

Dec 1930

28:1
1931

SERIES 28

NUMBER 1

AGNES SCOTT COLLEGE BULLETIN

DEDICATION ADDRESSES
WALLACE BUTTRICK HALL

ENTERED AS SECOND CLASS MATTER AT THE POST OFFICE
DECATUR, GEORGIA

Introduction



In 1929 Agnes Scott College undertook to raise \$1,500,000 for much needed development. Two-thirds of this sum was to be used for buildings, grounds and equipment; and the remaining half million dollars was planned for endowment. The General Education Board of New York subscribed \$500,000 on condition that the whole sum be raised. In spite of the financial depression, the College has been able to press the campaign successfully, and it was brought to a conclusion with a ten-day effort in the Atlanta area for the last \$300,000, October 10-20, 1930.

The most important single item in the building program which has been made possible is the erection of an administration-recitation hall, and this was completed and occupied by September, 1930. It is a four-story structure, fire-proof, having steel, reinforced concrete, brick, limestone, and a roof of antique tile, as its chief materials. It contains the principal administrative offices, committee rooms, faculty offices, a book store, post office, space for student activities, and thirty-two classrooms. It has modern equipment throughout.

The dedication exercises for the new building were set for December 5, 1930, because the Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools of the Southern States was then meeting in Atlanta, and it seemed an appropriate time to celebrate an advance step in Southern education. More than two hundred educators from all parts of the South honored the College by their presence, besides numbers of distinguished citizens in other walks of life. Approximately one hundred seventy-five friends who could not be present sent congratulations and best wishes.

The exercises themselves were very simple. The new building is named BUTTRICK HALL in honor of Dr. Wallace Buttrick, the first president of the General Education Board and a notable friend of Southern education. The College was much pleased to

have on this occasion an interesting sketch of the life of Dr. Buttrick presented by Dr. James H. Dillard, long a friend and an associate. Dr. Dillard himself, as a member of the General Education Board, and as President of the Jeanes Fund and of the John F. Slater Fund, has rendered splendid service in the South. In connection with the honoring of memory of Dr. Buttrick, it was a great pleasure for Agnes Scott and its friends to have as a guest at the dedication Mr. Paul Buttrick, of Bennington, Vt., a worthy son of his distinguished father. The address of Dr. Dillard is herewith published.

The principal address of the occasion was given by President W. P. Few of Duke University, who spoke on the subject of improving the quality of college education. This stimulating message is included in this booklet.

Hon. George Foster Peabody, former member of the General Education Board, and distinguished as an educator and philanthropist, spoke briefly in honor of Dr. Buttrick and congratulated the College on the acquisition of the new building.

Mr. W. J. Sayward, representing the architects—Edwards and Sayward, of Atlanta—and the builders—the Williams Construction Company of Atlanta—spoke of the significance of the new hall from the architectural viewpoint and delivered the keys to Mr. J. K. Orr, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, who thanked all having a part in the development of the College.

The exercises closed with the dedicatory prayer by Rev. Richard Orme Flinn, D.D., Pastor of the North Avenue Presbyterian Church of Atlanta.

Dr. Wallace Buttrick

DR. J. H. DILLARD

It was in 1902 that Dr. Buttrick came from the Emmanuel Baptist Church in Albany to become Secretary and Executive Officer, and later President, of the General Education Board. After attending the Ogdensburg Academy, the Potsdam Academy (which later became the Normal School) and the Rochester Theological Seminary, he served as pastor of Baptist churches in New Haven, St. Paul and Albany. It is natural to ask why he was chosen for this work in the field of education, a work quite different from that for which he had made particular preparation. Perhaps the answer might be, whoever may have been the special instrument, that it was by some influence beyond ordinary calculation which some of us would call Providence.

It was several years after he became connected with the General Education Board that I first met him. I think it was about 1910, before I myself became a member of the Board, that I happened one day to be in the offices. Seeing me in the reception room Dr. Buttrick asked if I would come into his private office for a moment. When we were seated together, he told me that he had made out a list of a dozen Southern Colleges which he was thinking of recommending to the Board for consideration in regard to cooperation and aid. He handed me the list. I looked through it and smiled. In the quick way which he sometimes had he asked me why I was laughing. "Nothing," I said, "except that each one of these dozen happens to be Baptist." Then he laughed heartily himself.

I have always thought of this laugh as a striking characteristic of the man. He had the keenest and finest sense of humor, and could enjoy a joke even on himself. This sense of humor stood him in good stead in the varied and wonderful work which he was called to do. Some one has wittily remarked of him that he was always ready for either a fight or a frolic. In fact he was always ready to show his good humor, and he was as ready to oppose what seemed to him pretentious and unworthy.

When applications came to the Board, however seemingly sound they might be, they were sure to meet with painstaking and careful consideration. He believed that this was in the best interest of the colleges as well as of the Board. He was never swept off his feet by sentiment or emotion. He was full of human kindness, but carried his head along with his heart. In thinking of his character I have frequently recalled a verse in the first chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians. The verse reads, "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all judgment, that ye may approve things that are excellent." This would be the best text that I can think of for any sermon that would be preached about Dr. Buttrick. He wanted to find out and approve the things that are excellent. He had the big heart, but he must have knowledge also.

I think this combination made him the best administrator I have ever known. He was on many Boards. I am sure that each member of every one of these Boards would bear tribute to the invariable value of his judgments. But his masterpiece was his management of the General Education Board. His kindly, clear-sighted and almost hidden mastership was wonderful in its influence. It was notable both in office and in field. The office of the General Education Board is a unique place. The people there, with all of their typewriting and filing, have always remained human beings. They have always been cheerfully devoted to their work as well as efficient in their individual jobs.

Outside, in the field, wisdom and the spirit of cooperation have always been manifested, wherever the master hand reached. The contact between the General Education Board and the numerous Colleges and State Departments of Education has always had the touch of good will and cooperation. It has always been straightforward, without any least sign of aught but mutual effort to help forward the great work of education.

Dr. Buttrick was too universal to be local, but I do not think there is any harm in saying that his heart often seemed to be in the South. So broad were his sympathies that he was absolutely unsectional. He told me once with much satisfaction of his speaking at a meeting of the Daughters of the Confederacy in some

Southern town. The promised orator had been prevented from attending. It was known that Dr. Buttrick was in town. He was asked to speak and did. I remember thinking, when he told me about this, that it seemed entirely natural and fitting even though he was a native of the State of New York.

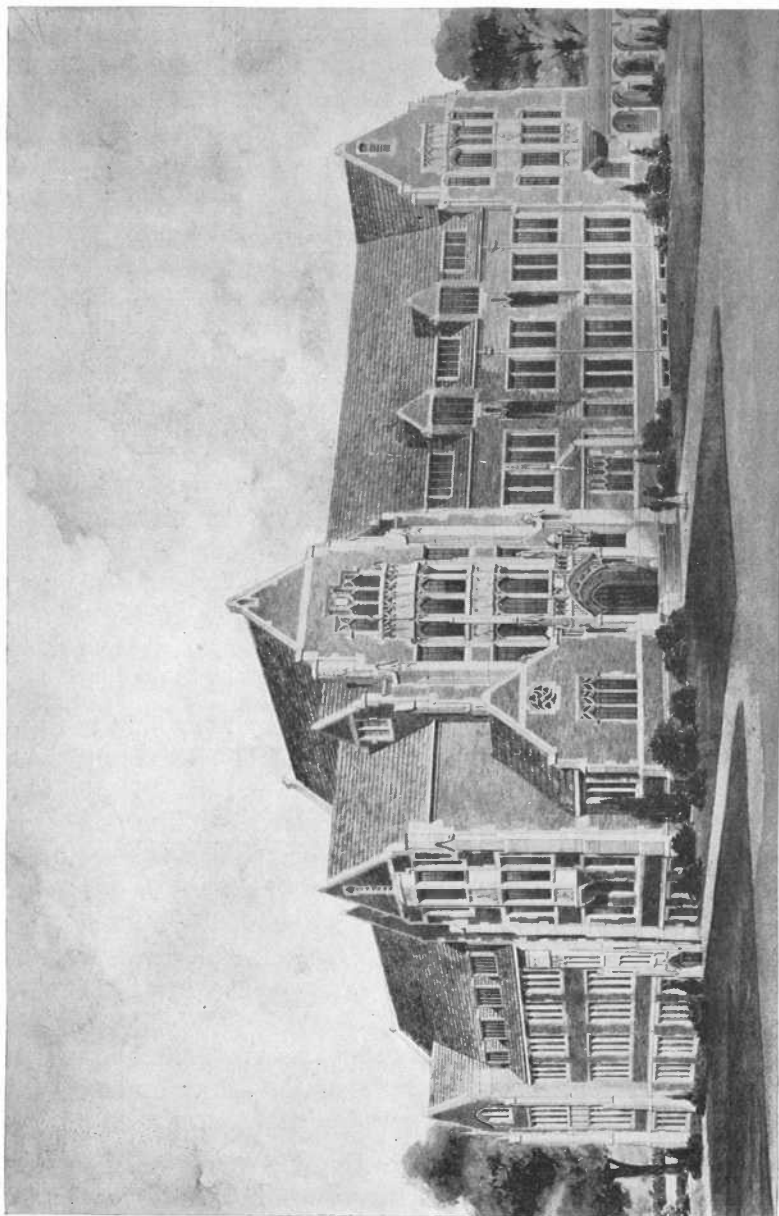
He was unsectional in every way. In spite of the joke I mentioned about the dozen Baptist schools he was as unsectional in his religious associations as he was unsectional in social and educational relations. While he was pastor of a Baptist Church in St. Paul he was a close personal friend of Archbishop Ireland, and in taking stock of the educational value of a college as he saw it, differences of denomination disappeared.

Turning from Dr. Buttrick's public work, I should like to note briefly three of his personal characteristics.

Never was there a worker in public who claimed or wanted less of personal credit. He might have had honorary degrees galore, but he did not have them, except two or three by chance we may say. He never sought for himself or for the great Board which he so wisely represented for so many years any special credit or renown. He was content to let the work be done and to help in the doing. This rare quality of freedom from personal ambition was to my mind perhaps his chief characteristic.

Akin to this characteristic, of course very near akin to it, and yet so prominent at the present time that it seems suitable for separate mention, was his absolute dislike for what we call publicity. Perhaps he carried this feeling too far. But the fact is that he avoided publicity and was suspicious of those who sought it. Such was his nature, and it led him to lament much of what he saw of the methods of publicity and propaganda. So much of this there is that it may be good for us to have the memory of one who, in spite of all temptations, had faith that reality and simple truth would in the end triumph without any specious or short-cut methods. He did not get nervous about immediate results. He believed that the straightforward performance of one's nearest duty would surely some time have its sure and right result.

Still akin to the foregoing characteristics was what I think we may call his imperturbableness. Whatever might happen he held



WALLACE BUTTRICK HALL

his happy way. This was based on his dependence upon reality as something far stronger than shifting opinions and stray efforts. It was this that made him disbelieve in all short-cuts of whatever kind, whether it be learning a language in six weeks, or getting a master's degree in Summer flights, or the immediate solution of social problems that inevitably depend on the slow process of education and time. It is this, it seems to me, that makes a deep dividing line between two sides of those who are called to service. The line is there as surely as the line between the methods and values of the Kingdom of Heaven and the methods and values of the Kingdom of this World. There is no doubt on which side of the line Dr. Buttrick stood.

Of course I have not enumerated here many qualities of the friend and counsellor whose memory we are honoring here to-day. He was a man without age and always growing. I think of lines from In Memoriam:

For what wert thou? some novel power
Sprang up for ever at a touch,
And hope could never hope too much,
In watching thee from hour to hour.

I would the great world grew like thee,
Who grewest not alone in power
And knowledge, but by year and hour
In reverence and in charity.

In conclusion let me say how fitting it seems that this memorial building, dedicated to good uses and to the memory of our friend, should have been erected at this college. More than once I heard him speak, in a rather unusual way, of his admiration for the genuineness of the work and for the loyalty to high standards that he found here at Agnes Scott.

Improving the Quality of College Education

PRESIDENT W. P. FEW, Duke University

I am most happy to have a part in the dedication of a building that is to bear the name of Wallace Buttrick. Few men have ever done so much as he for the cause of education in America. He was truly an educational statesman and he was also a man of unerring wisdom. I once heard a very wise man say concerning Dr. Buttrick, "I have constantly found in him judgments so nearly infallible that I have come to be more tolerant of the doctrine of the 'infallibility of the Pope.'"

I am also happy to cooperate in any way I can with a college like Agnes Scott—a college that has been among the pioneers in putting intellectual sincerity beneath the education of women here in the Southeast. We all rejoice with you at Agnes Scott in this admirable addition to your plant—to its equipment for service, to the beauty of the place. For we not only value improved facilities for their direct educational uses but we also realize that noble surroundings affect the character of the students who are privileged to live amid them and affect the character of the institution itself.

All colleges, whether they are independent colleges or colleges that are parts of universities, have essentially the same problems, though they may come at different times and in different forms. May I venture to predict two problems about which we may expect to hear much during the years just ahead of us? They are everywhere in the minds of thoughtful men; and, as Victor Hugo somewhere says, the most powerful thing in the world is an idea whose hour has come.

The first of these ideas whose hour, I believe, has come is the demand upon us to improve the quality of education. The period of educational expansion through which we have been passing, with all its inevitable wastes, immaturities, and excesses, will be followed, and followed soon, I believe, by a demand for education that really educates.

I do not have in mind to talk today about a college in Utopia. I prefer to have educational reforms made gradually and carefully tested every step of the way. But experiments are being carried on now in most of the better American colleges, and in some of these I am deeply interested.

Lest I be misunderstood let me say at once that I do not believe too many people go to college in America. But I am also going to say that I do believe many are in college who ought not to be there, at any rate unless they had entered through a straiter gate. Indeed I think the time is at hand when every good American college should exercise the utmost care to admit as students only those "whose previous record shows a character, determination, and application evincing a wholesome and real ambition for life."

This selective admission is beset with difficulties; but the acceptance of students through careful processes of selective admission is the first step in improving the quality of college education.

The better trained and brighter freshmen should be put in sections to themselves and opportunities should be provided for these abler students to go forward as rapidly as they will. Students in these advanced sections will cover more ground and do better work than those in the slower sections, and they should receive additional quantity and also quality credits. Care should be taken to allow students to pass freely from one section to another, up or down.

The same general plans should be followed in the sophomore year. After two years in college including diligent summer reading, which should be carefully planned by students in conference with their instructors, students of this type will have acquired a good proportion of their credits necessary for graduation. Occasionally a student of this kind should be encouraged to enter at once upon his professional training, especially if he intends to be a physician. But most of them should proceed to college graduation; and partly freed as they are from hour and course requirements they should have a good deal of free time for concentrated and extended reading in chosen fields. This should be tested in conferences with instructors or tutors and by thorough-going written work on assigned topics, and at the end of the four years, by com-

prehensive examinations both written and oral. And all this would be in fulfillment of the requirements for graduation with honors.

These gifted students, and the slow ones, too, should be under the guidance and inspiration of teachers who have been chosen for their personal qualities and teaching power as well as for knowledge of their subjects; and all college education should be understood to include not only high intellectual development but the shaping of the whole personality.

Needless to say education carried on in this way will be costly, and this brings me to the second problem that will confront us and already confronts us—economy not only of the student's time but of the people's money. I do not mean that we shall expect education to get less from taxation and philanthropy; we shall expect more, and ever more. But when we actually set about, as we have not yet set about, doing really well the work of elementary education, of high school education, of college education, and of graduate and professional education, and all this for all the people, we shall find on our hands a financial burden that will stagger the imagination. If this seems discouraging, I have one word of encouragement. With endowments or gifts, enough to keep their plants adequate and to take care of their overhead, as many educational experts believe, colleges with these aims and the power to realize them can face the future with confidence. Their public will hold them justified in raising tuition charges to the point that may be necessary in order to provide this higher kind of teaching and justified in administering their admissions so as to make sure of the best human material, and, of course, endowed scholarships and generous loan funds must be provided, so that the door of opportunity may never be shut in the face of any student who is fitted for college and deserves to be in college.

It is said that if the temperature of the ocean were raised, the water would expand and rise to a new level that would flood the dry land. In some such ways, too, as I have intimated we may, I believe, so change the temperature of the American college campus that a rising tide of intellectual interest might lift the whole level of undergraduate life and from this new level new currents of tendency and taste would sweep the centre of student activities away

from excessive devotion to athletics and other equally irrelevant undergraduate absorptions and on to the main concerns of college education. Thus we may find a surer and better way than by force of authority or even by mere repression, to rescue our colleges from a situation for which the graduates and the general public are more responsible than the undergraduates but of which the undergraduates are the victims.

We believe that education is the eternal debt of maturity to childhood and to youth and we see in the young the constant reinforcement and inspiration of humanity. It is this faith that we here dedicate this building and in the hope that this may be an ever-shining place where happy undergraduates generation after generation may catch aspirations to true character and genuine excellence and from whence a long succession of high-minded women may go on into a world that sorely needs them, themselves made strong by the power to know the truth and the will to live it.