OBERT LOWRY'S life overran the ideal three score years and ten, and was an unusually busy one. He was a rapid worker, and he worked persistently. Few men could put so much into a given period, and few could extend their periods of work as could he. His life-work, therefore, was far-reaching. To survey it would be like surveying the broad landscape from a mountain top.

The work in which he took supreme satisfaction was that of preaching the Gospel. To stand as God's Ambassador and persuade man to be reconciled to his Maker, was with him a privilege and a high honor. No themes stirred the depths of his
soul more thoroughly, or called forth more of his magnificent eloquence. His influence as a preacher has been demonstrated in multitudes led to Christ by his appeals, from the earliest efforts of his student days to the latest utterances of his maturest years.

He delighted also in pulpit work beyond that of the mere evangelistic sort. Historical, doctrinal, and polemic utterances were among his happiest pulpit efforts. He possessed fullness of knowledge; he was a keen and discriminating critic; he was a sound logician. These qualities fitted him for the highest grades of pulpit instruction. He could win to Christ and edify in Christ. To the unlettered and to the learned his preaching was ever helpful.

Coördinate with his pulpit work stands his pastoral work. His qualities in this line were of the manly, uplifting sort. He had a great sympathetic heart, and exceptional quickness to perceive a sorrow, but his helpfulness went out in imparting genuine strength, rather than in coddling and coaxing. He made the sinking feel that underneath were the everlasting arms.

Every church he ever served felt his power as an organizer and leader. When as a student he supplied McEwensville, White Deer, Elimsport, Milton, and other fields, he always did them good. His first pastorate led to the completion and occupancy of the new house of worship at West Chester, Pa. His second pastorate led the semi-rural Bloomingdale Baptist Church out into the Metropolitan power and position of the Central Baptist Church of New York City. His third pastorate led the Hanson Place Baptist Church of Brooklyn, N. Y., from a small, un'influential body to one of the largest and best organizations of that City of Churches. His fourth pastorate witnessed the completion and occupancy of the new house of the Baptist Church at Lewisburg, Pa. His last pastorate gathered a new company of disciples into the Park Avenue Baptist Church of Plainfield, N. J., and housed them in a new and beautiful edifice.

Every community in which he worked felt his power. He
had opinions on all worthy subjects—civic, political, educational, religious—and he had the courage to state them frankly, and the skill to state them wisely. In the early days of his ministry, before and during the Civil War, his voice uttered no uncertain sound. He was pronounced and effective in deeds also. The organization of the Long Island Baptist Association was largely due to his influence. In a period of jeopardy he successfully superintended the Fourth Ward Mission of New York City, and
brought it into large success. As moderator or secretary of
 councils, associations, conferences, as conductor of conventions,
 as president of miscellaneous organizations, and as a participant
 in numberless public gatherings, he was always masterful. His
 moulding or guiding hand was ever welcomed, and its impress
 was for abiding good.

As Professor of belles-lettres at Bucknell University from
1869 to 1875 he did splendid work. His metropolitan spirit
injected itself into what was seemingly sinking into a backwoods
institution, and gave a decided impulse in the direction of
subsequent prosperity. As a co-worker in the faculty the entire
force recognized his wisdom and skill, while the classes he taught
felt his perfecting touches, and students individually loved him
and confided in him as a true friend. His counsel on questions
of personal duty or difficulty was eagerly sought by those under
his care, and his advice became to many a deciding element in
the choice of life’s work.

Dr. Lowry is, however, most widely known through his
hymns and music. The greeting given him in London, at the
Raikes Centenary in 1880, attested that the Christian world knew
the hymn “Shall we gather at the river?” and loved and
honored its author. At the root of his phenomenal success in
this line lay his fine appreciation of what could and should be
sung. He instinctively recognized the “singable” quality in a
set of verses. If they could be sung he inquired further whether
they should be sung. He was generous enough to see merit
wherever it appeared. He dealt freely with poems of Bonar,
Hawargal, Hawkes, Crosby, Phelps, and other meritorious
authors. He gave wings to many sweet verses of such writers,
and on these wings they float down the years, charming and
cheering as they go.

The gift of versification and of musical composition were
both his, and both had been cultivated by assiduous study. He
produced hymns and music of the most finished character. He
also became a recognized editor and critic in both these lines.
His own copyright list numbers nearly five hundred works, with much unpublished material of value, but hundreds of copyrights in the names of others owe much to the suggestion and criticism of this generous man. His musical work must be viewed thus: He furnished music for many a worthy hymn of others; he perfected words and music for many less experienced but meritorious writers; he furnished the music and words of many a grand hymn.

Of this latter class a volume might be written. His most widely known production is, doubtless, “Shall we gather at the river?” What he esteemed his most evangelical hymn is, “Weeping will not save me.” His temperance song, “Where is my wandering boy to-night?” has probably done more to recall the erring than anything he ever wrote. A hymn finished when in his last illness, “Come, rest awhile,” was sweeter to him in those days of suffering than any other of his own productions.

Robert Lowry’s influence on those who knew him best, and entered deepest into the sanctity of his affection and confidence, will never be forgotten or lost. He was true. Through rolling years and multiplied changes he was ever the same. He was honest. He would tell his dearest friend of a fault and lovingly seek to correct it. He was generous. Firm as a rock in his own convictions, he would charitably cover the multitude of sins in others. He was religious. Not in the effervescent sense, nor in a stern ascetic manner, but in hating sin, loving righteousness, honoring Christ. To know such a man intimately is to be helped Christward.

His life-work ended in a halo of glory. His sickroom was a gate of heaven. His last utterances were absolutely sublime. With fulness of years, with mind unimpaired, with the assurance of faith, he looked Death in the face and did not falter. As he breathed his last the morning sunshine touched his brow, a coronation from God himself anticipative of the crown of glory which awaited this sweet singer in the bright beyond.

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