" A SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF CHARLES D. WILLIAMS"

Written by his wife - Lucy B. Williams

FORWARD

As a tribute to our mother on her eighty-third birthday, it seems that the best remembrance is her own tribute to her husband:"A Sketch of the Life of Charles D. Williams." This little sketch was started a little over ten years ago in 1938, apparently with the idea of later on using it as a basis for a more comprehensive work, but the task was never completed. However, the memory pictures which she has jotted down are too valuable to be lost. How intuitively she sensed the things that had value to him, the things that shaped and influenced his thought and life, and how vividly and simply told. Truly their life together was one of true comradship and understanding.

"Oh, I must feel your brain prompt mine,
Your heart anticipate my heart;
You must be just before me, in fine
See and make me see for your part
New depths of the Divine!"

Anne Williams McCormick
March 25, 1949

Detroit, Michigan

A Sketch of the Life of Charles D. Williams

I am venturing to write this brief sketch of the life and times of Charles D. Williams-late Bishop of Michigan (1906-1923), thinking that perhaps others may be interested to know of his home and his family life, and of the persons, social problems and world events that influenced his life and work.

Charles David Williams was born in Bellevue, Ohio, July 30, 1860, at the beginning of the Civil War. He used to say that he was the "only child of his father and mother" - with a large family of brothers and sisters, (he was the only child of the second marriage of both). His mother, who was of English decent, was born in northeast Pennsylvania. She was a teacher and a lover of books and a charming personality. His father's family came from Wales. They were brought up Lutherans, but left Wales to escape religious persecution, and settled in Pennsylvania. His father, David Williams, was a strong Methodist and brought up his large family in the fear of the Lord. After the death of his father, Charles and his mother, Eliza Williams went to the Episcopal Church in Bellevue, Ohio, where his mother formerly belonged.

David Williams and his brothers had come from Pennsylvania into Ohio and had bought large farms of six hundred acres and more, near Bellevue, Ohio. They had great fields of wheat and other grain, and great fruit orchards, and were well to do, successful farmers. Charlie loved to recall the days when he lived on the farm--the making of the apple butter in the great iron pot out of doors, which had to be stirred all day lest the apple butter

burn--the making of many loaves of bread in the great brick oven out of doors. He remembered especially the day when the colored girl was raking the hot coals out of the oven, preparatory to baking the bread, when her clothes caught fire. Screaming lustily she promptly jumped into the rain barrel full of water, and went bobbing up and down like a cork. He loved the merry talk as the brothers and sisters and hired help gathered around the large table. Jake, the colored man fascinated and puzzled him. Sometimes, he would say, "Jake , why don't you wash your face?" and Jake would chuckle and say, "I ain't wash my face yit, Mr. Charlie, has I?" He loved the winter evenings, when the wood fires burned in the great open fireplaces and friends, old and young, came in to talk, and there was music and singing and dancing. He loved the sound of the wintry winds as he sat secure by the fire and heard the whirr of the spinning wheel, as Rachel, the spinning woman, spun the wool to make warm mittens and scarfs and caps to make eve ryone warm in the winter weather. He liked the corn shucking and the apple paring bees, that brought the young people from the surrounding farms, and there were contests as to who found the ear with the black or red seeds, or who could cut the longest apple peeling without breaking it, and there was laughter and singing.

The year 1860 had brought the Civil War between the North and the South. Two of his brothers enlisted, Collins and James Cook. (His mother's sons by her first marriage). Collins became a Colonel and came home with gold braid and brass buttons, and was quite a hero. The other, James, was ill with typhoid fever and came home to get well. His father died in 1872, when Charlie was just twelve years old. The farms were sold and the older boys left home and farming.

Mrs. Williams took a smaller house in Bellevue with Charles and her little grandson Bobbie who died a year later when still a little boy.

Charles went to school, played with the boys, and his dog, cut wood for the fires and read everything he could find in the well stocked library-Dickens and Scott, Cooper's tales of the Indians, Shakespeare and so forth with a mother who knew books and loved them herself. He entered High School and was prepared for college by the Rev. Mr. Hamilton. He entered Kenyon College in 1876 when sixteen and graduated with honors in 1880.

Mrs. Williams went to Gambier, Ohio where Kenyon College was located to be with her son. She passed away in 1879 and Charles was left alone.

Charlie had many friends in college for he liked people--but his special friend was my brother, George Benedict. We used to call them "Damon and Pythias" because of their love for each other. He spent part of his vacations with us. Both Charles and George graduated from Kenyon and entered Bexley Theological Seminary at Kenyon and were ordained deacon and priest together. There were only five members in his class, including two prospective Bishops, besides himself--Bishop Brown of Arkansas, and Bishop Aves of Mexico. The three professors were all broad churchmen, President Bodine, Dr. Bates, and Dr. Abraham Jaeger. The latter more than any other person was to affect the life and preaching of his young student. Dr. Jaeger was a Russian Jew, trained under famous Jewish Rabbis and fired by the spirit of the prophets of the Old Testament. He was converted by Christianity, for he found in Jesus, the fulfillment of these prophesies. He was a great teacher as well as a great scholar. Charlie studied Hebrew and the Old Testament under him with enthusiasm. He delighted in the sound of the He brew, and later in family prayers he would sometimes read the Hebrew first and then translate it for us, to the children's delight. It was his habit to carry the two courses of study, one in the New Testament

in Greek, and one i n the Old Testament in Hebrew. He was accustomed to make a special study of the Old Testament characters and books as a basis for his preach ing. It was in the atmosphere of Bexley Hall that the characteristics of Charles Williams' life were developed. His love for humanity and sociability found expression in his college life. He made many fine friends. His love for learning came out in channels which were to be a source of strength to his social ideals, and his courage and moral sternness found themselves in a struggle for purity within the church's orders. He was ordained Deacon in 1884 by Bishop Thomas Jaggar, Bishop of Southern Ohio and Priest in 1886. He was assistant to Dr. Babcock in Columbus, Ohio. His first parishes were the Church of the Resurrection, Fern Bank, Ohio and the Church of the Advent, Riverside, Ohio. He also had two missions--one in Ohio and one in Cross Creek, West Virginia.

We were married September 29, 1886, by my father Rev. Samuel Benedict in St. John's Church, Cincinnati and all the congregations came to the wedding.

We spent four very happy years in Fern Bank. The next five years were in Steubenville, Ohio--a fine old town on the Ohio River--a place where the early glass blowers made such fine glassware, and where there were potteries and great furnaces for making plate glass. Fine people were there and a beautiful old church, and they were very kind to the young clergyman and his little family. We often went to the potteries to see them make glass and lamp chimneys, but it troubled us to see the young boys carry the red hot glass balls on their long rods from fire pots to the glass blowers. It looked so very dangerous, and there were so many accidents. This was one of our first experiences of seeing child labor and gave us cause for thought.

Dean Hodges was rector of a church in Pittsburg, Pa., and was not far from Steubenville. He was thinking seriously about the bad conditions

under which men in the iron and steel mills were working. He and Charles Williams met and exchanged ideas and pulpits, and had much concern about child labor. We were in Steubenville five years.

In 1895 Charles was called to Trinity Church in Cleveland, Ohio, as it's Dean. The church was down on Superior Street, quite solidly packed in by the business buildings around it. It was our church home for many years, until the parish house was built on 22nd Street and plans for the Cathedral were made.

Cleveland of the 90's was still in the horse and buggy street car days. People of means lived in lovely homes with lawns and great trees. There were even farms within a mile of the heart of the city, and the church Old Trinity, was on Superior Street. Bishop Leonard and the vestry were already talking of moving further "up town." Plans were prepared for a large parish house on Euclid and 22nd Street with the Cathedral facing on Euclid. A few years later the Parish House was built with an auditorium large enough for a good sized congregation, and a third floor for clergy and transients. The Deanery was on the same lot and a home for elderly ladies in the care of the Sisters. We lived in the Deanery, and our friends enjoyed the large parlors, for every Sunday evening there were always a group of young men and women there, and sometimes the Dean would have a book to read to them. Into this group Mr. William Torrance came one evening. He was a young English business man who was working for an English firm, but was not especially happy in his work. He came often and we liked him very much. Dean Williams thought he would make a fine clergyman and urged him to go to Bexley and study for the ministry which he later did.

The congregations at this time numbered about five hundred people, just twice as many as we had in our parish at Steubenville, Ohio. The vestry

was made up of influential men of the city--doctors, lawyers, captains of industry, college men, merchants, etc. Cleveland was a progressive city. Music and art flourished and there was much interest in the development of a modern library. A fine new library was built along modern lines. Mr. William Brett was one of the first librarians to introduce the open shelf library system where the public could handle the books. He maintained that the public could be trusted to handle the books, and that books were written to be read and that men, women and children could be trusted to use them and care for them. Dean Williams was much interested in the library and in the librarian. He served on the Library Board for some years and served as President of the Board until we went to Detroit in 1906.

For recreation and fellowship, Dean Williams joined the Cosmohoghany Club - a group of college professors and young clergymen. They met at dinner once a month "around the mahoghany table to discuss the affairs of the cosmos. It was a debating society to which one could belong if he could stand it and did not agree with anybody."

Henry George was a guest of the club one evening when he was campaigning for governor of New York. He had just published his book on "Progress and Poverty" and was the speaker of the evening. He spoke of the"Gospel of Single Tax." Louis Post was one of the guests and Tom L. Johnson, then Mayor of Cleveland, and he had many followers. Dean Williams was much interested in his talk and later he wrote an article on the "Equal Right of All Men to the Use of the Earth." Mr. Philebrown of Boston was guest of the evening, he heard of the address and asked Dean Williams to deliver it to a group of friends in

Boston. I was invited to go to Boston with him--all expenses paid--it was a great occasion for me - and I had a wonderful time.

Dean Williams was very much interested in the work of Miss Jane Adams in Chicago. She had been abroad studying social housing, and what was being done at Toynbee Hall, and had been in Russia talking with Tolstoi. She, with a group of like minded persons started the first Social Settlement House in that part of the country--Hull House. Their work was among the foreign born, who had come to the United States because of the unhappy conditions in their country, and they needed friends who could help them to adjust themselves to this new country. Dean Williams was often at Hull House for conferences, and also for addresses.

One day a group of young people from Hiram College came to Dean Williams to ask him if there was not something that they could do to help the foreign born children in Cleveland. All they had to offer was a cradle, six teaspoons and willing hearts and hands. Dean Williams was able to find some friends to help them and it was not long before a settlement house was built and staffed and Mr. George Bellamy was in charge. Dean Williams was President of the incorporated board for seven years and taught a class in history two years. Another settlement house in which he was much interested was Goodrich House, founded by Mrs. Samuel Mather, which also worked among the foreign born women and girls.

History repeats itself. When we came to Detroit in 1906, after Dean Williams had been called to be the Bishop of Michigan, we found a city with fine old residences, lovely gardens, and beautiful trees and lawns. The business men walked a mile or two to their places of business,

carriages and horses were used for transportation and some street cars and bicycles. The churches were moving up town and some new houses were built. St. Paul's Church down town had moved into the new Parish House on Hancock and Woodward. Grace Church and Immanuel were soon to follow and the three church congregations were to unite in one building under the name of St. Paul's Cathedral with Dr. Samuel Marquis as Dean. Dr. McCarroll and Rev. Mr. Purton assisted. Dr. McCarroll had one of the first Ford cars, and used to take us around to see the city.

Henry Ford had just started his automobile business. The automobile industry developed rapidly--fortunes were made overnight. Ford advertised that he would pay $5 a day and men poured into Detroit. Many houses were needed for them. Highland Park developed for the Ford men. It took on the air of a city itself. The cobblestone roads were hard on the new cars. The automobile demanded good road beds, so new roads were built. Strangers poured into Detroit and the whole atmosphere changed. We had chosen a large house and grounds on Eliot and Woodward as our place of residence. After several years we moved a block away to 32 Stimson Place. We had quite a large house there--room for entertaining for all our friends and three maids. It was a grand place for parties. In 1918 we moved to 241 Eliot Street--and have been here ever since. It has been a period of sorrow too, for Tom Weber, Elizabeth's husband died here before the family moved in. Little Lucy died here also and also Charles D. the father of the family in 1923. There are only two of the family left here now, Elizabeth and me--but the others come and go and we have many happy reunions, at the date of this writing in 1938.

In the summer of 1910, Bishop Williams took our daughter, Elizabeth Weber and myself to England to attend the Lambeth Conference. It was our first trip across the Atlantic, and we had very delightful traveling companions, Bishop and Mrs. Remington. The ocean trip was delightful, we had good weather and we enjoyed the experience very much. When we reached England we were taken to the Palace of the dear Bishop of London, with about eight other guests, Americans all. The English people are very hospitable but leave you alone more than the Americans do. After being shown our rooms we went out in the lovely gardens where we could enjoy the sunshine or read. Later the Bishops and Clergy arrived and we had tea in the garden and then went to our rooms to rest. The Bishop of London is a very dear, simple hearted old man, who had turned the large part of his grounds into small gardens which the village folk used to plant. This was just after the War, you know. There were five other guests, and we all had a merry time. The dear Bishop of London had little wooly white shawls for us to wear when we went into the chapel for evening devotions before we retired for the night, for the chapel was cold. The Bishop had turned his palace into a hospital during the war and was a chaplain for the boys. We had tea at Lambeth Palace and stayed about two days. The tea was served for a large group of ladies from all parts of the world. One dear lady was very deaf and carried around her ear trumpet covered with black lace, which she held out for us to use to talk to her. She was especially delighted with Elizabeth and would look for her to get her to talk to her. She was the wife of the Bishop of Wales. The Canadian Bishop of Spring River in Northern Canada was an interesting guest--well dressed and entertaining.

The King and Queen received the Convention in Buckingham Palace Gardens with the Indian Guard with their shiny black faces, standing at attention. The Royal Family received us and we tried to make the curtsey,but found ourselves not properly nimble or graceful. Our refreshments were two or three large strawberries. We were not having sugar those days but little pill shaped tablets of saccharin. We saw the beautiful dowager Queen Alexandria in her wheel chair. It was a very delightful occasion.

A few days later we went to Southern England for a visit with Mrs. Peek. Her son had married an American girl who wished she had a small house and grounds. It was a beautiful place but built on a scale with ovens that could cook an ox at a time. Of course we saw Cathedrals and the Wax Works and visited Parliament and heard the Big Ben and saw the beautiful hills and lakes and ate some awful cold puddings and equally awful coffee. But that was not our way but we must just smile and take it. I must not forget the evening when the Mayoress of London invited the guests for tea. We had music. The tables were all set with wonderful silver tea service. Butlers by the dozens serving you. The Mayoress was quite a person and let you know if you made a mistake. The Cathedrals were beautiful. There were great groups of people visiting them from all over the world. Poor England--much water has gone under the mill since then, and now she is in fear of the future - May she find her way out of these troubled times with honor and still lead the way to a better civilization - no wars.

The Girl's Friendly Society gave a great entertainment in a great Hall--wonderful to see such a great crowd of girls. We had a

Missionary Meeting on Thread and Needle Street where missionaries from South Africa Came. There was a very large crowd--one could not hear very well. It seems they were telling sad stories of not having enough support. That seemed natural but not very cheerful.

We took a little trip on the Continent--seeing Paris and France--the gardens, art galleries, the Boulevards, and river. Trains were packed to the limit everywhere. People rushing to get to the boats to be taken to America, some bare headed and with only a small bundle of clothes. We saw Italy--that lovely spot.

In 1922 the burden was particularly heavy. Bishop Williams had given a course of lectures on the "Prophetic Ministry for Today" in New York City. It was a challenge to the Theological students so to teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ that it would affect every phase of life--in business, in the home, and in personal living. Business men were very sensitive of criticism of their methods about that time and they took offense at Bishop Williams' plain speaking and brought pressure on our churchmen that they should curb their Bishop. He should "preach the simple Gospel" and "let business alone." What did a Bishop know about business. But Bishop Williams knew that the message to deliver was a real one and needed to be delivered and that the church and business should work together if they were to hasten the coming of the Kingdom of God, for the common good and build a Christian civilization. So he continued to preach as the Spirit gave him utterance. In 1922-23 he undertook to prepare his lecture course on "The Gospel of Fellowship" for Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee, to be delivered in the spring of 1923. Just before Lent he had an appointment in the northern part of the diocese, and he came

back in a bitter snow storm. We had an opportunity to hear Kreisler play at the Arcadia, and we decided to hear his Heavenly music. Ash Wednesday morning he did not feel equal to going to the Service but spent the morning in the study writing. He had an engagement with Dr. Maxon at St. John's rectory--then the Diocesan office--for the afternoon, and I was to take my first work at the International Institute, so we both went out in the bitter cold--14 degrees below zero--and came in about the same time in the afternoon on February 14, 1923. He came in a little ahead of me. He came in from the study to meet me and sat down to tell me about his talk with Dr. Maxon. The mist was still on my glasses--there was silence--I looked up - and he had passed away.

There were many friends who came to do him honor. There were many Services in the different churches to honor his memory and speak of the value of his life and work. His body lies in the crypt of St. Paul's Cathedral--beneath the High Altar.

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