

Wylie a 'soul-searcher'

Wylie, from page A1

ing a display before the people, because his natural talents lead him that way . . . Do we serve God more by trying to attend to subjects which do not interest us, or by meditating on things which do, even though they be not of the kind commonly considered as religious."

Even as Wylie wrestled with his intentions, he expressed doubt about his ability to preach successfully. "I have determined to make a desperate effort to preach, or rather to speak before the people without writing out at full length . . . I studied out its meaning from Stuart's Commentary as well as I was able, and with fear and trembling made the attempt this morning."

Two months later he wrote, "For the greater part of the day I have studied at divine things, not with my whole heart, but with the books open before my eyes, and with my mind wandering into every other subject. By Dec. 17, 1837, Wylie

must have realized that he lacked the necessary enthusiasm for the ministry. "... I attended the religious meeting at the Widow Hemphill's, but thought more about the things of this world and empty things rather than about the things of heaven."

The ministry's loss was, indeed, the university's gain. The young professor was still a long way from speaking with confidence in the classroom, but his transformation from minister to teacher was nearly complete. In January of 1838, he entered into his diary, "All things go on as usual, today tried to lecture, the day was dull and so was I. I did not get along with ease, the old vacuum in my noodle is returning. I begin to feel lazy and stupid."

Part of the extended life of teachers is that which can be found in the memories of students. In 1928 one of them wrote of Wylie, "He was a gentle, lovable man, affectionately called 'Pap' Wylie by our class."