

ARTHUR C. WICKENDEN

*Funeral Service
Memorial Presbyterian Ch.
Oxford Ohio -
June 10 '67*

It was because the life of Arthur C. Wickenden was so incomparably rich that all of us who knew him were so fully enriched in and through that relationship. That is why we come to this moment--though certainly not without a sense of loss--in joy and in celebration!

Arthur Wickenden stood firmly within both Church and University. Within the university, he was fully committed to the pursuit of excellence in the life of the mind, and participated fully in every phase of the educational endeavor. He had the unusual capacity and sensitivity to understand the tasks and responsibilities of administrative officials, to perceive the true nature of the high calling of teachers and scholars, and to support the student in the disciplined search for knowledge and the crucial quest for mature personhood.

Arthur Wickenden was a great teacher. His impact on students was impressive, obvious, and enduring. He was a great teacher not because he endeavored to pour the contents of his learning and wisdom into vacuous minds, but because he engaged students in a learning process. Dr. Wickenden had chosen the right vocation: he needed students for his own completion. It was not that he used students to elevate and sustain his own image; he needed them and wanted them to participate in a learning process that can bring mutual fulfillment only when teacher and students sincerely need each other and authentically contribute to each other. He motivated students to strive for informed judgments and reflective awareness, and he did this by being open to their every question and by addressing to them high expectations. Aware that the learning process is not limited to the classroom, he gave of himself freely to all phases of student life, as his multi-faceted career in the university clearly shows.

His life spanned decades of radical change, yet he moved through them with quiet confidence and easy grace. He was writing from the experience of his own life when he set forth these words:

"Only character of large dimensions and magnificent in spirit is adequate to meet successfully the demands of an age like this. But given adequate spiritual and moral resources, a time like the present offers glorious opportunities for creative living, because changes are in the making, old molds of behavior are breaking up, life is in a state of flux, and formative action is possible that will determine the shape of the future."

We cannot but commemorate his life with joy, for incarnate therein were the marks of an educated man. Woodrow Wilson has served us well by delineating these qualities:

"The educated man is to be discovered by his point of view, by the temper of his mind, by his attitude towards life and his fair way of thinking. He can see, he can discriminate, he can combine ideas and perceive whither they lead; he has insight and comprehension. His mind is a practiced instrument of appreciation. He is more apt to contribute light

than heat to a discussion, and will oftener than another show the power of uniting the elements of a difficult subject in a whole view; he has the knowledge of the world which no one can have who knows only his own generation or only his own task."

All who knew Arthur Wickenden as teacher knew those qualities.

Dr. Wickenden was not only an educator; he was a Christian and a churchman as well. He was concerned not only with the life of the mind, but also with the depth of the human spirit. Convinced that the human spirit was unfulfilled and incomplete apart from an awareness of and relationship to Him Who is the Source of all life, he endeavored to be a modern man without ceasing to be a Christian man, and to be a Christian man without ceasing to be a modern man. And this he made possible for countless others.

His life was a witness to that Presence by and through which the interior quality of life may be restored, a pointing to that Word by and through which others could find in their beleaguered hearts, fraught with every shame and embarrassment, living on the brink of endless decisions in which heaven and hell are always bidding for their souls, that vestige of the divine Presence, however obscured, by which life can be made whole and meaningful and purposeful again.

The quality of his life as Christian and as Churchman was never more manifest than in the integrity of these words from his pen:

"While there are people in the world who receive a raw deal from life, whose undeserved sufferings outweigh their joys, they are not among those for whom this meditation is written. Rather we belong to a privileged group who have been blessed beyond our deserts and our ability to repay. Any man who has been nurtured by loving parents in a good home within a free country and amid great natural beauty, who has enjoyed the benefits of higher education and experienced friendship with rare souls, and who has learned to appreciate values in music, art and literature and to share in the quest for goodness and truth, is a person who has been the recipient of blessings which he has not earned and for which he can never repay in full. Fortunately, it is not expected that he should. But it still remains that to whom much is given, much is also required; and we ought to strive, at least, to balance the obligation. But it will prove to be a strange kind of debt. The more we seek to discharge it by creative labor and constructive service, the greater it will become. As we endeavor to add to the happiness of others' lives, our own persons will be further enriched. We may never effect a balance between what we owe to life and what we render to it, but we can enlarge the heritage of the good for those who follow after us, and to do so is the most effective way in which to express our thankfulness for that which life has given to us."

He knew that life was a gift--not a gift to be repaid, but to be accepted with thanksgiving and to be invested in the possibilities for good among men. Such a heritage he had received; such a heritage he has left.

Karl Barth has given eloquent expression to the marks of a fulfilled humanity:

Openness to another as a human being.
Talking and listening to another.
Being there for another.
And to do all this---joyfully!

Arthur Wickenden was such a fulfilled and fulfilling person. That is why we
commemorate his life in celebration and in thanksgiving.

F. Stanley Lusby
June 10, 1967