

Z. T. Sweeney: *Preacher and Peacemaker*. By Lester G. McAllister. (St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1968. Pp. 128. Frontispiece, notes, bibliography, index. \$3.25.)

In the half century which began in 1871, within a Protestant group in Indiana which sought to convince itself that it was no denomination, the most famous preacher was the eloquent and dynamic Zachary Taylor Sweeney of the Disciples of Christ. As he is described in this short volume, the energy of the man is much more impressive than his message. Though there is, on virtually every page, a reference to his oratorical skill, there are few quotations from his sermons.

Sweeney was a builder of churches, but he was not averse to leaving them when a fresh challenge beckoned. His congregation in Columbus, Indiana, is his greatest monument, but he left it three times for other charges. Sweeney's longest period of service at Columbus lasted from 1876 until 1889, when President Benjamin Harrison made him consul-general in Constantinople. Family ties, inadequate salary, and considerations of health caused him to return, after two years, to his church in Columbus. Evidently the Turkish government was not upset by his departure, because Sweeney had encouraged missionary efforts during his short stay.

The loyal Republicanism of Sweeney's father-in-law, Joseph I. Irwin, and his brother-in-law, William G. Irwin, was rewarded by another political appointment in 1897, when the famous preacher was named commissioner of fisheries in Indiana. Shortly thereafter the long pastorate in Columbus was terminated.

Sweeney deserves an honored place in Indiana's conservation movement. For fourteen years, 1897-1911, he spoke on the protection of fish and game in every part of the state. He convinced most Hoosiers that hunting and fishing licenses were desirable, that poachers and vandals should be fined, and that the operation of game preserves and fish hatcheries was a proper function of state government.

The last part of this biography constitutes an apology for the Disciples of Christ, for their stress upon their unwillingness to hold to creeds, and, at the same time, for their insistence upon immersion as the only form of baptism. Readers are told repeatedly that Sweeney was a peacemaker and that he supported the ecumenical movement. But Sweeney distrusted theologians who questioned immersion and who engaged in "biblical criticism." On occasion, he could charge biblical critics with heresy (p. 91). From 1919 until his death in 1926, Sweeney, while pleading for "unity," stood firmly for exclusion from the brotherhood of all who were not committed to immersion.

In his last labor of love, Sweeney was aided by William G. Irwin; his devoted wife, Linnie; his daughter, Nettie Sweeney Miller; Marshall Reeves, and others. The Christian Foundation, which they established, made the College of Religion at Butler a reality, and classes began in September, 1925. The Christian Theological Seminary is an outgrowth of that college.