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ANNALS

OF THE

AMERICAN PULPIT;

OR

COMMEMORATIVE NOTICES

OF

DISTINGUISHED AMERICAN CLERGYMEN

OF

VARIOUS DENOMINATIONS,

FROM THE EARLY SETTLEMENT OF THE COUNTRY TO THE CLOSE OF THE YEAR
EIGHTEEN HUNDRED AND FIFTY-FIVE.

WITH HISTORICAL INTRODUCTIONS.

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BY WILLIAM B. SPRAGUE, D. D.

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WALTER MACON LOWRIE.

1841—1847.

FROM THE REV. R. W. DICKINSON, D. D.

NEW YORK, December 10, 1850.

Rev. and dear Sir: In complying with your request to furnish for your work a sketch of the life and character of the late Walter M. Lowrie, I thank you for the opportunity it gives me to render a tribute to the memory of one in whose mission I was naturally led to take a special interest from the circumstance that, in the providence of God, I was called to officiate both on the occasion of his licensure and of his ordination. My acquaintance with him began, when he was taken under the care of our Presbytery, as a candidate for the holy ministry; but since his decease it has been my privilege to see various letters from some who were intimately acquainted with him in early life, which embodied their reminiscences of his College life and Seminary course. His letters and journals, however, as edited by his father, the Hon. Walter Lowrie, are the sources whence I have drawn most of the material for the following sketch.

In the life of WALTER MACON LOWRIE who was born February 18, 1819, in Butler, Pa., nothing claims our special notice until we reach the period of his conversion. This occurred in the winter of '34-5, during a remarkable revival of religion in Jefferson College, of which he had been a member since the fall of '33. He was among the first of the students then brought to a sense of their character and condition as sinners; but, before he had attained peace, and even while labouring under the greatest distress of mind on account of the hardness of his heart, he spoke of the revival as a "work that would tell over the world." His exercise of mind at the time, however, differed not from the general experience of converted youth, excepting that his chief difficulties arose from the fact that he had not those "deep and pungent convictions," nor those "high exciting joys," which are sometimes felt,—nor was it to be expected that he should,—considering the manner in which he had been educated by his parents, the exemplary correctness of his life from his boyhood, and the evenness of his temperament. Strange perplexities too thronged his mind, while contemplating the duty of communing at the table of Jesus. He felt there "was something wrong within him;" he knew not what, "unless it was that spiritual pride had inflated his heart." But at last "all his difficulties vanished, and his mind was filled if not with joy, yet with a peace that passeth understanding."

But He who had called him, designed to prepare him for an arduous and trying service; and it was necessary to this end that he should have a deeper insight of his own heart, and a more operative sense of his need of sanctifying grace. A bitter experience awaited him, and that under circumstances most favourable to the exercise of faith and love. While again partaking of the emblems of Christ's broken body and shed blood, his mind was so assailed by distressing thoughts that his hope became as the giving

up of the ghost. Yet, miserable as he was, that Communion proved to be most profitable.*

Shortly after this, the incident of his meeting an old negro woman occurred, which, though it may appear to some too simple to be formally noticed, is not without its significance. No collegian who had not become "a new creature," would have stopped to converse on the subject of religion in connection with the missionary cause with such a person, much less noted her words, and derived a lesson from her attainments in piety. It intimates in signs which cannot be mistaken, that lowliness of spirit which is so essential in Christian character; that quick perception and high estimate of personal religion which mark the new born soul; a docility which foreshadows high spiritual attainments; and a sympathy with the mind that was in Christ Jesus, which may soon be developed in acts of self-denial.

"The child is father of the man."

Though he had at first thought that his new relation to the Church "would make a great difference in his choice of a profession," he was at a loss to know whether he should then examine the question, as to his duty to become a minister of the Gospel, or defer it to the close of his collegiate course; and the manner in which he canvassed the subject, together with the plan which he proposed to follow, evinced more than ordinary discrimination and forethought.

Life is too short to justify delay in the choice of a profession, by one who has been awaked to a sense of life's great end. No mind is competent to the mastery of every branch of literature and science. No one can become equally eminent or successful in every department of human toil; nor does the mind ever work to equal advantage when turned from the pursuit to which it had for years addressed its powers. There is great force in the reason assigned by young Lowrie that he might concentrate his powers, and make all things tend to this one object. Men fail, not so much from want of mind, as from the misdirection of their talents; nor so much from want of moral principle, as of fixedness of purpose. Unity of aim implies perseverance, and without resolute diligence the greatest powers are vain. Both success and eminence in any relation can be almost invariably traced to an early choice and inflexible purpose. It is worthy of note, therefore, how the work of the Gospel ministry took possession of young Lowrie's mind. It was not, however, as a means of livelihood, or as a profession by which he was to gratify personal ambition and rise to distinction. He was to enter the ministry from a sense of duty—to do good to perishing men, not to enrich or elevate self. And though he showed great decision and energy, it was the seal of his "new heart and right spirit," that rendered him proof against those temptations to loitering and indecision to which young men so often yield, only to regret in after life. From the hour of his decision he never lost sight of his object. It quickened his perceptions, roused his energies, guided his selection of books and company, and while deepening his interest in his religious privileges, led him to assume the superintendence of a neighbouring Sunday school, to take an active part in the "Brainerd Evangelical Society," and also in the "Society for Inquiry," and in these Societies which were connected with the College,

* See Memoir of Walter M. Lowrie—Edited by his father, the Hon. Walter Lowrie, pp. 10, 11.

to devise ways and means for promoting a deeper spirit of personal piety among the religious students, and a more hearty interest in the cause of foreign missions.

The subject of missions seems to have taken strong hold of his mind from the hour he made choice of the ministry as his profession. "Something seems to be telling me," he writes to his father, "when I think of you all, that I must endeavour to spend as much time with you as I can *now*; for when I am settled in life, I shall have very few opportunities of being with you. I do not anticipate much temporal pleasure or ease, and perhaps it is as well that I should now learn to deny myself as at any time; but still I find an unwillingness to entertain the idea of totally denying myself your company. However, I hope that if it shall ever be incumbent on me, I shall not hesitate to leave even father and mother, and all to whom I am bound by the ties of nature. I hope you are all in good health. Would that I had the same hope in relation to matters of more importance. I can do nothing but pray, and yet in my condition I am more fit to have prayers offered for myself than to offer them for others."

At last, after having scrutinized his motives, solicited paternal counsel, and sought wisdom from the Most High, he comes to so clear a sense of his duty, that a load is taken from his mind. Nor is it less worthy of note, that he came to this decision in the place where only two years before he was on the point of abandoning his hope: while commemorating the death of Him, who came into our world "to seek and to save that which was lost."

It may be thought that so great interest in religious matters must have interfered with his regular studies, and that he was too much under religious excitement to enjoy a healthful tone of piety. This, in repeated instances, has been the effect of a revival of religion in a College; but whatever importance may be attached to religion, a neglect of study cannot be justified; since the primary duty of a collegian is to meet the requisitions of the course, and thus prepare himself for public life. That must be enthusiasm, not piety, which impels one to merge his studies in devotional meditation and meetings. But Lowrie's religion gave to study the aspect of duty, and his decision on the great question only rendered him the more determined to overcome all difficulties in the acquisition of knowledge. It was, however, much to his surprise, (and his allusion to the circumstance is with characteristic modesty,*) that he was ranked among the first of his class in scholarship, and appointed to deliver the Valedictory. He bade farewell to the scenes of his College life in October, 1837,—having spent five years in Cannonsburg; during which time he had acquired a good education, chosen the good part, exerted a salutary influence, resolved on his employment through life, and prepared himself to enter on his theological course. What could such a youth have had to regret as he looked back? Several things it would seem; "and yet there is nothing I regret so much in my course in College, as that I did not try to secure the affections of young non-professors, and lead them to delight in the pleasures of the mind, and especially those of the soul. It makes my heart ache to think how many opportunities of doing good I neglected to improve. Yet

* Memoir, p. 17.

perhaps were I ever so situated again, I should act as before. Still it does seem as if I would try and do better."

While in College, Mr. Lowrie called on a young man,* in relation to some interest of one of their Societies. Though alike the subjects of the same revival, neither had much knowledge of the other; while each through diffidence had said little to any one as to his own private feelings on the subject of personal religion. Both had been sighing for Christian intercourse, and had alike struggled with pent up feelings. Soon after their meeting, they, in some way equally unexpected to either, got into conversation on their respective experience of the grace of God; and so absorbed did Mr. Lowrie become, that the object of his errand was lost sight of in "the sweet and holier topic of Christ's love." The mutual interest in each other awakened by this interview, speedily led to another, and still another, and thus, in that oneness of views and feelings which true Christian experience alone inspires, commenced a friendship which united their hearts and identified their plans. They were wont to converse and pray together, to exercise in company, and act in concert, and being alike interested in promoting their own personal piety and advancing the cause of Christ, both at last gave themselves in purpose to the missionary work, and held themselves in readiness to go wherever God might call them. College friendships often yield to other interests; but in this case there was no abatement of affection and no diminution of confidence. To no one out of his own family was Lloyd more warmly attached, while "the thought of being saved with his friend often filled his soul with a pure delight." Lowrie had formed other friendships; but to Lloyd he was wont to unbosom his secret thoughts, and to him, next to the inmates of his own family, wont to write just as he felt; and the reason seems to have been that with him he had spent so many soul-subduing hours in Christian fellowship, and enjoyed a foretaste of that world where perfect love and friendship forever reign. The spring before he left College, he unexpectedly met Lloyd and joined him in a walk. The day was beautiful and all nature inviting. Lifting their thoughts above the scenes through which they passed, Heaven became the subject of their conversation, and from the manner in which both in after years adverted to this conversation by the way, they must have then experienced some anticipative sense of the joys of Heaven. This walk, however, left an ineffaceable impression on Lowrie's mind. It served to invigorate his faith, to brighten his hopes, and sometimes in his hours of

* The individual referred to was JOHN LLOYD. He was born in Huntingdon County, Pa., October 1, 1813. He entered Jefferson College in the spring of 1834; made a profession of religion in the second session of his course; and graduated with distinction in September, 1839. Having spent two years in teaching in Western Pennsylvania, in order to provide means for prosecuting his theological studies, he entered the Seminary at Princeton in November, 1841, and during his course acted as Tutor, for a session, at the College at Easton, Pa., including his first vacation at the Seminary in 1842. In the autumn of 1843, he placed himself under the care of the Board of Foreign Missions, and the field of labour assigned to him was China. During his last session in the Seminary, he was licensed by the Presbytery of New York; but he transferred his relation to the Presbytery of Huntingdon from which also he received ordination, a short time before departing on his mission. He sailed from New York in company with three other missionaries, on the 22d of June, 1844, and arrived at Macao in October following. In November, he proceeded to Amoy, where he became very happily associated with several missionaries, both from England and from the United States. He addressed himself now with great diligence and success to the study of the language, and soon acquired so much knowledge of it as to be able to enter advantageously upon his missionary work. On the 22d of November, 1848, he was attacked with typhus fever, which had a fatal termination on the 6th of December, just four years to a day from the time of his arrival at Amoy. He possessed a vigorous mind, an equable temperament, an amiable, generous spirit, and an earnest devotion to the best interests of his fellow men.

gloom and despondency, it rose on his memory, like a bright vision, to revive his sinking spirits, and incite him to perseverance.

I have thus alluded to the occasion and the nature of this friendship, because most of his letters from the time of his leaving College to the completion of his theological course were addressed to Mr. Lloyd; but, though so many letters passed between them, and they held such delightful communion, they did not meet again for many years, and then under circumstances peculiarly interesting and doubly gratifying.

On entering the Theological Seminary at Princeton, he formed but few acquaintances and went but little in society. This was owing rather to his greater fondness for study than for company,—his stronger inclination to meditate than to converse. Though remarkably affectionate, he was peculiarly reserved; so much so, that his manner, at times, had the appearance of being assumed; and to this may be traced his wonted taciturnity in his intercourse with strangers in after years, and his want of freedom in conversing on the subject of religion with those with whom he was not particularly acquainted. This was subsequently a matter of regret with Mr. Lowrie, yet not without its advantage during the period of his preparatory course. In keeping him aloof from company, it threw him more on himself, rendering him more susceptible, serious, and meditative—fostering the love of study and the habit of solitary thought. No one ever entered the Seminary with more conscientious views, or pursued his studies with more unwearied assiduity. Hence his order for the day, and his regularity and constancy in exercise. He would even journey on foot, for the sake of securing a greater stock of health against the demands of the ensuing session, though at the same time he improved his vacations. During one of these he re-arranged the Seminary Library, and made a new catalogue,—a work of no ordinary labour, yet to one of his fondness for books and love of order, not without interest. During another he prosecuted the study of the Hebrew; not because his advantages in the Seminary were not sufficient, but on account of Nordheimer's reputation as a teacher, and his desire to perfect himself in that branch. Hence also he availed himself of such society as would further him in his plans for self-improvement; and the same may be observed in the character of his miscellaneous reading, and in the manner in which he spoke of such books as he had read, or the sermons which he had heard. It was always some character, some thought or sentiment, throwing new light on religious experience, on the meaning of a passage of Scripture, or on the nature of his contemplated work, that arrested his attention.

I am not aware how much time he spent in solitary prayer, or that he kept a diary of the changes in his views and feelings. To one of his introspective cast of mind, this might have fostered modes of thought and feeling at variance with his comfort and his usefulness; and if this be not equivocal in its tendency, there was the less necessity for a diary in his case, as he was in habits of familiar and confiding intercourse with kindred spirits. The more he reflected on the work to which he had given himself, the more he felt the necessity of a deeper religious spirit, in order to his effective preparation, and therefore was inclined to write bitter things against himself: his coldness at times amazed as well as distressed him; nor is it surprising that it should, considering his elevated conceptions of Divine truth, and the importance he attached to the missionary work.

Though often depressed, he was seldom despondent ; at times very happy, and again fearing the deceitfulness of sin, or shrinking from the temptations and trials to which, in imagination, he might one day be exposed. " Sometimes, when I think of these things," said he to a friend, " I feel inclined, if it were the will of my Master, just to lie down and die. The thought of having to spend eight or ten years in this wicked world is not very pleasing ; but if it be my Master's will, I will cheerfully obey." Meanwhile, whatever his difficulties on the score of his own piety, he seems never to waver or regret his course ; on the contrary, attains to clearer views of his duty, and at last feels that he would rather die than not be a missionary.

During his collegiate course his thoughts had been turned toward China ; but now Africa, as a field for missionary labor, claims much of his attention. The fact that so few, if any, were willing to go there,—that the most of those who had gone had died, seemed only to kindle his ardour, and establish him in his choice. Still, though most decided in his views, he is willing to defer to the counsels of age, and to the decision of the Board ;—thus giving evidence of a mind capable of exercising a calm judgment, and at the same time of that modesty and humility so much to be admired in youth. He had all along thought that he should be willing to go wherever duty might point, and now he is willing to go even to "the white man's grave."

His interest in the missionary cause, however, did not interfere with the prosecution of his studies. On the contrary, when, in April, 1841, he appeared before the Second Presbytery of New York to be examined for licensure, it was evident to all, from his explicit and satisfactory replies to every question put to him, that he must have diligently availed himself of his preparatory advantages. What his own thoughts and feelings were in relation to his licensure we have no means of ascertaining. There was deep solemnity in his aspect, and when, after the usual prayer on such occasions, the Moderator said,—“In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the authority which He has given to the Church for its edification, we do license you to preach the Gospel,”—he bowed his head and wept.

After this, he went forth to make trial of his gifts, and until the autumn, was engaged in preaching. During this period he visited the missionary station among the Chippewas. This tour gave him an opportunity of seeing many places, and of forming not a few valuable acquaintances, and wherever he went, his visits were not less gratifying to others than profitable to himself. Perhaps no persons remember him with more affection than they whose acquaintance he formed during the time that intervened between his licensure and his ordination. This took place on the 9th of November, 1841, in the Grand Street Presbyterian Church. I recollect the time and the place—the solemnity of the candidate and the emotions of those who officiated on the occasion. He was my junior by many years, yet he had decided on a course which few of us had ever contemplated. We were surrounded by friends, and comforts, and privileges ; he was about to give up all that is dear to the natural heart, and go forth to live and labour and die among the abodes of degraded pagans !

In the mean time, the Executive Committee of the Board of Foreign Missions had taken into consideration his application to be received as a missionary, and to be sent out under their care. In his application he had

expressed his desire to go to Africa ; but there were special reasons for reinforcing the China Mission. One of the missionaries had died, and it was apprehended that the Mission would be defeated unless some one could be speedily procured ; nor was it easy to find any one who could go there with advantage. The language was very difficult to be acquired,—translations of the Scriptures into Chinese were to be effected, and it was thought that Mr. Lowrie had peculiar talents and qualifications for such a task. Notwithstanding his deference to the judgment of the committee, their decision was to him a matter of surprise and regret. To the last he had looked forward to poor benighted Africa, and now to turn his face toward China, seemed like abandoning the cherished hope of years. But not *my will*, is the sentiment of his heart. *He is sent* ; and this thought serves all along to sustain and encourage him.

Mr. Lowrie bade farewell to his country with no intention of ever returning ; and his friends took leave of him with little or no expectation of ever seeing him again on earth. A free passage having been generously offered to him by the owners of the ship *Huntress*, he embarked in that noble vessel on the 19th of January, 1842. But we need not here lose sight of him. We may follow him in his course through the pathless waters, mark his actions, discern his feelings, and read his thoughts. At the request, and to gratify the wishes, of his mother, he kept a journal of the voyage ; and had I been his fellow passenger, I could hardly have enjoyed so intimate an acquaintance with him as may be derived from its perusal. It shows the training to which he had been subjected, the resources of his mind, the versatile adaptedness of his powers : how the love of home enhances the love of Heaven ; how the sensibilities of the man are refined by the acquisitions of the scholar and the affections of the Christian ; how the desire of doing good triumphs over the discomforts of shipboard and all temptations to indolent quietude ; how prudence tempers zeal, and gentleness wins prejudice, and cheerfulness recommends religion : what advantage the Christian scholar has in spending his time, and in deriving instruction and enjoyment from every passing object and any trifling incident. It is written without effort and without design,—like the spontaneous expression of one's cherished hopes and inmost feelings to a bosom friend, or the particular, though not tedious, narration of our travels to one whose varying countenance reveals the interest that is taken in all we saw, and said, and did. It is a transcript of the successive phases of his mind and heart, natural, truthful and vivacious—embracing beautiful sentiments and profitable suggestions, touching allusions and mirthful passages, scenes of grandeur and incidents of life—showing the man, as he was on shipboard, in his weakness, and in his strength, without either concealment or exaggeration—the Christian, in his moments of extatic elevation or of gloomy depression—the youthful missionary, as the home he had left, with all its tender memories, rose before the eye of his mind, or the land whither he was going cast its dark shadows over his soul ; now aiming to know more of the mind and will of Him who had sent him forth, from the precious pages of his own word—now improving his opportunities of doing good to those around him—now looking through nature up to nature's God, and anon wafted, as on eagle's wings, to that world “ where there is no sea.”

While perusing his journal, I have been struck with the thought how much may be accomplished on shipboard; what attainments may be made; what a salutary influence may be exerted. It shows the enviable superiority of the Christian scholar as a voyager on the great deep; how every branch of knowledge may there be brought into requisition, and be made the means of widening one's field of observation and inquiry—thus not merely relieving the monotony of shipboard life, but opening sources of ever varying interest and instruction; especially the great advantage he possesses for improving and enjoying a long voyage, whose mind is enlarged by the discoveries, fortified by the principles, and animated by the hopes, of the Gospel. How interesting does the youthful missionary appear, when, through the medium of his journal,* we contemplate him a solitary voyager, going forth for purposes with which few if any on board can truly sympathize, conscious of no wavering, though often sensible of his insufficiency, no regret, though his eyes are often suffused with tears! He arrived at Macao, May 27, 1842; but his stay there was brief; for as he had been directed to proceed to Singapore as soon as he had made himself acquainted with the existing state of things in China, he left Macao on the 18th of June, in the *Sea Queen*, bound for that port. It would seem as if he had some presentiment of what awaited him, during his voyage down the China sea.† How affecting are his reminiscences of the *parting*! How comforting to him the thought that he was not on *his own* errand;—that He who had sent him forth would strengthen him for whatever sufferings he might be called to endure. How true is it that by those events which often perplex and confound the children of God, “He is demonstrating his power over them, and showing them that they are not the masters of their own lot.” It is the great end of all his dealings with them, to convince them of their absolute subjection and dependance,—sometimes by involving them in unforeseen difficulties, or baffling all their calculations, to disclose to them the depths of their hearts, and then again by wrenching the heart with agony to test their faith and love.

Mr. Lowrie regarded the time spent on board of this vessel, as a “season of chastisement,” yet “of great and unmingled mercy.” He might not see how the interests of the Chinese mission could be promoted by such delay; but was satisfied that good would be the result. He was acting in obedience to the home instructions which he had received; anxious to reach the brethren at Singapore, and commence operations. While he tarried, the mission languished from want of aid; idolatry was riveting its chains around immortal minds, and men who had lived without God were hourly going down to death without hope; and why did not He who holds the winds and the waves in his hands speed him on his way? Was it an intimation from Providence that he had mistaken the path of his duty? Then the calms and the adverse winds to which Paul himself was subjected, and the storms by which his life was jeopardized during his voyage to Rome, should have been viewed by the Apostle in the same light. Or was it a trial of his faith and patience? Paul himself must have had a greater trial, for seemingly greater interests required his speedy arrival at Rome. Placed in such circumstances, Mr. Lowrie was necessarily impelled more than ever to devout meditation and study; and it was, indeed, a source of the purest consolations.

* See Memoir pp. 71—129.

† See Memoirs. Voyage on the China sea, pp. 141, 164.

tion and encouragement to find that he was in all probability not so severely tried as the great Apostle to the Gentiles had been; that the account which Paul gave of his voyage to Rome, was almost word for word applicable to his own voyage to Singapore. We shall yet see him moving amid scenes of varied and thrilling interest; but we love to bring him before the eye of our mind, as he was in that noisome craft,—amid that wretched crew,—on that boisterous sea,—without a friend with whom he could exchange thought,—without an opportunity of doing good to those whose language he could not understand—there, with no other companion than his *old Bible!* Its truths, its counsels, its promises, all are doubly precious to his soul. We feel for him in his loneliness, but unless he had been thus, he would not have been brought so near to God. We sympathize with him in the absence of his privileges; but had he enjoyed them, he would not have been able to enter with so much cordial interest into the aspirations of holy men of old: so true is it that without being placed in circumstances of sore trial, Christians can never fully appreciate the value, or know the preciousness of God's holy word. That *old Bible* of his! what light does it reflect on his character and errand! A missionary with his Bible is one sent of God and not of man; a missionary studying his Bible is one who respects the mind and will of God; a missionary brought in the providence of God to discover a deeper meaning and a more precious view in some passage of the Bible is the man to preach the Bible from experience and the heart. Instructions from home are of little value compared with instructions from the sacred page; letters from home of but little use to comfort, if the great things which God has written to his servants, do not secure permanent interest; the company of missionary associates can but relieve for a time, if the company of Christ and his Apostles be not habitually valued; while this Book, in the light which it throws on the darkest hour, in the consolations which it imparts to the sorrowing, in the thoughts which it may awaken in the solitude of our condition, and in the sweet and precious promises which it unfolds, may make amends for the absence of all earthly friends and personal comforts; and Mr. Lowrie's experience of its preciousness in the hour of need is an evidence of its truth, as well as of the sincerity of his belief. (Memoirs p. 145–153.)

By the 10th of July, the vessel had gone half the distance from Macao to Singapore; but after this her progress was impeded by currents which soon became too strong to be resisted. The Monsoon blew with great violence; for several days no observations could be taken; and, after crossing and re-crossing their track for thirty-one days, they found themselves on the 11th of August, only one hundred miles nearer Singapore than they were on the 10th of the preceding month. Finding at last that they could not make head against the currents, and that their provisions were nearly exhausted, they very reluctantly turned about, and shaped their course for Manilla, where they arrived in safety on the 3d of August, after a voyage of sixty-six days from Macao.

Through his anxiety to reach Singapore with as little delay as possible, and at the same time, retaining no very pleasing impressions of the Sea Queen's speed and accommodations, he took passage in another vessel, and, as he thought, with a better prospect of reaching Singapore. This vessel was wrecked; and his narrative of the disaster and of his wonderful escape will abundantly repay perusal. After a most graphic description of the

perils to which they had been exposed, and finding himself safe on the land, he adds,—“It was a scene worthy of the painter’s skill—our little boat fastened to the trees, our scanty baggage piled upon the shore, and ourselves under the custard apple-trees, standing with upturned faces, while the rain dropped upon our bare heads as we lifted up our voices, and, I trust, our hearts, to that God who had brought us through the dangers we never expected to survive.”

Well might Mr. Lowrie repeat to himself one of his favourite texts: “It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.” The Sea Queen in which he had started for Singapore did not reach there in less than a hundred and twenty days from Macao; while the vessel, (the *Oneida*,) which did not leave Macao till three weeks after the Sea Queen, arrived at Singapore before he reached Manilla remained two months, and returned in November. Had Mr. L. gone in her, it would not only have saved him an immense amount of suffering, but might have altered the whole course of his life. Such was his own impression, as he recalled the reasons for his preferring the Sea Queen—the scenes through which he had passed, and found himself, after the lapse of four months, again in Macao, without having seen the place whither he had been sent. It was natural, therefore, that he should feel somewhat perplexed with the affairs of the mission. Still, he did not yield to despondency. The recent lessons which he had been taught, enable him to say from the heart,—

“ I sure
 “ Have had enough of bitter in my cup
 “ To show that never was it his design
 “ Who *placed me here* that I should live at ease,
 “ Or drink at pleasure’s fountain. Henceforth then
 “ It matters not, if storm or sunshine be
 “ My future lot; bitter or sweet my cup.
 “ I only pray, God fit me for the work !
 “ God make me holy and my spirit nerve
 “ For the stern hour of strife !”

The mission at Singapore having been abandoned for sufficient reasons, Mr. Lowrie resided in Macao more than two years; where, in addition to the prosecution of the Chinese language, making such observations of the country as were necessary to the selection of favourable points for missionary stations, and such an acquaintance with the character and customs of the people as would tend to facilitate his future operations, he preached regularly once a Sabbath to a small congregation of English and Americans. His sermons were admirably adapted to profit, and his manner was peculiarly solemn. Such was the testimony of his friend Lloyd, who had the happiness of joining him on heathen ground toward the close of the year 1844. It was while in Macao, that he experienced some change in his views on the subject of the Millenium. He had come to the belief that the Jews would be restored to their own land, and began to lean to the opinion that Christ would again visibly appear. But my limits will not permit me to enter into particulars, nor even to advert to the various things which have arrested my notice while perusing his copious and minute letters. On the 21st of January, 1845, he left Macao, and, after having been a while detained at Hong Kong, arrived at Ningpo, the final place of his residence and labours, on the 11th of April, 1845. While there, he was most industriously and usefully employed, and made great proficiency in the study of the language. Though he had not equalled some of his colleagues in

speaking, yet he had thrown much light on the colloquial language. Even in relation to speaking the language, he seems at last to have overcome every difficulty, as is evident from the fact that, for some time previous to his leaving Ningpo, he had been preaching to the Chinese. But his chief attention was directed to his preparation for usefulness through the medium of the written language. Hence, not only his translations of parts of the New Testament and a considerable portion of the Catechism, but his advancement in a plan for a Dictionary of the Chinese; and had his life been prolonged, he would, in all probability, have completed so great a work. No one, however, can form any adequate idea of his life and labours, who has not perused his letters. These constitute an autobiography as complete as he himself could have written; and they are the more valuable because written, with but few exceptions, for the special eye of those to whom he felt free in laying bare his inmost thoughts and daily practices. He knew that nothing that concerned him and his work would be uninteresting to them; and as he felt assured of their sympathy and prayers, we may regard his letters in the light of conversations with absent friends. The life of every man is made up of detail; and it is only from every day life that we can truly judge of any one's character. We cannot know what he is until we see him where there is no motive either to conceal or to display; and as a man is in private, such is his true moral character. He may not know himself, but they who are around him from day to day, know him better than he knows himself; and in like manner, as a man is in the judgment of the inmates of his own dwelling, such is he in the unrestrained familiarity of epistolary intercourse with bosom friends; and though many have endorsed the opinion of Dr. Spratt that letters between relatives and special friends are scarce ever fit to see the light, as in such letters "the souls of men appear undrest," yet these are the very letters which are most essential to enable us to judge with accuracy of the Christian missionary. No Christian, unless he has schooled himself into a morbid monotony of thought and feeling, can always appear the same. Whatever his attainments in personal piety, the strength of his self-denying purpose, or the diligence of his habits, there are times when the peculiarities of his temperament, or the natural cast of his disposition, will be strikingly seen; and I am free to say, in relation to the subject of this sketch, that, in my view, his piety is not less fervent, because it is occasionally mingled with a strain of native tenderness and innocent gaiety; his devotion to his work not less real, because, in his hours of intermitted application, he could enter with zest into cheerful converse or epistolary chat; his affection for his Master not less deep and abiding, because he could interest his absent friends in the arrangements of his house and the supply of his table: even his occasional moments of utter loneliness are not at variance with his sense of the value of God's favour; nor those feelings which bordered on despondency inconsistent with a pure and holy zeal. A missionary, like the Hindoo man-god, may have *fire* in him to burn up somewhat of the sins and miseries of the world; but so long as he himself carries into the field "of substantial, laborious operation" the infirmities of a fallen nature, all his hopes may fail him, and leave him spiritless for a time "amid the iron labour."

One of the most pleasing traits in Mr. Lowrie's character was his disposition to allay the natural anxiety of those who loved him most, by interesting them in all that appertained to his mode of living and daily employments—

his tender thoughtfulness of them even when most fatigued by the labours of the day. And, in this connection, it is important, as well as gratifying, to recall his unabated concern for the advancement of religion at home; his deference to his Presbytery in giving them, of his own accord, an account of himself; his joy on receiving the intelligence of his brother's conversion and the liberal gift to the mission; his statements in relation to the missionary work; his advice to those who contemplated the work in China; his anxiety to welcome new labourers; his interest in the cause of Sabbath School instruction, which led him, notwithstanding the pressure of his engagements, to write a series of letters to children;* in the action of the General Assembly, as evinced by his appropriate reflections on receiving the Minutes;† and especially his aim to rectify all false or romantic views of the missionary's life and work; as appears from his masterly essay on Missions.‡ That cause must have been dear to him, which enabled him to control as affectionate a heart as ever beat in the human bosom. That mind could not have been limited in its range or narrow in its devotion, which enabled him to keep in practical view the vital connection between the prosperity of the Church in America and the Church in China; to do so much towards awakening in the bosoms of Christians at home a deeper interest in the cause of Missions, while bending all his energies to the advancement of the cause abroad; even while pressed down by a sense of the magnitude of his own work, to realize the responsibilities of Christians in America; and, while surveying with a tearful eye the wide-spread desolations around him, to feel for poor benighted Africa.

His powers of observation were no less remarkable than the largeness of his views, and the purity of his sentiments; his power in recalling past scenes, or in availing himself of any branch of knowledge, than his ability to apply himself with unremitting assiduity. That he could study so many hours a day, investigate different subjects, superintend the missionary press, do most of the writing for the mission, prepare a sermon every week,—at first in English, and afterwards in Chinese; and in the mean time turn off so many letters to different persons on a great variety of topics, and keep such copious journals, was owing, I apprehend, to his method in study, his equanimity in temperament, and ability to turn from one subject to another without distraction; to the quickness of his perceptions and the vividness of his reminiscences; to his facility alike in learning and in writing rather than to any extraordinary powers. He could not be idle. If not able to engage in some regular task, he penned a letter, or added to his journal; noted some fact or classified some flower. Every thing on which his eye fell awakened some pleasing association or suggested some useful thought. The varied aspects of the country, its products and its commerce, as well as the manners and customs of the people, all in turn and at suitable times, interested his attention and furnished him with valuable information for future use. He was not less fond of order than averse from interruptions. Wherever domesticated, each part of the day had its allotted task; and each thing in turn was to be done and well done; at times applying himself with injudicious severity, but seldom loitering or listless, now exercising with the buoyancy of youth, and then entering with equal relish into

* See Letters to Sunday School children.

† Memoir, p. 416.

‡ Memoir, p. 445.

the pleasures of the social circle, or even the sports of childhood; sometimes blending the advantage of conversation with healthful recreation, and then again availing himself of his knowledge of botany or his love of music to relieve the solitariness of his walk or the loneliness of his abode. His conceptions almost equalled the force of actual perceptions; his susceptibility to all the deeper emotions of the soul, and at the same time, his quick sense of the ludicrous, his playfulness, his aptness in seizing the strong points of a character or of a scene, and his facility in narration and description, all fitted him for a striking dramatic writer, or a charming writer of travels. And, on the other hand, his habits of laborious and untiring application, coupled with his general scholarship and great facility in the acquisition of language, fitted him in an especial manner for the task of commenting on the Scriptures,—of translating them into the Chinese, and even of framing a Dictionary of that tongue. But even his intellectual powers and acquirements sink in comparison with his holy faith and self-denying zeal. It is his missionary spirit,—his steady devotion to his object amid all trials and difficulties, that impresses us with sentiments of unaffected regard for his character; and it is in this light that we love to contemplate him. Though fond of the beauties of nature, and alive to the attractions of literature, he seems to have been only the more charmed by the richness and variety of the Scriptures. As the Iliad was to Alexander during his marches through the East, so was the Book of Books to Lowrie in his journeyings and labours to prepare the way for the final subjugation of the heathen to the King of Kings. It is refreshing to faith to contemplate such a spirit; never forgetting his spiritual birth-day, yet remembering his constant need of Divine guidance and succour, realizing that it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps, yet exercising all due vigilance and forethought; lamenting his own deficiencies, yet hoping in the salvation of God; ever panting after the rest of Heaven, yet neglecting none of the duties of life. As he knew not what a day would bring forth, it was his practical maxim to “live by the day”—to go on as if he were to live to see the fruits of his toils, and yet to die daily. Uniting diligence in action with dependance in feeling, prayerfulness of spirit with rectitude of life; grave without austerity, and cheerful without frivolity; resolute in purpose yet childlike in his sympathies; and though firm in his conclusions, modest in his utterance and humble in his walk,—he seems to have been pre-eminently fitted for influence in the Mission and usefulness in his field.

Having been appointed one of the delegates, he is on the eve of setting out for the Convention at Shanghai. That Convention would be composed of Medhurst, Boone, Bridgeman and Stronarch. He knew that he would be the youngest member, and on that account thought that he would have nothing to do but “to sit still and listen;” or if the services should be protracted, that he would continue his studies. He looked forward, however, with more than ordinary interest to the principal question which would probably occupy the time of the Convention, and that was, the proper Chinese term for the *Elohim* of the Old Testament, and the *Theos* of the New. He had written on the subject for the November and December numbers of the Chinese Repository, 1846; and, though it might seem presumption in him to differ from Dr. Medhurst, he was convinced that to continue the use of the Chinese *Shang-te* or the word *Te* for the true God, was only to confirm the Chinese in their idolatry. In his view, *Shin* was

the only word that conveyed the true idea of God; and had it not been for his intense anxiety to settle this all-important word, he would greatly have preferred remaining at Ningpo,—so attached had he become to his work there, and so desirous of prosecuting his studies. It is remarkable that in the very letter in which he unfolded these views, he should have alluded to the loss which some of the brethren of the Mission had sustained by having their books fall into the hands of pirates. The pirates had become exceedingly bold, and on this account “he knew not how he should get to Shanghai.” But taking the route by Chapoo, which “he considered an open route,” he arrived in safety at Shanghai, the first week in June, 1847, and was entertained by Bishop Boone. He had remained there for nearly two months, engaged with his associates in the great object for which they had convened, when he was sent for to return to Ningpo with reference to certain occurrences at that station. Accordingly, he left Shanghai, and thinking to expedite his return, engaged at Chapoo, on the 19th of August, a regular passenger-boat to carry him and his attendants to Ningpo. As the wind became unfavourable soon after the vessel set sail, “it was necessary to beat, and the boat sailed about twelve miles in a southeasterly direction, when suddenly a vessel was seen bearing down upon them very rapidly. The boatmen became alarmed, and would have turned back, had not Mr. L. endeavoured to allay their fears; and, as the vessel approached, he showed a small American flag which he had with him; but to no purpose. After a discharge of fire-arms, the pirates boarded the boat with swords and spears, and began to thrust and beat all who stood in the way. They then broke open every thing, and took such things as they wished,—even stripped the Chinesemen of their clothes; but Mr. L. they did not touch, and so collected was he that he gave them his key to prevent their breaking open his own trunk. But at last they stripped and beat his own servant, which so overcame him that he went upon deck and seated himself on the windlass to await the issue. It is not known by what motive the pirates were influenced in resolving on his destruction. It might have been from the impression that he was a man of influence, and would exert himself against them with the authorities; or, swayed, as such people usually are, by some ruthless superstition, they might have thought the sacrifice of a foreigner would propitiate their idol-god. This seems the more probable reason, as he was the only one on board on whom they sought to lay violent hands; but how shall I record the manner in which they executed their dark purpose? There is to my mind something painfully affecting in his condition. But a few years before he was kneeling on consecrated ground, surrounded by Christian fathers and brothers who laid their hands on his head, and by solemn prayer set him apart to the work of the Gospel ministry in pagan lands—now, pirates come about him, and with merciless hands seize and overpower him, and cast him into the raging sea. In his extremity, he naturally made for the vessel, but the threatening spears of his assailants caused him to breast the billows, and after a few brief struggles, he sank to rise no more until the sea shall give up its dead.

Thus ended the missionary career of Walter M. Lowrie—a man, who left behind him few equals,—no superior in the field; who, though young in years, was old in wisdom and ripe in experience; who had never made an enemy nor alienated a friend; by his judgment and fidelity had won the

esteem and confidence of all his compeers; by his assiduity had mastered the most difficult of all the written languages, and prepared himself to act with efficiency in the work of evangelizing the Chinese.

We have followed him in his short journey through life, marked his proficiency in study and growth in grace, noted the warmth of his heart and the strength of his purposes, seen him breaking away from the ties of home and country, going forth alone to the land of idols, devoting himself with an energy that could be shaken by no trials; attaining to a high degree of scholarship and a high position of influence and usefulness; taking his place in the convention for the translation of the Scriptures; and when our hopes of him were raised to the utmost, we have seen the waves of the China Sea close over him: but his character survives; his example lives; his memory shall not perish; though the noble monument erected for him by his missionary brethren at Ningpo should crumble into dust.

I remain, dear Sir,

With sentiments of the highest esteem,

Yours very truly,

R. W. DICKINSON.

JOHN HUMPHREY, D. D.*

1841—1854.

JOHN HUMPHREY was the third son, and fourth child, of the Rev. Heman Humphrey, D. D., and was born in Fairfield, Conn., March 17, 1816. When he was less than two years old, his father removed with his family to Pittsfield, having accepted the pastoral charge of the Congregational Church in that place; and, after remaining there nearly six years, he removed, in the autumn of 1823, to Amherst, in consequence of having been chosen to the Presidency of Amherst College. It was here that his son John had his classical education,—having the advantage of living under the paternal roof, not only while he was fitting for College, but during his whole college course. In his boyhood, he was distinguished especially for his genial disposition, and his superiority in athletic sports; and those who knew him then, and in subsequent life, recognised in the boy the germ of those fine traits which so adorned and elevated the character of the man. He entered Amherst College in 1832, and was graduated in 1835,—having sustained an excellent reputation for scholarship and general deportment.

The year following his graduation he spent as Principal of an Academy in Prattsburg, N. Y. Here he was eminently successful as a teacher, and the Trustees of the institution would gladly have retained him in their service; but, having resolved to devote himself to the ministry, he felt unwilling to delay any longer his immediate preparation for it. Accordingly, he left his school at the close of the year, and in the autumn of 1836, entered the Junior class of the Andover Theological Seminary. In the following summer, owing to Professor Stuart's ill health and consequent inability to

* MS. from his father.—Memoir by Rev. Dr. Budington.