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JULY, MDCCCLXX.

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## ARTICLE I.

### THE HISTORY OF BAPTISM.

What is baptism? How should it be administered? Who are its subjects? What is its meaning? We propose to answer these questions, by tracing the history of the ordinance as unfolded throughout the Scriptures, first in the Old Testament, and then in the New. “To the law and to the testimony.”

#### I.—THE PRIMITIVE SACRAMENTS.

Baptism is one of the two sacraments retained by Christ in the New Testament Church from that of Israel. “A sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ, wherein, by sensible signs, Christ and the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed, and applied to believers.” It is an *ordinance*, and not a mere sign and seal. The bow in the cloud, the shechinah of glory overshadowing the mercy seat, the manna and rock in the wilderness, and many other things mentioned in the Scriptures, were sensible signs and seals of grace, but were not *ordinances* to be observed, and so were not sacraments. Extreme unction is an ordinance and sensible sign; but it is of man’s devising, and not *instituted by Christ*, and is therefore no sacra-

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## ARTICLE VI.

*The Life of Joseph Addison Alexander, D. D., Professor in the Theological Seminary at Princeton, New Jersey.* By HENRY CARRINGTON ALEXANDER. 2 vols. New York: Charles Scribner & Co. 1870. Pp. 921, 12mo.

The notable volumes, whose title we have thus recited, appeared early in the present year; and whilst they were hailed with sincere delight by a numerous class of biographic readers, were almost enthusiastically received by the former pupils of the great man whose life their teeming pages were designed to commemorate. Frequent notices of them, all eulogistic and some extensive, have occupied from time to time the columns of our religious and even our secular newspapers. The reading public has, therefore, to a considerable extent, already been made acquainted with their principal contents, and there may seem to be scarcely a necessity for again calling attention to what is so well known. But we cannot refrain from occupying a few pages of this REVIEW with some further treatment of a subject which cannot easily be exhausted—a subject we approach with pleasure and will quit with reluctance.

Some have objected to the ponderous size of these volumes, and have ventured the criticism that their most obvious merit consists in the fact that they are merely a storehouse from whose treasures the future biographer shall be enabled to cull suitable materials for more popular use. For our part we are free to say that there is scarcely a paragraph we should be content to see expunged, or a chapter we would care to have condensed. Whilst, indeed, it might be well if an edition of Dr. Alexander's unique life were published, which, having been cast into a form better adapted to a cheap and wide circulation, would perhaps be in a condition for accomplishing a greater good; yet our belief is that no one of the particular class of readers whose minds and hearts the study of such a life is calculated most to benefit would be willing to spare any portion of the nine hundred pages now given to the world. We heartily thank the gifted author for

the cheerful pains he has taken to portray the many-sided character of his illustrious uncle; for the literary labor he has expended in tracing by touches so fine and so minute the career of a man whose like we of this generation shall probably never look upon; and for the industrious love with which he has followed from his childhood to his death-bed the successive steps of this mighty scholar, profound thinker, rare instructor, hard intellectual worker, and great preacher, for whose existence and endowments the American Church has the most abundant reason to thank its Head. The work that thus has been accomplished was a delicate one to undertake when the relationship of the biographer to the deceased is considered: but the task has been well, even nobly, discharged, and we take the opportunity to express our gratitude therefor.

JOSEPH ADDISON ALEXANDER was one of a family whose head, the great Archibald, and whose oldest member, the much-lamented James, would of themselves have rendered it conspicuous and memorable. But it is no damage to the reputation of the distinguished father, nor detraction from the fame of the eminent brother, to say that they were both excelled by the wonderful man, the theme of this memoir, who has shed a lustre more brilliant than that of either upon the name he bore. This seems the language of extravagance. The contents of these volumes forbid a eulogy less strong. We had thought, before reading this charming biography, that we were well acquainted with the characteristic worth of its renowned subject. We had known him personally. We had studied under him. We had enjoyed the privilege of many conversations with him. We had often heard him preach, and lecture, and expound. We had listened to descriptions of him from others whose opportunities for measuring his mental magnitudes were much superior to our own. We had read about him, before and since his death, a hundred things that freshly excited our wonder, our admiration, and our reverence. We knew that his exploits of erudition were prodigious, that his attainments in various scholarship were astonishing, that his gifts of genius were as numerous as his mental powers, and that his laboriousness in acquiring unusual

knowledge was something incredible. But until we perused these volumes we possessed no adequate conception of his gigantic understanding, of the high and comprehensive sweep of his intelligence, of the marvels of his learned achievements, of the majesty of his mind altogether. We could, indeed, hardly believe what is here told us, did it not come substantiated by every compelling proof. In languages he was a prodigy; in general literature he was a universal master; in theology he had few equals; in argumentative invention he displayed talents of the highest order; in oratory he reached the point of preëminence; in the art of composition he exhibited qualities which alone would have won for him shining distinction; in epistolary correspondence he was simply fascinating; whilst in his piety he was thoroughly child-like, and in his intercourse with intimate friends there was the charm of a flowing geniality for which he never received sufficient credit by the outside world—all this set off by the entire absence of self-assertion and by the frequent presence of much positive amiability. Such is the imperfect outline of a character of which mankind has known very few samples, and which is delineated in the work before us in a manner that leaves nothing to be wished. It ought to be added that, in his ordinary intercourse with men, this lordly son of genius oftentimes exhibited a reserve that resembled actual shyness. This, partly due to constitutional temperament, but mainly to his recluse habits of study, seemed to withdraw him from general society, and by-and-by rendered contact with his fellow-men at large distasteful and irksome. His accomplished biographer has not brought to view the whole effect of what thus came to be one of his best known peculiarities. It rendered his greatness less efficient than could have been desired. Intellectually qualified to stand at the head of his denomination, had he chosen to mingle more with others less great than himself, he could have occupied the very forefront as an influential controller of all its great movements. If, in addition to making the extensive use he did of his unrivalled talents and his unequalled attainments within the selected, but by no means narrow, circle to which his tastes confined him, he had stepped out into the spacious arena of active life, had become

a leader in ecclesiastical bodies, and had sought to impress himself upon his contemporaries, who often needed the light he could best emit and the healthful stimulus he could best impart, there would have been nothing wanting to the completion of a character every way transcendent. We cannot help regretting that such a man as he shunned the platform of debate, the floor of public deliberation, those places of official concourse where mind comes into collision with mind and strikes out sparks of otherwise latent truth and kindles the torch of general enlightenment. We regret that he did not find in the map of his duties a region into which he might have felt called, wherein to exhibit those wide and generous sympathies for his race, of which, in his soul, he was undoubtedly conscious, and which he frequently expressed in a quiet way. Had he done this, we might now be comparing him, not only with the greatest scholars of the age he adorned, but also with such men as those of whom Thomas Chalmers was a type—men whose ardent nature threw them into the van of every important church enterprise, and made them the glory of their generations. That Dr. Alexander might have equalled, if not excelled, that famous Scotchman in a similar public career, no one can doubt who has acquainted himself with that class of his harmonious abilities which were calculated to make him as illustrious in the ecclesiastical court as he was productive in the private study. But he seems to have shown no desire to achieve victories where fame such as that which Chalmers won would have crowned the conqueror. He wished no one to consider him a great man at all. He was even anxious for such obscurity as should screen him altogether from the gaze of men. He sought to do his congenial work in the depths of a quietude where no intrusive eye could follow him, where no popular applause could ever offend his ears, and where no conspicuous importance could appear to attach to his person. We must say that if this was a fault, it was at least a noble one. And we are not meaning to lay upon his memory our poor blame, when we say that he could have done a greater good to his Church and the world at large, if he had found it consistent with his other plans of Christian service to come forth from his walled

privacy and made his tremendous power felt in the manner we have indicated. When, in 1835, for example, he went to New York, to attend, as an outsider, some of the anniversary meetings, we can imagine what would have been the result had he been present as an insider; how, young as he then was, he would have answered and hushed Binney and Thompson, who, in one place, were pushing forward the cause of abolition in the spirit of a fanaticism that soon overleaped all bounds; and how he would have helped Bethune and John Breckinridge, who, in another place, were engaged in pleading the cause of colonization, that better solution of the negro problem! Or, we can fancy how, the same month, if he had been in Pittsburgh, a member of that General Assembly in whose proceedings he evinced a deep interest, his voice might, more powerfully than that of almost any other, have served to guide the storm then raging, and made the division into Old School and New more tender and not less complete. But he read his duty otherwise, and we must be satisfied with what he was—the light of knowledge—and need not deplore the loss of what he was not—the fire of action. Perhaps he was, after all, right. “*Totus in illo*” is a capital motto for ordinary minds, and may be it was so for his. Had he been more of a public man, we must have missed something of the depth of his impress in other respects; and if he did not choose to become both a great ecclesiastical chieftain and a great church-exegete, he at any rate made himself all that was possible in the latter and safer character.

The biography dwells at commendable length upon the opening years of him who afterwards became so great, and furnishes us with a variety of pleasing and pleasantly-told reminiscences of his rising genius. Those notices, too, of his truly charming mother, (a daughter of the “blind preacher” of Virginia,) of his venerated father, of his engaging brother and playmate, and of the scenes in Philadelphia and Princeton where the family successively resided, are really very fresh and picturesque. Nor could we well spare the allusions made throughout the work to a large number of persons, not relatives, who stood associated, more or less nearly, with the youthful or the mature “Addison.”

Indeed, our author has contrived, with rare skill, to convert his pages into an extensive gallery of exquisite portraits, some of them looking down upon us with faces that have long been familiar, others of them strange, but which we are made glad to see; and, amid these, to hang up in a sort of illuminated frame that large, prominent, central picture, which all the others serve to adorn, without for a moment distracting the principal view.

Hardly had the infant Addison learned to walk before he learned to think, and with each opening bud of thought appeared that thirst for knowledge which soon became insatiable. At the age of four, he was "a gentle, retiring, observing, thoughtful child, full of animal spirits and genuine humor; the delight of the household, the astonishment and despair of his little school-fellows; invariably attracting the notice of every visitor by the sparkle of his wit and the originality of his remarks." When six years had passed, he exhibited in a remarkable degree that fondness for attempting the mastery of dead and foreign languages which so eminently characterised him in subsequent life. Even then, too, he showed himself the "omnivorous reader" he ever afterwards was. At this infantile period he commenced, under the judicious guidance of his father, the study of Latin, and soon was introduced to the Hebrew itself, in unfolding the mysteries of which language and its cognates his progress was surprising and well-nigh incredible. At twelve, he indulged his active imagination in efforts at poetry, his talent for which difficult species of composition steadily grew to an extent that, had he given special attention to its cultivation, he would eventually have been ranked among its celebrated masters. Surely the boy who, at an age so tender, could compose a versified piece like the following, might have reached a rare eminence in this direction. It is entitled

"SOLITUDE.

"Now in the eastern sky the cheering light  
Dispels the dark and gloomy shades of night;  
And while the lowing of the kine is heard,  
And the sweet warbling of the songster bird;  
Where from afar the stately river flows

In whose bright stream the sportive goldfish goes ;  
 Where the thick trees afford a safe retreat  
 From public eye and summer's scorching heat ;  
 There let me sit and sweetly meditate,  
 Far from the gleam of wealth and pomp of state.  
 And while I listen to that murmuring rill  
 Which pours its waters down the neighboring hill,  
 I can despise the pride and pomp of kings,  
 And all the glory wealth or power brings.  
 Here in deep solitude, remote from noise,  
 From the world's bustle, idleness, and toys,  
 Here I can look upon the world's vast plain,  
 And all her domes and citadels disdain."

At thirteen, he was enabled to write the Arabic characters with a facility and neatness that ripe Oriental scholars might have envied. At this period he studied fourteen hours of every day. "He wrote Latin, both in prose and verse, with great ease and purity," imitating the odes of Horace with admirable grace and precision. In connexion with this, we must quote four amusing verses of Latin hexameters, which, mockingly condolatory, were written on the occasion of an attack of illness experienced by his older brother and sent to him for his amusement :

"Crede mihi, juvenis docilis, me maxime tædet  
 Audire ægrotum esse virum, tam longe celebrem.  
 Pulveribus (quid tu Anglice vocas?) te cumularint,  
 Et medicus, veneranda materque, An Eliza, niger Ned."

He pursued the study of Greek and of Mathematics with equal success before he was quite fourteen. He also cultivated the art of public speaking, in which, after a number of failures, he succeeded in making real proficiency; and his talent for English composition was, even thus early, something marvellous. There never was a boyhood more remarkable, nor one that gave evidence of greater native powers of mind. The man that grew up out of such a soil of fertile genius could not avoid the greatness we have already attempted to characterise. As an academician, as an undergraduate, it is now hardly necessary to relate, this youth was further advanced than many a scholar (himself perhaps regarded by his friends as a none-such) who had passed



through his entire college curriculum and borne off in triumph the "first honor" of his admiring class. Space would quite fail us, were we, as we are tempted to do, to draw from the rich volumes we are reviewing, the magnificent proofs that are scattered everywhere with a profusion at once delightful and bewildering, of the splendid gifts possessed by this rising scholar, and displayed at an age which ordinarily is so scant of promise and so barren of fruit. He took his diploma at Princeton in September, 1826, when about eighteen years old, and delivered a finished valedictory oration on "The Pains and Pleasures of College Life," which is described as unusually "touching and impressive," as we can well believe it was. Previously to this, however, he had become a contributor to the public press; and, in less than three months after quitting college, he contributed (to the pages of the *New Jersey Patriot*) an extended article on Persian poetry that attracted the admiration of scholars. Even while yet in his teens he became the principal editor of that journal, and his pieces, when acting in this capacity, were fine specimens of manly composition and patient reflection. He wrote, too, a beautiful eastern tale, entitled "The Jewess of Damascus," which in its style bears a certain resemblance to that of the novels of Sir Walter Scott. It was thought by some at the time "that this story would not have done discredit to John Wilson, or to Lockhart, on the score of imagination and diction; whilst it was doubted whether either of them could have more successfully preserved the oriental, and yet modern, *vraisemblance*. Again reverting to the poetry of this universal genius (partly because it has not been generally known to what an *extent* he possessed the poetic power, and partly to show how rapidly it grew from the germ, a sample of which we have already given,) our readers will pardon us for quoting the following dramatic piece, written at the age of eighteen years:

"THE TEARS OF ESAU.

"Mark yon tall chief returning from the chase:  
Canst thou not read in that deep wrinkled brow,  
That quivering lip, that fiercely flashing eye,  
The mingled characters of smothered grief

And rankling discontent? Thou readest well.  
'Tis Esau, first-born of the ancient Isaac,  
And monarch of the chase. There! did'st thou see  
The sudden gleam his eye shot forth upon us?  
Approach him not too nearly: drop thine eyes:  
He loves not to be scanned so searchingly.  
Yet men have guessed in vain what hidden crime  
Preys on his soul, and makes his eye a coward.  
The story which thou readest in his aspect,  
Is written in the process of his life,  
And stamped on all his deeds. Proud, fearless, fierce,  
Relentless—ever mindful of his wrongs,  
Forgetful of the kindness which repays them.  
Who would not say that, from an eye so hard,  
So diamond-like, infusible, though bright,  
The kindly drops of pity, love, or grief,  
Ne'er found a vent! Yet have I seen him weep,  
Ay, see him weep, and heard him cry aloud  
In sorrow, as a child. 'Twas on that day,  
When Jacob—but you know the tale of old.  
Ah, Arioeh! 'twas a sight to chill the blood,  
I scarce believed it; though I stood in service  
Upon the dying bed of Isaac. There  
The rugged hunter knelt, and when he heard—  
The savoury food still smoking in his hand,  
And gently offered to his father's taste—  
Yes, when he heard the old man's faltering tongue  
In broken accents tell the treachery;  
And saw those sightless eyes, with bursting tears  
Of agony distended; and that hand,  
That withered hand, whose hallowed imposition  
Had laid on Jacob's head the promised blessing—  
When its cold trembling touch reminded him  
Of all that he had lost—what did he then?  
I stood in staring terror to behold  
The wild and fearful bursting of his wrath  
Come forth in frenzied action: but it came not;  
I looked again: for how could I believe  
That Esau, the fierce hunter—that the Esau  
Whom I had known so terrible in anger,  
Should bear his griefs thus meekly? When I looked,  
His head was bowed upon his father's hand,  
His own concealed his face; his mighty frame

Was shuddering in anguish : but anon,  
 Between his fingers, drop by drop I marked  
 The scalding tears were oozing, and I heard  
 Those strong convulsive sobs, which, more than tears,  
 Betray a *man's* proud grief. I could have wept  
 To see *him* humbled thus. The gentler Jacob  
 Might weep, and who would mark it? 'Tis his nature.  
 But to see tears upon the manlier cheek  
 Of rugged Esau—'twas a moving sight.  
 Long did he weep in silence, but at last  
 There came from him a wild and bitter cry,  
 And then, in deep and hollow tones he said,  
 'Hast thou for me no blessing, O my father !'  
 What could the old man say? Before him knelt  
 The eldest born—his best beloved son,  
 Him whom he would have blessed, but for the arts  
 Of Jacob and his mother. Once again  
 He murmured forth, "Thy brother—'twas thy brother."  
 Again wept Esau, and again he asked,  
 'Hast thou reserved no blessing for thy son,  
 Thine Esau, O my father ?' Then once more  
 The biting, blasting, thought, that he had lost  
 That mystic benediction, by whose virtue  
 The favor of Jehovah seemed ensured,  
 Rose on his mind; and as it rose, he cried  
 In bitterness of soul. But with that cry  
 His weakness ended, and his agony  
 Passed from him as a dream. Across his brow  
 He drew his hand impatiently, then sprang,  
 As if in anger, to his feet. His eyes,  
 No longer bathed in grief, were fired with rage;  
 And on his quivering lip there seemed to hang  
 Unutterable things. The child was gone,  
 And vengeful Esau was himself again."

But, returning again to notices of his scholarly studies, what industry he exhibited whilst yet in his teens, and what advancements he was steadily making in learned investigation will appear in a few extracts from his dairy. One day, the record is this : "Arabic—Al Koran, Sura 19. Hebrew—Exodus, Ch. xix. Italian—Tasso, Ger. Lib., Canto 12. Latin—Cicero in Q. Cæcilium. German—rules of pronunciation. Greek—Matt., Chap.

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i.-iv." The succeeding day, it runs thus: "Hebrew—Exodus, Chap. xx. Persian—Hafiz (Nott's Ed.) Ode 16. French—auxiliary verbs. Spanish—Don Quix., Chaps. 27, 28. Greek—Matt., Chaps. iv.-viii." And so on, from day to day. His studies, too, were not those of a mechanical memorizer. He penetrated his authors with the probe of a discriminating criticism. For instance, under the head of Spanish, he thus writes with reference to Don Quixote:

"The most elaborate passage in this work of Cervantes which I have yet met with, is, 'La Novela del Curioso Impertinente.' Indeed, from the pains which he takes to introduce all his episodes, it is evident that he labored them with a care which he did not give to the main story. To this fact he seems to allude himself, when he speaks of the enjoyment which his hero had been the means of affording to the world, 'no solo de la dulzura de su verdadera historia, sino de *los cuentos y episodios* della, que la misma historia.' If the author had any partiality for this episode 'La Novela,' it was certainly not a blind one. This story is finely conceived, ingeniously developed, and elegantly expressed. The speech of Lothario, in opposition to the proposal of his friend, is so fine a specimen of elegant argument and eloquence, that the reader is tempted to exclaim, as Sancho to his master—'Mas bueno era onestra merced para predicador que para caballero andante.' The following sentence contains a strong but most expressive description of the effect of suppressed sorrow—'No excusarás con el secreto tu dolor; ántes tendrás que llorar contino *si no lagrimas de los ojos, lagrimas de sangre del corazon.*'"

So, too, under the head of Persian, this young critic remarks:

"Persian and Hebrew are radically distinct, in their genius and structure, as well as vocables. They agree, however, in this remarkable circumstance, that the government of one substantive by another, is denoted by a change in the latter and not the former, as in almost all other languages. The cardinal number for six is the same also in both the Hebrew and Persian languages. The Persian agrees with the Syriac (a derivative of Hebrew) with respect to the definite article, which is formed in both by adding a vowel at the end of the noun. The coincidences between the Persian and English are very numerous

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and striking, and are rendered more remarkable by the fact that many of the words common to both are simple, original, primitive terms used in ordinary intercourse, and not mere technicalities."

In examining the Koran, written in Arabic, he expresses his views of its remarkable author in language well worth quoting, as exhibiting that decided independence of thought which always characterised his original mind :

"I differ in toto from all writers who assert that Mohammed, in devising a religion for his followers, proceeded upon any regular plan whatever. We are too apt to ascribe motives to those who never felt them, and regard as deep-laid contrivance what probably arose from accident. He was first an enthusiast—a half-mad visionary. In this character he began his revelations, and afterwards finding their effect, became an ambitious aspirant after power. The idea that he endeavored to adapt his doctrines to the belief and propensities of particular sects, I think unwarranted; not only from his ridiculous anachronisms, but from the character of the stories which he gave as sacred history. All that he has borrowed from the Scriptures has the appearance of being caught from oral narration. When we consider the fondness of the Arabs for story-telling, we may readily believe that the Jews and Christians who were among them found abundant employment in rehearsing impressive narratives of the Pentateuch and Gospel. That these should take strong hold of Mohammed's mind, then in a low condition, is not surprising. By nature imaginative, he may have brooded in secret over these historical facts, till he felt their influence in a rising desire to emulate the ancient prophets. This I believe to be the source of his scriptural information. That he was actually assisted in the composition of the Koran by either Jew or Christian, I think improbable; because either would have given more connected narratives. In his own, not only is the truth diluted, but the facts confused and out of order, like the attempts of a man to repeat a half-forgotten story."

We cannot help treating our readers to a sample of the youthful Alexander's critical acumen in discussing the relative merits of English authors. It is well known that J. Fenimore Cooper has, by his admirers, been favorably com-

pared, as a novelist, with Sir Walter Scott. On this point, he says :

“I think the comparison, or rather the equalizing, of Cooper with Scott is highly unjust, for these causes following: (1.) Scott, it is evident from every page of his works, is a man of taste; Cooper not. (2.) Scott is always at his ease; Cooper constrained, and apparently striving after something unattainable. (3.) Scott is always perspicuous. His pictures are not only striking in distant view, but perfectly intelligible in all their parts. Cooper, on the contrary, is often obscure, and that when he has no intention to be mysterious—and his descriptions frequently leave the mind confused and clouded without any definite image to occupy it. Cooper may be a man of more depth and strength of feeling; but Scott is vastly his superior in liveliness and fertility of fancy. Cooper relies on the interest of his scene, and, at most, on variety of incident, to arrest the attention of his reader. Scott enchains it by the delineation of character. All Cooper’s passages may be resolved into one or two varieties; and of these few, some are unnatural and even monstrous; while Scott has an endless diversity, and all of them true to nature. The only passage in Cooper’s writings I have met with approaching to sublimity, is the description of the storm in the first volume of the *Pilot*; but, although the advantages as to scene and circumstances would appear to be on his side, that description is nothing when compared with the escape of Sir Arthur Wardour, his daughter, and Edie Ochiltree from the sea, in the *Antiquary*.”

In another place, speaking of Cooper, after reading his “*Red Rover*,” he says, after somewhat complimenting it :

“There is a sameness, however, in his descriptions which nothing but the comparative novelty of naval romance enables us to tolerate. The ships are forever ‘bending their tall spars as if to salute’ this or that object, and then ‘gracefully recovering their erect position.’ He is too fond, moreover, of ‘lurking smiles,’ and ‘struggling smiles,’ and other cant phrases of his own, which would appear to indicate that he had no very vivid impression of the object in his own mind, but described rather by rote; so that his descriptions, especially of men, are like set speeches, differing only in minor particulars, but capable of being adapted by a little alteration to any character. In denouement he is never successful.”

A student who, at the age of nineteen, could write such a critique as the following, in comparing Aristophanes and Shakspeare, must have been born a reviewer, such a one as Lord Jeffrey would have taken to his heart:

“I have finished the famous ‘Clouds of Aristophanes,’ but can scarcely say what my feelings and opinions are as I close the book. Such a combination of extremes, intellectual and moral, I have never before known. Such transitions from earth to heaven, from Parnassus to the dunghill, are to me new and startling. Shakspeare is unequal, but his inequalities are nothing to the fits and starts of Aristophanes. The English poet never dives so deep into pollution, nor rises, in point of artificial elegance, so high as the Athenian. Shakspeare’s genius is obviously untutored. His excellences and his faults are perhaps equally attributable to his want of education. It is altogether probable that many of these original and most significant and poetic modes of expression which he has introduced into our language, arose entirely from his ignorance of grammar and of foreign tongues. Had he been familiar with technical distinctions and etymological analogies, his thoughts would have been distracted between *words* and *things*. The dread of committing solecisms, and the ambition to exhibit that sort of elegance which results from the formal rules of an artificial rhetoric would have cooled his ardor. His ‘muse of fire’ would never have reached ‘the heaven of invention,’ but would have stayed its flight amidst the clouds and mists of puerile conceit. I never read any of Shakspeare’s real poetry (for much of his verse is most bald prosing) without feeling, in my very soul, that no man could write thus whose heart was fixed on propriety of diction as a principal, or even a secondary object. He seems to have let his imagination boil, and actually to have taken the first words which bubbled up from its ebullition. Hence his strange revolt from authority in the use of ordinary words, [in senses] as far removed from common practice as from etymology. And that reminds me of another circumstance. In the common blank verse of his dialogue, not only is he habitually careless, but seems not to know (in many cases) the method of constructing a harmonious verse; and perhaps his broken measure is more dramatic than one smoother would be; certainly more so than the intolerable tintinnabulum of the Théâtre Français. But let him rise into one of his grand flights, and his numbers are as musical as the ‘harp of Orpheus.’ I defy any man to bring forward any specimen of heroic blank verse, where the rhythm



is as melodious as in some passages of Shakspeare, and the sense at the same time within sight—I mean comparably good in any degree. Milton, you say, etc. But who can read the *Paradise Lost* without thinking of the square and compass? Even when we admire, we admire scientifically—we applaud the arrangement of the cæsuras and pauses, and are forever thinking of iambuses and trochees and hypercatalectics, and all the hard words that Milton himself would have dealt forth in lecturing upon his own versification. Whereas, I do verily believe, that Shakspeare knew no more of prosody, than of animal magnetism or phrenology. Thomson, again, is among our finest specimens of rich and musical blank verse, but Thomson is labored too; not in Milton's way, by weight and measure, but in a way no less artificial and discernible. He is always laboring to make his lines flow with a luscious sweetness: every body knows that he succeeds, but every body, alas, knows how. He does it by presenting words in profusion which are at once dulcet to the ear and exciting to the imagination. The method is the only true one, but he carries it too far. One strong proof that Shakspeare was a genius and a unique one, is that his excellence is not sustained and equal. Moonlight and candlelight shed a uniform lustre; but who ever saw or heard of a continuous flash of lightning? Our bard trifles, and proses, and quibbles, and whines, (but always without affectation) till something (whether accident or not I cannot tell) strikes a spark into his combustible imagination, and straightway he is in a blaze. I think a good rocket is a capital illustration of his muse of fire. First, we have a premonitory whiz, then a delicate but gorgeous column of brilliant scintillations stretching away into the bosom of heaven, and at last dying away in a shower of mimic stars and comets of tenfold—of transcendent brightness. What then? Why, then comes darkness visible, or at best, a beggarly gray twilight. But I began with Aristophanes, and have been raving about Shakspeare. All I have to say, however, about the former is, that he is a perfect contrast to the Englishman. He is evidently a master of the art of versifying, but he knows how to temper the formality of systematic elegance with the charm of native poetry. Compared with the Greek tragedians, his flights of choral and lyrical inspiration appear to great advantage. More coherent and intelligible than Æschylus, more vigorous and nervous and significant than Sophocles, more natural and spirited than Euripides; he notwithstanding excels them all in the music of his numbers and the Attic purity and terseness of his diction."

We could stud these pages, and adorn them as well, with gems like the above. But we must forbear.

The subject of the memoir before us, when he was only twenty years of age, became a contributor to the "Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review," a title which this celebrated quarterly (begun in 1825,) assumed in 1837, and has ever since retained. In 1829, J. Addison and James Alexander both had a hand in preparing for its pages a very fine biographical sketch of Erasmus—a life-portrait of the great Rotterdam literary giant, whose varied merits no two men were better capable of appreciating than these twin brothers of genius. But the articles which mainly distinguished the "Repertory" in the last named year and the year before were certain translations from the Latin of Flatt, on the Deity of Christ, and a couple of elaborate pieces, entitled "The History and Religious Opinions of the Druses." All these were due to the pen of the unbearded "Addison." This essay on the Druses, says our biographer, "is one of the most singular and startling demonstrations, among the many that he has left us, of his learning and capacity. The theme was one which exactly suited him. It was strange, mysterious, difficult, romantic; calling for all the hidden resources of his historical and linguistic attainments, as well as for all the acumen of his intellect and delicacy of his critical judgment; and bringing into play not only his powers of reason and analysis, but his impassioned energy, his talent for rapid and graphic description, and his talent, no less surprising in one who was still scarcely out of his teens, for the mere construction of a sentence. The aim of the article is to arrive, if possible, at an approximate solution of the vexed questions touching the origin and early history of the mysterious fraternity or sect of the Mowahhidûm of Mt. Libanus. The treatise is mainly historical and critical, but it is marked by broad outline views and vigorous generalizations, together with a marvellous acquaintance with the repositories of oriental learning, and with everything relating to the oriental people, and particularly the Arabs; as well as masterly sketches of character, and lively and engaging, but condensed, narrative."

The playfulness of his humor and the airiness of his fancy were early exemplified. See an instance of both "in the subjoined burlesque on the disproportionate zeal with which writers often advocate their hobbies:"

"PRIZE ESSAY UPON NOTHING."

"The apparent incongruity of coming forward, at the present crisis, when the minds of men are agitated by the fear of fiscal and political convulsion, with a systematic treatise on nothing, will, it is fondly hoped, be found excusable, on a deliberate examination of the principles maintained and the practical inferences thence deduced.

"Chapter I. 1. Nothing may be defined not any thing. 2. It naturally divides itself into two species, positive nothing, and negative nothing. 3. Positive nothing includes everything of which the non-entity is demonstrable. 4. Negative nothing includes every thing of which the non-entity may be presumed, but cannot be demonstrated. 5. The principal use of nothing is to nullify everything. 6. Nothing may be converted into something by abstracting its non-entity. 7. Nobody may become nothing, by being deprived of its negative personality. 8. Anything may become nothing, by annihilation. The only other remark which I propose to offer in this interesting and important point is—nothing."

As to Dr. Alexander's great scholarship, which grew until it became truly immense, it ought to be remarked, that much of the rapidity of his progress was undoubtedly due to his marvelous *memory*. Instances of the extent of this power are given in these volumes, which exhibit it in a light truly astonishing. It was more difficult for him to forget than to remember. In the acquisition of languages such a faculty as this is of first-rate importance. Many great men have possessed it. Macaulay, Mezzofanti, and others, will occur to the reader as prodigies in this direction. It is rare, however, to find a man whose judgment is as wonderful as his memory, if the latter be excessive. But Dr. Alexander's mental abilities—all—were equally and concordantly great. His capacious memory vastly aided him in his studies, but it did not make him what he was. It was only

one point in the immense circle of those gifts with which his Creator had endowed him.

Turning now from these exhibitions of character, we wish we were at liberty to display another phase of this remarkable man's life, and follow him, step by step, in his journey across the ocean. He made his first transatlantic tour when at the age of twenty-four. At this period all his powers were fresh and ripe, ready for the complete enjoyment of every novelty, and capable of fully appreciating all he saw, whether persons or places. His descriptions of old-country scenery are very fine; his estimates of foreign character charitable and yet discriminating, and his views, (generally expressed in prose, sometimes in verse,) upon whatsoever subjects were being constantly suggested to his ever-wakeful mind, just such as might have been expected from one so charged with varied scholarship and with the spirit of poetry. Often, too, his humor was most playful, and then, seeing things through the medium of the ludicrous, he would delight a congenial companion by pouring forth the treasures of his wit, or write home budgets of queer fancies to his friends. At every turn he showed that his sympathies, which touched whatever interested his fellow men, were as broad and as kindling as his large and pervasive soul.

In Scotland, he visited Professor Lee, the great Oriental scholar; in France he calls upon Lafayette; but he soon makes his way to Germany; where, at Halle, he remains to study. Here he attends the lectures of Tholuck, of Rödiger, of Fuch, of Pott, of Wegschneider. The Rev. Dr. Sears (manager now of the Peabody fund in the South,) was his intimate friend at this time. S. writes of him, among many other pleasant things: "He was a great favorite of Tholuck's, more so than any other American or English visitor. After he left Halle for Berlin, Tholuck often spoke to me of him in terms of the highest eulogy and admiration. 'He is the only man,' said he, 'who could *always* give me the right English word for one in German, apparently untranslatable.' Indeed, these two men were, in several respects, very much alike. They were both fond of the languages, classical, ancient, and modern, and were adepts in them, being

able to speak I know not how many of them. I have heard them both speak at least six. Both were great readers, and remembered every thing they read. The studies of both had a wide range, especially in all that related to any one of the departments of theology. When they were together, conversation did not flag for want of topics."

At Berlin, he heard Strauss and Lisco preach, listened to Hengstenberg's discussions, sat in Neander's lecture-room, studied with Bopp, and was interested in Schleiermacher and Von Gerlach, as, in their way, they unfolded the Scriptures. As one result of his stay in Europe, it is instructive to read, from one of his familiar letters: "The other point on which my feelings have experienced a change is Presbyterianism. Everything that I have seen in England, Scotland, France, and Switzerland, gives a rational confirmation to my hereditary confidence, and thus cements a prejudice into a strong conviction. Look at the various systems of church polity, and inquire to what extremes they run, and you will find these various and opposite extremes, almost without exception, shunned and remedied by scriptural Presbyterianism. The extremes of clerical and popular power, the extremes of strict and loose communion, the extremes of pomp and meanness as to form, the extremes of rigor and license as to doctrine, the extremes of superstition and irreverence as to sacred things, the extremes of learning without piety and the converse, among ministers—all these are held at arm's length by the wise yet simple constitution of our Church."

Again, at the age of forty-three, he visits Europe, and spends there the summer of 1853, flying from point to point with all the speed, but nothing of the *ennui* of a regular tourist. Extracts are given by his biographer from his epistolary chronicle, intended for affording "the best lights in which to view *the man*—his strong and peculiar intellect; his almost perpetual vivacity of spirits; his learning; his command of English; his power of description; his quick discernment of character; his dislike of sameness; his contempt of many fashionable usages, maxims, and opinions; his whimsical tastes; his fancy for odd people, startling adventures, queer expressions, and street signs; his pas-

sionate love of children, and fondness for courts and public spectacles; his delight in attending different churches and comparing different preachers; his quick and impulsive sympathies; his rare humor; his sterling common sense and orthodoxy; and his devout piety." He went to hear Candlish in Edinburgh. He describes his appearance as grotesque and even mean. "It was that of a sickly boy, just roused from sleep, and without any washing or combing—his eyes scarcely open and his hair disordered—forced into the ugliest and clumsiest black gown you can imagine—dragged into the pulpit and compelled to preach. The illusion was kept up by what seemed to be incessant efforts to get his gown off, or to button his clothes under it, with occasional pulls at his hair, as if it was a wig which he had just discovered to be hind-part before, and was pettishly trying to reverse or throw away. Now and then, too, a white handkerchief would come out in a kind of whirlwind, and go back again without performing any office. Add to all this that one shoulder was held up, as if by a painful effort, a foot higher than the other, and the neck quite nullified—and you have no exaggerated picture of the preacher's personal appearance. As to speech, imagine the funniest burlesque of the Scotch sing-song, and the broadest Scotch pronunciation of some common words, such as *wawn* (one), *naw* (no), *Hawly Gawst*, etc., with a voice rather husky in its best estate, and sometimes a mere rattling in the throat; and you have the impression made upon my ear as well as my eye. He read the first three verses of the eleventh chapter of 2d Corinthians, and repeated as his text the third. He read every word of his sermon from a small MS. in the pulpit Bible, never looking at the congregation, but once in every sentence raising his eye to some fixed point or turning it on vacancy." We have not space for the description of the sermon itself, but it caused Dr. Alexander to regard Candlish as the greatest preacher he ever heard. "The composition was masterly; both strong and beautiful; no Scotticisms; no provincialisms; no violations of taste, except perhaps an occasional excess of ingenious and pointed antithesis. Under one head he accumulated all the difficulties men feel as to election, ability, the

unpardonable sin, insufficient conviction, faith, hope, love, etc. There was something fearful in this part of the discourse. I shuddered as he enumerated the terrible contingencies. But when to these (as the subtleties of Satan) he opposed the simple truth that Christ had died and God was in earnest in offering salvation; and exhorted us to let God take care of his own attributes, and to look at the atonement, not from his side, but ours; not to debate with Satan, or wait for the solution of all puzzles, but simply believe what Christ has said, and do what he requires; it was like coming out of an English railway-tunnel into the paradise of an English landscape. And then, when he appealed to the experience of the convert, and described the escape of the poor soul from the knotted meshes of the devil's snare to the 'simplicity that is in Christ,' I was completely overcome. I shook with violent agitation; and I don't know how I could have sat still if my eyes had not relieved me. But I passed entirely unnoticed. Many were in the same condition, and the rest were unconsciously bent forward to catch every word."

How we would love to linger amid the garden-like pages of this biography, and introduce our readers more and more into the depths of its healthful, bracing atmosphere! But we must hasten to the close. The life of the wonderful man herein depicted in colors so rich and so faithful, is, at least after his manhood was reached, familiar, in its main features, to most of our readers. So that we need not dwell. How he was revered as an instructor, admired as a preacher, allowed preëminence as a commentator; how he advanced from step to step in a career of scholarship almost without a parallel in our day; and how he at last died at the comparatively early age of fifty-one, mourned by an entire Church, and by almost a whole nation—all this is well known to nearly every one who shall peruse these lines.

We had intended to tarry a little upon that other trait of his character of which we have only made brief mention, his piety—his humble, self-subduing, earnest, manful piety. But our readers must go to these volumes for a full portraiture of Dr. Alexander considered as a man of God. We know of nothing in our language, which, in the way of a religious diary, is comparable

with the few pages—too few—wherein he sets forth his first experiences as a Christian. Not a syllable of cant, not a trace of insincerity, not a shade of presumption, appears in these daily notices of his struggling sainthood, as it was emerging into the full sunshine of the kingdom of grace. And throughout his entire life, he gave abounding evidence, always however of an undemonstrative kind, of that steady growth in godliness which was so surely ripening his spirit for the glory of his Father's house above. With all his genius, with all his surpassing knowledge of the word of God, it is interesting and encouraging to note that he had precisely the same difficulties to contend with in his heavenward career that we all have. There were seasons of doubt, hours of depression, clouded days when the light from above seemed to be almost quenched; yet there was constant advancement in the divine life, with blessed and prolonged seasons of the possession of that inward peace which passeth understanding. And when he lay down to die, it was to sleep the tired but bright sleep of childhood in the arms of a loving Father.

We have thus discharged a sadly-pleasing duty. We invite special attention to this most admirable biography, and urge every minister and student of divinity—these at least—to procure copies for themselves, if they would be both delighted and profited. It is full, to repletion, of the most attractive matter, even independently of the halo it throws about the character and pursuits of the loftiest scholar in the department of sacred learning this land has, we think, yet seen. It is, too, attractively, racily, written. It is altogether a worthy monument, both to the affection of its author and to the memory of its great subject.