

## *Elwood Worcester*

ON THE SUGGESTION OF DR. PARKS, APPROVED BY BISHOP Lawrence, and with a special letter of praise from Dr. Weir Mitchell of Philadelphia fame, the Vestry sent a committee of four to Philadelphia to hear Dr. Elwood Worcester, rector of St. Stephen's Church. No report of the committee is in the Vestry minutes, but that it was favorable is assumed since Dr. Worcester was called to Emmanuel in April 1904 at a salary of \$9,000.

Dr. Worcester was born in Massilon, Ohio, but moved to Rochester, New York, at the age of two. The Worcester family had given the world ministers, physicians, scholars, teachers, preachers and missionaries, some with a marked tendency to mysticism.

Dr. Worcester was seventeen when his father died, leaving the family penniless and his mother nearly blind. He went to work in the New York Central freight department. One day, eating his lunch from a tin pail, the wall opposite seemed suddenly to brighten. Looking around for a cause, the light came again accompanied by an audible voice which plainly said, "Be faithful to me and I will be faithful to you." He discussed the meaning of this with the family clergyman who told him, "I can only tell you that God has spoken to you. He will reveal what you must do."

When the family finances eased a bit, he decided he must go to college and applied to Columbia. He crammed by himself for some months and had no difficulty in passing the examinations. He was offered a small scholarship, lived in a garret, ate sparsely and found outside jobs.

Graduating with honors after four years in Columbia, and having decided to go into the ministry, he asked Bishop Potter if he might take his training in Germany, but was informed he must graduate first from the General Seminary in New York.

Securing the requirements from the Registrar, he bought second hand the necessary books, and studied from 7 a.m. to midnight for the three summer months. He had a great gift of verbal memory. This quality of mind stood him in good stead in covering in three months the first and second year of study in the Seminary. He applied to take the examinations and passed both years, so he entered the third year of the Seminary. At the end he presented himself to the amazed Bishop, who now could not deny him his wish to continue his studies in Germany. He had three years in Leipzig.

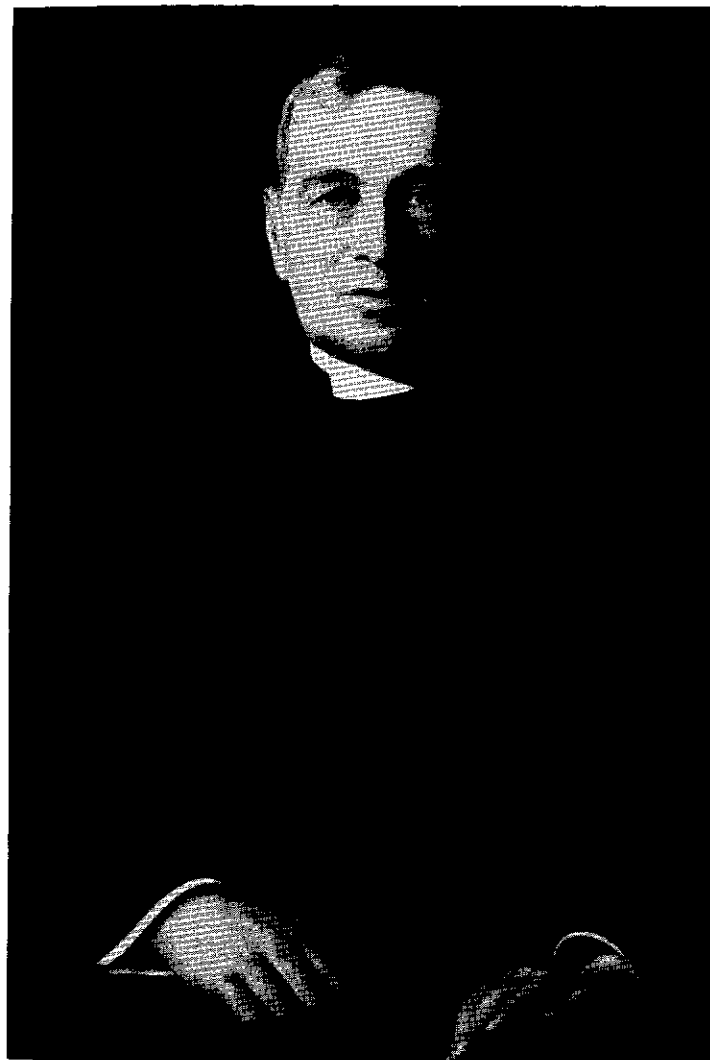
On his return to America, his first position was superintendent of a very large Sunday School, carrying on uneasily many duties in the church usually assigned to the ordained clergy, until someone spoke in his behalf to Bishop Potter. Finally he received a command to present himself for ordination. After Leipzig, it seemed very casual and simple.

He learned that the chaplain at Lehigh University had retired and applied for the position and was accepted. He found his greatest difficulty in preaching every Sunday to the college students, and great labor and thought went into his sermons.

It was here he met his wife Blanche, one of four daughters of Bishop Rulison. He took a year's leave of absence, and on their honeymoon, they went to Europe where he took charge of St. John's Church in Dresden.

In 1896 he accepted the rectorship of St. Stephen's in Philadelphia. This decided the question of whether he should become a parochial clergyman or remain a professor, a momentous decision in his life.

He found the tendency of the well-to-do people of his parish to leave the city for the beautiful suburbs of Philadelphia on "the Main Line," had already begun; still his church kept reasonably full, the pews were rented and finances secure.



*The Rev. Elwood Worcester, D.D.*

1904 - 1929

From so conspicuous a position Dr. Elwood Worcester came to Emmanuel in October 1904 at forty-one years of age.

At the end of his first year of rectorship — very definitely feeling the challenge of a predecessor of Dr. Parks' calibre — he expressed his gratitude "that the usual amount of work has been done and the usual amount of money has been contributed." Though he had found many and varied societies active in the church, it had not deterred him from at once starting new work. A Men's Bible Class, *The Parish News*, Sunday night Social Meetings, Emmanuel Class for Tuberculosis, The Wednesday Evening Health Service, Christmas Dinners for the Poor, all of which would seem to indicate that the new Rector of Emmanuel was not accepting the status quo.

The Tuberculosis Class was formed to enable poor consumptives to carry out modern treatment of the disease in their homes. In those days, sanatoria were the sole places for cure. Under Dr. Joseph H. Pratt, however, and Emmanuel, it was demonstrated that rest, fresh air and abundant food and careful medical supervision could effect a cure in the homes of the poor in a great city. This was a pioneer project with success equal to the best of sanatoria. It was carried on under Emmanuel's aegis for eighteen years, and finally was taken over by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Without the personal interest, stimulation, and encouragement of Dr. Pratt, however, it soon disintegrated, but not before this home method was widely adopted in the treatment of tuberculosis.

As early as 1906 the Rector pointed out the need of a new Parish House. The present rooms were used to capacity — there must be space to grow in or you "drop back." He advocated buying the two adjoining houses, nos. 11 and 13 Newbury Street, and building thereon a suitable Parish House. A committee was appointed to look into this daring suggestion.

During the past year Mrs. S. Reed Anthony had built Emmanuel Memorial House on Newcomb Street near the Church of The Ascension in memory of Andrew G. Weeks. It was carefully designed and constructed for its purpose of "Settle-

ment Work" and given as a gift to Emmanuel. "The house will not serve as a seminary for paupers," said Dr. Worcester, "or as a home where alms are given out, but as a place of social meeting without condescension on one side or servility on the other, as a school of character, and an instrument for the development of mind and body." Many Emmanuel parishioners, both men and women, gave many hours of instruction and supervision and financial support to this favorite Emmanuel project during the next thirty-five years.

One day in Newbury Street a woman said to Dr. Worcester, "I often see your people coming out of church and oh! it is a beautiful congregation!" He agreed, but did not confess to her that he sometimes wished it were not quite so "beautiful," but that it had a larger infusion of humbler persons and that Emmanuel represented more of all sorts and conditions of men.

Perhaps that was one reason for his loving the Wednesday evening Health Services, for there surely were collected "all sorts and conditions" from far and near — all with one thing in common — seeking help and an answer for their troubles, mental and physical.

The success of the "T.B." Class led to serving a larger group of unhappy people with physical and nervous afflictions, victims of injurious habits such as alcoholism and drug addictions. This grew into that far reaching form of treatment which became known as the Emmanuel Movement.

Dr. Worcester was ably assisted by Dr. Samuel McComb, by birth an Irishman. His training, his intellectual and spiritual interests coincided strangely with those of Dr. Worcester. He was educated at Oxford, studied in Germany, endowed with a mind "naturally Christian," a man of faith and prayer.

It is not within the scope of this short history to include a detailed exposition of the Emmanuel Movement. Its basic concern is now widely accepted by both the Christian church and the medical profession. Dr. Worcester and Dr. McComb published several books on the subject which are still available at many bookstores. Therefore, here will be only a few direct

quotations from these writings, which it is believed will provide a "sampling" of their beliefs and procedures.\*

"The part that I reserve for myself and the other clergymen in this work is the office of moral and spiritual advisor — and this alone — an office for which we are fitted by long training and experience."

"Our two rules — the treatment of the patients only by the advice and the diagnosis of a physician, and of accepting only functional cases."

"Fundamental — that body and soul together constitute the integrity of human nature; that these two are mysteriously but most intimately associated, so that for every event in the one there is an event in the other, and that no good or evil can come to man which does not affect the whole man, soul and body."

"I learned from psychology the law of suggestion; namely, that desirable states and conditions skilfully placed before the mind, when the mind is receptive, have a tendency to realize themselves through the mechanism of the nervous system."

"I am disposed to attach quite as much importance to rest — or to rest alternating with work, to useful and interesting occupation, to explanations, to direct moral appeal, and above all, to religious faith and prayer."

"We are not skilled physicians — we are teachers of religion; and we believe that religion is a reality, that it has ideas and emotions which can release psychic forces strong enough to create a unified state of mind in which inhibitions, weaknesses, disharmonies incline to disappear, with consequent beneficial reaction on the physical organism."

"In the psychical region, it is the emotions that make or mar our world. The emotion of fear disintegrates and disharmonizes the inner life, while its opposite — faith — unifies, literally makes whole. All around us are men and women enslaved by secret fears; fears of disease, fears of poverty, fear of

\* "The Christian Religion as a Healing Power," by Elwood Worcester, D.D., Ph.D.; Samuel McComb, M.A., D.D.

being alone, fear of old age, fear of life, fear of death, fear of anything and everything in this world and in the world beyond."

"The idea of God as a friend and companion of the soul, whose love is the deepest fact in the universe; the idea of forgiveness, the possibility of a man breaking with his past, the reconstructing his character on a new moral and intellectual basis; the idea of redemption in which a divine power enters the soul and frees it from all that enslaves and degrades; the idea of losing one's petty self in order to find a larger self in the life of the family, or the community, or the world; all these great conceptions have intrinsically the power to remove morbidity, dissipate despair, uplift the soul, and direct the energies of the individual into channels of health and freedom."

"The nervous patient requires to be taught to pray. Psychologists and medical men are agreed that prayer may contribute to the restoration of health."

"Faith is not a mere abstract, intellectual assent, but carries in it the feeling of trust, confidence, expectation. It is Faith that heals."

"If cure there is to be, it must come from within. It is an achievement of their own will, the product of their own character."

"The ultimate aim of the Emmanuel Movement is the harmonious development and exercise of all human powers, physical, mental, moral and religious."

Should not we in Emmanuel take great pride in the knowledge that through Emmanuel's ministry, peace, health, faith and security were brought to many thousands of people across the world? It is a great heritage and one with which we must still keep faith.

In 1908 the country was in the throes of a serious financial panic. "Such conditions," says Dr. Worcester, "are particularly trying to a church like Emmanuel which is unprovided with an endowment and is obliged to raise large sums to maintain its present undertakings. I am happy to say we have met

our obligations, paid our apportionment (and may we never again allow Emmanuel to be reported 'delinquent'!), supported all our former undertakings and added new ones. In order that the normal development of our work may be appreciated, I will transcribe from our year books the total receipts of the last six years:"

1903 — \$66,988	1906 — \$86,207
1904 — 68,907	1907 — 92,749
1905 — 71,648	1908 — 93,305

The philanthropies and social life had grown enormously due to the new Emmanuel House. "New growth means wider financial support of the whole congregation — not the forty or fifty who have borne the burden in the past."

In 1911 a history-making event took place. Emmanuel bought a rectory. For fifty-one years our rectors lived here and there where they willed. After about ten years, during which the Vestry ignored any responsibility, they allowed a sum of \$2000 for rent and taxes above the salary. That a church such as Emmanuel should house its Rector and family — a wife and four children — seemed to be accepted by the parishioners, for the response to the Vestry's letter met the cost one hundred per cent. It might be timely to introduce here the "Tale of Emmanuel's Rectories." One generally thinks of a Rectory as a permanent part of an established church — but since 1911 (49 years) Emmanuel has bought or rented seven rectories, and each change or sale seems to represent a financial loss.

Over a considerable period in 1912 the Vestry concentrated on organizing and promoting an Endowment Fund of \$200,000. This apparently had results as, in 1919, the treasurer's report shows an endowment income of \$6,767.

At the time of the great Chelsea Fire in 1908 Dr. Worcester was among the first on the spot to organize relief. This was a city of dwellings and 15,000 were left homeless. The story goes that Dr. Worcester looked for a house still standing and large enough for his purpose. He found one and also

found therein two elderly ladies. He suggested that Chelsea was an uncomfortable and dreary place to be in at that time — he extolled the sunshine of the South, offered them a considerable rent, and in two days they went to Florida. He opened a hospital, secured medical and nursing care from Boston and offered care to suffering mothers and babies, and it seems certain that many are alive today because of this prompt action. All of Emmanuel's societies and their volunteers participated in this relief and supported it to the cost of \$40,000.

A true picture of Dr. Worcester cannot be had if mention of his vacation life is omitted. He kept a small seaworthy fishing schooner in Newfoundland waters, and every summer he sailed the northern seas, fished, hunted big game and pearls, and climbed remote mountains.\* He had read that John and Sebastian Cabot four hundred years before him had discovered the northern part of the North American continent and had found pearls there, so he resolved to hunt for such treasure. He and his guide paddled up the rivers and eventually collected some 400 pearls of varying sizes, opening thousands of large black mussel shells to find them. He had many of the better ones made into simple rings and presented them to the brides he married. As this news spread, his weddings greatly increased! This part of his autobiography from which much of these personal sidelights come, is absorbing and exciting.

It was in January 1915 that a study was made of "the pledge or envelope system" and very shortly thereafter it was put into effect. After ten Sundays, a comparison was made and showed a decided increase in the collections much to the joy of the Vestry, one should rather say — "to the satisfaction of the Vestry" — for nothing so alive as "joy" enters these written Vestry records!

It should be remembered that all through these years Dr. Worcester and Dr. McComb carried on the health work and had drawn to them a great body of men and women who

\* "Life's Adventure" by Elwood Worcester.

needed and sought their help. The Wednesday evening conferences continued overflowing, 500-800 persons. These were simply meetings of intercessory prayer and for the dissemination of good ideas in regard to health of soul and health of body. Requests for prayers came from all over the country and from Europe — even one from Scotland for the recovery of a sick child. The meeting was followed by light refreshments which, some skeptics believed, swelled the numbers.

Because of an indicated need a Bureau of Social Service was established under Mr. Courtenay Baylor, and conducted in close relationship with the Emmanuel Movement, not dealing with poverty and destitution, but to study and correct habits, tendencies and dispositions of men and women which create inefficiencies in families. He was especially successful with alcoholics and drug addicts and in job placement. Mr. Baylor continued on with Dr. Worcester long after the latter's resignation from Emmanuel.

There was an active Boys' Club — from 60 to 80 at their meetings — a supper and a speaker on current problems; it is of interest to note that in 1927 one subject was "Delinquency". The Students' Club for girls starting in a small way developed rapidly. This began in Dr. Parks' day in one house on St. James Avenue — a club for students coming to the city from out of town; two more houses were added as it grew and prospered until in 1914 the Club moved into a beautiful new building at 96 The Fenway called Students House where some thirty to forty girls lived.

In January 1918, in the midst of the First World War, the Anthony Memorial Organ was given by Mrs. Randolph Frothingham and the reconstruction of the chancel and chapel organs was the gift of Emmanuel Parishioners. "These great organs," as Dr. Worcester said at their dedication, "are the latest product of art and science. In the midst of the horrors of war stand these instruments of peace.

There are two types of organs — the chancel organ is that of the classical English Cathedral organ, while the gallery organ

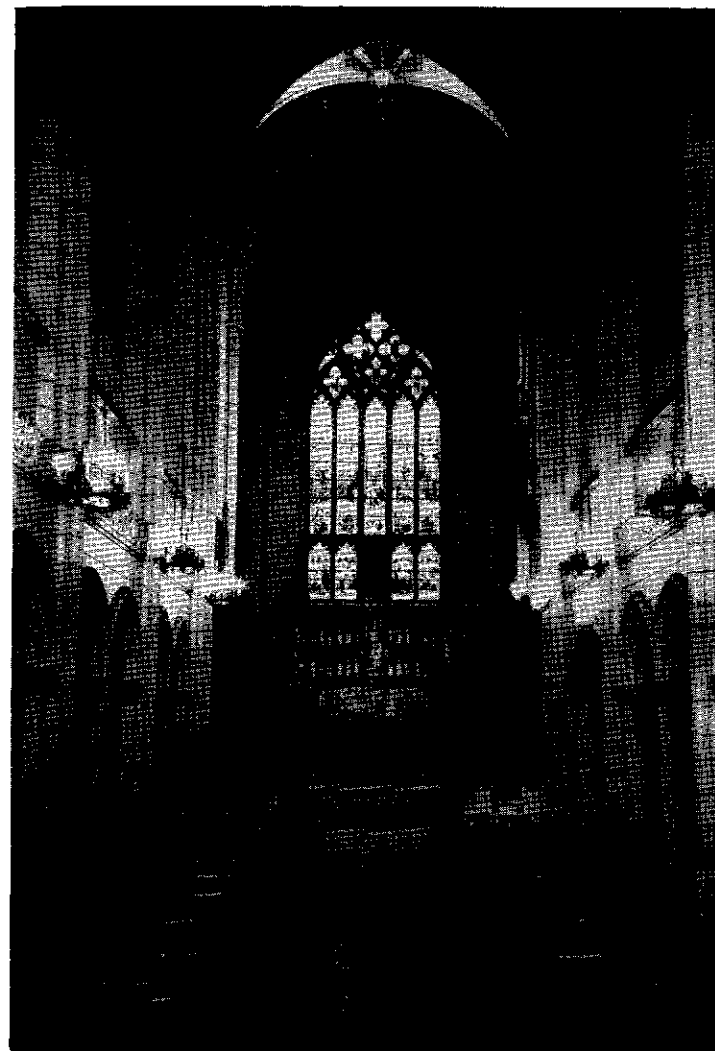
is of the type of the French Cathedral; "together there is no superior organ in America and perhaps none in Christendom." The gallery Anthony organ is one of the great beauties of Emmanuel. Its oaken case designed by Francis R. Allen fills the rear of the church, rising in beautiful Gothic tracery on both side of the large stained glass window. The specifications were prepared by Emmanuel's organist, W. Lynwood Farnum.

Dr. Worcester paid great tribute to the four organists who spanned his ministry of twenty-five years. "Always artistic, always satisfying, Arthur Hyde who was as noble and delightful in character as he was in his playing; next Weston Gales; then came that man of genius, cut off in the midst of a glorious career, W. Lynwood Farnum, and after him the classical, conscientious Albert Snow."

He frequently mentioned Miss Florence Downey, the secretary to the Rector of Emmanuel for over forty years. She came as a young girl in the early days of Dr. Parks and remained all her active life through Dr. Osgood's ministry. Those who knew her will not forget this truly remarkable woman. The two Deaconesses should not be slighted — Miss Goodwin who looked after the parish poor and for years held Bible classes, and Miss Libby. The latter was amazing in her energy, and what a delightful sense of humor! The choir boys were her special charge during the winter; she supervised the Summer Camp for women and children in North Scituate, and finally became housemother of the new Students House.

It might be well to mention here that both Dr. Parks and Dr. Worcester in their reports frequently stressed the importance of the lay volunteer — man or woman, and his value to the church as a whole.

Dr. Huntington, on one of his returns to Emmanuel, asserted, "From its very foundation, Emmanuel has been an active and industrious church, a real beehive in which there was little buzzing and no stinging." (It is assumed this referred to the female parishioners!), and, echoed Dr. Worcester, "I may add that it continues to this day with but few



*The Leslie Lindsey Memorial Chapel*

drones ——. I do not believe any church has kinder, better, more willing or more intelligent workers.”

Eleven and Thirteen Newbury Street had now been bought and given to Emmanuel by Mr. and Mrs. Walter C. Baylies. These were adapted and renovated as a Parish House at a cost of \$88,000 to the obvious joy and comfort of the workers — a fine place to work and “to grow.”

During the years of Dr. Worcester’s rectorship, there were many strangers attracted to both services of the church on Sundays, filling the church. But, as Dr. Worcester said, “No stranger can take the place of our own people. So many other interests and occupations claim our attention that the habit of regular church attendance is becoming rare. When the bicycle craze was at its height, it was bad enough, but the passion for motoring is even more inimical to the church as it carries whole families away for the day.”

Not only were they away for the day, but they were fast moving to the country to live. This took many “well to do” families from the fold and several of Emmanuel’s most bountiful contributors had died, so that Emmanuel was definitely feeling its “hey-day” was on the wane. To raise its morale came a most satisfying “blood transfusion”; in 1924 the beautiful Leslie Lindsey Memorial Chapel was completed and consecrated on October 1. Without doubt this was the most exquisite building of its kind in the United States and perhaps in the world. This is the second time we have suggested the World’s “best.” Are we, the parishioners, who daily live in this beauty, aware of its superlative priority?

This chapel was the gift of William and Anne Hawthorne Lindsey in memory of their daughter Leslie and her husband, Stuart Southam Mason, who lost their lives in the sinking of the *Lusitania*, May 7, 1915.

Mr. Lindsey made one condition, that he, the Rector, and Mr. Francis R. Allen as architect of the church, should be the building committee, subject to no restraint; that the building should be made to the least detail as perfect as contemporary



art and architecture would permit, and that artists from any country whose work excelled might be consulted and employed. What a plum for an architect and what riches for Emmanuel.

The joy and color of the interior are centered in the chancel and the reredos. The latter is a miracle of cut stone, carved, sculptured and painted with such delicate precision that it scarcely seems the work of human hands. The windows also are eloquent. Leaflets are in the chapel which interpret the story here told and point out details of great beauty. In constant use, it is one of the glories of Emmanuel.

Dr. Worcester tendered his resignation in January 1929 to become effective in October, that he might complete twenty-five years at Emmanuel.

He could now rightly boast that no other parish of our communion possessed more perfect buildings. The Endowment Fund had grown from \$5,500 to \$247,415. The influences of Emmanuel had spread throughout the world — spiritual, moral, social, missionary, and intellectual — and perhaps here lies its greatness.

Surely no one would expect or want Dr. Worcester to be modest in these tremendous and rich accomplishments of his twenty-five years — untold beauties in our Church, and out-reaching service to his community and mankind.

A fund was raised by the Vestry close to \$100,000, the income to be used by Dr. and Mrs. Worcester during their lifetime. Also, in order that Dr. Worcester need not move from his home of many years, 186 Marlborough Street, some friends made it possible for him to purchase the Rectory from Emmanuel and it was deeded to him and his heirs. His daughter Constance still lives there.

Dr. Worcester, with Mr. Courtenay Baylor, continued his specialized personal work, as well as an active lecture program for thirteen years under the name of the Craigie Foundation. He died at the age of seventy-eight on July 19, 1940.

"Of such was Elwood Worcester — a spiritual aristocrat."