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I.

TERTULLIAN AND THE BEGINNINGS OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY.

FIRST ARTICLE.

IT is exceedingly impressive to see Christian Latin literature Athena-like spring at once into being fully armed in the person of an eminently representative man, in whom seem summed up the promise and potency of all that it was yet to be. This is what occurred in Tertullian, whose advent and career provide a remarkable illustration of the providential provision of the right man for the right place. Seldom has one been called to a great work who was better fitted for it by disposition and talents as well as by long and strenuous preparation. Ardent in temperament, endowed with an intelligence as subtle and original as it was aggressive and audacious, he added to his natural gifts a profound erudition, which far from impeding only gave weight to the movements of his alert and robust mind. A jurist of note, he had joined to the study of law not only that of letters, but also that of medicine; born and brought up in the camp he had imbibed from infancy no little knowledge of the military art; and his insatiable curiosity had carried him into the depths of every form of learning accessible to his time and circumstances, not even excepting the occult literature of the day. When he gave himself in his mature manhood to the service of Christianity, he brought in his hands all the spoils of antique culture, smelted into a molten mass by an almost incredible passion.

The moment when he appeared on the scene was one well calcu-

III.

ARCHIBALD ALEXANDER'S PREPARATION FOR HIS PROFESSORSHIP.*

DURING his tour to the Hebrides, Samuel Johnson visited the little island on the west coast of Scotland where Columba and his companions lived; and from which they moved on their missionary journeys to the neighboring islands and to the mainland. Standing on the bleak hill which crowns it, his mind traveled back to the period when, to quote his words, "it was the luminary of the Caledonian regions." The association of the place with the saintly life and labors of the Irish apostle of Scotland called from him an eloquent expression of contemptuous pity for those whom such associations do not interest and benefit,—for those "whose patriotism is not deepened on the plain of Marathon, and whose piety does not grow warmer on the island of Iona." In every case in which association of this kind exerts a beneficent influence, the benefit takes its departure not from the mere physical element, but from the human element associated with it. There is much to charm the senses in the towers, the halls, the pictures, the libraries, the peaceful rivers, the gardens and the noble trees of Oxford and Cambridge. But what are these delights of sense in their power to uplift, to inspire, to awaken the high resolve "to scorn delights and live laborious days," when compared with the human memories which the university cities of England awaken or deepen? I do not know whether Mr. Matthew Arnold was right when he said that Oxford is the university of great movements and Cambridge the university of great men; but one cannot walk in either Oxford or Cambridge without crowding thoughts of the great and good whose lives have made them places of pilgrimage for all time.

Called to deliver the first address of the session, it has seemed to me that I could not do better than ask you to surrender yourselves for the hour to some of the great associations which constitute no small part of the wealth of the place in which you are to begin or continue your theological studies. For young as the town of

* An address to the students of Princeton Theological Seminary.

Princeton is when compared with the seats of the great schools of learning on the continent or in Great Britain, it needs only a little study to discover that we too are rich in great memories of the kind which should inspire high resolve.

The University of Princeton, standing on one of the first foothills of the Appalachian Mountains and in a town whose trees and lawns have given it a continental fame, whose oldest hall is one of the best examples of pre-revolutionary architecture, with its monumental buildings increased in number nearly every year, and with its noble towers and library and memorial theatre, produces a profound impression on the visitor. But what are these to its human associations? It is the great names on the gravestones in the cemetery, the marble stone that marks the place where Mercer fell, the homes of two signers of the great Declaration; it is the memorable fact, that here Madison and Paterson, in the Whig and Cliosophic Societies, began their discussions of the great problems of constitutional government which they debated in maturer years in the Constitutional Convention; that here Ellsworth began to learn the lessons in jurisprudence which made him the great Chief Justice; that here the elder Edwards planned to write his *History of Redemption*, and Davies delivered his eloquent discourses; that here Witherspoon impressed permanently his strong personality on the life of a great institution, and on the individual lives of his students; that here the elder Maclean lectured from the first chair of Chemistry in the United States, and Henry conducted the experiments which issued in the great discoveries which made possible the invention of the electric telegraph—it is names and facts like these which make the town a benediction to all who will yield themselves to its memories.

Younger by three-fourths of a century than the University is the Theological Seminary of which you are students. Though the eldest of the divinity schools of the Presbyterian Church, it is less than a century old. The years which have passed will one day be looked on as a brief period in the life of this institution of learning. If we choose to think of Princeton's age comparatively, and to call to mind the fact that they still deliver theological lectures at Paris where Thomas Aquinas taught in the thirteenth, and at Oxford where John Wycliffe taught in the fourteenth century, our Seminary is in its infancy. Even among American institutions it is not the oldest. The Dutch Reformed Church Seminary, now at New Brunswick, was founded in 1795; the Associate Reformed Seminary in 1804; and Andover in 1809. Thus three American divinity schools antedate Princeton Seminary, as three American

colleges antedate Princeton University. But young as it is, Princeton Seminary has not only done a large work for the Church and the world, but is rich in inspiring associations.

Of these none are more precious than the careers and characters of the founders and the early professors. It is one of these that I shall bring before you this morning. I shall tell the story of Archibald Alexander, our first professor; the story, not of his career in Princeton, but of those preceding and preparatory years which explain his Princeton life and justify the veneration with which we always speak of him. It is origins and beginnings with which history is most closely concerned, and in which the reader of history is most deeply interested. Limited in time as this opening address must be, I am compelled in selecting a special subject to choose between his earlier and his later life. And without hesitation I choose the earlier, not only because less known, but because it is the earlier and for you, therefore, the more important to know. I am not without hope that I shall be able so deeply to interest you in the man as to lead you to the charming biography written by his son.* If I shall do no more than this I shall be content; for in that case I shall have helped to bring you into vital communion with one of the loftiest, purest and simplest characters, with one of the largest and best-disciplined intellects the American Church has produced.

We shall do no wrong to their associates if we say that the Presbyterian Church owes this Seminary above all to the anxiety, the prayer, the correspondence and the separate and united labors of three notable men: Ashbel Green, Samuel Miller and Archibald Alexander.

If ever a man inherited the right and the duty to promote the interests of higher learning, in particular to take part in laying the foundations of a theological institution, it was Ashbel Green, sometime President of Princeton College. His father, the Rev. Jacob Green of Hanover, New Jersey, a graduate of Harvard College, had educated not a few ministers in his house, and had acted during a vacancy as President of Princeton. His maternal grandfather, the Rev. John Pierson of Woodbridge, graduated at Yale in 1711, was one of the founders and first trustees of Princeton College. His great-grandfather, the Rev. Abraham Pierson, graduated at Harvard, was one of the founders and the first President or Rector of Yale College. And his great-great-grandfather,

* *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, 1854.

Abraham Pierson, was graduated at Cambridge in England, and was deeply interested in the life of Harvard at new Cambridge in Massachusetts. With such an ancestry, Ashbel Green was only continuing the work of his family when he sent to the General Assembly of 1805 an overture, in which he set forth the Church's and the country's need of learned and devoted ministers, and prayed the Assembly to see to it that the Presbyteries of the Church take regular steps to secure suitable candidates and to proceed to their education. This overture and its favorable reception were the first public action toward the planting of this institution. Dr. Green was at that date the pastor of the Second Church of Philadelphia. Among his intimate friends and correspondents was the Rev. Samuel Miller, D.D., one of the collegiate pastors of the Presbyterian Church of New York. Samuel Miller's memory is one of the highly honored memories in the possession of our Church. We are too apt to think of him chiefly as a saintly man, who was eminently a gentleman. He was a saint; and he brought to his Seminary professorship that fine urbanity which was the fruit of good blood, lifelong association with men of influence, native gifts for society, a profound Christian experience and a successful career as the pastor of a great city church. But Samuel Miller, this Seminary should be the last to forget, was also a man of exceptional ability, of wide reading, of real scholarship and of diversified intellectual sympathies. Whatever he studied was submitted to the reflection of a strong and judicial mind. I hope to do later, what the time allotted to this opening lecture will not permit me to do now, namely, so to set before you the life and character and work of this great founder and benefactor of the Seminary, as will leave on you the impression I have received of his high intellectual life. That he lived far above the intellectual level on which many of his conspicuous contemporaries lived, no one who knows his life and work can doubt. Samuel Miller, as I have said, was one of Ashbel Green's most valued friends and correspondents. Whether Dr. Green awakened or only deepened Dr. Miller's interest in the plan of a regular system of ministerial education it is now impossible to tell. Certain it is, that not long after the overture of 1805 the two men were in correspondence on this subject in connection with the kindred subject of the projected seminary at Andover, on which Mr. Miller's New England blood and friendships led him to look with favor. But before Andover Seminary was established in 1809 Dr. Miller had become convinced that the Presbyterian Church must undertake the education of its own ministry. . . Mean-

while, in 1808, Archibald Alexander, then the pastor of the Third Church of Philadelphia, preached as the retiring Moderator a sermon before the General Assembly, from the text, "Seek ye to excel, to the edifying of the Church." "The first thing which deserves our attention," said he, "is the introduction of suitable men into the ministry. If you would have a well-disciplined army, you must begin by appointing good officers. There is no subject which more deserves the attention of our Church when met in General Assembly than this. The deficiency of preachers is great. Our vacancies are numerous and churches often continue for years unsupplied, by which means they are broken up and destroyed." He expressed the opinion that the Church would not have a supply of ministers adequate to its needs until every Presbytery, certainly until every Synod had under its direction a seminary established for the single purpose of educating youth for the ministry, and in which the course of education from its commencement would be directed toward this object.

It is not improbable that this sermon was the result of consultation and correspondence with Dr. Green and Dr. Miller. Certainly it gave the needed impetus and the right direction to the movement to provide the Church with a theologically educated ministry. For the next year an overture came to the General Assembly from the Presbytery of Philadelphia, distinctly proposing the establishment of a theological school. The Assembly appointed a committee, and referred the subject to the Presbyteries. The answer of the Presbyteries led to the organization of the Seminary "Plan." A Board of Directors was elected, of which Ashbel Green became the President, and of which Samuel Miller and Archibald Alexander were members. In 1811 Archibald Alexander was elected the professor of the Theological Seminary, and in 1812 Samuel Miller was elected as his colleague. During the latter year the Seminary was opened with three students in attendance. With the name of Archibald Alexander, therefore, begins the list of the instructors of this institution, of those who defined its curriculum and have given character to its internal life.

One of the richest valleys in the eastern half of the Appalachian Mountains lies between two ranges, which, while somewhat broken into peaks in the northeast, can be traced in Massachusetts and Connecticut. As you move south the ranges become more regular and less broken, until they sink into the alluvium of the States that border on the Gulf. The Hudson has cut its way across the valley at Newburgh, the Delaware at Easton, the Schuylkill at Reading,

the Susquehanna at Harrisburg, and the Potomac at Williamsport. South of the Potomac, speaking roughly, the valley widens until at places it is quite thirty miles in breadth. It was rich in timber at almost all points when the whites entered it; and wherever the land was cleared and tilled it amply rewarded by rich and diversified harvests the labors of the settlers. The mountains were always in sight to give the element of sublimity to a landscape which even without them would have possessed elements of exceptional beauty; and they were there as reservoirs to make it a land of water-courses, a land of plenty.

Throughout almost its entire length this great valley was subdued to the use of man by what we shall not be criticised in this place for describing as one of the noblest classes of the Colonial immigrants—I mean the class constituted by those who had been educated by the theology and polity of the Reformed Churches. In western Massachusetts and Connecticut prevailed that type of Congregationalism which was formed, not by the idea of Independence, but by the English Presbyterianism of Cartwright. In the valley through New York and New Jersey lived the Dutch and the Huguenots. In Pennsylvania, from the Delaware at the Irish Settlement on beyond the Schuylkill at Reading, the immigrants were largely German, and of these many came from the Reformed Churches of the Rhenish Palatinate. Even in this region some settlers from Ulster had founded homes; and they became more numerous as the valley approached the Susquehanna. Between the Susquehanna and the Potomac it would be hard to say whether the German or the Ulster immigrants were the majority. South of the Potomac the valley was called the Valley of Virginia; and what we may call the Presbyterian character of the settlements was quite as striking as it was farther north. I think we shall not be inaccurate if we call this great valley from its northeastern to its southwestern limits, the region of the country in which the theology and polity of the Reformed Churches exerted their characteristic influence more powerfully than in any other large section during the last half of the eighteenth century.

About 1736 Archibald Alexander, the son of Thomas, who was born in Scotland, migrated to America from the county of Derry in Ireland. He landed at the port of Philadelphia, and settled on the Schuylkill near what is now Norristown. Here his son William was born. Like many others he moved, about ten years later, to the southwest to new Virginia. Just what was the route he took we do not know; but it would not have been difficult for him to

have pursued his journey farther than the Potomac river through contiguous settlements of Ulster families. In Virginia he made his home in what is now Rockbridge county. His strong character was reflected in his vigorous physical frame. He was the leader of the community of settlers, the captain of the company raised to protect the settlement. "Perhaps," writes his grandson, "no man ever left behind him a higher character for uprightness and benignity than 'Old Ersebell' Alexander, as he was called by the Scotch people." His son William, a merchant and farmer and an elder of the Church, who could justify his right to bear rule by repeating from memory the whole of the Larger Westminster Catechism, married, in his own community, Ann Reid. Of these Scottish or, as we inaccurately say, "Scotch-Irish" parents Archibald Alexander was born on the seventeenth of April, 1772, just three years before the farmers of Massachusetts at Concord "fired the shot heard round the world." So heartily in sympathy was the farming community into which he was born with their Massachusetts brethren, that when soon afterward they organized a new county seat, they called it Lexington after the little town of Massachusetts; and the classical academy they founded and supported they called Liberty Hall, which still flourishes—*semper sit in flore*—as Washington and Lee University.

Archibald was the third of a family of nine. When he was three years old the family removed about five or six miles from his birth-place, and very near to what became the county seat. The period of his childhood was one of general distress throughout the country, brought on by the war. To this distress we must add the hardships which all suffer who live in a new country, even if as rich as a prairie of the Middle West or as the great Valley itself. The lack of a stable currency, the frequent and unexpected calls of the minute men to support the Continental line in the war of Independence, the want of manufactures, the difficulties of transportation and even of correspondence were common hardships; hardships which we, who live in a highly specialized society where labor is divided, can with difficulty realize. But hardships were not the most important elements of Archibald Alexander's boyhood. The community in which he lived was free in its spirit and democratic in its organization. If there were hardships, all endured them. The adventitious differences which mark our conventional life were unknown. If the rich were poor, as they were, the poor had enough and to spare of the necessities of living. And of the greatest elements of an ideal society none were wanting. For the com-

munity of which the Alexander family were members was aglow with religious feeling, and animate with intelligence and high intellectual ambition, and all on fire with the resolve to achieve civil liberty. We need not commiserate this boy. We would better congratulate him. For a society, however wanting in wealth, inventions and even fine art, which is formed by the sublime ideas of religion, intelligence and civil freedom, must be a society of fair women and brave men, of courtesy, of good deeds and large deeds, of self-sacrificing benevolence. It was quite another kind of community than that in which Archibald Alexander was born of which Wordsworth wrote, "Plain living and high thinking are no more."

He was trained religiously, of course. That prejudice or prejudgment in behalf of a religious life, which the historian Niebuhr said ought to be created in the mind of every child, was not permitted by faithful parents to be absent from the mind of young Alexander. And in his case at an exceptionally early period religious belief was given an intellectual and systematic form. Before he was seven he learned the Shorter Catechism.

He had already begun the study of Latin. And so distinct already was the promise he gave of large faculty for study, and so strong was the desire of his parents that one of their sons at least should receive a liberal education, that they sent him from home to what was thought a better school. When he was ten years old the purpose of educating him was settled, so remarkable already had his love of learning and his ability to acquire it appeared. He now became the pupil of the Rev. William Graham, whose school, called Liberty Hall, a revival of one which existed before the war, was re-established on land given for the purpose by young Alexander's father.

The often quoted remark of President Garfield, that in order to constitute a university it would be only necessary to secure a log, put on it Mark Hopkins as teacher and give him a pupil, would lose nothing of its truth if made of this teacher of Mr. Alexander. For William Graham, in his ideas of education, his devotion to abstract study and the search for fundamental truth, and his gift of exciting the interest and calling into healthful activity the powers of his students, was not unlike the great President of Williams College. He aimed, at Liberty Hall, "to rear a seminary on the model of Princeton College." Dr. Alexander, when seventy years of age, delivered a discourse in which he expressed his mature judgment of the gifts and character of his early teacher. "Mr. Graham," said he, "possessed a mind formed for profound and accurate investigation. He had studied the Greek and Latin clas-

sics with great care, and relished the beauties of these exquisite compositions. He had a strong leaning to the study of natural philosophy and took great pleasure in making experiments with such apparatus as he possessed. As he was an ardent patriot and thorough republican, the times in which he lived led him to bestow much attention on the science of government. The science, however, which engaged his thoughts more than all others, except Theology, was the Philosophy of the Mind." Dr. Alexander held in high esteem both the fidelity of Mr. Graham as an investigator in this department and the views he defended. He expressed the opinion that "the system of mental philosophy he organized" was a really great system. Besides Mr. Graham's, Mr. Alexander attended the classes of James Priestly, Mr. Graham's assistant. Priestly was a fine classical scholar and an enthusiastic teacher. His distinguished pupil says of him, that "the classics commonly read at school he had so completely by heart that I hardly ever saw a book in his hand when hearing classes in Ovid, Virgil, Horace or Homer. He would resort with the larger scholars to a spring, to spout the orations of Demosthenes in the original with all the fire of the Grecian orator himself."

In this academy he continued his studies for seven years. He had at the time a very humble opinion of his acquirements. He had, however, passed through, with the approbation of his principal, the whole of the course and was engaged in the review preceding the examination for Bachelor, when his studies were interrupted by his father's announcement that he had made "an engagement for him as tutor in the family of General Posey of the Wilderness, twelve miles west of Fredericksburg."

Humble as young Alexander's estimate of his attainments at this time was, it was not shared by either his father or his teacher. Already he had given evidence of the sure intellectual grasp and the eager intellectual outlook which always distinguished him. It was only his engagement as tutor that prevented his taking his degree. And his preparation for it was the mastery of a curriculum as wide as that whose completion gave it to Samuel Miller at the University of Pennsylvania, and to William Graham at Nassau Hall.

When he became tutor in General Posey's family he was only seventeen years old. This seems to me to have been the greatest change he ever made and the severest test to which his character was ever subjected. For he passed from the position of a pupil to that of a teacher, and he was thrown into the midst of a society very differently organized from that of his own community, and this

when only seventeen. I have said that the society of the Valley of Virginia was democratic in its organization and spirit. This is true, though the farms were larger there than in the valley in Pennsylvania, and though the farmers employed slaves and redemptioners who constituted a distinct and servile class. But on the lowlands of Virginia the farmers were great planters. Their shipping interests had early brought them into direct contact with the mother country. There was among them a spaciousness and ease of life which reflected the lives of county families in the old home. The planters were English in blood, and English sports and social ideas prevailed. Here Episcopalianism had been first established in America. Happily the planters did not follow their rectors in the loyalty of the latter to the mother country. The laymen of Virginia, among whom was George Washington, in rebelling against the Government of the United Kingdom, rebelled against the ministers of their own congregations; and really, if the portraits of these ministers, painted, for example, by Thackeray in the *Virginians*, are true to life, the laymen of Virginia evinced as much righteousness in abandoning their spiritual guides as they did patriotism in fighting for political independence. Partly because of the character of many of their clergy, and partly because of the spirit of the age, religious indifferentism or positive Deism was common in this part of Virginia. The warmth of religious feeling and the deep interest in religious truth which were characteristic of the Valley were at this time, speaking broadly, absent from the planting district, except as they prevailed among what were called "the lower classes." Certainly William Alexander either unwittingly put his son in a situation of great moral and spiritual peril, or had great confidence in his character, intelligence and attainments when he ushered him at seventeen into this society.

I dwell on this because it seems to me that Mr. Alexander, in the way in which he met these new conditions, showed the strength and poise of character, the fine self-command, the control by his central will of all the powers which marked him during all his manhood. Two things aided him in this critical period of his life. One was the regularity and severity of his duties as teacher; the other was the conversation of a devout Christian lady who lived in the family. The result of his year's life on the plantation was that his knowledge was increased and his character grew firm and his interest in personal religion was deepened. This interest, strengthened by his conversations with Mrs. Tyler, was informed by honest and intelligent efforts to obtain light on subjects which were dark to

him. He read John Flavel, one of the greatest of Puritan preachers, and studied Jenyns' *Internal Evidences of the Christian Religion*, a volume which he always esteemed highly.

This life at General Posey's proved a providential preparation for the deepening of his religious life. In 1789 he returned to his home in the Valley. A deep and widespread religious awakening occurred just at the time of his return, not at his home, but east and south of the Blue Ridge. I must refer you to his biography for a detailed narrative of this great revival. Among the preachers prominent during its course were John Blair Smith, Drury Lacy and William Graham. Mr. Graham took Mr. Alexander with him on his preaching tour, and it was while in company with his teacher and in the midst of the scenes characteristic of a great religious movement that he publicly confessed the Lord as his Redeemer. Both his deep and lifelong interest in revivals of religion and his opposition to not a few of the measures afterward employed by evangelists of note had their origin in his reflections on the scenes he witnessed during this tour.

In the autumn of 1789 he returned to his home in Rockbridge county, and became a communicant. Soon afterwards he fell dangerously ill. On his recovery he was compelled to face the question of his profession. He talked with his friends, and their judgment was clear that he should become a minister. "Moreover, the ministry of the Gospel was clearly his choice." But he thought himself unfit for it. To quote his own words, "I doubted my call. The only other pursuit which entered my thought was that of agriculture; and I pleased myself with the thought of retirement and escape from the awful responsibilities of the ministry." Still he went on with his studies, and began to read divinity with his old preceptor, Mr. Graham. At first with only one companion, afterward with half a dozen, he went to Mr. Graham's house once or twice a week to recite and debate. Philosophy and Systematic Theology were the chief subjects of the course. "During the time of my theological studies," he says, "I perused no great number of volumes, but some I read with great care. Among them were Edwards on the *Will*, on *Original Sin*, and on the *Affections*; Bates' *Harmony of the Divine Attributes*, and some treatises of Owen and Boston."

In the autumn of 1790 he was accepted by the Presbytery of Lexington as a candidate, and his preceptor obtained for him the right to exhort in social meetings for religious worship. This was against Mr. Alexander's wish, for he was not yet thoroughly

convinced that he had been called to the ministry. Mr. Graham, however, urged him to "exercise his gifts," and told him that he might postpone as long as he chose to do so his licensure and ordination.

He was a reserved and somewhat diffident lad, and was without the least consciousness of the gift of public speech. Mr. Graham knew him far better than he knew himself. I do not know an instance in which this gift revealed itself more suddenly. Soon after the meeting of Presbytery Mr. Graham took Alexander and John Lyle, another student, to Kerr's Creek, to the house of "old John McKee," where he told them they were to "exhort." Poor Lyle broke down utterly. "He hemmed and groaned, rolled up his pocket handkerchief into a ball, made a few convulsive gestures and sat down." Alexander went to the meeting apprehensive of disaster, for up to this time he had spoken in public nothing which he had not memorized. Once he had tried to debate, but without success. After Lyle's failure at the meeting, a prayer was offered and a hymn was sung and Alexander was asked to make some remarks. "Although," he writes in 1843, "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."

This was the beginning of Archibald Alexander's career as an extemporaneous preacher. A power which up to that time had been entirely hidden suddenly burst into the view of himself and his audience. From this time on he had no reason to decline the appeals to preach which came to him from preceptor and people. It is not too much to say that the ease, simplicity and lucidity of speech which marked all the discourses of his later years were present in his first sermons. His son James, who expresses the opinion that his father's "extemporaneous discourses were throughout his life the highest effusions of his mind," tells us that up to the last Dr. Alexander found the greatest ease and enjoyment in his freedom of extemporary speech; and was often heard to say that "if he were to stake his life on a single effort, he would, if familiar with the general subject, abandon himself entirely to the impulse of the moment."

All that I have been able to learn of his preaching from his pupils and others accustomed to listen to him, and from his sermons which have been preserved, leads me to believe that among his contemporaries he had no superior in the Church in what may be called didactic eloquence; in that oration of which the method is the orderly

unfolding of the truth, and of which the purpose is the incitement of the will to action. I have the opinion, too, that as this was the earliest of his special gifts to reveal itself, so it was one of his greatest gifts, and the one in whose exercise he had the greatest liberty and the highest enjoyment. Whether his audience was composed of his own family and family friends, or a little gathering in the house of "old John McKee," or the students of the Seminary in the lecture-room or the oratory, or the General Assembly before which he preached as the retiring Moderator, it was as the orator engaged in expository discourse, and bent not distinctively on quickening the sensibilities, but on moving the will, the free responsible spirit of man, that he was at his best. It was when engaged in this work that all his remarkable powers wrought best as a unity and made all his attainments their willing and genial servants. Whatever the subject, whether in philosophy or dogmatics or missions, this was his chosen method, and his aim was always one. Perhaps he enjoyed most, as he excelled most, when he revealed the sinful or Christian soul to itself, exploring its recesses and expounding those "inner ongoings" which, even if noticed by the subject of them, require a teacher to correlate them to divine truth.

Even before he was licensed by the Presbytery he preached often, and as soon as he had passed his examinations he was sent on a missionary and evangelistic tour into the southeast section of Virginia. Wherever he preached, he preached with extraordinary power, and he always delighted in the work. "So accustomed was he," writes his son, "to associate pleasurable sensations with pulpit work that even in later years he used to laugh at the notion of any one's being injured by preaching. And it was commonly observed, through most of his life, he always came from it in a state of exhilaration. Never was he more full or free in conversation. These were the times at which to draw from him his most elevated religious discourses, as well as his liveliest narratives, and his own household, or those in which he was a guest, remember such hours with pensive delight."

Many a minister has been seriously injured by having facility in public speech developed in early life. There is no more insidious peril to the public speaker than that arising from the ability to address an audience with ease. Had Mr. Alexander, in other respects than this particular gift, been a small man or even an average man, his experience in the house of "old John McKee," when he first found he could speak with ease and with fervor, would probably have seriously limited his influence. He would have been strongly

tempted to trust so largely to his natural eloquence as largely to neglect the discipline and cultivation of his powers.

But Mr. Alexander knew himself, and was honest with himself. Unflattered by his success as a speaker, he gave himself to theological study with great earnestness. His studies were carried on under great disadvantages. His library was what could be gathered in a new country. But no man could have had a stronger thirst for knowledge or a stronger determination to satisfy it. It was during the early years of his professional life that he formed the habit of exploring every avenue of learning which presented to him the slightest opening: a habit which at last made him a linguist, a philosopher, a theologian and a great preacher. The text-books put before him by his preceptor became the starting-points of independent investigation. He "devoured books rather than perused them." And there was no great subject which did not so deeply interest him as to possess him. Dr. James Alexander says that he has heard him recite passages from a History of the Arabians which he had not opened for sixty years. Deism had left its mark in Virginia. He undertook an answer to Paine's *Age of Reason*, and read as widely as he could on the evidences of Christianity. He was interested in Church order and the Catholic and Protestant controversy, and so read Stillingfleet's *Irenicum* and Chemnitz on the *Council of Trent*. Now as both before and afterward, he loved mathematics and was interested in physics. The Geometry of Euclid was always a delight to him. Of course he was more deeply interested in investigating abstract truth, the study to which he was introduced at Liberty Hall, and most deeply of all in Systematic Theology. But that he might know the truth thoroughly he studied its great source, the Word of God. He knew the Greek Testament, and read it with ease from an early day; and though the first Hebrew Bible owned by him was wanting in some of its leaves, what of it remained he read, and as his son says, read with avidity. "My thirst for knowledge was always great, and its pursuit was never a weariness to me," he writes of himself; and to this those who knew him, whether in early youth or when for most men age makes the grasshopper a burden, bear unanimous testimony. Thus the facile speech of Archibald Alexander was made useful by severe intellectual discipline, and enriched by wide culture, and ennobled by severe and lofty reflection from the very beginning of his life as a clergyman.

But if he was interested in preaching and in study, I gather from

his early life that he was more deeply interested in his fellow-men and in their highest welfare. No one can read the story of his missionary journey undertaken immediately after his licensure without receiving this as his most distinct impression. That religious affection for the souls of men which marks all great preachers shines conspicuous in his sermons and letters of the period, and in his reminiscences written long afterward.

Thus furnished in intellect, in character, in knowledge and above all in zeal for souls, he entered upon the stated work of his clerical life. He was licensed to preach in October, 1791, by Lexington Presbytery. Two years and a half later he was ordained as pastor of the Churches of Briery and Cub Creek, in Charlotte county. From this date onward his work became more complex in character; though through it all, while actively at work as pastor, he never relaxed his energy in the pursuit of truth and in the cultivation of his mind. He was now one of a circle of active evangelical missionary pastors; and he threw himself into the work with an earnestness excelled by that of none of his brethren. Loving to preach and preaching with power, he was not willing to confine himself to the appointments of his own pulpit; and he gladly gave his services to his brethren, at communions and in meetings designed to awaken the impenitent to a sense of their sin and of their need of a Saviour. I do not know that there is any evidence that he grew as a preacher. But he developed and informed his intellect by hard and continued study; his character was made strong by his evangelical and pastoral labors; and his social life was enriched by close friendships among his clerical brethren, and among the Christian people into contact with whom he was brought as pastor and minister.

Of his clerical friends none appears to have been closer to him than Dr. John H. Rice, whose name in Union Seminary, Virginia, is honored no less than that of Archibald Alexander is in Princeton. Next to Rice, Conrad Speece, the son of a German, stood closest to him. The relation between these three young men was an ideal Christian friendship. Blessed is the minister who has such friends. Each preserved his individuality, each stimulated the others' minds and warmed the others' hearts. After Mr. Alexander had left Virginia and had become a pastor in Philadelphia their intimacy was maintained by correspondence. It is to their city friend that these clergymen in the country write for books. "Buy for me," writes Rice, "at any price, any book you can find that it will in your opinion be important for me to have." He wants especially Horsley's new

translation of Hosea, and asks Alexander to be on the watch especially for a Syriac New Testament, for Trommius' Concordance, for Wettstein's Greek Testament and Michaelis' Hebrew Bible. This was a notable trio of clerical friends. Nor was his interest exhausted by theological and religious subjects. He was interested in public affairs, and he made the acquaintance of men of eminence. He heard and met Patrick Henry, whose career as an orator, statesman and lawyer was soon to close, and John Randolph of Roanoke, just then rising to political prominence.

While still pastor of the two Churches he was called, in 1796, when only twenty-four years of age, to the presidency of Hampden-Sidney College. It had been opened with Samuel Stanhope Smith as President in 1773, but did not obtain a charter until ten years after its planting. It was in a low condition; "but the trustees were determined to resuscitate it if possible." He hesitated long before accepting the position. He became President in the spring of 1797. He reorganized the curriculum and increased the number of students; tiding the institution over the shallows on which it had almost been wrecked. The love of thoroughness in study and exactness of knowledge which were characteristic of himself he endeavored to awaken in his students. Meanwhile, in view of his specific duties as the head of the college, he studied as perhaps he had never studied before. He was "earnestly engaged," says his son, "even beyond his strength, in accumulating and systematizing stores of knowledge, and in conscientiously endeavoring to lift up an institution which had sunk almost to its lowest point." Engrossing as his new duties were, he continued to preach not only stately to two congregations, but in response to many special calls. It was during this period of his life that he married Miss Waddel, the daughter of the Rev. James Waddel, one of the most eloquent of Virginia preachers, the description of whose preaching at a communion service by William Wirt is widely known.

While President of Hampden-Sidney, Dr. Alexander passed through an intellectual trial which, looking at his life from the point of view we occupy, we must regard as one of the preparations for the larger work he was afterward to perform. He was beset with doubts about the position of his Church in respect to the subjects and the mode of baptism. I must refer you to his extended life for the narrative of this trial. But I cannot mention it without saying that his conduct toward himself and his investigation of the subject reveal strikingly the honesty of his intellectual life. With absolute simplicity of purpose, desiring to know only the truth,

he studied the discussions and explored the sources of the subject, until he reached a conclusion in which he could confidently rest.

If this experience of doubt helped to prepare him for his larger work, so did another experience, though in an entirely different way. This was his travel to the North, and especially his journey through New England. The people of southeastern Virginia, where he lived, were widely separated from the rest of the nation. Indeed, owing to the difficulties of communication, every community was in danger of becoming narrow and provincial. Perhaps no two sections of the country were growing wider apart in customs and social life than the South and New England. Agriculture was the characteristic occupation of the South, trade of the North. Moreover, in New England there was flourishing not only Arminianism which soon ripened into Unitarianism, but also more than one type of modified or, as they called it in New England, improved Calvinism. At the same time the Presbyterian Church and the Congregational Churches were about to form the Plan of Union which continued in operation for nearly forty years, and which, while it conferred great blessings on the country, had in it also the seeds of strife and disaster.

As it was intended that he should do his latest and greatest work in organizing a great national school of theological learning, it was important that he should know intimately the theological currents and the religious life of the country. And so he was led, when twenty-nine, to take this journey. He had been twice at Philadelphia as Commissioner to the General Assembly. I do not know where to look for a more vivid picture of that body, as it was at the close of the last and the beginning of the present century, than the sketch in Dr. Alexander's recollections.

But these recollections fall far below in interest those which detail this remarkable journey which began at Hampden-Sidney and extended to New Hampshire. His reputation as a preacher and a thinker preceded him. And this reputation and his position as President of the College secured for him a warm welcome everywhere. He saw the stately ceremonies of a Commencement at Harvard. He visited Princeton and Dartmouth Colleges. He attended the meeting of the General Association of Connecticut. The ministers met at the house of the pastor of Litchfield; and the first business transacted was "the distribution of long pipes and papers of tobacco, so that the room was soon filled with smoke." More interesting to him was his meeting with the clergy who were widely influential as pastors, like Nathan Strong of Hartford and

Eckley of the Old South Church of Boston; or as theological writers, like Hopkins of Newport and Emmons of Franklin. We easily understand the enlarging influence exerted by such a journey on a man prepared for it, as was Dr. Alexander, by his interest in men, his special theological knowledge and his active life as an eminent preacher and educator. It deepened in him that national patriotism which, in his future position, was so important to him and to this institution.

Retaining still the point of view from which his earlier life is regarded as preparatory to his life as a theological professor, one other experience would seem to have been needed; the experience of city life. And this he obtained when, in 1807, he became the pastor of the Third Church of Philadelphia. Philadelphia at that time was the central city of the nation as well as its metropolis. It stood between the North and the South, and was sympathetic with both sections. It had been the capital of the United States during the war of Independence and for several years after the consolidation of the Union under the Constitution. It was also the centre of Presbyterian influence. The first Presbytery in the United States was called popularly the Presbytery of Philadelphia. And when the Presbytery developed into a Synod the geographical name was retained. Here the Synod became the General Assembly; and the General Assembly almost invariably selected one of the Philadelphia churches as its place of meeting. No other city at this time had four Presbyterian churches. To pass from the quiet country home of Hampden-Sidney to his new residence was for Dr. Alexander to be brought into frequent and personal contact with the ministry and laity of the Church from all sections of the country. The change also brought him before the whole Church. He suffered not a little from homesickness, as indeed he did afterward at Princeton. His love and enthusiasm for Virginia never abated. But his pastorate of five years in Philadelphia made the Church know him and made him know the Church. Though he formed no friendships like those with Rice and Speece in Virginia, he was brought into contact with a larger number of ministers. He studied new types of men and saw truth from their points of view. New England was not more distant than Virginia. New York was nearer. And Philadelphia was the point from which the largest movement to the West was made. Moreover, he learned the distinctive traits of the Church life of a city, and with his quick apprehension and his zeal in applying his knowledge to immediate needs, he led a movement of Church extension. And then at the

period of his pastorate those great organizations, which employed and united the evangelical spirit of the churches in the work of Home Missions and Foreign Missions and the publication of the Word of God, were beginning to take form. He was thirty-five when he came to Philadelphia, and forty when he left it for Princeton; and when we think of the great work he had before done, we can, I am sure, conceive of no better consummation of the long period of his providential preparation for life in the Theological Seminary.

And now, in 1812, began the largest and, so far as we are able to judge, the most important part of his life. When the Church founded the Theological Seminary, and in 1811 met in General Assembly for the election of a single professor, by an "almost unanimous" vote Archibald Alexander was elected to the position. It may safely be said that no one in the Church except himself had any doubt as to his duty. What doubt he had had its origin in his profound sense of the greatness of the work. "No man," writes his biographer, "could entertain a higher estimate of the functions which awaited him; no man of eminence could think more humbly of himself." At last, after serious and deliberate consideration, he accepted the appointment, and was inducted into his new office in 1812.

There is no need to tell the well-known story of his life and work as the first professor of this Seminary. The plan of the Seminary went little further than to set forth its specific design. In its details, "the scheme was not so much to be carried out as to be created." In this work of calling into being the elements of the interior life of the institution, Dr. Alexander, though at the farthest remove from an egotist, impressed his personality upon each of these elements, so far as I can see, more deeply and more permanently than any other man I know of has done on any other theological institution. Not even John Witherspoon at the College so distinctly reappears in its subsequent life as does Archibald Alexander in the continuous life of this Seminary for more than ninety years. The largeness and variety of the work he did is appalling. For the first year he was the only professor. We need not wonder that his son says, "Without doubt these were the most anxious moments of his life." He drafted the three-years' course; he instructed all the classes; he wrote lectures; he adjusted his teachings to men from institutions of differing degrees of efficiency. Immensely as he was strengthened by Samuel Miller's accession the next year, it is simply the truth that Dr. Miller found the curriculum created and the means for maintaining the religious life of the students perfected.

The presence of an able and learned colleague gave to Dr. Alexander more time for private study. To his latest days he continued the pursuit of exact knowledge, in the languages, in theology and in history, with all the enthusiasm which was awakened in his youth by William Graham. He made himself a master not only in his knowledge of the details of the Reformed theology, but in his knowledge of its history. Beginning his work with a knowledge of the Biblical languages large for the time and the country, he extended and deepened it, teaching the Old Testament until he was able to commit its instruction to young Charles Hodge; the discernment of whose high character and large gifts while still a student and the selection of whom for the work of linguistic instruction constitute only one of Dr. Alexander's special services to the Church.

As the years passed his influence grew stronger and wider. Students, attracted largely by his reputation for large knowledge, for sincere goodness, for devotion to truth, for genius as a preacher, and by his fame as a quickening and informing teacher, came to the Seminary from New England and from the South, as well as from the Middle States. Within ten years from its planting the Seminary was as national in its patronage as the College.

Then came the fruitful period of publication: *The Canon of Scripture*, *The Evidences of Christianity*, *The History of Israel*, special studies in local history, like the volume on *The Log College*, *The History of Colonization*, biographies, reviews, theological essays and practical discourses were in succession given to a public which had learned highly to esteem every product of his pen.* Year by year both this larger public and the increasing students of the Seminary regarded him with growing love and admiration. And as he passed from middle life to old age, to the love and admiration was added reverence. At last, when in the eightieth year of his age he was called to his reward, no man in the Church was more influential, more beloved, more deeply venerated. From all lands came eulogies which expressed the gratitude, the reverence and the love of a thousand pupils and of unnumbered friends. The unity, symmetry and largeness of his mind, character and life made it difficult at the time—and it is no easier to-day—to portray him in his individuality; though his countenance, his expression, his voice, his gestures and his conversation were strongly marked by distinct

* In addition to the theological essays and reviews contributed to the *Biblical Repertory* and articles published in other periodicals, Dr. Alexander's publications—books and pamphlets—number forty-nine.

and attractive qualities. It was easy for his friends to recall his quick and sure grasp of all the subjects of his study, his interest in truth in all its forms, his tenacious memory, his ease of recollection, his lucid expression, his buoyant spirit, his zeal for God and his love of men. But after all their analysis and all their catalogues, it must have been felt at the time, as one who studies his career now must feel, that catalogues of traits which differentiate him from other men are utterly inadequate to describe the greatness of Archibald Alexander.

For the special trait of the highest type of mental and spiritual life is precisely a trait which does not differentiate. It is mental and spiritual universalism—at once receptive and out-giving at every point of contact with the universe of thought and the world of man. To this high type of greatness we must assign the greatness of this Seminary's first professor. He was a man, and nothing human was foreign to him. The largeness of his human sympathies, both intellectual and spiritual, and his wholesome relish of every phase of thought and life he touched, gave to his character as student and as man its finest quality. Of course he had special gifts, and a strong character which laid them under tribute; and both gift and character were sanctified by strong and high convictions and consecrated to the service of God and man. Of these special gifts, it seems to me the most notable was the quick and sure apprehension of which I have spoken, which in action appeared as an intuitive and lightning-like penetration into the very heart of whatever subject had his attention. Whether he was investigating a language, or expounding a passage of Scripture, or unfolding a doctrine, or discussing a practical measure, or exploring the recesses of a convicted soul; the most notable trait he exhibited was this power of rapid penetration. I do not think that his acquisitions were ever so thoroughly organized under an intellectual system as were those of his pupil, Charles Hodge; and hence the massive unity of Charles Hodge's intellectual products does not appear in those of Archibald Alexander. But in place of it is this rapid, brilliant and penetrating movement into a wide variety of subjects. And what gave the unity to this varied and almost dramatic intellectual activity was his human interest in all interests that were human. And therefore it was that, intellectual as he was, linguist and philosopher and theologian and preacher, his profoundest interest was his interest in men; his deepest love was the love of souls; and the ambition which laid under tribute all his gifts and attainments was the ambition to bring his fellow-men to

their Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. No wonder that we venerate the memory of our first professor.

We bid you welcome, gentlemen, to the Theological Seminary of Archibald Alexander; to the curriculum he first organized; to the studies he first methodized. And we can offer for you no better prayer than that here where he lived and taught and passed to his reward, where his memory is to us so great a blessing, your devotion to the work of the ministry of the Church of Jesus Christ may be exalted and beautified by a love like his of the Redeemer and of your fellow-men.

Princeton.

JOHN DE WITT.