this discourse, for there being a prospect of rain, the Communion was administered in the house, and the non-professors, to which number I belonged, were requested to remain under the arbour, and hear sermons from the Rev. Nash Legrand, and the Rev. Samuel Houston.* But the rain came on and drove us into the house, as many as could press in. I remember the peculiarly solemn appearance of the congregation when I entered the house. The speaker was then addressing such as were not the people of God; and he commenced every paragraph with 'Oh comfortless ye!'

It was during this revival that Archibald Alexander, as he believed, first became experimentally acquainted with the power of religion. He returned home with a joyful, and as he trusted, a renovated heart. Mr. Graham, on his return, preached at Lexington, and after the sermon called upon two young men, one of whom was Mr. Alexander, to lead in prayer. The effect upon the congregation was very perceptible, and a revival of great power immediately commenced, which extended to almost every Presbyterian Church in the Valley of Virginia. Mr. Alexander made a public profession of his faith in the autumn of 1789.

Several young men who were the subjects of this revival, directed their attention to the study of Theology, under the superintendence of Mr. Graham and of this number was young Alexander.

In the spring of 1791, Mr. Alexander, at the suggestion, and by the earnest desire, of his Preceptor, Mr. Graham, consented to go to Philadelphia to attend the General Assembly, in the capacity of a ruling elder. There were many highly interesting incidents attending his journey and visit, but he seems to have felt ill at ease on account of his extreme youth; and what he undertook then not without great reluctance, he regarded in after life, as having been at best an ill-judged and awkward affair.

On the 1st of October, 1791, when he was nineteen years of age, he was licensed to preach the Gospel by the Lexington Presbytery. The text of his trial sermon before the Presbytery, which was given him by the Rev. Samuel Houston, was "But the Lord said unto me, say not I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee, thou shalt speak." Jer. i. 7. Mr. Graham listened to the sermon with the deepest interest; and, at the close of it, expressed to a few friends a most favourable opinion of the character and prospects of the young man

* SAMUEL HOUSTON, the son of John and Sally (Todd) Houston, was born within the limits of the New Providence Congregation, Va., and completed his education about the time of the removal of Liberty Hall Academy to the neighbourhood of Lexington. In 1781, when he was in his twenty-third year, he served for a while in the army of the Revolution. In November of that year, he was received by the Hanover Presbytery as a candidate for the ministry; and on the 22d of October, 1782, was licensed to preach the Gospel. On the 20th of May, 1783, he accepted a call from the Providence Congregation, in what is now Tennessee, and was ordained on the third Wednesday of August following. When the Presbytery of Abingdon was formed in August 1785, Mr. Houston became one of its members. In common with most of his brethren at the time, he seems to have mingled a good deal in civil affairs, and was a zealous advocate for the formation of a new State to be called Franklin. Owing to various circumstances, he returned to Virginia, sometime before the State of Tennessee was formed; and on the 24th of October, 1789, was admitted a member of the Lexington Presbytery. On the 20th of September, 1791, he accepted a call from Falling Spring for two-thirds of his time; and here and at High Bridge he performed the duties of a minister with great fidelity until he was disabled by the infirmities of age. He was, for many years, a popular and successful teacher of a classical school. He attended the Synod of Virginia for the last time in October, 1837, listened to the debates with great interest, and finally gave his vote to sustain the Exsisting Acts of the General Assembly of that year. He died on the 20th of January, 1839, aged eighty-one years. He is represented as having united great modesty with great intrepidity and benevolence.

who had delivered it. During the winter succeeding his licensure, he was occupied, partly in gratuitous missionary labour, and partly in supplying the pulpits of his friends,—the Rev. Nash Legrand and the Rev. William Hill, one of whom was absent on a journey, the other confined by illness.

The General Assembly having directed each of the Synods to recommend “two members well qualified to be employed in missions on our frontiers, for the purpose of organizing churches, administering ordinances, ordaining elders,” &c., the Commission of the Synod of Virginia, on the 19th of April, 1792, appointed Mr. Alexander, then a probationer under the care of the Lexington Presbytery, to carry out the purpose of the Assembly, by engaging in the missionary work. In fulfilling this appointment, he laboured in several of the destitute counties of Virginia, and wherever he went, was greatly admired, as well for his quiet and unassuming manner, as for his simple and sparkling eloquence. In this missionary tour he was occupied about six months, during which time he visited fifteen or sixteen counties in Virginia, and several in North Carolina.

The Rev. John Blair Smith having accepted a call to Philadelphia, the Congregations of Briery and Cumberland, together with the Trustees of Hampden Sidney College, invited Mr. Graham to take charge of both the College and the Churches; and upon his returning a negative answer, the attention of the people was directed to Mr. Alexander. All the Presbyterian Congregations in that neighbourhood were then vacant,—namely, Cumberland including the College, Briery, Buffalo, and Cub Creek including Charlotte Court House; but for the two first named, the Rev. Drury Lacy, then acting President of the College, was a regular supply. It was agreed, upon consultation, to call two ministers, who should serve these several churches in rotation; and Mr. Lacy and Mr. Alexander were the two designated, both of whom signified their acceptance. They were to preach in six different places,—their field being not less than sixty miles in length, and thirty in breadth; and their travelling was all on horseback. This arrangement, however, proved inconvenient to the pastors, and unsatisfactory to the people; in consequence of which, a division of the field was soon effected, and Mr. Alexander received for his share the Churches of Briery and Cub Creek. He was ordained at Briery, November 7, 1794, and was dismissed from Cub Creek, April 11, 1797, and from Briery, November 16, 1798.

Mr. Lacy having resigned the Presidency of the College in 1796, Mr. Alexander accepted a call to become his successor; and though the institution, owing to various causes, was at that time in a depressed and languishing state, he, by his great wisdom and untiring industry, soon imparted to it a more healthful and vigorous tone, as well as greatly increased the number of its students. His combined influence in the College and in the pulpit, at this period, was at once very powerful and very extensive.

In 1796, Mr. Alexander went as a delegate to the General Assembly at Philadelphia; and such was his popularity as a preacher, that the Pine Street Church, then vacant by the removal of Dr. John Blair Smith to the Presidency of Union College, invited him to become their Pastor. He, however, declined the invitation.

About the year 1797, Mr. Alexander became seriously doubtful in respect to the authority of infant baptism. The occasion of this was what he afterwards regarded as “too rigid notions as to the purity of the Church, with a

belief that receiving infants had a corrupting tendency." He frankly stated the embarrassment he felt on the subject, to his people and his Presbytery; and by both was tolerated in the omission to administer the ordinance to infants for a year or two; but he subsequently became satisfied that his scruples were not well founded, and returned to his former practice.

In 1801, he was sent a second time to the General Assembly. His health had now become considerably reduced, in consequence of his arduous labours, and he felt the need of relaxation and rest. Accordingly, after the Assembly had closed its sessions, he proceeded to New England, as a delegate to the General Association of Connecticut, and continued his journey as far East as Portsmouth, N. H. He preached in various places, and there are still persons living in New England, who will speak in raptures of the wonderful effect which his eloquence produced upon them. On his return home, he preached in the Third Presbyterian Church in Baltimore, and shortly after received a call to settle there, as the successor of Dr. Allison, but declined it.

In 1806, he received a second call from the Pine Street Church in Philadelphia; which, owing to the weight of his duties in the College, in connection with some other circumstances, he determined to accept. He was received a member of the Presbytery of Philadelphia on the 21st of April, 1807, and was installed on the 20th of the next month,—the Sermon on the occasion being preached by the Rev. George C. Potts.* Here he continued, an eminently faithful pastor and popular preacher, for about six years.

In 1807, at the age of thirty-five, he was chosen Moderator of the General Assembly. The next year he preached the opening Sermon on the text—"Seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the Church;" (1 Cor. xiv. 12;) and on this occasion he made a suggestion in regard to the importance of a Theological Seminary, which is supposed to have had an important bearing on the ultimate action of the Church in establishing the Seminary at Princeton.

In 1810, the degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred upon him by the College of New Jersey.

In 1812, the Assembly having decided on establishing a Seminary at Princeton, Dr. Alexander, on the 2d of June, was chosen to the Professor-

* GEORGE CHARLES POTTS was a descendant of an English officer by the name of Potts, who, when the army of Cromwell made its memorable incursion into Ireland, (1649,) remained in the Island and became the head of an Irish house. He was born in Clontibret, County of Monaghan, in 1775; was educated at the University of Glasgow; and was licensed to preach the Gospel by the Presbytery of Monaghan. He entered with great ardour into the memorable struggle for freedom; joined the Society of United Irishmen; and in 1795 visited Paris as the bearer of an important communication to the French National Convention. While on this embassy, he travelled as far as Switzerland. But being satisfied that he could not remain with safety in his native country, he directed his course to the United States, and arrived here in July, 1797. After preaching for some time to various vacant churches in Pennsylvania and Delaware, he chose Philadelphia as the field of his permanent labours, and, with the sanction of the Presbytery, gathered a new Church in the Southern part of the city. In June, 1800, he was ordained and installed Pastor of the Fourth Church; which, from a small beginning, grew to a large and well established congregation. Here he continued in the faithful discharge of his duties, for thirty-six years, when, on account of his increasing infirmities, he resigned his charge. For three years preceding his death, he was an invalid, and occasionally a great sufferer. He died, sustained to the last by the glorious hopes of a better life, on the 23d of September, 1833, in his sixty-fourth year. Without any high degree of popularity as a preacher, he was distinguished for soundness of judgment; for the kindness of his spirit and manners; for the most faithful attention to his pastoral duties; and for a cordial sympathy in every enterprise designed to promote any of the great interests of humanity. He was the father of the Rev. George Potts, D. D., Pastor of the Church in University Place in the city of New York.

ship of Didactic and Polemic Theology. He accepted the appointment, after considerable deliberation, and was inaugurated on the 12th of August following,—an appropriate Sermon on the occasion being preached by the Rev. Dr. Miller, which, in connection with Dr. Alexander's Inaugural Address, was published.

Here he continued in the laborious discharge of his duties till near the close of life. About a month before he died, he was attacked with dysentery, which had been prevailing to some extent in that region; and his friends, from the commencement of his disease, were somewhat apprehensive of a fatal result. He continued to sink gradually, until it became apparent to all, and to none more than himself, that he had nearly done with the world. He contemplated the approaching event with the utmost calmness, and felt that the circumstances of his departure were all ordered in great mercy. It was a source of special gratification to him that his son, the Rev. Dr. James W. Alexander, who had been passing a few months in Europe, reached Princeton, on his return, a week before his father's death. He died in perfect peace on the 22d of October, 1851. The Synod of New Jersey, which was in session at Princeton at the time, attended his Funeral on the 24th,—an appropriate Sermon being preached on the occasion by the Rev. Dr. McDowell, whom Dr. Alexander himself had designated to perform the service.

Dr. Alexander was married on the 5th of April, 1802, to Janetta, daughter of the Rev. James Waddel, D. D., of the county of Louisa,—a connection with which no small part of the happiness of his future life was identified. Mrs. Alexander died, after a brief illness, on the 7th of September, 1852. They had seven children who survived them,—six sons and one daughter. Of the sons, three are ministers of the Gospel, two are lawyers, and one is a physician.

The following is a list of Dr. Alexander's publications:—

VOLUMES.

A Brief Outline of the Evidences of the Christian Religion, 1825. 12mo. The Canon of the Old and New Testament ascertained; or the Bible complete without the Apocrypha and unwritten Traditions, 1826. 12mo. A Selection of Hymns, adapted to the Devotions of the Closet, the Family, and the Social Circle, and containing subjects appropriate to the Monthly Concerts of Prayer for the success of Missions and Sunday Schools, 1831. (Seven hundred and forty-two hymns.) 32mo. The Lives of the Patriarchs, published by the American Sunday School Union, 1835. 18mo. History of Israel. 12mo. Biographical Sketches of the Founder and Principal Alumni of the Log College; together with an account of the Revivals of Religion under their Ministry, 1845. 12mo. A History of Colonization on the Western Coast of Africa, 1846. 8vo. A History of the Israelitish Nation from their Origin to their Dispersion at the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, 1852. 8vo. Outlines of Moral Science, New York, 1852. 12mo.

PAMPHLETS.

A Sermon at the opening of the General Assembly, 1808. A Discourse occasioned by the burning of the Theatre in the city of Richmond, Va., 1812. A Missionary Sermon before the General Assembly, 1813. An Inaugural Discourse delivered at Princeton, 1814. A Sermon to Young Men, preached in the chapel of the College of New Jersey, 1826. Sugges-

tions in vindication of Sunday Schools, 1829. Growth in Grace : Two Sermons in the National Preacher, 1829. A Sermon before the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, 1829. The Pastoral Office: A Sermon preached in Philadelphia, before the Association of the Alumni of the Theological Seminary at Princeton, May 21, 1834. The House of God Desirable : A Sermon in the Presbyterian Preacher, 1835. The People of God led in Unknown Ways : A Sermon Preached in the First Presbyterian Church, Richmond, 1842. An Address delivered before the Alumni Association of Washington College, Va., on Commencement day, 1843.

He published Introductions to Matthew Henry's Commentary, Works of the Rev. William Jay, and Dr. Waterbury's Advice to a Young Christian.

The following books and tracts, as well as some of those mentioned above, are issued by the Presbyterian Board of Publication :—

Practical Sermons ; to be read in Families and Social Meetings, 8vo. Letters to the Aged, 18mo. Counsels of the Aged to the Young, 18mo. Universalism false and unscriptural, 18mo. A Brief Compend of Bible Truth, 12mo. Divine Guidance ; or the people of God led in Unknown Ways, 32mo. Thoughts on Religious Experience, 12mo. The Life of the Rev. Richard Baxter, (an abridgment,) 18mo. The Life of Andrew Melville, (an abridgment,) 18mo. The Life of John Knox, the Scottish Reformer, (an abridgment,) 18mo. The Way of Salvation familiarly explained in a conversation between a Father and his Children, 32mo.

To which must be added the following Tracts :—

The Duty of Catechetical Instruction. A Treatise on Justification by Faith. Christ's gracious Invitation to the weary and heavy-laden. Ruth, the Moabitess. Love to an Unseen Saviour. Letters to the Aged. A Dialogue between a Presbyterian and a Friend (Quaker). The Amiable Youth falling short of Heaven. The Importance of Salvation. Future Punishment Endless. Justification by Faith. Sinners welcome to Jesus Christ. The following Tracts have been published by the American Tract Society :—The Day of Judgment. The Misery of the Lost.

FROM THE REV. JOHN HALL, D. D.

TRENTON, March 28, 1855.

My dear Sir : It would give me great pleasure to make the slightest contribution to the materials for illustrating the character of Dr. Alexander ; but I do not find any thing in my recollections or impressions that seems to have any original value. Such as they are, however, they are at your service.

My first recollection of Dr. Alexander is as the Catechist of the children of his congregation in Philadelphia. Through the only winter which I was old enough to attend, we were assembled on Saturday afternoons in the main aisle of the church. Our seats were the baize-covered benches used by the communicants, when sitting at the Lord's table. The aisle was paved with bricks, and with the gravestone of Dr. Duffield, a former Pastor of the Church. A large tin-plate stove in the middle, was the only heater. Near it the Pastor took his seat, by a small table, and put the class through the Shorter Catechism. The older children were required to bring written proofs of certain points assigned. I was scarcely out of my infancy when the Doctor left Philadelphia for Princeton, and cannot revive any impressions of his course as a Pastor beyond the incidents of the middle aisle on Saturdays ; but I could not have passed so much of my life among those who never ceased to speak of his ministry with fond recitals of its extraordinary value, without receiving some idea of its characteristics. Imagine

then, a man of Dr. Alexander's knowledge, wisdom, and piety, placed over a people of plain habits, but of religious dispositions,—to whom he would and easily *could* accommodate his bearing and language at all times and in all places; always simple, affable and in good humour, but never light, familiar or undignified; inexhaustible in conversation, yet not exciting a thought that he loved to talk or to be heard; suiting himself to each one's intellectual and spiritual condition with equal facility; delighting most to serve the poor and ignorant, and adapt himself to them, but just as well qualified, and as much at home, in serving those who stand highest in the social or mental ranks; in preaching, actuated by no ambition of greatness, and yet attaining it by the very talent of making every class of hearers interested and pleased; so living among his people that all could confide in him as their best friend and counsellor in private as well as in the pulpit; accustomed to have their tenderest emotions kept in action by the sagacity and force with which his sermons, prayers, exhortations, and conversations were perpetually penetrating their hearts, and having no eccentricities or habits that would qualify the general tenor of so much excellence—imagine such a Pastor, and you will not wonder how a plain congregation could *love* as well as, or even more than, *admire* him.

As is so often the case with the most effective preachers, no printed sermons of Dr. Alexander's can give an adequate conception of the interest which belonged to their delivery, especially when he preached without a manuscript. It was the naturalness of his manner,—the getting up and talking rather than a formal oration or lecture,—the sweetness of his voice and the delightful modulations of its tones, in which feeling and understanding, instead of the rules of elocution, were obviously exercising the whole direction—that captivated the ear, even when the matter made no impression. He had very peculiar cadences—tones now so tender, and now so solemn, and now so long-drawn, and always so unaffected, that one who did not know the language he spoke, must have been moved by the very sound and manner. So his gestures were peculiar. They were not graceful, neither were they ungraceful; but they were natural and significant. The fore-finger pressed on the chin at the pause of a sentence which called for serious reflection—the head thrown down, and eyes peering forth in silence, as if expecting that what he had said *must* be that moment taking effect,—every look and tone indicating that *his* soul was in what he was saying, and that he was moving the souls he addressed,—many more such unstudied, unaffected traits of his manner in preaching can be recalled by those who heard him, than they can describe to the apprehension of those who never enjoyed this privilege. The words were not remarkable for rhetorical excellence, except the utmost simplicity of expression, adapted to all classes of hearers, be admitted to be such an excellence in the pulpit. Hence his universal acceptance. I have before me a family letter, written by my father in June, 1818, who, on his way to the seashore at Long Branch, stopped for the Sabbath at the little village of Eatontown, in the neighbourhood. This was six years after Dr. Alexander left Philadelphia, when we were his parishioners. He writes,—“We had the pleasure of hearing Dr. Alexander preach yesterday. It was in a neat Methodist Church about three miles from this town. The Doctor had a ride of four miles. The preacher of the place finished about twelve o'clock, and our Doctor began in about fifteen minutes afterwards. His intention was to make a short address; but as he advanced in the discourse he seemed to become interested, and a more animated, eloquent discourse I never heard from him. His text was, 'Take my yoke upon you,' &c. His audience, though at times very noisy, (I suppose this alludes to the audible demonstrations of sympathy often heard in churches of this denomination,) were very attentive, and seemed to feel the word preached. His sermon was nearly an hour and a quarter long, and when he finished, though unusually late, the good people seemed to be in no haste to go. They tarried

about the door till he came out, and I believe the whole congregation stood looking at him, as if wondering who he was." It will be admitted by those who knew the Doctor's temperament and characteristics, that this was just the occasion for one of the most striking manifestations of his power, and such will readily believe that the extempore discourse that so charmed a plain, country congregation, would have proved equally fascinating and impressive to the most cultivated persons who might have been present, if their hearts had the least sympathy with Divine subjects. Indeed the youngest of his hearers were often kept attentive by the manner so direct and colloquial, in which he often preached. A relative, who was but sixteen years old when the Doctor removed to Princeton, informs me that he has never forgotten the substance of many of his discourses, and recognises several passages in the volume of "Practical Sermons" as once heard in Pine Street.

The vivacity, intelligence, and inquisitiveness, of Dr. Alexander's conversation will be remembered among his most agreeable qualities; and I have often been reminded of a remark I heard when a child, from my mother, that, whatever was the business or calling of any one with whom he conversed, one would have supposed that the Doctor was of the same pursuit, and had lived in the same place. Though always seeking information from every one he encountered, he seemed already to be familiar with the leading facts, and generally with details. A friend of mine once said to me that while a student at the Seminary, he was often foiled in trying to communicate to his teacher in their familiar interviews something new or uncommon that occurred to him in his reading or observation, and had to content himself with the resolution to be constantly receiving every sort of information from him without imparting any in return. After leaving the Seminary, however, he spent ten years in India, and upon his return, he went, as he said, with some confidence that he could now find something to say that Dr. Alexander did not know beforehand; but, after a long conversation, he came away with the disheartening impression that he knew more, even about India, than himself.

But the more I strive to give expression to my views of his peculiarities, the more confident I become that he was one of those uncommon men whose traits cannot be communicated by description, and who must be seen and heard to be at all appreciated, or to have the secret of their influence and popularity understood.

Very respectfully yours,

JOHN HALL

FROM THE REV. H. A. BOARDMAN, D. D.

PHILADELPHIA, April 9, 1855.

Rev. and dear Sir: It has given me very great pleasure to learn that you were engaged in writing a series of biographical sketches of the leading ministers of our country, and I cannot deny your request when you ask me for a letter to be inserted in your account of the late venerable Dr. Alexander. It was my privilege to be a good deal in the society of our revered Professor, during the three years I spent at Princeton; and I was in the habit of meeting him not unfrequently, down to the close of his life. But I have had no advantages above those enjoyed by many of my brethren, for supplying the sort of reminiscences you desire; nor can I write any thing which I should regard as a fitting tribute to the memory of this patriarchal man. But I am quite willing to say just what occurs to me on the subject; and you must allow me to say it in the most desultory manner.

If I were to attempt to account for Dr. Alexander's great influence both in the Seminary and out of it, I should say, first of all, that it was not owing to any

assumption of superiority on his part. For, aside from the fact that pretensions of this kind are apt to defeat their own end, all who knew him are aware that entire exemption from such claims was one of his prominent characteristics. No one could be more unassuming in manner and disposition than he was. Nor was his influence to be ascribed altogether, or even chiefly, to the splendour of his abilities. For, although his talents and attainments were of a very high order, they were not of so extraordinary a cast as to place him in this view above all his contemporaries. But the secret of his power over men lay in the singular *combination* of excellencies which his character presented—in his blended piety and wisdom; his simplicity and consistency; his sound sense and his spirituality; his never saying nor doing foolish things, and his hearty sympathy with every thing good, and kind, and useful; and above all, or as pervading all, his deep experimental knowledge of the human heart, and of the Gospel as the only remedy for its corruptions. None who were in the habit of hearing him preach, will wonder at the sway he exercised over those brought in contact with him. For how can we help reverencing a man, whom we feel, as soon as he begins to speak, busy about our hearts, and who goes on opening one ward after another, until we begin to fear that there is not a secret chamber that he will not enter, and expose all that is in it? This was what Dr. Alexander did—he addressed himself so much to the consciences of people,—came home so thoroughly to their own varied experiences, that they must have been either more or less than human not to be moved by it. He seemed to have studied every phase of character, and to be equally at home in every part of the wide field of experimental religion. It mattered not whether the subject were joy or sorrow, temptation or triumph, submission or rebellion, trust or despondency, faith or works, the flesh or the spirit, life or death—you soon saw, in listening to him, that it was familiar ground to *him*, and that wherever you were, he had been there before you. His discursive *talks* at the Sabbath afternoon conferences in the Seminary, if gathered up by a stenographer, would have formed a body of practical and casuistical Divinity, inferior to nothing of the kind in the language. His students, in all their doubts, and conflicts, and fears, felt at full liberty to consult him, and they always found him perfectly accessible. He could penetrate the nature of their spiritual difficulties from a hint or two, as readily as Cuvier, the great naturalist, could identify a skeleton from a single joint. He was quick in discerning, and gentle but firm in administering, the antidote which every case required. And then his counsels carried such *authority* with them that they were far more effective than they would have been, had the same sentiments been expressed by another person. The feeling was, that it was not safe to disregard the views of one, who evidently enjoyed in so high a degree the presence of the Holy Spirit. And so strong was this feeling that many a conscientious student has had his hope revived by an encouraging word from his revered teacher, while others of doubtful piety have been led by his paternal and faithful suggestions to turn aside into some more suitable profession.

There was a charm about Dr. Alexander's public ministrations that no one who ever heard him can forget. His unique and inimitable manner—so simple, so vivacious, so earnest, was sure to rivet the attention. His discourses were replete with instruction drawn fresh from the fountain of wisdom. A mere rhetorician might have criticised them as deficient in ornament, but no one felt this in listening to him. He had the rare faculty of making didactic and familiar topics interesting even to persons of no religion; for his sermons partook of the vitality and freshness of his mind, which was like a perennial fountain sending off its sparkling waters. They abounded in terse apothegms, and gleamed with pithy and pleasant sayings, like the bright flowers which light up the rich green of a prairie. You could not possibly suppress a smile sometimes, at the lively turns and sprightly sallies which occurred in his discourses; nor less at the feli-

citous expressions with which, in a single sentence, he would put before you a vivid transcript of what was passing in your own breast. You smiled, not from lightness of feeling, but from pure pleasure—a pleasure blended with deep seriousness, and often with the spirit of devotion. This simplicity and animation won the hearts of his hearers, and they followed whithersoever he chose to lead them, not because they *resolved* to follow him, but because they were too much interested to resolve any thing about it. As there was no ostentation in his manner, no pretension, no demand for applause, criticism was disarmed and led captive. Men of all classes felt his power alike. Beyond any minister of his day, his preaching was equally acceptable to the learned and the illiterate, the old and the young, the untutored and the refined. For the *nature* of all men is the same, and Dr. Alexander was one of Nature's preachers. He was so simple that children could understand him; but his simplicity never degenerated into *silliness*—it was the graceful but invisible mould into which the instinct of his nature, and the habit of his life, made him cast the richest ore of Divine truth.

There is no greater element of power in the pulpit than the capacity of exciting religious emotion. This must take precedence of intellectual prowess, of learning, of brilliancy of imagination, of logical astuteness, and of all the graces of oratory. Dr. Alexander possessed it in combination with several of these qualities in a most remarkable degree. He could set forth the Gospel in its adaptation to the endlessly diversified states of human feeling, with a skill and effect truly wonderful. And the facility with which he could awaken emotions of gratitude, praise, contrition, joy and the like, gave him a rare control over any *Christian* auditory. Nor did his sermons die with the occasion; they combined with the radical principles and affections of his hearers, and went to strengthen and perpetuate their reverence for him.

Besides the elements of power to which I have already referred, Dr. Alexander's great influence was to be ascribed, in no small measure, to his earnest sympathy with his kind. A stranger, to look in upon him in his study,—an old man half doubled in his big chair, engaged with his books and manuscripts, and occupied professionally as a teacher of Theology, might have conjectured, at first sight, that he was as much isolated from the great Babel in feeling as he was in situation. But this was not the case; and the whole Church knew it. He never sank the man in the philosopher, nor the citizen and patriot in the divine. His sterling common sense formed a bond of union between himself and his fellow-men, which neither his scholastic pursuits, nor his high spiritual attainments, ever weakened or tarnished. There was no chasm to be bridged over before you could approach him;—no mailed coat of professional dignity to be pierced;—no steps to climb up to the high official chair where he sat in state. You could not hear him in the pulpit nor meet him in social life, without feeling that there was a common ground for you to stand upon; that there were numerous points of contact between you and himself; and that you could talk with him as freely as with any other man. There was assurance of this, not only in his genial sympathies, but in that native cheerfulness and mother-wit, which made him a delightful companion. His wit, using the term in its broad philosophical sense, revealed itself often in his discourses. But when he was in full health, and no *adverse winds* depressed his spirits, it would sometimes play in the class-room, and in the social circle, like the Aurora Borealis. If the scintillations of it which have been preserved by his students could be collected, they would make a brilliant and substantial volume. But his wit never degenerated into coarseness, nor his cheerfulness into levity. It is not probable that a minute scrutiny into his ministerial life would bring to light an act or an expression that was inconsistent with the dignity of his sacred office. And while he pleased in private life, he instructed. Persons who were drawn around him by his vivacity,

seldom retired without carrying away some wholesome truth or valuable suggestion. It was his high vocation to do good; and he seemed never to lose sight of it, nor ever to prosecute it as a task.

I must not omit to say that another source of Dr. Alexander's great power was his eminent piety. And yet I hardly need expatiate upon this, as a distinct attribute; for it was to his character what the soul is to the body—the pervading, life-giving, governing principle; and it would be difficult to speak of him in any of his relations or pursuits without recognising the fact of his singular attainments in holiness. It was his rare fortune to maintain an unsullied reputation for superior piety, wisdom, benevolence, and consistency, throughout a ministry of nearly sixty years. This entire period he spent, not in the seclusion of a remote rural parish, but in the most prominent and responsible situations—as the President of Hampden Sidney College, the Pastor of a Church in this city, and the Senior Professor at Princeton. It was a period, too, of great excitement, marked by a succession of momentous changes in the politics and commerce of the world, and with incessant conflicts in Theology and morals. Yet, with such fidelity to his Master, and with such meekness of wisdom, did he carry himself throughout, that the most violent controvertists have rarely ventured to breathe a word of censure against him.

But it is more than time for me to close. I have simply glanced at some of the most prominent traits of Dr. Alexander's character, without attempting a full delineation of it. If these familiar sketches should afford you the least assistance in finishing your portrait of one whom we all revered as a Master in Israel, it is all I could expect or desire.

I remain, my dear Sir,

Sincerely and affectionately,

Your friend and brother,

HENRY A. BOARDMAN.

FROM THE REV. WILLIAM E. SCHENCK.

PHILADELPHIA, April 6, 1857.

Dear Sir: It gives me pleasure to comply with your wish that I should furnish you some personal reminiscences of the late venerated Dr. Archibald Alexander. His biography has been so well and so thoroughly written, that it seems almost presumptuous to attempt any thing in addition. If, however, any of the following impressions or incidents can be of the least service, they are placed at your disposal very willingly.

I have always accounted it one of the most distinguished privileges of my life, to have lived from early childhood in the near vicinity of two such men as Dr. Samuel Miller and Dr. Archibald Alexander. They were, to my youthful mind, both in and out of the pulpit, very models of ministerial excellence and dignity. The impression made by them respecting the elevation of goodness and of usefulness to which an ambassador of Christ may attain, has not yet worn away, and never can.

During my boyish years, Dr. Alexander was held in profound reverence, mingled with strong affection. Although not then specially interested in the great subject of religion, I can yet recall the feelings of peculiar delight with which I always saw him rise in the pulpit and heard him preach. His simplicity, vivacity, and directness of speech, were such as always to rivet attention, afford pleasure, convey instruction, and secure conviction, even to a child's understanding. It was not, however, until I had become a theological student, that I enjoyed frequent access to him, and almost daily opportunities of hearing and observing him.

As a lecturer, Dr. Alexander was always profound, philosophical, instructive. His lectures, as I heard them, were written out with great care, yet he never confined himself to his manuscript. Assuming an easy position in his chair, with his forefinger pressed against his cheek, he read deliberately and critically, just as if perusing for the first time the production of another mind, in which he might possibly detect some error. Frequently a sentence would suggest remarks not found upon the paper, when he would enter upon an extemporaneous discussion of that point, and after a while would come back to his manuscript. There was so much in his manner that was conversational, fresh and easy, that the attention of any hearer seldom was seen to flag. When attending to the performances of the students, they always had his careful and undivided attention. When criticising their productions, his remarks were pointed, brief, apt and judicious. Hundreds of these brief and sententious criticisms still live in the memories of his students, and many a preacher's whole style of pulpit performances has been revolutionized by a single one of them.

I have heard it hinted that Dr. Alexander was sometimes tart in his remarks to the students, and even at times unnecessarily severe. This, I believe, is a mistake. Although gifted with the power of uttering prompt and scathing sarcasm, when occasion called for it, he was exceedingly chary in the use of this formidable weapon. During a somewhat intimate acquaintance of over twenty years, and after seeing him in every variety of circumstances, I cannot remember to have heard him utter a single sharp remark, which my own judgment did not regard as entirely suitable and called for by the occasion. Indeed there was only one class of his students with whom he ever used sarcasm. They were *the self-conceited*. For them he agreed with Solomon that severe remedies alone could be expected to do any good. With these his remarks were sometimes like the point of a pen-knife, thrust into an inflated balloon. Many a mortifying yet beneficial collapse has followed them. But to the self-distrustful and the humble, his words were uniformly full of kindness and encouragement. The students always found in him a ready, patient and wise adviser. They knew that they could resort to him in every emergency in their affairs, and however busy he might be, if they did not receive as ample expressions of tender sympathy as in some other quarters, they were sure to receive advice that was full of practical sagacity, and genuine pious wisdom. Many a pupil of his, now even past the meridian of life, not seldom wishes in his exigencies that he could still resort to him for guidance.

Few things caused more astonishment to Dr. Alexander's clerical visitors than his extensive and accurate knowledge of the ministers and churches of his own denomination. He was acquainted not only with their present condition, characters, and prospects, but was familiar also with their histories from the beginning. This was the case not only with the more important churches in the cities and larger towns, but with even the obscurest missionary churches. I have heard him discourse at length about the little preaching places in the Pines of New Jersey, and along the sea shore, or back in the mountains of Pennsylvania, until I marvelled how he could possibly either acquire or retain all his information.

After my settlement as Pastor of the First Church in Princeton, he was uniformly one of the kindest and most attentive of parishioners. Although to one so conversant with the whole circle of biblical and theological science, I knew that the truth to which he listened was familiar as the alphabet, yet I never could have inferred from his manner that it was not to him as fresh and new as to the most illiterate among my hearers. When his help, either pecuniary or ministerial, was needed to advance the interests or efficiency of the Church, it was promptly and cheerfully extended.

The depth of experimental piety, and the clearness of philosophical discrimination, which were so remarkably conjoined in him, made Dr. Alexander's

unstudied and devotional exhortations always very precious to pious hearers. It was a common feeling among the theological students that his Sabbath afternoon talks in the conference meetings were among the most profitable of all his religious instructions. For the same reason every one rejoiced to hear him at the Communion table. There he was perfectly at home, and thence his Christian hearers would go away, after listening to his words of wisdom, feeling that they had been refreshed and strengthened by partaking of the very best of the old wine of the Gospel. His very last public service was of this description. On Sabbath, September 14, 1851, he took his place at the Communion table by my side, and delivered a beautiful and most touching address to the communicants,—exhorting them *as pilgrims* to a faithful and hopeful performance of their duties. Before the next Communion season had come round, his own pilgrimage was terminated, and he had, as we cannot doubt, entered joyfully upon his eternal rest.

Early in the spring of 1850, a little more than a year before Dr. Alexander's death, it pleased a gracious God largely to pour out his Spirit upon Princeton and its institutions of learning. Just preceding this, there had been a brief season of unusual coldness. On a Communion occasion, a few weeks before the revival commenced, not a single soul was added to the First Church. Dr. Alexander occupied the platform with the Pastor, and made a few very pointed and solemn remarks to the Christians then present on their duty in the existing state of religion. I have always believed that those remarks were instrumental, under God, of bringing believers to the throne of grace to supplicate more earnestly for a revival of religion. In a few weeks it was graciously granted. And when it came, no one took a livelier interest in it throughout than Dr. Alexander. For six or seven weeks, religious services were maintained every evening except Saturday, and the house was thronged with eager listeners. During this course of services, he repeatedly preached, and although now nearly eighty years of age, it was with all the richness, unction, and power, which had characterized the days of his very prime. One of these sermons was on the parable of the Prodigal Son, and was peculiarly rich in discriminating and pointed practical remark. More than one new convert afterward said to me that that sermon had been blessed as a means of bringing him to the great decision. After these meetings had been held some weeks, Dr. Alexander was consulted about the expediency of continuing them longer. He advised that they should be kept up as long as the people continued manifestly to hunger for the word. "Divine truth," he would say, "never yet surfeited a hungry soul. Only be careful to let it have nothing but truth."

The annual meeting of the Synod of New Jersey was to be held in October, 1851, at Princeton. Before the time came, Dr. Alexander had been stricken down with the illness which terminated his life. You have requested me to give you especially some account of my last interview with him. Directly after this interview occurred, I wrote out with some care a full account of it, with no thought that it would ever meet any other eye than my own. It was, however, afterwards, in part, inserted in the *Life of Dr. Alexander* by his son, and I prefer to extract the account as then published rather than attempt to rewrite it.

"It was on the morning of the Thursday preceding Dr. Alexander's death, that I called to inquire after his health. My inquiries having been answered at the door, I was about to leave when I was called back by one of his sons, who said that his father had heard I was at the door, and desired to see me. As I entered the study, he was lying on the sofa in his usual dress, but supported by pillows. He extended his hand in a very cordial manner—on taking it I found it icy cold. He at once said to me in a very warm and tender tone, 'My dear young friend, I have much desired to see you once more, and am glad to have this opportunity. I wish to bid you farewell. You will see me no more in this life.'

“I was so greatly overcome by this address that I hardly knew what to reply. I merely said, ‘I trust and most earnestly hope, dear Sir, that you may yet be mistaken. Should it be so, we are confident it would be your inexpressible gain; but it would be a sorrowful day indeed for all of us that should survive.’

“‘I feel confident,’ said he, ‘that I am not mistaken; I shall not live long. Nor have I any wish to stay longer. I have lived eighty years, which is more than the usual term of human life, and, if I remain, I have little to look forward to but infirmity and suffering. If such be the Lord’s will, I feel thoroughly satisfied, and even would prefer, to go now. My work on earth I feel is done. And it does seem to me (he added with great earnestness) as if my Heavenly Father had in great mercy surrounded me with almost every circumstance which could remove anxieties, and make me feel that I can go without regret. My affairs have all been attended to, my arrangements are all completed, and I can think of nothing more to be done. I have greatly desired to see my son James before my departure, and sometimes feared I should not have that privilege; but the Lord has graciously brought him back in time to see me, having led him safely through much peril on the ocean. My children are all with me. The Church of which you are Pastor is prosperous and flourishing. The Seminary Faculty is again full, and the institution is in an excellent condition. The more I reflect upon the matter, the more all things seem to combine to make me perfectly willing to enter into my rest. The Lord has very graciously and tenderly led me (he added, closing his eyes and clasping his hands in a devotional manner) all the days of my life. Yes, all the days of my life. *And He is now with me still. In Him I enjoy perfect peace!*’ The last sentence he uttered in a quick, earnest and happy tone of voice, such as was peculiar to him in certain moods. Pausing a moment or two, as if to recover breath, he then said:—

“‘I have much desired to see you that I might bid you farewell, and once more invoke God’s blessing upon you and your ministry. You have had a strong hold upon my affections, and I have felt much satisfaction in your preaching. Continue as you have begun, and have done thus far, to preach Christ and Him crucified, scripturally, plainly, earnestly, and God will continue richly to bless your ministry, even as here He has so lately done.’ He lifted his hands as if to pronounce a benediction. I fell on my knees beside the sofa, with my head bowed and weeping bitterly; nevertheless I tried hard to restrain my feelings, while, with his hands extended over me, he offered a short and fervent prayer, closing with these words: ‘God greatly bless his servant in his person, in his family, and in his ministry. May it please God to give him great usefulness and success. May many souls be saved through his efforts; and when his work is done, may we be permitted to meet again in a happier world, Amen.’

“As I arose from my knees, he reached out his hand, as if to bid me farewell.

“‘I cannot go,’ (said I,) ‘until I attempt to thank you, which I do with my whole heart, for your long and unvarying kindness to me. You have been to me the best and most valued of earthly friends.’

“‘You must thank God for that’ (said he, quickly); ‘all kindness and all friends are his gifts. Give my love to your wife and children.’

“The last sentence he repeated when I had reached the door, and very slowly, as if he were very loath to have me leave him.

“‘Give my love and a very affectionate farewell to your wife and children.’”

“As I walked away from the house, I could not repress my tears, and a sense of utter desolation came over me for a little while, as I thought that I had probably received the last words of affectionate counsel from that beloved and venerated friend to whom I had been accustomed to resort, and on whose counsels I had been accustomed to rely, as on those of no other man on earth. But soon my feelings grew calmer. I felt that I had been breathing an atmosphere redolent

with the very fragrance of Heaven. The room that I had left seemed to have been perfumed with holy composure and immovable confidence in a glorified but present Redeemer. As I reflected upon the scene, I gained new views of life, of death, and of Heaven. I felt, as I had never felt before, how 'sure and steadfast' is that anchor of Gospel hope which 'entereth into that within the veil.' I could not help asking myself,—'Is it possible to die so? Does the Lord Jesus give his people such complete and quiet victories over the grim King of Terrors?' There was nothing excited, nothing exultant; and yet it seemed to be thoroughly triumphant; a calm, believing, cheerful looking through the gloomy grave into the glories of the eternal world. It was the steady, unflinching step of a genuine Christian philosopher, as well as an eminent saint, evincing his own thorough, heartfelt and practical belief in the doctrines he had so long and so ably preached, as he descended into the dark valley and shadow of death. And I could not help praying, as I had never prayed before,—'Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!'"

On Thursday, the 23d of October, 1851, Dr. Alexander's precious remains were deposited in the cemetery at Princeton, made venerable by the ashes of the many great and good which there await the Resurrection morn. It was a scene never to be forgotten. Just as an unclouded sun was sinking to the Western horizon, a group was gathered around his open grave, such as had seldom been gathered in one spot in any part of our land. There were the students and Faculty of the College of New Jersey, and those of the Theological Seminary, the entire Synod of New Jersey, and many members of the Synods of New York and Philadelphia, besides a crowd of other spectators, a numerous company of God's ministers and people, all feeling that a great man in Israel had fallen.

Ever most respectfully yours,

WILLIAM EDWARD SCHENCK.

JOHN POAGE CAMPBELL, M. D.*

1792—1814.

JOHN POAGE† CAMPBELL, a son of Robert Campbell, was born in Augusta County, Va., in the year 1767. In 1781, when about fourteen years of age, he removed to Kentucky with his father, who settled first in Lexington, and afterwards in Mason County, where he became an elder in the Smyrna Church. He was a descendant, on the mother's side, of the celebrated Scottish divine, Samuel Rutherford,—one of the members of the Westminster Assembly, and author of the work well known as "Rutherford's Letters." In his early youth, he gave evidence of uncommon talents, which led his father, notwithstanding he was in moderate circumstances, to resolve on giving him a liberal education; and, after studying some time with Messrs. Hamilton and McPheeters in Rockbridge, and afterwards with Mr. Rankin‡ in Lexington, he was entered as a pupil in the Transylvania

* Davidson's Hist. Presb. Ch., Ky.—Foote's Sketches of Va., 2d Series.

† He took the name of *Poage*, as a memorial of a bosom friend and connection by marriage, who died about the time of his settlement in the ministry.

‡ ADAM RANKIN was born, March 24, 1755, near Greencastle, Pa.,—his ancestors having emigrated from Ireland, and at a more remote period, from Scotland. At the age of eighteen, he became hopefully pious, and shortly after commenced the study of the languages, at Mr. Graham's Academy in Virginia. Having been prevented from entering the College of New Jersey by its being in possession of the British troops, and having lost a year's study by dan-