

the India Office for several years, after which he was engineer to the South London Tramways Company, and under his superintendence the various lines of that company were constructed. He died on 27th November 1884. He was elected a member of the Institution of Civil Engineers in 1880, and a Fellow of this Society on 6th June 1881.

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JOHN M'NAIR. By T. Stevenson, *P.R.S.A.*

John M'Nair was for nearly twenty years a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. He took a lively interest in physical subjects, but owing to his advanced age, and the latterly feeble state of his health, was prevented from attending our meetings very regularly. He was born at Belvidere, near Glasgow, in 1801, and died at Edinburgh in his eighty-fifth year.

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WILLIAM LINDSAY ALEXANDER. By Professor Flint.

William Lindsay Alexander was born at Leith on 24th August 1808. He was educated at the High School of his native town and in the Universities of Edinburgh and St Andrews. He distinguished himself in all his classes, but especially in those of Latin, Greek, Logic, and Moral Philosophy. While at St Andrews his earlier religious impressions were much deepened by intercourse with a pious fellow-student, and through the inspiring influence of Dr Chalmers. Although he began preaching when still a student of Arts, it was not until 1832, five years after he had left college, that he made choice of the Christian ministry as his profession. Teaching, literature, law, medicine, all presented themselves to him with competing claims. During the greater portion of this period of indecision and unsettlement he was occupied as classical tutor in the Congregational Academy at Blackburn. Passing through Liverpool in 1832, he was persuaded to occupy for a Sunday the pulpit of Newington Street Independent Chapel, then vacant. The result was that he remained in charge of the congregation for a

year and a half, putting his qualifications for the ministry to a thorough test, and gradually coming to feel that he had found his true vocation. He afterwards went to Germany, and studied theology for a short time in Halle and Leipsic.

On 5th February 1835 he was ordained to the ministry, and became the pastor of the congregation meeting in what was then called "North College Street Chapel," Edinburgh. The connection then formed lasted somewhat over forty-two years. Mr Alexander at once gained, and to the last retained, great popularity as a preacher. In stimulating and guiding the Christian energies of his congregation he was also eminently successful. Gradually he attained in his own denomination an influence with which that of no one else in Scotland could be compared, while his services to the common Christian cause, his genuine catholicity of spirit, and his candour and courtesy even as a controversialist, made his name honoured in all denominations. His scholarship, literary talents, and theological acquirements became attested by writings which spread his reputation far beyond the limits of Britain. Notwithstanding a certain shyness and reserve of manner, his amiability and affectionateness of nature attracted to him numerous warmly attached friends. Among the events and dates of his life during his ministry in Edinburgh, these may be specified,—his marriage in August 1837; his delivery of the Congregational Lecture at London in 1840; his editorship of the *Congregational Magazine* from 1836 to 1840; his receiving of the degree of Doctor of Divinity from the University of St Andrews in 1845; his candidature for the chair of Moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh in 1852; his appointment to the Professorship of Theology in the Congregational College in 1854; his removal with his people from Argyle Square to Queen Street Hall in 1855, and thence to the new church (St Augustine Church) on George the Fourth Bridge in 1861; his election as examiner in philosophy at St Andrews University in 1861; his visit to Palestine in 1869; his selection as a member of the Old Testament Revision Company in 1870; his appointment by the Council of Edinburgh University assessor to the University Court in 1871, and reappointment in 1875; and "the greatest sorrow of his life," the death of Mrs Alexander in the last-named year. He published *The Connection and Harmony of the Old and New*

*Testaments* in 1841; *Anglo-Catholicism not Apostolic* in 1843; *Switzerland and the Swiss Churches* in 1846; *Christ and Christianity* in 1854; *The Life and Correspondence of Ralph Wardlaw, D.D.*, in 1856; *Christian Thought and Work* in 1862; and *St Paul at Athens* in 1865. He contributed to the eighth edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* three elaborate treatises—*Moral Philosophy* (vol. xv., 1858), *Holy Scriptures* (vol. xix., 1859), and *Theology* (vol. xxi., 1860). From 1861 to 1869 he superintended the publication of the third edition of Kitto's *Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature*, and supplied a very large number of the articles which appeared in it. He was also the author of at least forty sermons, lectures, or pamphlets, published separately, and a frequent contributor to Reviews and Magazines.

Dr Alexander resigned his ministerial charge on 6th June 1877, and was in the same year appointed Principal of the Theological Hall, while retaining his professorship. From a sense of growing infirmity, these latter offices also he resigned in 1881. In 1884 he received the degree of LL.D. from the University of Edinburgh, on the occasion of its Tercentenary. Amidst deep and wide regret, on the 20th December of that year, he died at Pinkieburn, leaving behind him many a good work to perpetuate and endear his memory, and the example of an unsullied and beneficent, faithful, and consistent life.

Dr Alexander was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society on 29th April 1867, one of the vice-presidents on 24th November 1873, and was re-elected a vice-president on 22nd November 1880. He wrote a number of obituary notices of eminent members, and delivered the Opening Address of the Session 1876-77.

Having indicated the chief facts of his life, let us now glance at the chief aspects of his character.

It was impossible to think of him otherwise than as a remarkably accomplished scholar. He was throughout his life an earnest student. No one knew better that knowledge is not the supreme object of human life, yet no one could realise more how precious and pleasant it is, and how closely connected with what is best. Hence a large portion of his daily life was given to its acquisition, and not selfishly, but in the belief that through self-improvement he would the more profit others. He had a keen interest in most

kinds of science and learning; had cultivated with special care various departments of theology and philosophy; was intimately conversant with Biblical studies; was widely read in classical and modern literature; and was an excellent Latinist, Hellenist, and Hebraist. His mastery over the classical tongues as poetical media is amply attested by the collection of Greek and Latin verses which he printed privately and dedicated to his brethren of the Hellenic Society. His attainments as a Hebraist he had many opportunities of applying. He delighted in good English poetry, and was the author of a considerable number of very meritorious English hymns.

The amount of literary work which Dr Alexander performed must be regarded as marvellous, when it is considered with what diligence and success he discharged the many duties of his ministry and professorship. Yet none of his writings bear the marks of hasty and inadequate preparation. The briefest articles from his pen in *Kitto* are carefully executed. That he achieved so much as an author was doubtless due largely to strength and readiness of memory, clearness and vigour of thought, and facility of accurate and appropriate expression, but it was due as largely to his self-denying and methodical employment of his time. In this respect few can ever have surpassed him. At the commencement of his ministry he formed the resolution never to have what people called "a spare hour," but to lay out his work every day so as to know each hour exactly what to do; and to this resolution he steadily adhered to the close of his life.

From the time that he listened to Chalmers in St Andrews, philosophy, and especially moral philosophy, had strong attractions for him. How high was his estimate of philosophy and his ideal of the philosopher may be best learned from his eloquent and elaborate address to the Philosophical Society of the University of Edinburgh on his election as president in 1875. The most adequate measure of his philosophical ability is, however, the treatise on Moral Philosophy in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. It presents us with a clearly defined, well-arranged, skilfully rounded system of ethical science. If not exhibiting much originality, it displays extensive learning and careful and independent reflection. It fully entitles its author to an honourable place among Scottish moral philosophers.

Dr Alexander devoted, of course, far more of his time and energy to theology than to philosophy. And it may safely be said that among his contemporaries in Scotland there was no more generally accomplished a theologian, although he was doubtless surpassed by several of them in particular qualities. He attained a high reach of excellence alike in exegetical, historical, apologetic, systematic, and practical theology. In all these departments he produced excellent works. On any special theological problem he could at once bring to bear ample knowledge and a rich combination of strong and disciplined mental powers. It cannot, indeed, be said that in theology, any more than in philosophy, he opened up or even followed out new paths of research. His mind rapidly reached maturity, and the religious opinions which he formed in youth remained almost unmodified to the close of his life. Within the limits of so-called orthodoxy, however, his intellect acted with admirable freedom and effectiveness. He held firmly to the Calvinistic system of doctrine and to the Congregational scheme of Church government, but with conspicuous independence of judgment. On various theological and ecclesiastical questions he differed decidedly even from those with whom he was in the main most in agreement. This appears very clearly in his *Memoirs of Dr Wardlaw*, in which criticism mingles so largely with admiration.

Dr Alexander took a somewhat prominent part in most of the religious controversies of his time. On the platform and through the press he felt called to set forth his views on Episcopacy, Anglo-Catholicism, Romanism, Church Establishments, and the like; he was drawn into the Voluntary, Spiritual Independence, Morrisonian, and some minor conflicts. It will be admitted by all, however, that while he always fought with vigour, he also always fought without bitterness or unfairness, and obviously from no love of strife itself or desire for personal or party victory, but from a sense of what he felt due to truth and the public good. As was to have been expected in the case of one whose mind was so justly balanced and so catholic in its sympathies, the more experience he acquired of religious controversy the more disappointed he became with its results, and in his later life he kept aloof from it.

As a pulpit orator he was of remarkable merit. Never aiming at

popularity, making it a rule not to prepare so-called "great sermons," constantly dealing largely in the exposition of Scripture and the setting forth of doctrine, habitually keeping feeling under restraint, and very sparing of gesture and action, he was yet not only a most instructive, but a most interesting and impressive preacher. His tall stature and noble presence, his admirable delivery, his style refined yet strong, somewhat elaborate but also singularly lucid, the amount of knowledge which he communicated, and of light which he cast on Scripture, his intellectual force, his vivid and deep realisation of spiritual things, and the judiciousness and pointedness of his practical applications of truth, combined to make him a great and beneficent power in the pulpit.

As a man his character commanded universal respect. None doubted his piety and benevolence any more than his learning or ability. He gained many friends, and alienated none. He was especially at home in scholarly and intellectual society, and where at home he was a charming companion, unaffected and genial, with a keen sense of humour and hearty love of mirth, and with an inexhaustible store of anecdotes, which he delighted to tell, and which he told exceedingly well.

His private and domestic life has been gracefully delineated by Miss E. T. M'Laren, in reminiscences originally printed for private circulation, but now incorporated in the *Life of Dr Alexander* by the Rev. Mr Ross. Mr Ross himself, as an old student of Dr Alexander, has given us an account of his character and work as a professor, from which it is apparent that he was nowhere more admirable and successful than in his class-room.

The memory of Dr William Lindsay Alexander will be long affectionately cherished and highly honoured.

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WILLIAM CHAMBERS, LL.D. By David Patrick, M.A.

William Chambers, one of the founders of the publishing firm of William and Robert Chambers, and in his later years distinguished for his public spirit as a citizen, was born at Peebles on the 16th April 1800, his father being a cotton manufacturer there. William,