

The Duke Divinity School

BULLETIN

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AVE ATQUE VALE

(Hail and farewell)

When the DIVINITY SCHOOL BULLETIN went to press, this page was devoted to an announcement made by President R. L. Flowers of the appointment of Dr. Paul Root as Dean of the Divinity School to succeed Dr. Harvie Branscomb. Dr. Root was Professor of Sociology at Perkins School of Theology, Dallas, Texas. He received his B.D. and Ph.D. degrees at Duke and his return as Dean of the Divinity School was looked forward to with pleasure by his many friends.

President Flowers, in announcing the election of Dr. Root, expressed his great satisfaction at being able to secure him for the Deanship and wished him Godspeed in his new work. The BULLETIN added its official welcome to that of President Flowers.

Just as the proof had been read and the copy was about to be returned to the printer, the shocking report was received of Dr. Root's sudden death. This page is therefore sadly dedicated to his memory. Our disappointment at having him taken away just as he was about to enter upon his new field of activities is inexpressible.

Our deepest sympathies go out to his wife and other members of his family.

Ave Atque Vale

THE DUKE DIVINITY SCHOOL BULLETIN

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The Seminary and Methodist Leadership

By W. W. PEELE

Bishop Methodist Church

[A paper prepared for the BULLETIN at the request of the Editor. Bishop Peele is an alumnus of Trinity College (now Duke University), a member of the Board of Trustees, and the Chairman of the Committee of Trustees having specific charge of the Divinity School. He was for years a successful teacher and educational administrator, a prominent churchman and popular pastor, and from both experience and observation is qualified to give advice to the ministry of the church and those aiding in their preparation.—*Ed.*]

The Methodist Church is today the largest Protestant Denomination in America. According to the last figures available, the membership of the Methodist Church in the United States is 8,430,146 which is an increase of 346,369 during the past year. There are 18,261 effective ministers who together with some 6,450 supply pastors fill, by Episcopal appointment, 21,463 pastoral charges and a large number of "special" appointments. These ministers are held together in a compact, united organization by a Methodism which is connectional and by an exchange of ministers from one Area to another under a transfer system which is becoming more liberal. Methodism is a fellowship and as this fellowship is made strong the unity of Methodism is made more secure. Because of the "four-year limit," as practiced in certain sections of the church during long years in the past, the length of the pastorate is distressingly short. One of the great needs, as I see it today, is for a longer pastorate both in city and in rural appointments. A minister must be more than a preacher appointed to a certain church or to certain churches. He must be a potent and leading force in the community and this can be possible only if he remains at a place long enough to become a recognized leader in all good causes affecting the life of the people of the

community. An attempt should be made in every way, that will not do hurt to the younger ministers of the conferences, to lengthen the time of the pastorate in Methodism and in this way reduce the turnover in the leadership.

This leads to the question as to the present condition of the leadership in the Methodist Church. To no small degree the kind and quality of leadership will determine the future of the denomination. In the number of ministers needed we are distressingly lacking. There are in the denomination at present, 21,463 pastoral charges, and the church has only 18,261 ministers with which to man these charges. There are also hundreds of "special" appointments which demand the services of ministerial leadership. The bishops are using 6,455 supply pastors to reduce this wide gap and without the services of these supply ministers many Methodists would be without the ministry of a pastor. We are greatly indebted to these faithful supply pastors and to ministers who have been "retired" but who are willing to carry on through the heat of the day so that our people may have the Gospel preached to them. But what of the future? Shall we lower the standards to increase our procurement of ministers? Nothing would be more fatal to the future of Methodism. The shortage of ministers cannot be charged to the educational requirements. The real cause is a far more serious one. Because of the lowering of the standards of spiritual living we are reaping the results here as in other realms. We believe the explanation for the shortage is found at this point and not in the educational requirements. A materialistic atmosphere has been noted for years and this is destructive to a spiritual atmosphere. We must change the situation.

The best of training and a glorified devotion to the cause are essential to a satisfactory ministerial leadership. Young ministers should be encouraged to take the courses offered by our Divinity Schools in addition to the minimum requirements for admission into the conferences. We must not allow an emergency to change our long-time planning. Fortunately financial aid is available to make preparation possible. All Divinity Schools of the Methodist Church should accept it as their main responsibility to recruit and train ministers to meet the ever-increasing demands of an ever-enlarging Methodism. There is no greater need today than that of ministers—ministers who can preach and who have the supreme desire to serve people at whatever place and in whatever fields this ministry is needed. Problems of all kind vanish with the coming of proper persons. The supreme objective of the minister is to be of real service, not primarily in developing the program of the church, but in the salvation

of the people of his charge. Our Divinity Schools can render a much needed service if they can keep ever in the fore the dominant motive of service in dealing with the young ministers. It is fatal to the success of any minister when this motive is supplanted by any other. Any Divinity School that considers the making of preachers as of secondary importance is failing in the accomplishment of the purpose for which it was established. If Methodism does not expand it will shrink and if it shrinks it will be largely due to the lack of the right kind of leadership both in the pulpit and in the pew.

What about ministerial recruitment? We cannot call people to preach. Only God can do that, but we can be the instruments in the hands of God in this call and also in giving to those who are called a chance. This applies both to the procurement and to the follow-up. More and more young men of ability and of gifts should be faced with the Christian Ministry as affording one of the best opportunities for a successful career. Not simply more ministers, but a better quality of minister is needed. No one will challenge this statement. Only the best can expound the best to needy and hungry men and women. In paragraph 301 in the Discipline is the heading "The Call to Preach." The answers to the questions here asked might be very differently appraised by different examiners. For example, "Have they the gifts, as well as the graces, for the work?" What are the required gifts and graces? We would all agree that a sound faith, a strong character, a good education, a pleasing personality and ability to express thought convincingly are all essential; and yet that a man might have all of these and not meet the demands and requirements of our churches. I am convinced that whatever other qualifications an applicant might have he will never make a great preacher if he lacks sincerity, buoyancy, tact and sympathy. In the main, these things are initial gifts of God without which no one will ever make a great teacher or a great preacher. Greater pains should be taken to make sure that men who are encouraged to preach are the kind of men who ought to continue in the conference. In some instances it has been too easy to get into the ministry in the past; but there is a tightening up in this respect and I think we are headed for an improvement rather than a letting down under the great need of more ministers. The Methodist Church in North Carolina as well as elsewhere is greatly in the debt of the Duke Divinity School for the high type of men furnished the conferences.

While we are concentrating on the new inductees to the ministry, we must not overlook the needs of those who are already in the service. Here we have that large number of supply pastors who for various reasons have not found it possible to join the conference and

also the whole range of our ministry which stands in constant need of intellectual and spiritual sharpening. While the need is different with these two classes the need is not more acute with one than with the other. To render this service our seminaries and colleges must take the lead. To an ever greater extent they should reach beyond the campuses and by extension courses and institutes provide this intellectual and spiritual sharpening to the preachers already in the service. Here may I quote from a Report of the Commission on Survey of Theological Education of the Board of Education of the Northern Baptist Convention. "While it is true that the seminaries are at the mercy of the kind of students the churches send to them, the obverse side of this is that the churches are at the mercy of the seminaries for the kind of training these students get. All too frequently that training, rather than fitting a youth to minister to the real needs of people, abstracts him from those needs. If the church is to be the bearer of a redemptive message, and the minister is to function as a priest and prophet of God to real people who sin, suffer, strive and find themselves constantly embattled by forces over which individually they have no control, then the obligation rests upon the seminary to provide a leadership with the insight, skill, and zeal demanded." This may mean that our seminaries must face up more realistically to the needs of the churches and of the world and if a change of objectives and policies are needed to meet the demands, this will be brought about. In the Bible we are told that the eye cannot do without the hand, neither can the head do without the feet. In like manner neither can the pastorate do without the seminaries nor the seminaries without the pastorates. They have a common goal. All our tasks can be accomplished and problems solved by accepting them as common to both and in a united, cooperative effort move forward to the desired results.

A Layman Discusses Worship

By DR. A. C. REID

Professor of Philosophy, Wake Forest College

[A lecture delivered before the Phillips Brooks Club. It is published at the request of many of those who were fortunate enough to hear the lecture.—*Ed.*]

The primary need of the present time is intelligent recognition of the Eternal God and sane worship of him. I therefore, somewhat arbitrarily, discuss worship from three points of view: the need for worship, prerequisites to worship, and some results of worship.

THE NEED FOR WORSHIP

The world now experiences widespread tragedy and confusion. The recent war probably cost almost a hundred million human lives; and it brought poverty, crippled minds, and spiritual frustration to countless millions of people. Moreover, every important institution—secular and religious—has been shaken to its foundation. Elemental human rights, including freedom of thought, freedom of speech, and the privilege of worshipping God according to the dictates of conscience, are in grave danger; and, withal, we are much nearer the condition of losing these hard-wrought fruits of civilization than we care to believe. In my opinion, no great achievement is safe and no real security can be had except through sound convictions of the reality of God, the sacredness of man, and the fact of moral law.

Symptoms of the present malady in the body of civilization are numerous. For example, even the casual observer can detect strife, suspicion, intemperance, and attitudes that foster forms of totalitarianism. One hears arguments for socialized medicine, bureaucratic control of industry, and federal control of public schools and institutions of higher learning. One writer boldly advocates the substitution in education of the concept of the State for the idea of God. It is trite to mention disintegration of the home, tension and collapse in individual human lives, inglorious indifference and agnosticism in religion, and national ambition now implemented with devices capable of effecting the suicide of civilization.

We must not mistake symptoms for the seat of the trouble. One major cause of the present confusion is the prevalent idea of the competency of man and the adequacy of things, with the consequent disregard of spiritual truth. For example, since the opening of the seventeenth century, man has increasingly gained effective mastery

of nature, and, consequently, in view of amazing progress in science and technology, he has developed a dangerous form of pride. For, having made such stupendous progress, he has focused admiring attention upon himself and has come to feel that he himself is the master of his fate, and that he no longer needs to believe in or rely upon God.

Sound human progress must rest upon the conviction of the reality and the supremacy of God, the infinite spiritual worth of the individual human life, and the immanence of spiritual principles. But we have adopted a pragmatic ideology that holds that truth is reducible to human concepts, that only particular things and standards are real, and that man is, morally, a law unto himself. Many people, therefore, feel that reality is only a flux of appearances, that values are humanly derived, that quantitative results are the best criteria of human action, that might makes right, that justice is on the side of the stronger, and that no such thing as good or bad exists except as opinion makes it so. God, soul, immortality, truth, right and temperance become, therefore, mere figments of the imagination. The *Wall Street Journal* properly describes this condition, by and large, as an attempt to deify man by the dethronement of God, and an effort to "write God out of the universe, the intellect out of man, and the law of right and wrong out of man's conscience." Robert Maynard Hutchins says that even the nominal followers of theology, "frightened out of their wits by the scientific spirit, have thrown theology overboard and have transferred their affections to those overdressed hoydens, the modern versions of the natural and social sciences.

As a result of the rise of the feeling of self-sufficiency and the attendant disregard of spiritual verities, numerous people think of man as only a rationalizing brute. And this low conception of man not only effects a condition of ethical anemia, it also arouses grave fear that civilization may destroy itself, and produces the morbid suspicion that the ultimate sum of human life is oblivion.

PREREQUISITES TO WORSHIP

Worship is essentially an experience with God. It is a mystical relation of the transcendent soul of man with the transcendent-immanent God. A person who worships becomes aware of this divine union through the medium of mind. Thus, Dean Sperry says that "worship is the adoration of God, the ascription of supreme worth to God, and the manifestation of reverence in the presence of God." Now, such an experience may be aided by and may be attended by ritualistic practices and emotional upheavals, but worship does not consist essentially of such matters. Moreover, the high privilege of worship cannot be exercised in violation of principles of human life

and in defiance of the laws of God. I therefore mention three prerequisites to worship.

First, one must have a genuine sense of need. This awareness of need may manifest itself in various ways. It may take the form of dissatisfaction with any achievement less than one's best. It may be the conviction that one should do an honorable type of work that promotes human welfare. Certainly, no lazy, limp-minded human parasite worships, however much he professes to do so. Carelessness does not encourage one to worship; for the fruit of indifference is ignorance and inaction, and a result of ignorance and inaction is darkness and disintegration. The layman who refuses to work does not worship, for he violates a first principle of human respectability. The preacher who deliberately evades the grave obligations of the ministry does not worship, and it is unlikely that he leads others to worship. No church that is satisfied with the *status quo* is a place of worship; for divine insight is as inconsistent with complacency as life is contrary to death. Worship presupposes superior interests, respect for excellence, and devotion to the objects of personal integrity.

One who would feel the presence of God must, therefore, feel the need of and actively seek the good, the true, the beautiful, the just, the honorable. He must actually desire that his life conform to the will of God. A person is therefore prepared to worship when he yearns for and strives to do his best. He is in the spirit of worship, for example, when his attitude enables him to realize the truth embraced in the words, "In the beginning God. . . ." One is ready to worship, when, like the centurion, he loves people, ministers to them, is humble, and graciously makes a good request. One is able to worship, when, like Mary of Bethany, he expresses profound gratitude; or, when, like David Livingstone and Jane Addams and Dorothea Dix, he loves unfortunate people and labors with them for their own sake.

Worship, moreover, requires purity of motive. Motives exist in the mind; they are evidence of the quality of character. Mental imperfections—such as selfishness, deception, and intolerance—poison and weaken the mind, and are inconsistent with the spirit of worship. For example, the Prodigal Son did not worship while he squandered his time and money; and his selfish brother was worse than the wastrel himself. The Pharisees were so jealous and so intolerant in their support of tradition and ritual that they were blind to the living truth. The Gadarenes were more interested in the price of swine than in the worth of a human life. Likewise, any person who places financial reward, personal reputation, or any other condition that is permeated with selfishness in the foremost area of his life is unpre-

pared to worship; for divine truth does not condone selfishness, provincialism, deceit, bigotry, or hypocrisy.

Jesus spoke plainly about one's motives and loyalties. He would have no divided loyalty; nor would he condone the retention of an evil attitude. For example, he stated the matter of one's attitude in an apparently extreme form when he said: "Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar; and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." According to our Master, one who worships God must do so in spirit and in truth.

Worship, furthermore, requires a contrite heart. Jesus himself could not penetrate a heart congealed by dogmatism, intolerance, or vainglory. He knew, for example, that it is easier for harlots and sinners to become able to worship than it is for some professedly very religious people to do so, for the plain reason that such wayward people do not have arrogant, closed minds. In this relation, Jesus knew the dogmatic leaders who deliberately wore long faces, appointed themselves members of an ecclesiastical gestapo, strutted about in religious assemblies, and paraded their piety. It was in this connection that our Lord gave the vivid story of the Pharisee and the publican at prayer.

There are people like that self-righteous Pharisee. Hear them boast: "Observe what a great revivalist I am; see how many souls I have garnered for the Lord; listen to my superb eloquence; note my marvelous scholarship; hear how I infallibly expound the will of God." There are churches like that Pharisee. There are schools like that Pharisee. It would be well for some preachers, as well as a host of us laymen, to feel the deep humility of the publican, and say: "God be merciful unto me a sinner."

Boast of our accomplishments in face of this chaotic world! Speak of great religious progress, when the earth reeks with human carnage and groans in confusion! Express satisfaction at this time when the voice of the church is so feeble! Parade our puny opinions in view of vast human perplexity! Proclaim our righteousness in the light of the goodness of Jesus of Nazareth! Vastly better that we humbly pray for mercy and wisdom.

SOME RESULTS OF WORSHIP

The worship of God effects transformation of human lives. What, therefore, are some results of worship?

First, worship enables one to acquire deeper awareness of truth, clearer views of human situations, and superior conceptions of values. Too often we live in the twilight, become fascinated by the

tawdry, accept appearance as reality, and regard opinion as the truth. We often take the microscopic view, and frequently place undue emphasis upon minor affairs. As Jesus said, with our poor sense of values, we expertly observe trivial matters while we disregard major situations. Worship enables a person to judge wisely the mediocre and the transient, and to see in correct perspective the primary and the permanent.

For example, worship empowers a person to acquire a better conception of God, and of man's relation to God. For instance, when Ezekiel saw "the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord," he did not gloat over Hebrew accomplishments; he fell upon his face and waited for God to speak to him. When Job heard the Eternal God say, "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?" he realized something of the majesty of the Eternal Father, and he discovered his own place as well. When Saul of Tarsus met the Christ, he then realized the relative insignificance of his Jewish ancestry, his Roman citizenship, his fine scholarship, and his high religious position; and only one consideration was primary, the Lord Christ and his gospel.

Worship also initiates a process of cleansing. We sometimes feel so important and self-confident, that we suspect that, with us, wisdom will perish from the earth. But discovery of the supreme effects a wholesome change. It is said that Plato, when he discovered Socrates, went home and burned everything that he himself had written. A friend of mine took a champion fiddler to hear Fritz Kreisler. The fiddler knew that he was a champion; but, as he heard Kreisler play the violin, he turned to my friend and exclaimed: "What I have been doing is trash."

Wisdom abhors conceit. A wise man is a humble person. When Moses realized the presence of God, he felt that he was standing on holy ground, and he experienced a sense of humility. When Isaiah saw the Lord, he cried out, "Woe is me! . . . I am a man of unclean lips." When Saul of Tarsus became aware of Christ, he was purged of clogging impurities of pride, arrogance, provincialism, bigotry, and vindictiveness, and he gladly became a bond-slave of his Lord.

And suppose Christian people actually became clearly aware of the glory of the Lord? What a process of cleansing would occur! For example, they would then design and preserve church buildings for the worship of God. Their careless attitude toward services of worship would be greatly changed; for religious services would then have as their central purpose the worship of God. Services of worship would also be cleansed of absurd songs, ill-considered prayers, and carelessly prepared discourses called sermons; for Christians

would not dare approach the Divine Father with that which is cheap and tawdry. Moreover, religion would not be regarded either as a formality, be restricted to convenient times and places, nor used as an escapism. Furthermore, religious bodies would substitute statesmanship for selfish prejudices, and inaugurate great and vital programs in the interest of the earthly Kingdom of our Lord.

Finally, worship gives a superior conception of personal worth and responsibility. An experience which does not lead to the recognition of the sacredness of human lives and a person's imperative responsibilities should not be called an experience of worship; for genuine worship awakens a sense of personal dignity, arouses a desire for increased knowledge of the truth, and stirs one to action in the interest of righteousness. Worship is no vacuous ecstasy, no sedative, no satisfying entertainment, no mere pleasant emotionalism, no autohypnosis. Worship awakens the urge to devote oneself to intelligent effort and worthy enterprise; it reveals the imperative obligation to gird up one's loins like a man in a needy world; it brings the challenge to fight in the name of right, justice, and honor; for one who regards himself as a son of God can do no less.

For example, Moses worshiped, and felt called to lead his people out of bondage. Ezekiel worshiped, and, despite inevitable obstacles and suffering, became a prophet. When Isaiah worshiped, he said, "Here am I; send me." One day Zacchaeus met Jesus. He then stood up and manfully declared: "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold."

Preaching and the Ministry to the Common Life

By RAY C. PETRY

"... and people came to him from every quarter."

MARK 1:45

Preaching is the ministry to the common life. This proposition, however, counsels no supercilious uplifting of tolerated inferiors. It is, in fact, the credo of the Lord's spokesmen who are sent in service to that community of mingled despair and ecstasy which, with all of its shared mortality, comprises the human race.

Preaching means nothing if it does not bring "word and worship" into the lives of people; if it does not summon them to hear the Gospel and to bow before the Eternal. Jesus prayed frequently—often alone—but he heard the people's cry and responded to it. "That is why I came out (here)," he said. He preached throughout Galilee, healing minds, souls, and bodies. Lepers came to him. People sensed in him a companion's regard, a more than "manly" concern. He left town for country, and "people came to him from every quarter." He went to the synagogue; he read and spoke there of his kinship with the disinherited and oppressed. He yearned to join his people in temple service, but he bridled at the way in which sinning, savable humanity was being defrauded and victimized.

The apostles in Acts 6:1-5 were right in putting common prayers and shared word before social service, as such. But they were impelled by this very experience to a course of action inescapable for worshipping, witnessing Christians: they began providing for widows, orphans, and others in need.

In all Christian history nothing has been more spiritually destructive than keeping the people and God apart. This dire separation has often been accentuated, if not initiated, by preaching that is alien in thought or language, lazy in preparation or delivery, undisciplined in content or form, puerile in conception or expression, and feeble in down-sweep or up-thrust. One may survey historically the ancient church, medieval Christendom, the Protestant era, and our own modern, sophisticated age. Throughout these successive periods nothing has proved so disappointing on many occasions, and so explosive on others, as preaching to the people; preaching to them God's stern, loving, numbing, exhilarating, and reconciling word.

The preaching function and community activities have their dif-

ferentiating as well as their affiliating experiences. People have a right to congregate on occasions supposedly immune to ministerial infiltration. The retreat of a little girl, aged three and three-quarters, who failed at the last moment to attend a long anticipated missionary meeting at her mother's house, underlines this reminder. Having repelled sadly, but firmly, her mother's every effort to lure her downstairs where she was accustomed to assist in serving tea, she confided to her grandmother the cause of her perturbation. She had just learned that the minister was to be in attendance. "And you know," she said with a sigh, "I just can't take a chance on going down there and getting baptized."

But if the people have to guard against pastoral ubiquity, the preacher, for his part, has to defend places and seasons of prophetic privacy against the extroversions of the populace. He has to beware of becoming merely a community man; of constituting in himself the people's vibrating harp; of being the flattering mirror of their gregarious selves. Preachers are not the Lord's ministers plenipotentiary, his jovial greeters, to each elite human gathering that holds the "keys to the city" for the day. As a sixteenth-century preacher brusquely observed, there is a vast difference between the shepherd's piping to frisky goats, and the prophet's thundering with awesome, tuba voice. Social joys are the people's right. But the preacher who feels no responsibility to declare God's plan of eternal beatitude, and how it affects our corporate existence, today, is a hater of man's delight.

Preaching is for the people. They need it as bewildered, benighted, travelers need a way, a light, and a voice. It is the people that the Lord wants saved. It is to them that prophets are sent. They are the ones that God's voice must reach, his truth enlighten, his terms set free.

And these same people must be confronted in their collective existence, not only in their solitary musings. They must be shocked into life and deprived of their self-styled right of defeating the Lord's love, each in his own way. Furthermore, this life of the people is the life of us all. None has any priority of righteousness, in himself, over those to whom he preaches. But the blood of every one to whom he speaks not, or to whom he rumbles on in soothing platitudes, is already on his own head.

Naturally, when the people receive the Gospel they make of the preacher's life a thing of misery and—paradoxically but no less truly—a joy forever. People, and that includes the preaching-teaching profession, attack the preacher who speaks boldly, and the one who does not. They refuse, scorn, deride, willfully misinterpret, villify—and finally capitulate to the good news and its announcers. Those

who preach to the common life must speak plainly, out of depths not always left uncovered. They must use language as bruising as the prophets', and as gentle as parenthood's dream for its young. They must suit message to hearer; and discipline according to God's, not their own, wisdom.

It was in this way that Augustine preached visiting prelates from behind convenient posts. As they peeked out to get a look at him, he transfixed them with gospel words. Thus Bernard of Clairvaux blazed through popular gatherings and concourses of truculent princes, not to mention assemblages of newly elevated churchlings, and convocations of sleepy monastics. Similarly, Jacques de Vitry riveted the interest of farm laborers with an unforgettably illustrated message before they had time to turn their backs upon him. So, too, Meister Eckhart dropped people's jaws and dried up their tongues so that they forgot to misunderstand what he meant. These preachers, like Gregory Nazianzen, spurned ecclesiastical ventriloquism and visceral bombast as they charged their voices with God's own power. They sat in no ecclesiastical laps and they scorned being artful, wooden scavengers from other men's lips. Actually, they put into lively homiletic play a vocabulary often reminiscent of the Master's own.

Now, in Divinity School, is the time to learn and to practice preaching as the ministry to the common life. This we do by recognizing prayerfully our own sure identification with the community of human frailty; by drawing, from above, upon a resource that is versatile and redemptive; by distributing to others the amplitude of God's free grace and undefeatable love. Jesus showed how, as always. He spoke clearly, simply, and seriously. He galvanized the attention of his hearers by means of word-pictures, in humorous asides, and with relentless query. He preached from among the people, to the people, in God's name. So he preached as he taught; he preached as he worshipped; preaching always in ministry to the common life.

At Eventide

By M. T. PLYLER

[This article was written by Dr. M. T. Plyler, a superannuate of the North Carolina Methodist Conference. Dr. Plyler is in many respects one of the most remarkable men of modern Methodism. A famous athlete in his day, a great thinker, a church statesman, a prominent editor, a writer of noteworthy books, Dr. Plyler comes to what might seem the end of the road with an outlook as enthusiastic as if he were just beginning. He is the living example of Browning's Rabbi Ben Ezra. "Grow old along with me, the best is yet to be."—*Ed.*]

Dr. Hersey E. Spence for the Divinity School BULLETIN requests "a word of retrospect" from this itinerant Methodist preacher now moving towards the sunset. This is rather much personal; but I dare not refuse such a dear friend of many years.

Fifty-five years ago, as one of the graduating class of '92 at "Old Trinity" in Randolph County—the last class before the removal of the college to Durham—I left July 1st of 1892 to supply the Carteret Circuit—the pastor there having died. This assignment held until the meeting of the North Carolina Conference at Goldsboro in December. Here I joined the Conference and for fifty-four years, without a break, I have received appointments from this Conference. These first five months, free from academic routine, were spent by day and by night in revival meetings on this seven point Carteret Circuit. A fine opportunity was this to try out the effectiveness of my own personal gospel. As a college youth my first sermon was from the text, "God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Later, the theme of my graduating thesis was "Conservative Progress." So I left college with the conviction that the Cross is central and all life should be progressive. This doctrine of mine seemed to work in the woods and the pocosins of Carteret, since during these months more than forty joined the churches on profession of faith.

True, my knowledge of Christian theology was seriously limited and my college degrees did not tempt me to rely on these, but my loyal devotion to the Methodist tradition and to the Wesleyan theology was most pronounced. Briefly stated it was that all men may be saved, that when a man is saved he will know it, and then be enabled to go on to a more perfect life, in full assurance that he will come out more than a conqueror. This simple gospel could be preached in

schoolhouses, log huts, and under the trees to all kinds and conditions of men. It certainly met the situation found in Carteret County.

During my first seven years in the Conference my salary was less than \$500 a year, and for the next seven less than \$1,000 a year. But what of that? Money through all the years has been with me entirely secondary. In these small churches I came to know even the inner life of the people. Visiting in their homes, I was able to save and build up some. I was also able to give myself to serious study and prayer and preaching, instead of attending functions and clubs and meeting the demands made of a "good mixer." Furthermore, my reliance on the "One mighty to save" and the stress on a spiritual renewal of all men saved me the snare of the overrated Social Gospel which too often becomes a weak substitute for the gospel of a new Creature in Christ Jesus, sufficient to change the entire life of an individual and the nation.

Our final year at "Old Trinity" was one of unusual inspiration and enlargement. The stir and enthusiasm under the fine leadership of President John F. Crowell, incident to moving Trinity College to Durham, told mightily upon the entire student body. To me personally Dr. H. Austin Aiken, fresh from the Universities of Toronto and Yale, with his university outlook, introduced me to the realm of philosophy and speculative thought. Along with all the rest, came the honor of being a member of Trinity's first championship football team.

In this retrospect of the years, college life and the high days of academic rounds assumed new proportions. Life lived in the home, the school, the church, the fields, the woods, with the many and varied fellowships of boyhood days, counted for more than the hours in classroom at college. It may be more accurate to say that those experiences made possible the later achievements of the years. Most certainly my years have been full of struggles, misgivings and the infirmities that flesh is heir to, but in all these journeys One has held fellowship by the way.

My sense of insufficiency through the past half-century has constrained me to make the most of the passing years by reading the best books, by taking courses offered in such institutions as the University of Chicago, the University of North Carolina and in my own Alma Mater. Had I been loaded down with academic degrees in the beginning, an undue sense of sufficiency might have been mine. But the consuming desire to be a useful Methodist preacher, able to care for the pastorates assigned me in a proper way, has constrained me to strive from year to year so as to leave every charge better than I found it. Furthermore, that beautiful soul with a passionate love of

music and flowers and little children, embodying the truest and the best and the noblest, did much through the years in a close walk by my side. She, with a devotion to family and church and community life, has been my inspiration and guide to the nobler and more beautiful attainments of my own soul. She opened her soul to me in a most marvelous way.

Somehow in the early period of my ministry it seems never to have occurred to this young "itinerant" that he might one day become a presiding elder or a member of the General Conference. Losing sleep over appointments and scheming for lofty places were not any of my worries. Still, I count it an honor and the joy of my life to have been a member of the Uniting Conference in Kansas City when American Methodism became one. For such a consummation I had longed and labored and prayed through the years.

Those who have gone into the prophet's office for a piece of bread usually fail to speak with the authority of a messenger from high heaven. Soft words and vapid religious homilies can never deal effectively with the present world situation. Preachers who bemoan their lot, especially their desperate worldly estate, are unable to brace the occupants of a faltering pew or to lead crusades for God.

Our churches have not been entirely remiss in meeting the world situation during the past three decades. The Methodist Missionary Centenary did much in a needy day for Methodist missions. The Crusade for Christ, in which we are still engaged, strives to help the nations beyond every sea. The Aldersgate Celebration—this Bi-Centenary Celebration of Wesley's heart-warming experience just prior to the union of American Methodism—has done no little to save us from the spiritual inertia of a growing ecclesiasticism. Indeed, all these church-wide efforts have been put to the test to save the nations from the ravages of war and from that other sore hurt, beverage alcohol, now so fully enthroned in our nation's life.

My faith in the saving power of a spiritual church and my reliance on the United Nations for securing the peace of the world, brighten the horizon for the future. Certainly never before has there been anything comparable to the Charter of the United Nations with its home in New York City where the Council of fifty-five nations are to work for the peace and welfare of the world. This seems to be a practical application of the New Testament to the need of the nations. Notwithstanding the faltering and the failures of the churches during the past half-century, the dawn of the better day is on the horizon.

Fifty years ago the North Carolina Conference had eight members with honorary degrees, and perhaps that many of the younger

men had spent a year at a theological seminary. Though many of the preachers had gone to college, the big majority of them had not graduated. Then the tendency was for the leaders of the Conference to induce the young men to go into the "active work" of the pastorate. At present, all this has changed with the growth of colleges in the state and the coming of the Duke Divinity School, aided by the Duke Foundation. So, for a young man of the North Carolina Conference not to have college and seminary training is an exception and not the rule.

These exceptional opportunities are not free from the perils attendant upon a church that relies on training in the schools to furnish the leaders. John Wesley remains a warning and also an inspiration for the Methodists. He refused to take his father's parish of Epworth, electing to remain in the shades of Oxford, striving to save his own soul. This, however, was before his failure as a missionary to Georgia, and that revolutionary heartwarming experience in London at the Aldersgate prayer meeting. Certainly without this wonderful new sense of God, this Oxford Don bade fair to remain one of the unknown clerics of that ancient university in the worldly seventeenth-century England.

It has been said that Oxford University has been the home of lost causes. May we see to it that this shall never be said of Duke University. Moved by his experience of the warm heart, John Wesley emerged from Oxford able to change the course of history—yes, to proclaim to all the world: "*The best of all God is with us.*"

Through the financial depression of the nineties and the later depression of the twenties of this present century, also through two world wars, with the moral degradation and the spiritual decay incident to the backwash of war, this later Son of the Wesleyan movement now moving to the sunset, still faces the morning. The light on the Damascus road, the voices in the upper reaches of the skies, the Presence in the storm on the Mediterranean and the Resurrected Lord that walked with the dispirited disciples on the dusty road outside Jerusalem, lead me to say with every assurance that "the best is yet to be."

Dr. Ormond Retires

[The BULLETIN notes with deepest regret the fact that, on account of ill-health, Dr. J. M. Ormond has been compelled to retire from his teaching duties. His work has been taken over temporarily by the Reverend D. D. Holt, Dr. Harry C. Smith and Mr. E. F. Smith. The tribute paid him in the following statement was written at the request of the Faculty of the Divinity School and adopted by that body in regular session.—*Ed.*]

The Faculty of the Duke Divinity School wishes to record its deep regret that Dr. Jesse Marvin Ormond has been compelled to retire from active relationship with that group. The School, the entire University, and many other groups will feel keenly the loss involved in his retirement.

Professor Ormond came to Duke University in the fall of 1923 and has been actively engaged in teaching here since that time. For years he has been at the head of the Department of Practical Theology and has taught courses dealing with Rural Sociology and Church Management. In addition to his teaching duties, he has also directed the Duke Endowment activities in the matter of placing divinity students and assisting in the building program of many churches. He has served as Dean of the North Carolina Pastors' School and the Rural Church Institute for many years.

Dr. Ormond's work has not been limited by state boundaries. He is one of the best known men in Methodism, having been a member of the General Conference for a score of years. He has also been a member of many important committees both in the local and general conference. Some years ago he made a thorough survey of the rural church situation in North Carolina, the results of which he incorporated in his book, *The Rural Church in North Carolina*. He has also written a book for mission study entitled *By the Waters of Bethesda*. He was a popular pastor for a number of years and has dedicated more churches in North Carolina than perhaps any other minister who was not a bishop.

It is not merely for the distinctive work which he has done as pastor, preacher and teacher that Mr. Ormond is appreciated and esteemed. The greatest influence which he has exerted lies in "those little unremembered acts of kindness and of love" which go "to make up the best part of a good man's life." His affable nature, his genial disposition, his kindly smile, his courteous conduct, all these endeared him to hearts of thousands of students and many thousands more of his fellow-citizens. Always alert to every good cause, he showed

enthusiastic interest without objectionable intrusiveness. He could fight hard but he fought fairly and without giving offense. Affable without affectation, courteous without condescension, fair but yet firm, kindly and yet courageous, tactful but tenacious, he made a place with us which will be long remembered with kindness and deep appreciation. Our work is the sufferer for his enforced retirement.

The interest and best wishes of the Divinity School will go with him in his retirement and its gratitude for the service which he has rendered the School will be long lasting.

More Trends Toward Traditions

In the January edition of the BULLETIN, the Editor published an article entitled "Trends Toward Traditions." Attention was called to the fact that the Divinity School has for years engaged in practices which were fast becoming traditional, if indeed they could not already lay legitimate claim to being considered as such. The especial emphasis at that time was upon the Christmas Cycle. Promise was made that the activities of the spring would receive notice in due season. This article will attempt to describe the special group which might be included under the classification:

THE EASTER CYCLE

As in the case of the Christmas Cycle, the activities comprising the Easter Cycle are not strictly limited to the Divinity School. But also as in the case of the former, the activities were either produced by members of the faculty or participated in by both them and the students.

The Chapel Exercises of Holy Week were largely in commemoration of the last week in the Life of Christ. On Tuesday and Wednesday mornings, Professor James T. Cleland discussed and described the events in the career of Jesus leading from Palm Sunday until the night of the Last Supper. On Thursday morning the Lord's Supper was celebrated in York Chapel. On Friday Mr. Charles A. Francis of the Divinity School student body led Chapel.

On Thursday evening at 8:00 o'clock the Choral Communion service took place in the University Chapel. The program for the occasion was written by Professor Spence. Former students will recall that in this service there is an attempt through song, reading, prayer, special ritual and lighting effects to represent the evolution of religion from its earliest crude stages to the full development of Christianity. This special service has been carried out for the past ten or more years and is a regular feature of Holy Week celebration.

Dr. Frank S. Hickman, Dean of the Chapel was the Celebrant, assisted by the Faculty and students of the Divinity School and others. The University Choir, led by Mr. Barnes with Mrs. Hendrix at the organ, furnished the music for the occasion.

A most impressive and inspiring series of services were conducted in the University Chapel on Good Friday, beginning at 11:30 a.m. and running continuously until 2:30 p.m. The great Easter hymns and other special Easter music were sung. Meditations based upon the Seven Last Words of Christ were given. Members of the Divinity School Faculty participating were Drs. Robert E. Cushman, Kenneth W. Clark and Waldo Beach. Each of the seven last words was the topic of a separate meditation. Each of the seven meditations was the nucleus of a separate worship service which was complete within itself, yet furnished a link in a chain of connected services. Members of the community attended such sections of the service as was convenient, coming and going quietly as interest and ability directed or permitted.

Many of the students participated in the sunrise services on Easter morning and attended the breakfast given in the University Chapel basement. At eleven o'clock the regular Chapel service was held with Dean Hickman preaching the sermon. On Sunday afternoon Gaul's Holy City was presented in the University Chapel.

The Easter Cycle bids fair to become as prominent and well established as the Christmas Cycle.

Student Activities

By NELLE BELLAMY

Secretary of the Student Body

The spring semester in any school is always the busiest time of the year and this semester in the Divinity School has been no exception. As we have finished the year's work, handed in last minute term papers, attended final social functions, and enjoyed the beauties of spring, we have had every minute filled.

The most inspirational experience of the semester was the Spiritual Life Retreat on April 8, 9, 10. Special emphasis was placed on the morning Chapel services that week, a student-faculty colloquium and tea was well attended, and the climax came with "all-day preaching and dinner on the ground" at Duke's Chapel. J. Walton Spitzkiet and the Spiritual Life Committee planned a program of worship and fellowship in which both faculty and students participated. The most frequent comment from the students was, "We need something like this more often."

Students began to make plans for the coming year as election time "rolled around" again. After days of vigorous campaigning, the new officers were elected. They are: Gilreath G. Adams, Charlotte, North Carolina, president; Milton H. Robinson, El Paso, Texas, vice-president; Virginia Nelle Bellamy, Roda, Virginia, secretary; and Raymond P. Hook, Lexington, South Carolina, treasurer. This group has been making plans for next year.

The Duke Endowment Association has also elected officers for next year. They are: Jarvis P. Brown, Portland, Oregon, president; Ralph I. Epps, Sumter, South Carolina, vice-president; Calton F. Hirschi, Woodhaven, New York, secretary-treasurer. This summer about fifty men will go into churches on the Endowment and Jurisdictional Scholarships.

Nine members of the student body will represent the School at the North American Interseminary Conference to be held at Oxford, Ohio, in June. The delegation, composed of Milton H. Robinson, William Bull, Rowland Pruett, Edward Draper, Jarvis Brown, Melton Harbin, Jerry Murray, Johnny Dinas, and Nelle Bellamy, has been meeting with Dr. Beach and discussing the *Interseminary Series*.

Wayne Coffin and E. H. Nease represented the School at the General Board of Education meeting in Nashville, Tennessee.

E. H. Nease and the Social Committee deserve a vote of thanks for the good times that they have made possible for us this year. The

Indoor Sports Party, at the beginning of the semester, gave us a chance to meet the new students. The outstanding social event was the banquet in the Union Ballroom on April 25, honoring the graduating men. Never before have we had as much fun! The formal dresses of the girls, the meal by candlelight, and the very interesting program all contributed to the evening of fun and fellowship. Our new dean, Dr. Paul Root, was present and was formally introduced to the group.

Members of the student body have cooperated in the general activities of the University. Students acted as solicitors in the World Student Service Fund and also gave generously themselves. An active part was taken in the Holy Week services in Duke Chapel.

Graduation in a few weeks will mark the close of the year's activities. Forty-eight men will receive B.D. degrees and three women will receive M.R.E. degrees.

We have had "a good year" together, and, now, look forward to an equally successful coming year.

The Spiritual Life Retreat

The annual Spiritual Life Retreat of the Divinity School was held April 8, 9, and 10. The principal day of the Retreat came on the 10th. Some earlier traditions were re-established by returning to Duke's Chapel for that day, a custom which lapsed during the war years. The Retreat was so planned as to utilize the spiritual experience of faculty and students as well as a representative of the Church at large. The Retreat began on Tuesday morning with the regular morning chapel at which Dr. Cleland directed our thought to the meaning of the Retreat and its place in the life of the School. Dr. Harry C. Smith, Superintendent of the Durham District, brought the chapel meditation for Wednesday morning and again on Thursday inspired the students with a rich interpretation of the task of the Christian minister as prophet, priest and physician of souls. Dr. Rowe, with salty spirituality, spoke to us from his long experience on "Indispensables in the Spiritual Life of the Christian Pastor." In the afternoon of Thursday, Dr. Stinespring, Dr. Young, and Mr. Wallace participated in an informal testimonial symposium—each of them speaking on the subject "Aids Toward the Deepening of Our Life with God." The day of Retreat was concluded with Holy Communion as a time of renewed consecration of each man to his spiritual calling and ministerial vocation. By general consent, the Retreat was a high moment in the lives of us all. There was a sense of being one body in Christ and severally members one of another.

With the Faculty

Dr. WALDO BEACH had an article entitled "Basis of Tolerance in Democratic Society" appearing in *Ethics*, published by the University of Chicago Press. A series of four articles on "The Certainties of Life" appear in the spring and summer issues of *The Woman's Press*, the national magazine of Y.W.C.A. Dr. Beach also preached in the Duke Chapel, Sunday, April 27.

Dr. JAMES CANNON, III, attended the meeting of the Fellowship of Professors of Missions at Hartford, Conn., on May 9, 10.

Dr. KENNETH W. CLARK taught in the Chattanooga School for Christian Workers in March. While in Chattanooga he preached at the First Methodist and Centenary churches. He addressed the Phillips Brooks Club in February, and the Lutheran Men's Fellowship in March, on the recent Revised Standard Version of the New Testament. He led in a Good Friday meditation in the University Chapel, and preached on Easter at the Mt. Sylvan Methodist Church. He attended the opening of the Byzantine Art Exhibit in Baltimore, presented by the Walters Art Gallery, where Greek New Testament manuscripts from the Duke Divinity School are now on display.

Dr. JAMES T. CLELAND lectured at Bryn Mawr College on March 15 and at Davidson College on March 25.

In addition to his regular ministry at Duke University Chapel he has preached at the following schools and universities during the spring and winter: Harvard University, Princeton University, Smith College, Wesleyan University, Mt. Holyoke College, Bryn Mawr College, North Carolina College for Negroes, Abbot Academy, Asheville School for Boys, Phillips Exeter Academy, Bradford Junior College, Taft School, the Masters School at Dobbs Ferry, and Chatham Hall, Virginia.

Dr. Cleland has preached sermons to several church congregations also during that time. Among the churches included were the Presbyterian churches of Asheville and Durham; Myers Park Baptist Church, Charlotte; the Germantown Unitarian and others.

Dr. ROBERT E. CUSHMAN was the principal lecturer in March at the Conference on Religion at Washington and Lee University, giving three lectures on the general theme "The Crisis in Our Time."

Professor H. E. MYERS was recently elected president of the College Teachers of Religion in North Carolina. The annual session was held at Greensboro College. The association is planning to in-

vite to its next meeting teachers from the states of Virginia, South Carolina and Georgia, in order to form a regional group in the southeastern area. It is also possible that this regional association may affiliate itself with the National Association of Biblical Instructors. Professor Myers has been a teacher of college students in the field of religion for some twenty years, and is thoroughly conversant with the trends in this field of learning.

Professor Myers is the preacher at Louisburg College Commencement this year.

Dr. GILBERT T. ROWE taught in training schools at Lincolnton, Albemarle, and Raleigh; addressed a gathering of pastors and prospective students for the ministry at Salisbury; preached for Rev. J. A. Russell in Grace Church in Wilmington, from Palm Sunday through Easter; and delivered the District Conference sermon at High Point College on the evening of May 4.

Mr. J. J. RUDIN, II, spoke to the Durham Baptist Ministers' Association at their February and March meetings on "Oral Reading and Public Worship."

From February 4th through the 7th, Professor H. SHELTON SMITH delivered a series of four lectures at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary under the general theme, *Faith and Nurture in Contemporary Protestant Thought*. On April 11th, he read a paper before the American Theological Society, which met at New York, on the subject, *Christology and the Kingdom of God*. He presented a paper on the subject, *Resurgent Fundamentalism*, before the Baptist Book Club, Chapel Hill, on April 21. The spring number of *Christendom* carries an article by Professor Smith under the title, *Conflicting Interchurch Movements in American Protestantism*.

Professor H. E. SPENCE attended a meeting of Professors of Religious Education and selected seminary students at Nashville, Tennessee, recently. Dr. Spence has been elected to serve as Dean of the Pastors' School to succeed Dr. J. M. Ormond. He was the dean of that institution for ten years during its earlier years. He wrote the Church School Rally Day program, entitled "Stalwarts of the Faith," for the Methodist Church Schools of North Carolina.

Professor W. F. STINESPRING delivered the principal address at a dinner at the Faculty Club of New York University on March 3 in honor of Professor Henri C. Olinger, head of the Department of Romance Languages of New York University. Dr. Stinespring attended the meetings of the North Carolina College Teachers of Religion on March 14 and 15 in Greensboro, North Carolina, and of the American Oriental Society on April 15 and 16 in Washington, D. C.

He has given talks on the Palestine question to the following organizations: Polity Club of Duke University, February 18; Lutheran

Brotherhood of Durham, March 12; Rotary Club of Siler City, N. C., April 21 (luncheon meeting); Baptist Book Club, Chapel Hill, N. C., April 27 (evening); Youth Fellowship of First Presbyterian Church, Durham, May 7.

Dr. FRANKLIN W. YOUNG taught a course in the Bible for laymen of the Franklinton Baptist Church, Franklinton, N. C., for five nights from Monday, April 28 through Friday, May 2. He also spoke at the fifty-seventh anniversary service of the Orange Grove Baptist Church, Durham, N. C., on Sunday, May 18.

The Pastors' School and Rural Institute

Owing to the demand made upon Duke University by the United States Government in the matter of training members of the armed forces, the institutes for the training of ministers and other church workers could not be held at Duke during the years of the war, and the summer immediately succeeding the cessation of hostilities. These institutes, through the gracious hospitality of President L. L. Gobbel, were held at Greensboro College during that period, with the exception of one year when it was deemed inadvisable to undertake to hold them at all. The one drawback to the success of the institutes at Greensboro was the lack of space for entertaining those who wanted to attend.

It was, therefore, a matter of rejoicing when the Boards of Managers of the Pastors' School and the Rural Church Institute, learned that the Duke campus would again be available for the entertainment of this school. So back to Duke come these delightful sessions for the days including June 2 and 6. An interesting program consisting of lectures, class sessions, play and recreation has been provided.

Information is being sent to all interested parties with bulletins setting forth in detail the program for each day. The instructors with their subjects are: Dr. E. S. Brightman, "Philosophy of Religion"; Reverend Leon Couch, "Alcoholism"; Dr. Ollie E. Fink, "Friends of the Land"; Dr. Elliott Fisher, "Rural Church"; Dr. C. W. Iglehart, "Missions"; Dr. John Knox, "The Meaning of Christ"; Dr. Edwin Mims, "Spiritual Values in Victorian Literature"; Mrs. W. R. Reed, "Vacation Church Schools"; Reverend J. J. Rudin, "Speech and Scripture Interpretation"; and Miss Ethelene Sampley, "Visual Aids in the Work of the Church." Other lecturers, including Dr. Russell Lord, will appear as platform speakers, in addition to one platform appearance each of the above named instructors.

It is expected that the largest crowd in the history of the school will attend these sessions.

Book Reviews

Finding God Through Christ. Charles Edward Forlines. New York-Nashville: Abington-Cokesbury Press, 1947. 207 pp. \$2.00.

Has the Abington-Cokesbury Press a penchant for publishing volumes under misleading titles? Or, have I just been unfortunate in the two which most recently passed through my hands, in which the purchaser would have been deceived by the titles? This book is neither a meditation on nor a discussion of "Finding God Through Christ"; no single chapter bears that name. It was chosen by the author's widow and while it may be, and probably is, a valid description of the author's spiritual life, it is a misnomer when applied to a volume, which contains historical essays such as "Higher Criticism" and "The Messages of Amos and Hosea." The friends of Charles Edward Forlines, of Westminster Theological Seminary, contributed a sum of money to have some of his sermons and addresses published; the book comprises fifteen of these, some of them being baccalaureate utterances to theological graduates. As an introduction there is a gracious and enlightening appreciation. Friends of Dr. Forlines will wish to own the volume.

JAMES T. CLELAND.

The Making of a Preacher by W. M. Macgregor, which was favorably reviewed in the BULLETIN, November, 1945, has now been published in this country by the Westminster Press for \$1.00.

The United States and the Near East. E. A. Speiser. Cambridge, Mass.: The Harvard University Press, 1947. xvi + 263 pp. \$2.50.

It is seldom indeed that a book on any subject is as good as this one. And when one considers that the author discusses the Palestine problem at some length and manages to present a well rounded and fair picture, one's admiration increases. How did he do it? In the first place, Speiser knows the Near East as do few Americans. He knows the ancient times because he is such a good archaeologist. He knows the modern times because he is such an intelligent and fairminded observer. While he was digging in the earth and studying archaeology, he was also looking around him and studying living history and living human beings.

A few words about plan and content are in order. Part I portrays "The Background," making use of the author's unrivalled knowledge of the past. Part II, "The Recent Near East," brings the history down to the present, country by country. Part III, "Problems of the Present and the Future," is the longest and best part; for it is here that the author shows his great fairness and his deep understanding of the human problem. A brief appendix of well chosen "Suggested Reading" concludes the book.

When students and friends ask me for the best book on the Palestine problem I shall now recommend this one. The fact that it surveys the entire Near East is an advantage, for Palestine is best understood as a part of a whole. Incidentally, I am delighted that Speiser stuck to the term "Near East" instead of succumbing to the current usage of the very questionable "Middle East." Speiser's only foible, so far as I can see, consists of a few curiously pedantic transliterations. But even the great must have their weak moments.

W. F. STINESPRING.

Revelation in Jewish Wisdom Literature. J. Coert Rylaarsdam. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1946. xi + 128 pp. \$3.00.

This little book is an expression of the theological wave in Biblical study so evident at the present time. In it there is much more concern for "interpretation" than for critical questions. One takes it up expecting a certain timeliness. But the reviewer, perhaps through some fault of his own, could not find timeliness or any special claim to distinction.

Chapter I introduces us to "The Context of Hebrew Wisdom," i.e., the older Wisdom Literature of Egypt and Babylonia. It is shown that "Hebrew wisdom fits into its context." Chapter II, "The Nationalization of Wisdom," shows the development of a specifically Hebraic wisdom bound up with the Law. Chapter III, "The Hope of Wisdom," treats of the "optimistic" or orthodox books such as Proverbs, Ben Sira, Wisdom of Solomon and IV Maccabees, the last two, of course, being able to bolster their optimism by reference to a post-mortem existence. Chapter IV, "The Transcendence of Wisdom" treats of the "pessimistic" or unorthodox books like Job and Ecclesiastes. The function of clearing away rubbish to make way for later developments is stressed. Chapter V, "Wisdom and Spirit," paves the way for the author's "Conclusion" (Chapter VI) that "the Spirit," which gives "a living Word, a Divine Wisdom," rather than a book or an institution, should be the basis of authority in religion.

The work seems to the reviewer brief, dry, immature and replete with ostentatious quotations from French and German like a thesis or dissertation. It is also badly proofread and considerably overpriced.

W. F. STINESPRING.

White Man—Yellow Man. Arva C. Floyd. New York and Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1946. 207 pp. \$1.75.

The author of this compact and useful little book is professor of Missions and Oriental History in Candler School of Theology of Emory University. He states his purpose is "to sketch in a few bold strokes and in outline fashion the picture of the Yellow Man of history, mainly the Chinese and the Japanese, to recount some of the more important features of the impact which the West has made upon him, and to see how he has reacted to the stimulus."

The book closes with a challenge: "Need the story of *White Man—*

Yellow Man always be burdened with prejudice and blotched by war? With understanding and tolerance can they not work out their separate destinies in peace?"

There seems to be some needless repetition of material in the first half of the book and the general impression is scrappy, but on the whole the author has done a good job.

JAMES CANNON, III.

Methodist Union in the Courts. Walter McElreath. New York and Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1946. 318 pp. \$3.00.

The author of this valuable collection of Methodist historico-legal material was retained by the Methodist Church in the litigation over the union of American Methodism. The book should become a standard reference in the field of church union. The more important testimony and arguments are given, together with the pertinent documents and decisions of the courts. An intelligible and readable description of the case makes it clear to the layman, as well as to the historian and lawyer. It is fortunate that this authentic compilation has been made so close to the time of the events and by one of the participants best qualified to render this particular service. There is an introduction by Bishop Clare Purcell. Judge McElreath and the publisher are to be congratulated on this volume.

JAMES CANNON, III.

Toward a United Church. William Adams Brown. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1946. Pp. 264. \$2.50.

The author of this book will probably go down in history as America's greatest theological exponent of the Ecumenical Movement prior to 1940. This was undoubtedly the culminating interest of his career. At the time of his death, in 1943, the present work was only partially finished, and his friend, Samuel McCrea Cavert, completed the manuscript for publication.

In no other single volume will one find the complete story of Ecumenical Christianity for the past three decades. Beginning with the World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh (1910), Dr. Brown unfolds the many-sided course of events which, in 1939, culminated in the provisional organization of the World Council of Churches. Contributing to this ultimate result was a long series of world conferences, including those meeting at Jerusalem (1928), Stockholm (1925), Lausanne (1927), Oxford (1937), Edinburgh (1937), Madras (1928), and Amsterdam (1939).

Owing to the coming of World War II, the World Council has been forced to remain on a provisional basis. Nevertheless, it has meanwhile grown in strength and influence. By May 15, 1946, ninety-three churches in thirty-three countries had signified their wish to unite with the Council. A World Assembly of these churches will meet at Amsterdam in the summer of 1948, the general theme of which will be *Man's Disorder and God's Design*. At that time the Council expects to assume permanent form.

Two features greatly enrich the book: a series of historical documents marking the growth of the Ecumenical Movement, and a carefully chosen bibliography.

H. SHELTON SMITH.

Conscience on Stage. Harold Ehrensperger. New York-Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1947. 238 pp. \$2.00.

A splendid book in that ever-growing field of church interest and activity, religious drama. Mr. Ehrensperger writes out of years of experience, backed by success. There may be much of theory in his book, but it is a theory which he has put into practice. He knows that the theories will work—he has tried them.

The one objection offered to the book is trivial. The author is rather inept in the selection of his topics. His chapter headings are apparently studied and smack of smartness. They would have been much more effective and intelligent if they had been couched in conventional terms.

With this slight criticism, one hastens to state that the book is one of the most complete and interesting treatises yet published in this field. It is not only well-written, it is complete in all significant details. Definite directions are given without a sense of being weighted down with details. The writer or director of amateur dramatics will find the book of invaluable service. The appendices contain several items of unusual worth. A model constitution for a drama group in a local church is given. A list of dealers and manufacturers of stage materials and equipment is furnished. But the thing of most value is one of the best selected lists of books in the various phases of the work yet compiled. The reviewer has seen no such complete bibliography in any other book.

The author is slightly unfortunate in the selection of his model plays and worship programs. They are not on a par with the remainder of the book.

H. E. SPENCE.

Religion on the American Frontier, 1783-1840. Vol. IV: *The Methodists.* William Warren Sweet. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1946. Pp. ix, 800. \$10.00.

Dr. Sweet's last twenty years of research and writing have done much to advance the study of American church history from a relatively minor rank to an enviable place in the world of scholarship. His zestful search for neglected documents and his impetus to a source-based interpretation of ecclesiastical-cultural movements have served the church and her graduate trainees well. A number of these are justly and graciously recognized, in the editor's preface, for their scholarly assistance to this and other like projects.

The current volume is the fourth in a series that puts in documentary perspective the frontier role of Baptists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Methodists. With a procedure similar to that of the previous

studies, Part I gives a concise, carefully grounded resume of Methodist transplantation to America, post-Revolutionary organization, church polity, and growth to 1850.

The second part, pp. 73-730, illustrates from representative documents, official and personal, the workings of frontier Methodism. Perhaps no two people would agree on the materials that should go into such a source-book. Professor Sweet has edited, with illuminating notes, a varied sampling within a limited range of major categories. The resulting continuity and coherence are manifestly superior to the more dazzling "fragmentation" method of selection.

Journals, Conference Records, and Letters predominate. There is instructiveness in the very diversity of interest and significance found in such journals as those of Bishop Whatcoat, Benjamin Lakin, and James Gilruth. Even the prosaic sections—and they are plentifully in evidence—have their surprises, whether for the pastor and his family, or for the student of church history. The Edward Dromgoole letters, 1778-1812, edited from the University of North Carolina Historical Manuscript Collection, are fascinating doorways to a better appreciation of circuit riders and expanding Methodism—particularly in the South and Mid-West. For these hardy wrestlers with Satan, spreading the Gospel becomes engrossingly interspersed with confronting "many Baptists, & Presbyterians, who have fill'd the Peoples heads with Predestination." They also have some difficulties in securing warm clothes for fractious climates, financing children in college, and warding off attacks of "Ohio fever."

Other records show the Methodist transcendence of regional salvation; the implacable evidence that even Conference Records can serve the Lord's will; and the certain, if not equal, claims on a Christian's attention of Church Trials and Publishing House activities. Frontier Deeds, Circuit Plans, and Camp Meeting Rules could hardly have been left out of such a book. Too many sermons and exhortations have been. But the brief ones included are rich in frontier atmosphere.

The Bibliography is meticulous to an almost unprecedented degree in its arrangement of categories such as Manuscripts (theses included), Official Documents, Periodicals, Autobiographies, and Secondary Books; most of these with an invaluable organization of library holdings by states and institutions comprised within them.

The price of the book is high. Or is it? For here are over 700 pages of evidence that the truth—historical truth at least—is stranger than fiction, and much more interesting! Perhaps not purchasing several volumes of "current sermons" and preaching one's own, refreshed at times with memories from this rich heritage, may help to finance this acquisition. If early Methodists could make such history, later ones ought at least to read it. I have a feeling that the Baptists, Congregationalists, and Presbyterians should, also—and I think they will.

RAY C. PETRY.