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THE THEBAN LEGION.

BY PROF. WM. M. BLACKBURN.

CHAPTER III.

A RIDE THROUGH CHRISTENDOM.

THE finest city of Galatia was named Ancyra (now Angora), because there was kept the anchor of Midas, its supposed builder. Traveling punsters used to say that they *anchored* safely in the tavern of Otho, or Theodotus, a famous character in that region. He won more respect than was usually granted to an innkeeper in those times. His was a "house of paths."* The city was the meeting-place of the great roads in that part of Asia Minor. It was a well-known station on the long line of travel from York to Jerusalem. Hence it was a common affair for him to have his rooms all engaged, and he did not put on airs about it. Even if his house were small, his heart was large enough for all who came, especially for those whom he thought were "strangers and pilgrims on the earth." He had a way of detecting them, and making light their bills for fare and lodging.

One evening rather late the foaming post-horses brought to his door a man who had ridden hard over the old Bithynian road. He must be some

great official, thought the bystanders, or the Roman post would not be granted him. He gave orders in a haughty tone. A good supper—that he could have, but the very best room was wanting.

"What!" he said angrily, "do you not know who I am?" Otho looked to see if he were an emperor, but the face was not familiar. "I am Hierocles, the former governor of Bithynia, and now on my way to take the governorship of Alexandria."

"Very sorry that I have no room worthy of you," said Otho, "but first come, first served. This centurion came an hour ago from Nicomedia, and engaged the best quarters. Yet you shall not have the worst."

The governor turned, saw Maurice, and scarcely repressed his contempt of one who held only the rank of a centurion.

"Ah! a soldier," he said, for he had before seen Maurice. "A *Christian* soldier, and, perhaps, a coward, skulking from the imperial service, and traveling on some errand for the Church. Your Master, as your preachers say, 'had not where to lay his head,' but you love the uppermost rooms. This town is beset with these Christians. I called at the great inn, and that was nearly full of them. And there comes another bishop."

* Proverbs viii. 2. *Original.*

ternity, I should in all probability have spared myself the incredible labor and chagrin I have since undergone."

Dr. Brown, of Scotland, in a very quaint way, gives an account of his feelings when he first received an invitation to write articles for publication. It was from Hugh Miller, editor of the *Witness* newspaper. He had sent him four five-pound notes for an article on the Exhibition of the Scottish Academy. "I can still re-

member," says Dr. Brown, "or indeed feel the kind of shiver, half of fear and pleasure, on encountering this temptation, but I said to my wife, 'you know that I can't take this. I can't write. I never wrote a word for the press.' She, with wife-like government, kept the money and heartened me to write; and write I did, but with awful sufferings and difficulty, and much destruction of sleep. I think the only person who suffered still more must have been the compositor."

JOSEPH ADDISON ALEXANDER.*

BY PROF. A. D. HEPBURN, MIAMI UNIVERSITY.

IT is to be regretted that Dr. Addison Alexander did not carry out his purpose of writing a literary biography. Such a work, from one so competent to give instruction in that hardest of all arts,—the art of study, would have been to students a legacy more valuable than the *Biographia Literaria* of Coleridge. We have never had in our country one whose life was more exclusively that of a scholar. He was neither an ecclesiastic nor a politician. He shunned society, kept aloof from all local and temporary agitations and controversies, and in the uninterrupted quiet of academic life, prosecuted with unflagging zeal his favorite studies, finding the pursuit of knowledge its own exceeding great reward. His death was a fitting close of such a life. He was at his customary work on the day before he died. His journal closes with the entry made two days before his death: "Reading as usual;" and in his study, among his books, without consciousness of pain, and probably without becoming aware that the hand of death was upon him, he gave up his life of unremitting labor and intellectual enjoyment as gently as a tired child "lies down to pleasant dreams."

Dr. Addison Alexander was, in the strictest sense of the word, self-educated. Although he passed regularly through the Academy and College, bearing off the highest honors of both, he owed but little to either in the formation of his tastes and habits. His favorite studies lay outside of the prescribed tasks of the class-room, and were carried on mostly without the knowledge of his teachers or even of the members of his father's family. The first serious undertaking of the lad (or child, rather), which was thus begun and carried on in secret, was the study of Arabic. He had commenced the study of Latin under the direction of his father almost as soon as he could talk, and the study of Hebrew when he was about six years old. When in his ninth or tenth year he happened to find either on a shelf in his father's library or among the rubbish of the garret, an Arabic grammar, which he had mastered before any one knew of the labors of the precocious linguist. Other languages, both ancient and modern, were soon added to his stock; the Oriental, however, continued for years his favorite study. The example of Sir William Jones seems to have inflamed the imagination

*The Life of Joseph Addison Alexander, D. D. By Rev. Henry C. Alexander, D. D. 2 vols. 8vo. Charles Scribner & Co., New York.

and awakened the emulation of the boy, and kindled an enthusiasm for the study of these difficult languages, that afterward amazed him. In a letter written in the later years of his life, he speaks of his "early and almost unnatural proclivity to Oriental studies," and makes the curious confession that, under the potent spell of Sir William Jones, it was his cherished wish for several years to settle in the East; the wish was not prompted by any missionary zeal, on the contrary he was afraid the Moslems would be Christianized before he could get to them!

His Oriental fever subsided as his taste became purer, and as he became better acquainted with the classical philology of Germany, and a passion for the Greek language and literature succeeded to it. It is surprising, that, although before he entered the Theological Seminary as a teacher, he had exchanged his first love for the second, none of his friends seem to have been aware of the change in his affections. To the last the Church and the community persisted in regarding him as an Oriental rather than a classical scholar. The mistake was an unfortunate one for him and for the cause of Biblical Science in our country. His fondness for the study of languages, and his facility in acquiring them continued during his life. According to the estimate of his biographer he had mastered at least twenty-five languages, excluding merely dialectic variations of one language; several of these he spoke with ease, and many of them, certainly thirteen, he wrote accurately.

The capacity to acquire languages is of itself no evidence of great mental vigor. It is De Quincey, we believe, who calls it the "dry-rot of the intellect." Such prodigies as Mezzofanti may excite wonder, but can hardly claim the title of scholar. Dr. Alexander's command of languages was wonderful, but he was something more than a mere linguist. He would have adopted as his own the words of Milton: "Language is but the instrument conveying to us things useful to be known; and though a linguist should pride himself to have all the tongues

that Babel cleft the world into, yet if he have not studied the solid things in them as well as the words and lexicons, he were nothing so much to be esteemed a learned man, as any yeoman or tradesman competently wise in his mother dialect only." With him a language was valuable only for the literary treasures it contained. All books of extracts, chrestomathies, and scrap books of every kind so frequently employed to introduce the student to a language he rejected, and proceeded at once to the study of the complete works of the great authors. "Where no other books can be had," he says, "the use of such substitutes is compulsory; but when entire classical works can be obtained, no student ought to hesitate. This has been my principle. When about to learn a language I have endeavored to obtain a standard work of acknowledged merit, and read it from end to end; and if no other such could be immediately obtained, my rule has been to read the first again."

It is a saying of Hegel's, that one ought to be acquainted with all that is beautiful and sublime in both the ancient and modern world. So far as Literature is concerned, Dr. Alexander could boast that he was familiar with the greatest productions of genius both of ancient and modern times in their native tongues. And the many criticisms scattered through his journals and letters show that he read them with keen relish and discriminating taste. Of the various branches of learning, history was his favorite one. His predilection for it is shown in his college performances; and his first original contribution to the *Princeton Review* was upon an historical subject. At one period he thought of confining his reading in the languages of which he was master to history. The structure of his mind fitted him to excel in historical investigation and composition. None of our American authors combined so many of the qualities which make a great historian,—vast and varied knowledge, retentive memory, vivid imagination, keen critical talent, truthfulness, im-

partiality and refined taste. We have always thought that in the commentator we lost our greatest historical writer.

Restless as was his desire of knowledge, he could still exercise a learned ignorance. For some departments of science he entertained feelings of indifference, if not of aversion. Metaphysics was to him a *terra incognita* which he never felt any disposition to explore. By the advice of his father he had read as a preparation for his theological studies the leading writers of the Scottish school, but appears not to have carried his researches much further, and to have been content with a very general historical knowledge of the different philosophical systems. It is not to be understood by this that he was not a careful student of human nature. He was a shrewd observer of men and a remarkably accurate judge of character, and had, besides, in a high degree the power of self-observation and refined analysis of feelings and motives. His remarks in the regular Sunday afternoon conference were usually of a casuistic nature, and his peculiar conscience smiting prayers, whose power was felt by every student, could proceed only from one who was familiar with the most hidden workings of the soul. But beyond the region of facts he did not care to venture under the guidance of human reason alone. He could find in speculative philosophy no firm ground for his belief, or, rather, he never felt the need of such speculations to give a foundation to his belief, and was repelled by their obscurity and vagueness. He had found in divine revelation a certain and clear answer to the profoundest questions which engage the philosopher, and he needed nothing more. He probably regarded as the indication of a perverted mind the willingness to leave this clear light of revelation for the uncertain twilight of human speculation. Writing from Europe to his brother, he says: "Having disposed of politics, etc., I proceed to German philosophy. I am sorry to say that the nearer I get to the transcendental Limbo, the stronger becomes

my anti-metaphysical prejudice. My common sense is absolutely rampant. So far as I have yet learned this wisdom, which is not from above, there is nothing in it that can satisfy the craving which you speak of. The aliment provided to appease that craving is the beautiful *mysticism* of revealed religion. There is one distinction which affects me strongly. The Bible shows us much to make us long for more. Beyond what is revealed there hangs a mystic veil which recedes as we advance, half hoping and half fearing that we shall never see all. This keeps the mind in healthful action, and will probably continue so to keep it, world without end. It is precisely for such progress that our constitution fits us; and in it lies our intellectual happiness. How different is the process of transcendental quackery! Sin affects to rend the veil of truth, and impudently plants herself at the extreme of knowledge, pretending to uncover the foundation stones of science, and to show us *all at once*. The man who believes this is no longer capable of rational enjoyment. The majestic stride of intellect is lost forever, and the sublime development of truth in all its symmetry gives place to a huddle of abstractions. So far as sentiment and taste are at all concerned, the partial gleams of sunshine through the pages of the Bible are immeasurably better than the artificial lamplight of oblivious metaphysics."

His views of German metaphysics which are here so decidedly expressed remained unchanged long after the system to which they refer had ceased to be dominant in Germany. He grew more averse to reading or talking upon such subjects, and when by chance he came across metaphysical discussions in his reading he would, to use his own expression, "slam over the pages until he came to something else." Quite as offensive to his truthful, manly nature was the effeminate sentimentalism and mysticism which infected our popular literature. He has criticised and parodied this nebulous, metaphysical poetry in a review

of Shelley's "Prometheus Unbound," which he takes as a text-book in this style of composition; the *dramatis personæ* he describes as a male nondescript, being neither God nor man, three female nondescripts, a couple of gods, furies, several voices, and a large assortment of spirits, etc., who all attest their superhuman nature by singing and saying things which no human being can comprehend. He informs us, that he once projected a lyrical drama of his own in imitation of Shelley's, which he entitled "Flibbertigibbet in Liquor," in which the spirits of Turpentine, Garlic, Gravy, etc., are made to give forth utterances not a whit less sublimely unintelligible than the more dignified spirits of the original. How will the admirers of this style of poetry respond to the appeal, whether the imitation even approaches to caricature, after reading such a specimen as this?

[Voice of Gravy sings.]

"The Spirit of Moisture comes flying abroad,
And his train is borne by the Cyprian god,
Behold, Behold,
The voice of the ghost,
Of a murdered toast,
Sings an anthem of praise in a palace of gold."

"MUSIC—The spirit of sleep playing upon the solar system."

This production belongs, it is true, to the earlier portion of his life, but we may be sure that with his classical taste and anti-metaphysical tendency, he never modified the judgments contained in it.

It was some time after graduating before he decided upon his profession. After his boyish dream of living among the Moslems was broken, he had for a while a passionate desire to become a lawyer. His journal shows that he studied with care the Institutes of Justinian, Coke on Littleton, and other elementary works. The dreams of law and of literary fame all vanished after he made a profession of religion, and the young scholar devoted himself to the Christian ministry.

His course after having made this decision was very characteristic. It was a very prevalent opinion that Dr. Alexander was a restless genius, who

was impatient of rules and of regular, fixed work. It was a great mistake; he needed variety in his work in order to engage in it with all his energy, and was fond of varying his modes of work, as a stimulus to greater activity, but, nevertheless he was one of the most systematic of students. No one yielded less to mere random inclination. To each of his different studies, and he usually carried on five or six at the same time, he allotted its fixed hours. Every day had its "standing" and its "movable orders," *i. e.*, work which he made it imperative on himself to accomplish, and such as could be performed or omitted at pleasure. To every part of the day its special duty was assigned; the interstices of time had suitable tasks assigned them, so that no moments were allowed to go to waste. At the close of every day a record was made of what had been done, and these daily records were reviewed at the end of the month and a summary of the labors of the month was made. It would be hard to find an instance of a more rigid, conscientious economizing of time.

He entered upon his professional studies in his accustomed methodical manner. He did not suffer himself to be carried from one object to another by the impulse of a chance desire, but at once selected that branch of science which was to be the special object of his labors. "I have set before me," he writes in his journal, "as the specific end of my toils to become thoroughly acquainted with the Scriptures; philologically, theologically, practically; and so to qualify myself for interpreting them properly to others. My studies having this for their chief end will at present fall under three distinct heads. 1. Biblical criticism. 2. Systematic theology. 3. History." Before taking up theology, he will, by the advice of his father, pursue a course of reading in Metaphysics; in History, he will lay a firm, general foundation, and to this end will read the best original historical authorities in the languages with which he is acquainted; he will avoid compilers and second-hand retailers, and go at once

to the fountain head. Having thus marked out his course of study, he next prepared a scheme for the distribution of his time, in which nearly every hour is provided for.

He remained faithful to his early choice, never wearying of it, but manifesting an increasing fondness for it to the close of his life. A portion—too small a portion—of the results of his labors was given to the world in his published works and in his lectures. It does not come within the scope of so slight a sketch as this to discuss Dr. Alexander's merits as an interpreter of Scripture. A few traits that serve to reveal the character of the man may not, however, be out of place. That the Bible is as truly the word of God, and a revelation of his will and character as the material universe, was a fact which he seems never to have doubted, but to have rested upon with a hearty unquestioning faith. No naturalist ever found more delight in observing the phenomena, investigating the laws, and pondering the mysteries of nature, than did he in studying the facts and mysteries of the written revelation. Its interpretation was to him a purely scientific process, as much so as the interpretation of nature. Like that, it was governed by fixed laws, and required knowledge, judgment, experience and taste. He had made its principles a matter of profound study, and at one time wished to have it assigned him as his special subject of instruction. His works show how well he understood the theory, and how skillfully and honestly he could apply it. He brought to the study of the sacred volume the same unbiased mind, minute and patient observation, cautious induction, and strict method, as a Faraday or Herschel to the investigations of physical science. In the spirit of genuine inductive philosophy, which regards whatever is worthy of existence as also worthy of science, he deemed nothing in the sacred volume insignificant. His pupils will all remember the stress which he frequently laid upon points that to less honest

and reverent minds seemed to be but trifles.

Dr. Alexander was a great reader; he did not feel qualified to write upon a subject until he had learned what had been thought and written upon it by others. He had no respect for the originality of ignorance, which is continually rediscovering obsolete and exploded opinions and theories. Such work he regarded as a waste of time and effort. The only originality worth any thing is that which first gets upon other men's shoulders; which builds upon the labors of others. He would have assented to the justice of Sir William Hamilton's gruff criticism upon Archbishop Whately: "Why did he undertake to write a treatise without knowing all that had been written before upon the subject?" The literary crime with which that great philosopher so often upbraided the mass of British authors, that they wrote books in almost entire ignorance of what had been done by others in the same field, was one which could not be charged upon Dr. Alexander. His habit of exhaustive reading is apparent in all his writings. There may be little explicit reference to others, possibly no quotation, but the intelligent reader feels that he is following a guide to whom all the aspects of the subject are familiar.

He had, what is not always the case with great readers, native vigor of mind sufficient to support the weight of this accumulation of other men's thoughts. He was no mere compiler nor reproducer of the opinions of others; was not prone to blind deference to any authority, but subjected all opinions to independent criticism, and proportioned his assent to the force of the evidence given. He could exercise also the rarer virtue of suspending his judgment when the grounds for a decision were wanting. This last trait, though it often gave offense to that class which finds uncertainty torture, and must have a decision upon every question, is an indication of the sincere love of truth which governed him both in his thinking and in his

dealings with men. As he would not practice self-deception, neither would he deceive others; he would not attempt to influence others by arguments which had produced no conviction in his own mind. From his views many have widely dissented, but no one has ever accused him of understating the force of the objections of opposing parties, nor of violating the established canons of interpretation in favor of any system of doctrine.

Those who are curious about the habits of composition of authors will find much to entertain them in the statements given by his biographer of Dr. Alexander's mode of writing his works. His preparatory reading was done in the midst of his professorial labors at Princeton. There he would be found in his study with sometimes as many as twenty volumes spread open around him. But when the session closed he went to New York, and in the hot months of July and August he wrote his commentaries. All his works, with the exception of the first volume of his *Isaiah*, were thus written.

Sometimes we find him at the house of one of his brothers, sometimes in the "seclusion of a down-town hotel." His table was placed at a window commanding a view of the street, where he could enjoy the sight of the crowd, and the noise of the cars and omnibuses, and here he would write from early in the morning until late in the afternoon. As a rest from the labor of the day, he would stroll through the streets or ride in the omnibuses, taking now one route, now another, and after a night's repose be ready for another day of hard work. The rapidity with which these works, so rich in learning and so faultless in style, were dashed off is most surprising. He began his work on *Mark* on June 18, and finished it on August 29. His *Exposition of the Psalms* was written with equal rapidity. Writing to his mother, for whose entertainment he prepared a full account of his labors and recreations during the vacation in which he was getting this work ready for the press, he says: "I spend the whole of every day in writing, from breakfast

to late dinner time, besides correcting proofs at night. I never ran a race with the printer so before. What I gave them in manuscript in the morning, they returned to me in proof at night. This was the next thing to 'composing,' in both senses of the word; as Dr. Franklin sometimes did. When Saturday night came I found we had printed about fifty pages, every word of which was written here." This was on June 10; on July 10 he had finished *Psalm ciii.* and corrected the proof of the second volume. It is an illustration of the wonderful tenacity of his memory and of his habits of accurate study, that in preparing for the press he had no need to consult either lexicons or commentaries. His brother once asked him how he could get along without his commentaries on the difficult points. His answer was, "I know what they all have said."

Those who know Dr. Alexander only as an author can form but a very inadequate notion of his great powers. The man was greater than his writings. The declaration of Dr. Hedge, "Take him all in all, he was certainly the most gifted man with whom I have ever been personally acquainted," gives the impression made by Dr. Alexander upon almost all who were brought into personal contact with him. His pupils all retain a vivid recollection of his strongly marked character as it was displayed in the class-room. If at any period of his life he had felt an aversion to teaching, he must have overcome it before he entered the seminary as an instructor. He generally did more than his share of teaching. In addition to his regular duties, he frequently gave special courses of lectures, and had a select private class pursuing some branch of Oriental study, and besides was rarely without some young pupil whom he was training in the rudiments of Greek and Latin.

He had made the subject of methods of instruction one of much study and reflection, but seemed to be always dissatisfied with what he accomplished with his classes. This, with his dislike of traveling over the same

ground, and his need of excitement in order to keep up his interest in his work, led him to frequent changes in his mode of conducting the business of the class. A new plan of instruction, or a new experiment, had a fascination for him altogether irresistible. He felt no pride of consistency about abandoning the well-prepared scheme of a few weeks ago. It was more than could be expected of human nature, even in a theological seminary, to submit patiently to this endless experimenting. Frequent and loud were the murmurings of the unhappy victims at the fickleness of the professor. The effects of this so-called fickleness were not as injurious as might at first be supposed. There was a method in it after all. The students did not receive what they expected and desired, but if in earnest they received something far better. As a teacher he made the communication of facts subordinate to teaching the method of investigating facts. It was not his aim to give to minds that would passively receive them the bare results of his own study, but to train the student to study and interpret for himself. It is more than probable that a majority of the students went through the seminary course without being greatly benefited by his instructions, but there are many who will acknowledge that they have never known a more stimulating teacher. His fine analysis, his broad generalizations, threw a new light upon the subject, and made the pupil feel that a new world of thought had been opened to him, and that powers within him had been awakened of the possession of which he had hardly been conscious. And the influence thus exerted continued long after the pupil had passed from the class-room, and was felt even by those engaged in branches of study very different from the ones in which they received instruction from their great teacher.

It is a saddening reflection that this great scholar and teacher, the greatest the Church possessed, could not attain until the close of his life to what he

regarded as his true position; that he was forced to teach subjects not congenial, and was debarred from those which he felt himself best qualified to teach, and in which he could have accomplished the most for the cause of Biblical Science in our country. He was first appointed teacher of Hebrew in the Theological Seminary at Princeton, on the ground of his supposed predilection for Oriental languages. The mistake was not corrected, although in allowing it to remain he felt that he was acting the part of a literary hypocrite. He discharged with all fidelity the duties of his chair, but he had entered upon them with a divided mind, and though resigned he could feel no enthusiasm. He gave much of his time in private to his beloved Greek, and reproached himself for unfaithfulness to his official obligations in so doing. When he was some years later transferred to another chair, in which New Testament history was assigned him as one of the subjects of instruction, he found his duties more congenial. The study of the historical books of the New Testament he declares to have been the most delightful labor of his life. The fruits of these labors we have in his most popular commentaries. But, unfortunately, he was required also to teach Ecclesiastical history. To this work he was exceedingly averse, although from his known fondness for history we might have inferred the opposite. He probably underrated the importance of the study in a theological course. But apart from this, he was not willing to abandon the work to which he had devoted the best years of his life, and which he had carried so far, for one so entirely different which demanded an exclusiveness of attention he was not disposed to bestow. He had become satisfied "that a man must make Church history either everything or nothing; he must either be a whaler or an angler of the pettiest and pitifullest kind." He could not consistently with his own views make it every thing; and he would not be a mere angler, and so refused to exchange the delights "of

direct original investigation for the study of second-hand authorities and diluted compilations."

Although he never complained he was always impatient under his burden. Much of his "fickleness" arose from his efforts to awaken and keep alive an interest in the distasteful work which was forced upon him. He at last succeeded in getting released from it and in securing the position which for so many years he had desired. The department that he had marked out for himself was designated as that of "Hellenistic and New Testament Literature." What he comprised under this title he has given briefly in a letter to Dr. James W. Alexander. "My earliest glimpse," he writes, "of the modern German doctrine on this subject (the true character of Biblical Greek), was afforded by Schaff's admirable chapter in his history containing little of his own except the clear, captivating mode of presentation, but collecting the best thoughts of the best writers, in relation to the claims of the Hellenistic dialect, as a co-ordinate branch of the Hellenic tree, with a distinctive independent character, and no small merits of its own. From that time (about ten years since) these have been my favorite studies; none the less because connected upon one side with the vast domain of classical philology, and on the other with the sacred field of Biblical learning. My interest in the language soon extended to the literature of the Hellenistic Jews, inspired and uninspired, as a distinct and well-defined department of ancient learning. It is this that I have always had before my mind, as my proposed field of study and instruction in my many schemes and efforts to attain my true position. It is not merely the New Testament literature, strictly so called, that I wish to cultivate—though that

does lie at the foundation and gives character to all the rest; but I covet the privilege of making excursions, without any violation of official duty, into the adjacent fields of Hellenistic learning, having still in view as my supreme end, the defense and illustration of the Bible, but at the same time opening a new field for literary culture in this country," etc.

The transfer came too late. He had but fairly commenced organizing his new department when he was suddenly seized by the malady which hurried him to the grave. We can not estimate how great has been the loss to Biblical Science in his premature death. He had but begun to give to the world the results of his labors in his favorite departments of study; his productions were becoming more popular in their character, and he was every year finding a larger circle of appreciative readers. But just as he was entering this extended sphere of influence, he was suddenly cut down in the prime of life.

The friends of Dr. Alexander will feel under great obligations to his accomplished biographer for affording them the opportunity of becoming so well acquainted with his many-sided character, so little understood, too often misunderstood, during his lifetime. Those who find pleasure in studying the history of the growth of a mind, and in contemplating a pure and noble character, will find abundant entertainment and instruction provided for them in these volumes. May we not hope that he will finish his work by giving us a selection from Dr. Alexander's contributions to the *Princeton Review*? The substance of many of his most valuable lectures are to be found in some of these articles; none of his writings better deserve to be widely circulated, and in none are the varied powers of the man so fully displayed.