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ART. I.—*Remarks on the Studies and Discipline of the Preacher.*

THE habits of a young minister, in respect to mental culture, are very early formed, and hence no one can begin too soon to regulate his closet-practice by maxims derived from the true philosophy of mind, and the experience of successful scholars. Early introduction to active labour, in an extended field, partaking of a missionary and itinerant character, may, amidst much usefulness, spoil a man for life, in all that regards progress of erudition, and productiveness of the reasoning powers. Such a person may accomplish much in the way of direct and proximate good; but his fruit often dies with him, and he does little in stimulating, forming, and enriching the minds of others. On the other hand, a zealous young scholar, captivated with the intellectual or literary side of ministerial work, may addict himself to books in such a manner as to sink the preacher in the man of learning, and spend his days without any real sympathy with the affectionate duties of the working clergy. The due admixture of the contemplative with the active, of learning with labour, of private cultivation with public spirit, is a *juste milieu* which few attain, but which cannot be too earnestly recommended.

L. Ch. Hodge

ART. VII.—*The Life of Archibald Alexander, D. D.*, First Professor in the Theological Seminary at Princeton, New Jersey. By James W. Alexander, D. D. New York: Charles Scribner, 145 Nassau street. 1854. 8vo., pp. 696.

CONSIDERING the variety of his gifts, the extent of his attainments, and the character of his influence, it is not extravagant to say that Dr. Alexander is entitled to the first place in the list of distinguished men, who have arisen in the American Presbyterian Church. We do not doubt that in one or more endowments other men have been equally favoured; but in the combination of the gifts which secure ascendancy for good, we do not think our history furnishes another name entitled to be placed beside that of the venerable subject of this memoir.

Dr. Alexander was born in what is now Rockbridge county, Virginia, on the 17th of April, 1772. His parents, William Alexander and Ann Reid, belonged to the Presbyterian colony which early settled that part of the valley of Virginia. Archibald Alexander, his grandfather, came to this country from Ireland about the year 1736, and settled first in Pennsylvania, and after a residence of a few years removed to Virginia. He was a man of eminent piety and of great influence. His son William, father of Dr. Alexander, was an elder of the Presbyterian Church. The subject of this memoir, therefore, was descended from that vigorous race of Scotch-Irish, to which our Church and country are so deeply indebted.

His first teacher was John Reardon, a young man born in Ireland, but reared in London, whom his father purchased as a convict servant. He had for some time attended a classical school, and had read Latin books as far as Virgil, and had some knowledge of Greek. At the age of seven, Dr. Alexander was sent from home to school, attending to the usual rudimental branches of an English education. When ten years old, he was placed under the care of the Rev. William Graham, a graduate of the College of New Jersey, who had set up an academy in that neighbourhood. Here he first entered on classical learning. No one exerted the same formative influence on the mind and character of Dr. Alexander, as the re-

markable man with whom he was thus early brought into contact. Mr. Graham was an accurate classical scholar, addicted to the study of natural philosophy, but specially devoted to mental science and theology. In reference to both of these departments he was an independent thinker, and disposed, perhaps to too great a degree, to repudiate authority in matters of opinion. He was constantly urging his pupils to think for themselves, and not to rely on books, but was withal very impatient of contradiction, and dissatisfied with all free thinking which did not lead to his own conclusions. Dr. Alexander expressed, in mature life, the opinion that the system of mental philosophy which Mr. Graham had evolved by his own investigations, "was in clearness and fulness superior to any which has been given to the public in the numerous works recently published on this subject." p. 18. To all these elements of power were added soundness in doctrine and an evangelical spirit. Though his ordinary delivery was feeble, yet from the instructive character of his discourses, the knowledge of the heart which they displayed, and the clear and cogent arguments they included, he was as a preacher universally respected. Such a man could not fail to make an abiding impression on the minds of his pupils.

The usher in Mr. Graham's school, James Priestly, was also a remarkable man. He could repeat almost verbatim any sermon he heard preached. He had the ordinary school classics so completely by heart as never to use a book, when hearing his classes in Ovid, Virgil, Horace, or Homer. He was accustomed to take his pupils to some sequestered, romantic spot, and there "spout before them the orations of Demosthenes, in the original, with all the fire of the Grecian orator himself." At a subsequent period of his school career, Dr. Alexander had the advantage of the instructions of Archibald Roane, afterwards Governor of Tennessee. Thus on the frontiers of Virginia, amidst primeval forests, in the infancy of our civilization, men of genius and learning were engaged in the work of education, and forming minds which were destined to exert a wide and lasting influence on our Church and country.

When he reached his seventeenth year, Dr. Alexander entered as tutor the family of General Posey, who resided

near to Fredericksburg, Virginia. His residence in this family was very important, not only in reference to his intellectual improvement, but also in its influence on his character. He had three pupils, one of whom was larger than himself, and they had already made such progress in their studies, that he was often obliged to devote the night to preparation for his morning lessons. To this pressure he was wont to "attribute all the accuracy he afterwards attained in the Latin language." Access to a library containing some valuable books, and constant intercourse with educated persons, also tended to his intellectual progress. After a year thus spent, he returned home in the year 1789.

Having prosecuted his studies for some months privately, he formed the purpose of going to Princeton College, then under the presidentship of Dr. Witherspoon. Mr. Graham, however, interposed with objections, and urged his taking degrees at Lexington, and the journey was abandoned. A serious illness which occurred the very day after he was to have left home, showed that the hand of Providence was engaged in his detention. After suffering great pain and weakness, he so far recovered as to be able to visit the Sweet Springs in the summer of 1790, for the restoration of his health.

As soon as he was sufficiently restored, he turned his attention to preparation for the ministry, and went to Mr. Graham with the request that he would direct his studies, expecting, as he says, that he would put into his hands some ponderous Latin volumes of theology. Instead of this, his preceptor said to him, "If you mean ever to be a theologian, you must come at it not by reading, but by thinking." He was soon associated with a class of ten or twelve fellow-students, who met every Saturday at Mr. Graham's study for recitation and debate. During this period he read with much care, besides other works, Edwards on the Will, on Original Sin, and on the Affections; Bates's Harmony of the Divine Attributes, and some treatises of Owen and Boston. On the 20th of October, 1790, he was taken under the care of the Presbytery of Lexington, and was allowed "the privilege of exhorting in social meetings for religious worship." This was a new thing in that part of the

country, and many came together to hear the young candidates exercise their gifts. "I was," says Dr. Alexander, "exceeding apprehensive I should utterly fail, and not be able to say anything, for I had never spoken in public, except what I had committed to memory. I had once attempted to speak in a juvenile debate, without the least success. We arrived at the place early in the evening, and retired to the grove. When we returned to the house, Mr. Lyle (his fellow-student) appeared to be much animated and elevated. He told me he had a remarkable flow of thought, and seemed confident of a prosperous issue; which only discouraged me the more, as I was weighed down with a heavy burden. After singing and prayer, Mr. Graham first called upon Lyle, who arose with an awful cloud upon his brow, seized fast hold upon the chair upon which he had been sitting, and with many contortions of countenance forced out a few words; but his flow of thought had deserted him. He hemmed and groaned, rolled up his pocket handkerchief into a ball, made a few convulsive gestures, and sat down. After another prayer and hymn, I was called upon. Although I did not know a single word I was to utter, I began with a rapidity and fluency equal to any I have enjoyed to this day. I was astonished at myself, and as I was young and small, the old people were not less astonished. From this time I exhorted at one place and another, several times every week. It was still a cross for me to hold forth at Lexington; and after efforts unsatisfactory to myself, I often suffered keen anguish of spirit, from various causes. At other times my heart was enlarged, my feelings were lively, so that I found delight in the utterance of truth. At that time I seldom followed any premeditated train of thought; the words which I first spoke generally opened a track for me, which I pursued."

In the spring of 1791 he attended Mr. Graham, in the capacity of a ruling elder, to the General Assembly, which met in Philadelphia, and of which he gives a very interesting account. The men of that generation have all passed away. Dr. John Woodhull, the moderator of the Assembly that year, Dr. Allison of Baltimore, Dr. Ewing and Dr. Green of Philadelphia, Dr. Witherspoon and Dr. Samuel S. Smith of Prince-

ton, Dr. McWhorter of Newark, and Col. John Bayard,* were all distinguished men, whose personal appearance, character, and manner of debate it is pleasant to have transmitted by so intelligent an observer.

On his return from Philadelphia he devoted himself to his theological studies, under the guidance of Mr. Graham, and was licensed to preach the gospel October 1, 1791. "This was indeed," he says, "a solemn day. During the service I was almost overwhelmed with an awful feeling of responsibility and unfitness for the sacred office. That afternoon I spent in the fields, in very solemn reflection and earnest prayer. My feelings were awful, and far from being comfortable. I seemed to think, however, that the solemn impressions of that day would never leave me." The winter after his licensure was spent in preaching in the northern part of Virginia, about Winchester. In April, 1792, he was appointed a missionary by the Commission of the Synod, and travelled extensively through the lower counties of the State and the borders of North Carolina. He seems to have continued to act as a missionary in the service of the Synod, in connection with the Presbytery of Hanover, until the fall of 1794, when he was ordained, and installed pastor of the church of Briery, November 7th. He was led to pay special attention to the deistical controversy, from the alarming prevalence of infidelity in his native State. He also cultivated with much zeal mathematical and physical science, and to the end of life kept himself acquainted with the course of discovery to an extent which was surprising to all around him. After spending a few years in the discharge of his pastoral duties, Dr. Alexander was induced to accept the presidency of Hampden Sidney College, which he continued to hold until the spring of 1801. He was associated in the instruction of the college with John H. Rice and Conrad Speece, two names afterwards famous in our church. The duties incident to this important charge had no small influence in the intellectual development of the subject of this memoir, and served to prepare him for the larger sphere of usefulness to which he was destined.

* Dr. Alexander speaks of Col. John Bayard as the father of Samuel and James A. Bayard, the distinguished United States Senator from Delaware. The latter, however, was the nephew, and not the son of Col. Bayard.

At this period of his life he is thus described by Dr. Rice: "He is endowed with faculties of the highest kind, and has cultivated them with the greatest assiduity. No man of his age has greater extent or variety of information. His powers are peculiarly fitted for the investigation of truth. With a sound judgment, a vigorous understanding, a quick perception, a great compass of thought, he has the capacity of holding his mind in suspense, until a subject is viewed in all its bearings and relations, and until the rays of evidence, however widely they are dissipated, are brought to a focus on the point under investigation. Possessing such intellectual powers as these, he is animated with a love of truth, and thirst after knowledge, which prompt to unwearied diligence in research, and unremitting application to study. His knowledge, then, must be considerable. His taste is refined, his imagination rich in imagery, his elocution copious, and his trains of reasoning are close and logical; his eye sparkles with intelligence, and his voice is as melodious as the notes of a nightingale. But in addition to all these excellencies, he is remarkably modest; it is impossible for you to be in his company without seeing his superiority, and yet such is his modesty, that it gives you no pain to acknowledge it."

Contemplating a journey to the north for the restoration of his health, he resigned in the spring of 1801 his connection with the college and his pastoral charge. The Presbytery of Hanover sent him as a commissioner to the General Assembly, which met in Philadelphia, whence he proceeded on an extended tour through the New England States. This was an eventful journey, to the incidents of which he was accustomed to refer with interest, to the latest period of his life. His position as president of a college, his reputation, his interesting appearance, gave him access to all the distinguished men of the day. His style of preaching, so effective, and yet so different from that then prevalent in New England, excited the liveliest interest. To this day it would not be difficult to trace his progress by the traditions yet extant of the effects produced by his sermons. We doubt whether, since the journeys of Whitefield and Gilbert Tennent, any stranger has made such an impression as that produced by Dr. Alexander during this tour. The theo-

logical excitement, then almost universal through New England, arising out of the prevalence of the peculiar opinions of Hopkins and Emmons, greatly added to the interest of this journey. It brought Dr. Alexander everywhere into contact with new modes of thought, and doubtless contributed not a little to his comprehension and due appreciation of those systems, which in our own church were soon to enter into conflict with the genuine doctrines of the Reformed churches.

On his return from the north, he spent the winter of 1801–2 principally in Charlotte county, Virginia, and on April 5th, 1802, was married to Miss Janetta Waddel, daughter of the celebrated Rev. Dr. Waddel. We cannot resist the desire of inserting the following beautiful tribute of filial affection from the author of this memoir, to a mother who so well deserved his gratitude and love. Speaking of his father's marriage, the author says: "It may be safely said that no man was ever more blessed in such a connection. If the uncommon beauty and artless grace of this lady were strong attractions in the days of youth, there were higher qualities which made the union inexpressibly felicitous during almost half a century. For domestic wisdom, self-sacrificing affection, humble piety, industry, inexhaustible stores of vivacious conversation, hospitality to his friends, sympathy with his cares, and love to their children, she was such a gift as God bestows only on the most favoured. While during a large part of middle life he was subject to a variety of maladies, she was preserved in unbroken health. When his spirits flagged, she was always prompt to cheer and comfort. And as his days were filled with spiritual and literary toils, she relieved him from the whole charge of domestic affairs. Without the show of any conjugal blandishments, there was through life a perfect coincidence of views, and a respectful affection which may be recommended as a model. It pleased God to spare to him this faithful ministry of revering love to the very last, and when the earthly tie was broken to make the separation short." (p. 272.)

In May, 1802, he returned to Hampden Sidney, and resumed the care of the college. He remained in this position, increasing his knowledge and maturing his opinions, until the fall of 1806, when he accepted a unanimous call from the

Third Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia to become their pastor. Dr. Alexander was now in his prime. "Wider range of knowledge, sounder experience, keener sagacity, more prophetic forecast, there may have come with advancing years, but in whatever can attract in the man, or impress in the preacher, he was," says our author, "just now at a point of culmination."

During his residence in Philadelphia, he was not only the attractive preacher and laborious pastor, but also a diligent student. "In everything connected with the criticism and interpretation of the sacred text, he used assiduous application; taking lessons in Hebrew of a learned Jew, perusing the Septuagint, collecting other versions, and pushing more deeply those researches which he had long before commenced, into the original of the New Testament. His shelves began also to fill themselves with those folios and quartos, bound in vellum, of Latin theology, which always continued to be characteristic of his library. In some departments of learning he was no doubt surpassed by many of his brethren; but it is believed that none of his coevals had read more extensively in the theology of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, including Romanist and Lutheran, as well as Reformed divines."

In no one particular does the providential training of Dr. Alexander for the great business of his life, appear more conspicuous than in his being thus led to a familiar acquaintance with the history of doctrine. This enabled him to perceive that the principles which underlie modern peculiarities of doctrine were identical with those which had already been fully discussed in earlier periods of the church, and which had proved their true character by the various forms of error into which they had unfolded.

These and kindred studies he continued to pursue to the end of his laborious life. He was seldom seen without his pen or some huge volume in his hand. "Theology," says our author, "had been the study of his life. Its difficult questions had been the constant occupation of his profoundest meditation, and he had during his residence in Philadelphia gathered round him the great masters of Latin theology, whose works had appeared in Holland, Switzerland, Germany, and France, in the

sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. . . . To these great authors he turned with unabated zest during the whole of a long and studious life. He once said to the writer, that on a perplexed subject he preferred Latin to English reading, not only because of the complete and ingenious nomenclature which had grown up in the dialectic schools of the church, but because the little effort required for getting the sense kept his attention concentrated. . . . His penchant for metaphysical investigation urged him, from an early date, to make himself acquainted with the philosophies of the periods from which each system took its tincture, and without which it is impossible to survey the several schemes from a just point of view. Thus he perused, and generally in their sources, not only the peripatetic and scholastic writers, but the treatises of Des Cartes, Leibnitz, Wolff, and Voetius; and there was no subject on which he discoursed with more pleasure or success than on the exposition and comparison of these ingenious though now exploded systems. He made himself familiar with the Christian Fathers, both Greek and Latin, and perused them at intervals during forty years; some of his very last labours having been in this field. At a certain period he examined all they had written on the Divinity of our Lord, and this formed a subject of lively intercourse between him and Dr. Miller. It is particularly remembered with what surprise and admiration he spoke of the felicitous subtilty of Cyril. It was his delight to seek out the portions of truth in the books of ancient authors. Nor did he confine himself to writers on one side. Through long years he was wont to seek with patience the best works in defence of popery; the argumentative dissertations of the extreme Lutherans and Dutch Remonstrants, as well as the *Fratres Poloni* and other champions of Socinianism. It need scarcely be added that he was familiar with English theology, as treated both by authors of the Established Church, and by the great Nonconformist divines. His recent travels in New England, and the prevailing excitement caused by the speculations of Hopkins and Emmons, served to keep him observant in regard to the phases of opinion in the American churches. . . . There were other branches of learning, tributary to the teacher's place, which occupied his attention. His extraordinary tenacity of memory,

which seemed never to let go a fact entrusted to it, gave him both taste and facility for historical study; and we have never met any one who was more at home in all the annals of ecclesiastical record. For reasons already indicated, the events were made to revolve in his mind around the momentous points of theological determination; so that the history of doctrine, including the rise and progress of errors, the decisions of councils, controversial authorship, and establishment of symbols and of sects, became favourite objects of inquiry. On these subjects he amassed an extraordinary amount of original manuscript, and from these sources he was accustomed to enliven and diversify his dogmatic instructions. In the classical languages he was well read, though without scrupulous care for those niceties of metre and accent, in which English scholars take a pride. The Greek of the New Testament was familiar to him from incessant perusal. No day passed without deliberate study of this sacred original. And in his later years a beautiful Glasgow edition of Griesbach was commonly in his hands during all the private hours of the Lord's day. . . . We have already recorded his first acquaintance with the Hebrew Bible. From that hour he never relaxed his efforts to master the venerable language. To the last of his reading he perused at least one chapter of Hebrew every day. In natural connection with this, the study of criticism and hermeneutics, although in regard to the latter he was indebted chiefly to the older schools, his curiosity was wakeful and his knowledge extensive. The history of great manuscripts, versions, and editions, was deeply fixed in his mind, and he always spoke of them with the familiarity which the mineralogist has with the specimens of his cabinet."

The numerous responsible and important positions which he was invited to occupy, furnish evidence of the estimation in which he was held by his contemporaries. At an early age he was elected President of Hampden Sidney College; in 1802 he was chosen Phillips Professor of Theology in Dartmouth College; the same year he received a call to become the pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Baltimore; in 1806 he was called to Philadelphia as pastor of the Third Presbyterian Church in that city; in 1810 he was elected President of the

University of Georgia; in 1812 he was chosen the Professor of Theology in the Seminary in Princeton; in 1820 he was again elected President of Hampden Sidney College, and immediately after the Synod of Virginia chose him their Professor of Theology.

Meagre as the above account is, and inadequate as we conceive it to be to convey a just view of the attainments of Dr. Alexander, it is still sufficient to show that as it regards learning, there are few of the ministers whom our Church has produced who stand with him on the same level. It was not merely that he had read so many books, or investigated so many subjects, but that he knew so much; that his capacious memory was filled with such stores of facts, with such clear ideas of the various systems of philosophy and theology, to which he had directed his attention. Many men lose almost as fast as they gain, what they read or study; one year fades away before the next has run its course. But with Dr. Alexander anything once learned was held in permanent possession; so that his mind was to an extraordinary degree replete with the accumulated treasures of a life of uninterrupted study.

Having thus traced, as well as we could, the progress of the subject of this memoir in knowledge, and shown his claims to be regarded as a truly learned man, we turn to the formation of his religious character as it is developed in the work before us. He enjoyed the inestimable advantage of a correct doctrinal education in his youth. He was early taught the Westminster Catechism, an educational process of priceless value. The principles of moral and religious truth contained in that sublime symbol, when once imbedded in the mind, enlarge, sustain, and illuminate it for all time. That God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth, is a height of knowledge to which Plato never reached. That the eternal Son of God became man by taking to himself a true body and a reasonable soul, and so was and continues to be both God and man, in two distinct natures and one person for ever, is a truth worth all other knowledge. A series of such precise, accurate, luminous propositions, inscribed on the understanding of a child, is the richest inheritance which can be given to him. They are seeds

which need only the vivifying influence of the Spirit of life, to cause them to bring forth the fruits of holiness and glory. Dr. Alexander experienced this benefit in its full extent. He learned the Catechism as a matter of custom. Its truths were not pressed upon his heart and conscience. They lay in his mind as a form of doctrine, (what men are wont erroneously to call dead orthodoxy, as though truth can ever be dead.) Still, even as mere speculative knowledge, it occupied his mind to the exclusion of error. The understanding is the regal faculty, and when filled with the self-evidencing truths of divine revelation, it does and must control to a great degree the convictions and principles even of those not yet renewed. His mind being thus stored with truth, as soon as his moral and religious feelings were excited, they had the proper forms at hand in which to express themselves. The intellectual and emotional elements combine by a kind of elective affinity, and form that knowledge which is eternal life.

The first great question which awakened his attention was, whether anything more is necessary to salvation than a knowledge of the doctrines of the gospel, an assent to their truth, and a decorous moral and religious deportment; whether there is any such thing as regeneration, considered as an inward, supernatural change of heart and nature. His early life had been passed without this question having presented itself to his mind. It is the question whether religion is a work of nature or of God; whether it is something to be acquired and done, or something to be experienced. He says on this subject, "My only notion of religion was that it consisted in becoming better. I had never heard of any conversion among the Presbyterians." He was in this state of mind when, at the age of seventeen, he went to reside in the family of General Posey. Here he was brought into connection with Mrs. Tyler, an aged Christian lady, well bred and well informed, who exerted a great and salutary influence over him, by her pious example and conversation, and by directing his attention to proper religious books. General Posey had in his employ a pious millwright, with whom Dr. Alexander had frequent conversations. "One day," says the personal narrative, "he unexpectedly turned to me and asked me whether I believed

that before a man could enter the kingdom of heaven he must be born again. I knew not what to say, for I had for some time been puzzled about the new birth. However I answered in the affirmative. He then asked whether I had experienced the new birth. I hesitated, and said, 'Not that I know of.' 'Ah!' said he, 'if you had ever experienced this change you would know something about it.' Here the conversation ended, but it led me to think more seriously whether there were any such change." This, he adds, became about the same time a matter of frequent discussion in the family; the ladies affirming their belief in regeneration, and the gentlemen denying all faith in any such miraculous change. As Mrs. Tyler's eyes were weak, she often requested Mr. Alexander to read for her, and generally placed in his hands for that purpose the writings of John Flavel, whose views on regeneration became a special object of interest. About this time he read "The Internal Evidences of Christianity, by Soame Jenyns, Esq.," with great delight. "At every step," he says, "conviction flashed on my mind, with such brightness and overwhelming evidence, that when I ceased to read, the room had the appearance of being illuminated. I never had such a feeling from the simple discovery of truth. And it is my opinion that no argument of the external or historical kind would have produced such a conviction." Secret prayer now became with him a habitual exercise. On one occasion while reading to his aged friend Flavel's sermon on Rev. iii. 20, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock," his feelings became so excited he was obliged to lay down the book, and seek his place of retirement. "No sooner had I reached the spot," he says, "than I dropped on my knees, and attempted to pour out my feelings in prayer; but I had not continued many minutes in this exercise before I was overwhelmed with a flood of joy. It was transport such as I had never known before, and seldom since. I had no recollection of any distinct views of Christ, but I was filled with a sense of the goodness and mercy of God; and this joy was accompanied with a full assurance that my state was happy, and that if I was to die then, I should go to heaven. This ecstasy was too high to be lasting, but as it subsided, my feelings were calm and happy.

It soon occurred to me that possibly I had experienced the change called the new birth." With instinctive wisdom, he left that question to be determined by his future conduct. He knew that a holy life was the only satisfactory evidence of regeneration. The reading of "Jenks on Justification" was attended with feelings of delight analogous to those which followed the perusal of Jenyns. The way of acceptance with God became to him now "as clear as if written with a sunbeam." "I now began to read Flavel," he says, "for my own instruction, and also Burkitt. . . The two great doctrines of Justification and Regeneration I began to understand, at least in theory. A good sermon was now a feast to me. . . . This year, 1788-89, was in many respects the most important of my life. If I had not the beginnings of a work of grace, my mind was enlightened by the knowledge of the truth, of which I had lived in total ignorance. I began to love the truth, and to seek after it as for hid treasure. To John Flavel I certainly owe more than to any uninspired author."

It would be presumptuous to express any confident judgment on the nature of the religious exercises above delineated. The "joyful frames," more than once experienced, could of themselves decide nothing. The sources of such joy in the imagination, in the physical constitution, in the natural affections, are so numerous and so wonderful, that it is a familiar fact that such seasons are often experienced by those who give no satisfactory evidence of genuine conversion. But the clear apprehension of the truth, the cordial approbation of it, and desire for divine knowledge, are indications which can hardly be mistaken.

Having returned home in the spring of 1789, Dr. Alexander was induced to accompany his pastor, Mr. Graham, and several young friends in a visit to the counties of Charlotte and Prince Edward, where a very remarkable revival was in progress under the preaching of the celebrated Dr. John Blair Smith. The party reached Briery in season to attend the celebration of the Lord's Supper on the Sabbath. There was a great concourse of people, who bore the aspect of tender and earnest solemnity. Dr. Smith preached the action sermon, and Mr. Graham delivered a discourse after the communion, which se-

cured him, in the estimation of those who heard him, a place "among the ablest preachers in the land." Mr. Graham remained more than a week, and preached several times in private houses. "I understood his discourses," says Dr. Alexander, "and thought I could find the evidences of vital piety, as proposed by him, in myself. But hearing much of sudden conversions, and of persons being convulsed with severe conviction, I concluded that the hopes which I entertained must be fallacious, and that they prevented my being truly convinced of sin." Though very backward to speak of his own experience, he unbosomed himself, when personally addressed, to Mr. Graham, "who made little or no reply." When an occasion offered for conversation with Dr. Smith, "I related to him," he says, "my various exercises, but added that I had still fallen into sin after these exercises; upon which he said in his decided, peremptory way, that then they were certainly not of the nature of true religion, which always destroyed the power and dominion of sin; and proceeded to account for the joy I had experienced on other principles. From this time I abandoned all persuasion that I had experienced regenerating grace. My desire now was to be brought under such alarming convictions of sin, as I had heard of in the case of others. But that evening, which I spent in the forest, I was greatly distressed on account of my exceeding hardness of heart. I rolled on the ground in anguish of spirit, bewailing my insensibility." In this state of mind he journeyed homeward. "The conclusion forced itself upon me that I should certainly be lost for ever. My mind was calm and thoughts deliberate, and when I came to this result I was nowise agitated, and began to contemplate the justice of God in my condemnation. Yet I felt that I could never entertain any hard thoughts of God, even when suffering under his heavy displeasure." Happily he found in the Rev. James Mitchell a wiser counsellor than his previous advisers. That gentleman sought an interview with him, and drew from him the statement of his difficulty that he had not "experienced those convictions without which he could not expect to be saved." "To this Mr. Mitchell answered, that no certain degree of conviction was prescribed; that the only purpose which conviction could answer was to

show us our need of Christ, 'and this,' added he, 'you have.' He then represented Christ as an Advocate before the throne of God, ready to undertake my cause, and able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by him. A new view opened before me at this moment. I did feel that I needed a Saviour, and I knew Christ as an Advocate was able to save me. This mere probability of salvation, after having given up all hope, was like the dawn of morning on a dark night; it was like life from the dead. From that instant I entertained a joyful hope that I should yet be saved. These new views affected me exceedingly. I was like a man condemned to die, who is unexpectedly informed that there is a friend who can obtain a reprieve. I was unable to say anything. My tears prevented utterance."

We have here an instructive illustration of the two methods in which even good men and experienced Christians deal with anxious inquirers. Dr. Smith undertook to judge of the exercises of the heart, and to decide whether or not they exhibited evidence of regeneration. He led the inquirer to refuse to hope in Christ until he was satisfied he had experienced the new-birth. He thus drove him to the borders of despair. Mr. Mitchell pointed the wounded spirit to Christ, and bid him hope for acceptance on the ground of his merit and mediation. This brought peace. Had any one persuaded the bitten Israelites not to look in faith on the brazen serpent until they felt themselves cured, they too would have despaired. Our first duty is to receive Christ, and in receiving him, he brings conviction, repentance, and all the graces and blessings of the Spirit.

When Mr. Graham and his company returned to Lexington they were like burning coals; they must either be extinguished or make a conflagration. When on the day of Pentecost the Spirit was poured out on the disciples, they began to speak as the Spirit gave them utterance, and multitudes were added to the Church of such as should be saved. And thus in all subsequent ages, when his divine influence is dispensed in any unusual measure, those who are its subjects are endowed with unwonted power, and are generally made the means of communicating a new life to others. Though no little opposition

was excited by the measures adopted by Mr. Graham and his associates, a lively interest in personal religion was awakened in the community, and many were brought to the saving knowledge of the truth.

Dr. Alexander entered with much zeal into the work, though far from satisfied as to his own state. About this time a young woman, who was regarded as one of the most hopeful converts, was, on reading one of Gilbert Tennent's sermons, suddenly seized with such terrible apprehensions of her danger, that she began to tremble, and falling prostrate, was taken up in a state of terrible convulsions. This occurrence led Dr. Alexander to think that he had received an irreparable injury from the clergyman (good Mr. Mitchell) who had persuaded him that no such conviction as this was necessary. "I determined, therefore," he says, "to admit no hope until I should have a like experience. I read all the religious narratives I could procure, and laboured much to put myself into the state the writers described themselves to have been in, before enjoying hope. But all these efforts and desires proved abortive, and I began to see more of the wickedness of my own heart than ever before. I was distressed and discouraged, and convinced that I had placed too much dependence on mere means, and on my own efforts. I therefore determined to give myself incessantly to prayer until I found mercy, or perished in the pursuit.

"This resolution was formed on a Sunday evening. The next morning I took my Bible and walked several miles into the dense woods of the Bushy Hills, which were then wholly uncultivated. Finding a place that pleased me, at the foot of a projecting rock, in a dark valley, I began with great earnestness the course which I had prescribed for myself. I prayed and then read in the Bible, prayed and read, prayed and read, until my strength was exhausted; for I had taken no nourishment that day. But the more I strove, the harder my heart became, and the more barren was my mind of every serious and tender feeling. I tasted then some of the bitterness of despair. It seemed to be my last resource, and now this had utterly failed. I was about to desist from the endeavour, when the thought occurred to me,

that though I was helpless, and my case nearly desperate, yet it would be well to cry to God to help me in this extremity. I knelt upon the ground, and had poured out perhaps a single petition, or rather broken cry for help, when, in a moment, I had such a view of a crucified Saviour, as is without a parallel in my experience. The whole plan of grace appeared as clear as day. I was persuaded God was willing to accept me, just as I was, and convinced I had never before understood the freeness of salvation, but had always been striving to bring some price in my hand, or to prepare myself for receiving Christ. Now I discovered, I could receive him in all his offices at that very moment, which I was sure at the time I did. I felt truly a joy that was unspeakable and full of glory. How long this delightful frame continued I cannot tell. But when my affections had a little subsided, I opened my Bible and alighted on the eighteenth and nineteenth chapters of John. The sacred page seemed to be illuminated; the truths were new, as if I had never read them before, and I thought it would be always thus. . . . For several days my mind was serene. But before a week had elapsed, darkness began to gather over me again. Inbred corruption began to stir. In a word, I fell back into the same state of darkness and conflict as before.' This, however, was but as the alternation of clear and cloudy days. The struggle was over. In the autumn of that year (1789) he made a profession of his faith, in which he continued steadfast, unmovable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord, for sixty-two years.

The narrative above given is surely adapted to teach us in matters of religion to look not at processes, but at results. If a man is led to forsake sin, to trust in Christ, to worship him and to keep his commandments, it is of small consequence how these results were brought about. The attempt, however, is constantly made to force our experience through the same steps of progress with that of others. God dealeth with souls in bringing them to Christ and holiness variously, just as the wind, the emblem of the Spirit, is sometimes scarce perceptible though all-powerful—sometimes a zephyr, and sometimes a storm—yet in every form accomplishes the same great work. Delay, suffering, and waste of strength would be prevented, if

men could learn wisdom by the experience of others, and be induced to believe that Christ will accept them just as they are; that waiting to become better, or striving to attain certain states of preliminary feeling, is only one of the various forms of unbelief. There is another lesson of a different kind suggested by the account above given. How different are theory and experience! What becomes of the boasted power of man—of his ability, pleenary or natural, to repent, believe, and change his own heart? Had any miserable sophist gone to the youthful subject of this memoir, lying on the ground in his agony in the depths of the forest, and told him, "You can if you will," would it not have been as much a mockery as when Satan said to Adam and Eve, "Ye shall be as gods?" It is well enough for men in their studies to split hairs and quibble about ability and inability, can and can't; but when it comes to the death-struggle, these distinctions are all discarded, and a solemn, fearful consciousness of absolute helplessness is produced. And until in one form or another this sense of impotence is experienced, there is no real apprehension of the help of Christ. Then, again, when men tell us that conversion is effected when the soul summons all its powers and determines to make God its portion, or purposes the general good, how does this agree with the experience of God's people? Is conversion, so far as it is a conscious process, a self-determination, so much as it is a beholding the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, as that glory is revealed to it through the word and by the Spirit, taking the whole soul captive in admiration, gratitude, love, and submission? Men do not create themselves; they do not come forth from the darkness of spiritual death, to behold the light of God's countenance and the glories of the new creation, by any energy of their own. The whole change is one of which man is the subject, rather than the agent.

We have not the means, if we had the inclination, to trace further the formation of the religious character of the eminent subject of this memoir. He seldom spoke either of his own experience or of his methods of religious culture. He lived with God; and men knew that he had been on the mount by the shining of his face; but he was not wont to tell what he saw, and he made no record. He was eminently unworldly. He made no

effort to become rich. He never sought the honour which comes from men. He kept aloof from all worldly amusements. He mingled very little in any active pursuits. While taking the liveliest interest in all religious and benevolent enterprises, it was by his counsels, countenance, and prayers, rather than by active agency, that he endeavoured to promote their objects. He was seldom seen in public, except in the pulpit, and every one saw that he was there for no purpose of self-display. All this tended to give him that saintly character for which he was remarkable. By thus keeping himself unspotted from the world, by this habitual fellowship with God, and by the obvious consecration of all his powers to the service of Christ, he came to be regarded with a reverence seldom felt for man. This was the great secret of his power. This was the halo which encircled his brow, attracting all eyes and offending none.

It is very difficult to convey any adequate impression of Dr. Alexander as a preacher to those who never or but seldom heard him in the pulpit. He differed from himself so much in different moods of mind, and on different occasions, and doubtless also at different periods of his life, that his coevals were his only competent judges. All witnesses unite in testifying that from the very outset of his ministry he was regarded as one of the ablest and most effective preachers in the land. In his native State especially, the liveliest admiration was evinced for his pulpit talents, and the tradition of his success is still fresh in every place he visited in early life. It is said that at first his discourses were very imaginative and ornate, a character which certainly did not belong to them in later years. Nor did he owe his power as a preacher to his skill in elocution. No two things could be more different than his simple conversational method and the oratorical declamation of many justly celebrated public speakers. His preaching was that of an able, learned, wise, spiritual man, who always and manifestly spoke with the single object of doing his hearers good. His manner was simplicity itself. His voice clear and various in its intonations, adapting itself wonderfully to the feeling uppermost in his mind. His eye was like a veiled diamond or a burning coal, according as he was in repose or excited. You never lost the sense of its power. His keenness of vision kept

him in communion with his audience, as he could read every countenance, even the most distant, and adapted his remarks or tone to what was thus revealed, so that each man in his turn felt himself personally addressed. To all these advantages, intellectual and physical, was added the unction of a devout spirit. This was the holy oil upon his head, whose fragrance filled the sanctuary, and made all feel that they were present to hear God's messenger, and not to listen to an oration.

Dr. Alexander's manner in preaching was to a remarkable degree determined by his feelings. If he felt dull and heavy, he made no effort to appear otherwise. There was no striving to get up feeling, no emotionless vehemence of tone or action.

His discourses were generally a stream, as distinguished from an artificial canal. They followed "their own sweet will," always keeping their course, but still free. One thought suggested another, and when the sermon was completed, it was a continuous whole, and not a combination of parts. This at least is true in reference to his most characteristic discourses. Many of his sermons indeed were logically constructed and pre-arranged, the whole plan of which was visible at the time and on review. But this was not the character of his mind, nor his usual manner. We have often sat in admiration and witnessed this process of spontaneous evolution, no one knowing what was to come next, and yet something always did come making a real advance on what had preceded, awakening attention and exciting expectation. This was especially his method in remark, for which his talent was extraordinary. He seldom laid down any proposition to be regularly established. He seldom stated premises from which a remote conclusion was to be drawn. His first remark seemed to be almost fortuitously determined; either suggested by what some one else had said, or occurring to himself at the moment. But that remark was sure to be followed by a continuous stream, which never turned back upon itself.

Dr. Alexander was very much in the habit of adhering to the figure of his texts. If he preached on the passage, "I am the vine, ye are the branches," instead of abstracting from it the general proposition that believers are partakers of the life of Christ, and proceeding to discuss it as a theme of religious

philosophy and experience, he would keep up the figure of a vine throughout. Or if discoursing on the text, "The Lord is my Shepherd," it would not be a sermon on providence, as a point of doctrine, but one in which the shepherd and his flock were never lost sight of. This contributed not a little to the endless variety in his preaching, which was so remarkable.

His methods of preaching, however, were so distinct the one from the other, that those hearing him in one style, could have no idea of what he was in another. One of his favourite methods was the descriptive or graphic. He would take some scriptural scene and reproduce it. He would so describe the event as to make it all pass before you, awakening the feelings which an intelligent spectator might be supposed to have experienced. Many years ago we heard him in Winchester, Virginia, depict the scene of Abraham offering up Isaac, when he excited the sympathy of his audience to the highest pitch. Everybody knew how it was to end, and yet everybody felt relieved when the angel arrested the hand of Abraham. It was not, however, sympathy in the mere sufferings of Abraham, but in his faith, submission, and gratitude; so that the pleasure of his hearers was not so much æsthetic as religious. They went away filled, not with admiration of the preacher, but with devout affections towards God. On another occasion, at a communion season in Princeton, he preached on the last three days of our Saviour's life. It was to all appearance nothing more than a simple narrative of events with which every one was familiar. Yet after thirty years, the impression of that discourse lives in the recollection of all who heard it. Not long before his death, he preached a sermon on the Transfiguration, in the chapel of the Seminary. After the service was over, we asked ourselves whether the preacher had stated one new fact, or brought forward one new idea. We could recall none; and yet all present felt they had been with Jesus, and beheld his glory. There was a strange power of this kind about him. No one could find out where it lay, or in what it consisted; but devout persons would follow him gladly from place to place, to be moved and elevated by its influence.

Another style of his preaching may be called the experimental, in which he was *facile princeps* among the men of his

generation. Perhaps most of those who remember him with personal gratitude, recall him as their spiritual guide, who revealed to them the workings of their own hearts. Under his preaching was realized what the apostle describes as the effect of intelligible discourse, guided by the Spirit, 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25. Those who heard were convinced. Their conscience and consciousness bore testimony to the truth of what he said. They were judged, or examined. Their feelings, which lay as a confused, unintelligible mass, were analyzed, examined, and their true character discerned and estimated. Thus the secrets of their hearts were revealed. They were brought to know and estimate themselves aright, and so falling on their faces, confessed that God was indeed with the truth and with the preacher. All classes of persons felt the power of this searching process. The procrastinating, the sceptical, the hardened, were astonished to find with what accuracy they were depicted, and thoughts and feelings, misgivings and purposes, which they thought hidden from all eyes, were brought to light. The anxious inquirer, the young convert, and the experienced Christian, each in his turn had his heart thus analyzed and interpreted to his consolation or guidance. Many can recall the solemn hours when the preacher, in his kind, paternal manner, told them all they ever felt, showed them where they had erred, and what they were to do. Often the inquirer or the young convert could follow him step by step up to a certain point, and when he left them, and detailed experiences of which they as yet knew nothing, would sit and weep. Still more frequently the Christian would find his heart probed to the core, its hidden evils disclosed, or its doubts and difficulties removed, and the light of divine truth made to reach its secret places. This was a rare gift, due, under God, to his own profound and varied experience, to his habit of noticing and analyzing the operations of his own mind, to his frequent intercourse with all classes of Christians, to his power of extracting from those with whom he conversed their thoughts and feelings, to his extended knowledge of books of casuistry and religious biography, to his familiar acquaintance with the Scriptures, the great treasury of spiritual knowledge, and to his always drawing from life. If he undertook to describe how certain

men felt, it was no imaginary picture that he drew, but one the original of which he knew. He would tell either what he had himself felt, (never, however, naming himself,) or what he had observed in others. Personal experience, observation, and Scripture, not fancy, were sources whence he drew. What was drawn from life, was found to be true to life.

In dogmatic preaching, when some point of doctrine or duty was selected to be established and enforced, Dr. Alexander differed less from other men. His discourses of this kind were replete with truth and wisdom; everything was clear and to the point; but this was not the kind of preaching in which he most delighted, or in which he was most impressive.

Sometimes in the midst of a sermon, he would pause, and utter with peculiar solemnity a truth or sentiment which seemed to have no immediate connection with the subject in hand, and then resume the thread of his discourse. These were shafts shot at a venture; and we have known them to penetrate so deep as never to be extracted.

On the whole, the subject of this memoir was a preacher *sui generis*. He was what he was, in virtue of high gifts and endowments, manifested and exercised without rule or effort. He imitated no one, and was incapable of being imitated. He stands alone, enshrined in the memory of those who knew him, an object of admiration, reverence, and gratitude.

The greater part of Dr. Alexander's public life was spent as a teacher of theology. He was elected by the General Assembly in 1812, the first professor of the Theological Seminary then just established at Princeton. His election took place under peculiarly solemn circumstances. It was "amid the prayers and tears of the Church he was elected, and amid the prayers and tears of the Church he was laid in the tomb." Nearly forty years intervened between his election and his death; and we believe during all that time not an individual of our Church ever doubted that he was, of all men in our connection, the man best suited to the office. To say that he was able, learned, orthodox, and pious, would be to say little. He might have been all this, and yet unsuited to his position. He was to a remarkable degree free from those faults, whether of levity, imprudence, extravagance, or exaggeration, in opinion

or conduct, pride of intellect, and eccentricity, which so often mar the character of able and good men, and seriously interfere with their usefulness. On the other hand, he was eminently wise and moderate in his opinions, prudent in his deportment, serious in his manners, reverential and devout in his spirit, humble before God and man, faithful, punctual, and diligent, so that the influence which emanated from the whole man was healthful. And we are deeply satisfied that it was to this freedom from faults, compatible with ability and piety, and the possession of these minor excellencies, if they may be so called, which are often wanting in good and great men, that Dr. Alexander was in a large measure indebted for his eminent success and usefulness as a professor. He was always ready at the right time and place. During his long official life, we do not believe he ever missed an exercise through neglect or forgetfulness, and very rarely from any other cause. He was always prepared for what he had to do. He never disappointed the expectations of his pupils by any failing on his part.

The three great sources of influence, ascendancy over the intellect, power over the religious feelings, and ability to win the affections of his pupils, united in Dr. Alexander, each in an eminent degree. His talents and learning rendered all his lectures instructive. They communicated knowledge, removed difficulties, illustrated important principles, and produced conviction.

In teaching theology he adopted all the methods of a text book, lectures, catechetical examinations, and written exercises. His students were for many years accustomed to read Turretine, on which they were examined. Lectures were delivered on the prominent topics. Questions were handed out, to which the students were expected to write answers; and themes were proposed for extended dissertations. On Thursday evening, the two lower classes assembled for public speaking, Dr. Alexander presiding and criticising the performances. On Friday evening there was a meeting of the theological society for the discussion of points of doctrine and ethics. The professors attended these exercises, and concluded the debate with whatever remarks they saw proper to make. It was here Dr. Alexander appeared in his element. His talent for extemporaneous

remark found fit occasion. His older pupils will remember while they live, the knowledge and mental excitement derived from these exercises. Sometimes a state of real enthusiasm was produced by a lecture which seemed to dissipate the darkness which hung over some difficult subject. On one occasion of the kind referred to, the late William Nevins, D. D., of Baltimore, loved and admired by all who knew him, came to the room of two of his classmates, and said, "Brethren, it is a shame that we should enjoy such advantages, and do nothing to secure to others the same privileges. Our class ought to endow a scholarship." This was the origin of the scholarship of 1819. When a committee of the class waited on Dr. Miller to inform him of what they purposed to attempt, Mr. Nevins in his frank manner told him of the occasion of the movement, when the holy man, with tears in his eyes, lifted up both his hands, and said, "My young friends, I do not believe such a man as Dr. Alexander walks the earth." This incident is mentioned simply as an illustration of the ascendancy exercised by Dr. Alexander over the minds of his students.

Having incidentally mentioned the name of Dr. Miller, we may be permitted to pause and in a sentence pay our humble tribute to that sainted man. He could be appreciated only by those who knew him intimately, who saw him day by day, and year in and year out, in all circumstances suited to try and to reveal the true character. We have never heard any one who enjoyed such means of knowing him, speak of him otherwise than as one of the holiest of men. May the writer be further pardoned for obtruding himself for a moment, so far as to say, that during twenty-nine years of intimate official association with these two venerated men, he never saw the slightest discourtesy, unkindness, or acerbity manifested by the one towards the other; and that he never heard a disparaging remark from the one in reference to the other. Thank God, the Princeton Seminary has a history! The past is safe. The memory of the two eminent men who were its first professors, and who gave it character, rests over it as a halo, and men will tread its halls for their sake with something of the feeling with which they visit the tombs of the good and great.

The influence of Dr. Alexander over his students, however,

was not due to his intellectual abilities alone. It was attributable, perhaps in a higher degree, to his power over their religious feelings. Of all sources of influence this is the greatest. The man who can bring us into communion with God, who can reveal to us the glory or the love of Christ, who can unseal the fountains of penitence, or kindle the expiring embers of faith and hope—the man whom God uses to do us such services as these, is one “for whom some would even dare to die.” Certain it is, we never knew a man who was even second to Dr. Alexander in this respect. This gift in him was so rare and pre-eminent that all others seem lost in it. The obligation of his pupils to him for knowledge and intellectual improvement, though neither forgotten nor undervalued, is still merged in this deeper debt. When they think of him, it is as he appeared on some well-remembered occasion, in the pulpit, at the communion table, or in the Conference.* Even his lectures were devotional. We well remember that his class went to his lectures on pastoral theology as if going to the sanctuary. It was a season of worship.

This article is already unduly protracted, and yet we have done no justice to our subject. We have said nothing of Dr. Alexander as an author, or as a theologian, or as a Presbyterian, or as to his position and influence in reference to all the great questions and enterprises of the day. Had we the time and ability it would be instructive to contemplate him under each of the above aspects. But our space is exhausted. We must refer our readers to the Memoir prepared with so much skill by his accomplished son.

* A social meeting of the professors and students for religious conversation or conference on Sabbath afternoons.