

The Princeton Seminary Bulletin

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THE Seminary opened happily for its One Hundred and Twelfth Session with the registration of students on September 25th. On the following day the students, Faculty and friends assembled in Miller Chapel for the opening exercises of the Seminary. The Faculty were all present, except Professor Robert Dick Wilson, D.D., who was delayed for several days because he was on the steamer just leaving dock at Yokohoma at the moment of the earthquake, and Professor Caspar Wistar Hodge, Ph.D., who has been given a leave of absence for a year because not yet fully recovered from his illness. The student body filled the chapel, its total number being two hundred and sixteen against two hundred and fifteen the year before. The Junior Class numbers seventy-two. This is the largest enrollment and the largest Junior Class the Seminary has had since 1898. The opening address was given by the Rev. James M. Black, M.A., Minister of St. George's United Free Church, Edinburgh, Scotland. His subject was "The Present-Day Task of Preaching."

Some changes have been made in the Seminary course. On account of the illness of Dr. Hodge, in addition to their other work, Professor John D. Davis, D.D., is instructing the Seniors, and Professor Frederick W. Loetscher, D.D., the Middlers, in Systematic Theology, Rev. Finley D. Jenkins, B.D., having the Juniors and the elective classes in Theology.

Professor George Johnson, D.D., '96, Professor of Systematic Theology in Lincoln University, has been engaged for a part of his time to relieve Dr. Greene of the instruction in the courses of Apologetics, Theism and Evidences, and he is also giving a course in Religious Pedagogy.

The Rev. J. C. R. Ewing, D.D., is again assisting Dr. Stevenson in the Department of Missions, and several of the missionaries in residence will also take part in the instruction of this department.

For the purpose of enlarging the Department of Homiletics and of giving frequent practice in sermonizing under competent criticism, President Stevenson and Dr. Erdman are giving instruction in this Department in addition to their own courses.

The class-room schedule has been revised so that most of the courses which formerly ran one hour a week through the year are now given two hours weekly through one semester.

On Accommodations for Seminary Commencement

It was most gratifying that so many of the alumni were able to return for the Seminary Commencement last May and could prolong their stay for a night. The Seminary is very glad to provide rooms, furnished with necessary bedding, for the alumni who wish to remain over night. The number of rooms available is limited by the fact that many students retain their rooms over Commencement. It will greatly facilitate the arrangements for the 1924 Commencement if those who purpose staying over night and wish rooms will address a letter to the Seminary ten days before the date of Commencement, May 6th, asking that rooms be reserved. Those who on account of physical limitation wish first floor rooms will kindly indicate it in their applications.

JOHN DEWITT, D.D., LL.D.

Dr. DeWitt died at his residence in Princeton on Monday, November 19, 1923. He was in the eighty-second year of his age, having been born on October 10, 1842. Funeral services were held at his home on Wednesday, November 21, and on the following day his body was laid to rest in Harrisburg, Pa., the city in which he was born and in which he received his academic education preparatory to his entrance at Princeton College in the fall of 1858.

In 1912, being then seventy years old, and having completed twenty years of distinguished service as the Archibald Alexander Professor of Church History, he asked the Board of Directors to accept his resignation. With deep regret and with much grateful appreciation of his able, faithful and successful labors as a member of the Faculty, his request was granted and

he was made Professor Emeritus. He thereupon withdrew from all active participation in the work of the Seminary, but always—even within the two weeks of his fatal illness—manifested his keen interest in the affairs of the institution. To his many friends in this place it was most gratifying to see, and it will be a source of pleasure to his former students as well as to others who may be unacquainted with the facts to learn, that his old age was serene and happy, and that while in recent years his physical health was somewhat impaired, his mental faculties were remarkably well preserved to within a few days of his death.

Dr. DeWitt was the son of the Rev. Dr. William R. and Mary Elizabeth (Wallace) DeWitt. The father, born in 1792, and educated at Salem Academy, Washington Co., N. Y., and at Princeton and Union Colleges and the Associate Seminary of New York, became in 1818 the pastor of the Presbyterian Church (Market Square) of Harrisburg, and remained in that position until his death in 1867, thus all but completing fifty years of service in that pastorate. The son attended the Harrisburg Academy, but his preparation for college was so richly supplemented, especially in the classics, by private instruction from both his mother and his father, that he was readily admitted at the unusually early age of sixteen years to the Sophomore class of Princeton College.

After his graduation with the class of 1861, he studied law for some months, and then became a candidate for the Gospel ministry, pursuing his studies at Princeton Seminary from 1861 to 1864, and at Union Theological Seminary, New York, in 1864-1865. In 1865 he was ordained by the Third Presbytery of New York. The sermon which he prepared for this service dealt with the subject of eternal retribution, a problem that had perplexed him a great

deal. Bringing this fact to the attention of the Committee on the Parts of Trial, he asked and obtained their consent to make the question the theme of his sermon before the Presbytery. The impression made by the young preacher—he was not yet twenty-one years of age—was such that, contrary to the usual custom on such occasions, he was permitted to present his discussion in its entirety and through the influence of some who heard him, was soon thereafter invited to supply the pulpit of the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church during the following summer, an appointment which he gladly, though with some trepidation, accepted, and which he fulfilled with an ability and success that gave unmistakable promise of a notable career in the ministry.

His first charge was at Irvington, N.Y., where he labored from 1865 to 1869. From 1869 to 1876 he was the honored and beloved pastor of the large and influential Central Congregational Church of Boston. Though he often referred to his Boston ministry and to his fellowship with his Congregational brethren as an exceptionally delightful period of his life, he welcomed a return to the Church of his fathers, and in 1876 he accepted a call to become the co-pastor, with the venerable and highly esteemed Dr. Henry Augustus Boardman, of the Tenth Presbyterian Church, then situated at Twelfth and Walnut Streets, Philadelphia. The happy coöperation of the two ministers was destined to be of brief duration, for that same year Dr. Boardman was compelled by ill health to bring to a close his thirty-three years of service in that church, his first and only pastoral charge. The extraordinary respect and affection with which the congregation had supported their veteran pastor was in large measure transferred to his successor, and Dr. DeWitt ably sustained the noble traditions of that eminent pulpit during the six years in which he occupied it.

It was in this church that Dr. DeWitt developed a homiletic specialty that gave a unique distinction to his Sunday afternoon service. Having cultivated for years his natural fondness for historical reading, he now composed brief series of sermons on some of the outstanding personalities and movements in the history of the Church. As many of his published discourses show, he had a rare gift of being able clearly to grasp, fairly to estimate, and graphically to portray the salient features of such biographical themes. These discourses—specimens of which he often gave to the students at the close of the Senior year, by way of illustrating the sermonic use to which they could put their historical studies—were marked by breadth and largeness of treatment, with the avoidance of unnecessary detail; emphasis on the distinctive qualities of the leader under consideration; deep religious fervor; and an ease and charm of style which made the lessons of the life reviewed stand out with impressive clearness and force.

In 1885 Dr. DeWitt published a volume entitled *Sermons on the Christian Life*. They are a representative group of his parish sermons. It may be regretted that they do not furnish a sample of those historical discourses which had been so heartily commended not only by the more thoughtful members of his own congregation but also by professional men and women—many of whom were not regular attendants at any religious services—who thronged to hear these series. But the published selection is one of high merit. Dr. DeWitt's preaching, whether topical or textual, was always interesting and instructive, by reason of his orderly and systematic presentation of Christian truth expressed in language that was as sincere and veracious as it was clear and cogent. Caring little about phrase-making or the mere adornments of speech, he unfolded the content of biblical facts

and doctrines with much spiritual wisdom and a sympathetic and intimate application to the religious needs of his hearers.

Dr. DeWitt's well-known aptitude for historical study and the wide and favorable impression which his historical sermons in Philadelphia had made attracted the attention of the authorities of Lane Seminary when in search of a successor to the late Zephaniah M. Humphrey in the chair of Church History. They extended a call to Dr. DeWitt, and for six years, from 1882 to 1888, he served in that capacity. His Inaugural Address, on *Church History as a Science, as a Theological Discipline, and as a Mode of the Gospel* (Cincinnati, 1883), is a comprehensive discussion of the theme, and elaborately sets forth those principles of theological encyclopaedia which he so ably advocated and illustrated in his professorial work.

In the year 1888 he accepted a call to McCormick Theological Seminary as Professor of Apologetics and Missions. While here he was repeatedly called to the chair of Church History at Princeton, and in 1892 he finally yielded to the urgency of the Directors, entering upon his duties in the fall of that year. Rich and varied as his services had been, it was in this last position that he made his largest, best sustained, and most valuable contribution to the work of the Church. This brief notice does not permit any estimate of the twenty years of devoted toil which Dr. DeWitt gave to this Seminary. It must suffice to say that in many lands and climes his students, when they learn that their beloved teacher has gone to his reward, will give renewed expression to their gratitude that it was their privilege to study Church History under one who commanded alike their respect, their admiration, and their affectionate regard by reason of his broad general culture, his thorough familiarity with

his special field of knowledge, his stimulating and engaging methods as a lecturer, his courteous and affable manner, and his high Christian character.

Dr. DeWitt was a voluminous contributor to *The Presbyterian and Reformed Review*, and to its successor the *Princeton Theological Review*, of which he was for some five years the managing editor. Among his more noteworthy articles the following may here be mentioned: The Testimony of the Holy Spirit to the Bible (1895); William Greenough Thayer Shedd (1895); The Planting of Princeton College (1897); Princeton College Administrations in the Eighteenth Century (1897); Princeton College Administrations in the Nineteenth Century (1897); Jonathan Edwards: A Study (1904); Archibald Alexander's Preparation for his Professorship (1905); The Intellectual Life of Samuel Miller (1906). He took an active part by voice and pen in the controversy on the revision of the Confession of Faith, arguing in favor of leaving the standards unchanged. He was much sought as a speaker for special historical occasions, and though in later years he felt constrained to decline many such invitations, the addresses which he consented to deliver, a number of which have been preserved, are model productions of that kind, as admirable in form and content as they are felicitous in their adaptation to the purpose which called them forth.

The degree of Doctor of Divinity *honoris causa* was conferred on him by Princeton College in 1877 and that of Doctor of Laws by Hanover College in 1888. For many years Dr. DeWitt was a life trustee of Princeton University, a position to the congenial duties of which he devoted much of his leisure in the years of his retirement from the work of the Seminary.

Dr. DeWitt was twice married. His first

wife was Laura Aubrey Beaver, of Danville, Pa., who died in 1892. In 1894 he married Mrs. Elinor Maclay Allen, of Erie, Pa., who survives him.

—F.W.L.

Employees Deceased

Few of the Alumni will fail to remember Robert Hendrickson, the colored man who served as janitor of Stuart Hall and of the Seminary Chapel. They will remember him for his dignity, his courtly bearing, and his reverential attitude as he stood in the chapel vestibule or as he took notes up to the pulpit or made a bow before it as he passed across to open the windows. Those who talked with him learned of his wonderful visions of the Lord which were so very real to him and influential in his Christian life. He has been for many years an honored elder in the Witherspoon Street Presbyterian Church. He was in the service of the Seminary from 1899 until he retired on a pension a couple of years ago. His death occurred on October 13th.

Another long-time employee of the Seminary, Peter Dowd, died about a year ago. He will be remembered as the genial Irish factotum of the Library whose conversation was salted with a wit all his own.

Alumni Notes

1870

Rev. Robert P. Shaw was elected moderator of the Presbytery of Olympia at its fall meeting.

1873

Rev. Richard B. Webster celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of his pastorate over the Westminster Church of Wilkes-Barre, Pa., on June 3, 1923.

1878

Rev. David R. Moore, D.D., and his congregation recently celebrated the one hundredth anniversary of the Dunlapville Church of Liberty, Ind.

1879

Rev. Charles A. Salmond, D.D., has changed his residence from South Morningside, Edinburgh, to Allanvale, Dunblane, Scotland. Dr. Salmond continues to be senior pastor of the South Morningside United Free Church, which he has served since 1890.

1881

Rev. Adolos Allen has been engaged as hotel preacher at Lake Minnewaska, N.Y., from July to October.

1881-1882

Rev. Thomas H. Candor, a graduate student, 1881-82, received the honorary degree of D.D. from Monmouth College, Illinois, at its commencement in June.

1886

Rev. Charles E. Craven, D.D., has moved from Mattituck, N.Y., and is now the acting pastor of the South Church of Montclair, N.J., with his address, 5 High Street.

1887-1888

Rev. William M. Woodfin, a graduate student, 1887-88, was given the honorary degree of D.D. by Cumberland University in June.

1889

The Samuel J. McClenaghan Memorial Chapel in the pine belt of Burlington County, N.J., was dedicated June 14, 1923.

1890

Rev. Crofton C. Adams has moved to Maple Plain, Minn.

Rev. Arthur F. Bishop, D.D., has moved from Athens, Ga., to 626 South 54th Street, Philadelphia, Pa.

1891

Rev. Jay C. Hanna has moved from Los Angeles, Calif., to 504 Myrtle Street, Glendale, Calif.

Rev. Louis E. Holden, D.D., has resigned the presidency of James Millikin University of Decatur, Ill.

1892

Rev. Matthew J. Hyndman, D.D., was elected moderator of the Synod of Pennsylvania at its recent meeting.

1893

Rev. George E. Gillespie, who has been pastor of the church at Coatesville, Pa., since 1902, has become pastor of the First Church of Brookline, Mass. His address is 8 Elm Street.