

The Destinies of Men

Joseph Addison Alexander (1809 - 1860)

Joseph Addison Alexander was born in Philadelphia. He was the third son Archibald Alexander, the first Professor of Princeton Seminary. Educated himself at Princeton, he later taught there and became assistant to Dr. Charles Hodge, who was then Professor of Oriental and Biblical Literature. He proved himself to be a brilliant linguist and exegete, as may be seen in his commentaries on Isaiah, Psalms, Matthew (published posthumously), Mark and Acts, as well as two volumes of Sermons. Dr. Hodge once described him as "the greatest man whom I have ever known; all his powers and attainments were consecrated to the cause of truth and of Christ." He continued teaching at

the Princeton Seminary until his death.

There is a time we know not when,
A place we know not where,
Which marks the destiny of men,
To glory or despair.

There is a line, by us unseen,
That crosses every path;
Which marks the boundary between
God's patience and His wrath.

To pass that limit is to die –
To die as if by stealth;
It does not dim the beaming eye
Or pale the glow of health.

The conscience may be still at ease,
The spirit light and gay;
And that which pleases still may please,

And care be thrust away.

But on the forehead God hath set,
Indelibly a mark;

Unseen my men, for men as yet,
Are blind and in the dark.

And yet the doomed man's path below
May bloom as Eden bloomed,
He did not, does not, will not know,
Or feel that he is doomed.

He feels perchance that all is well,
And every fear is calmed;
He lives, he dies, he wakes in hell,
Not only doomed, but damned.

O where is this mysterious line
That may by men be crossed;
Beyond which, God Himself hath sworn,
That he who goes is lost?

How far may we go on in sin?
How long will God forbear?
Where does hope end, and where begin
The confines of despair?

An answer from the skies is sent
"Ye that from God depart,
While it is called today, repent,
And harden not your heart".