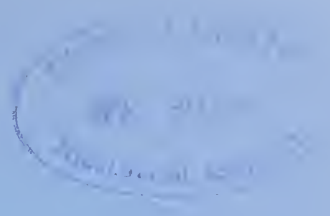


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PRINCETON

SEMINARY

BULLETIN

The Theological Dilemma of
the Minister

Jas. I. McCord

The Idea of Necessary Being
Wholeness of Life

John H. Hick

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Calvinism and Confirmation

Donald R. Kocher

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Donald Macleod, Editor

Edward J. Jurji, Book Review Editor

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IN MEMORIAM

Charles Rosenbury Erdman
July 20, 1866-May 10, 1960

The Faculty of Princeton Theological Seminary expresses its deep sense of loss at the passing of one of its beloved colleagues, the Reverend Charles R. Erdman, D.D. He was associated with this Faculty from November 1, 1906, when he was inaugurated as Professor of Practical Theology, until his retirement in 1936. Ever since his retirement, he continued to be closely related to the life of the Seminary. Deep as our sense of loss is at his passing, we are profoundly grateful to God for the unique presence and influence of his life among us. His career was both long and eventful, and one that is seldom granted to anyone. The long list of his achievements and honors can hardly do justice to the remarkable quality and richness of his life and ministry.

He was born in Fayetteville, New York on July 20, 1866, the son of the Reverend William Jacob and Henrietta Rosenbury Erdman. He joined the Presbyterian Church in Jamestown, New York, at the age of fourteen. After being privately tutored, he entered Princeton College and was graduated with the Class of 1886. The next year he was engaged as an instructor in the Franklin School of Germantown, Pennsylvania. In the Fall of 1887, he entered Princeton Theological Seminary. After his first year, he traveled abroad, and returned to complete his course and be graduated with the Class of 1891. He was licensed by the Presbytery of New Brunswick and ordained on May 8,

1891, by the Presbytery of Philadelphia North. After serving as Stated Supply of the Overbrook Presbyterian Church from April 1, 1890 to May 1, 1890, he became pastor of that Church and served it until 1897. From Overbrook, he was called to become pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Germantown, Pennsylvania. After a memorable pastorate in Germantown, in 1905 he was called to the Faculty of Princeton Theological Seminary to assume the professorship of Practical Theology. The purpose of the seminary position was to "give emphasis to the practical side of seminary teaching," not only through class instruction in practical theology, but also by working with students "in the practical Christian work in nearby cities." The Reverend E. D. Warfield, D.D., President of the Board of Directors, presided and administered the pledge to the professor-elect. The charge was delivered by the Reverend Maitland Alexander, D.D., who represented the Board. Dr. Erdman's address, entitled, "Modern Practical Theology," was termed a "masterly exposition" of the principles of that department. It was subsequently published in *The Observer*. Dr. Erdman was always popular with his students. During his more than thirty years as a professor, and eighteen years as a student adviser, his influence upon the graduates of Princeton Seminary was incalculable.

Dr. Erdman was elected Moderator of the 137th General Assembly in 1925. He served as president of the Board of Foreign Missions from 1928 to 1940. He was a long-time member of the

Board of Trustees of the Westminster Choir College, and served on its Faculty. While Professor of Practical Theology in the Seminary, from 1924 to 1934, he served as Pastor of the First Church in Princeton. He was a founder of the Princeton chapter of the Young Men's Christian Association and past president of its Board of Directors. He also served as president of the Columbus Boy-choir School. Most recently, he was president of the Princeton Symphony Orchestra Association.

Dr. Erdman was honored by three institutions with the Doctor of Divinity degree: The College of Wooster in 1912; Davidson College in 1924; and Princeton University in 1925.

Dr. Erdman was a popular preacher in the best sense of the word; his presentation of biblical truth was clear, interesting and moving. He preached thousands of sermons here and abroad. He rejoiced in an acquaintance with the great pulpit figures of his generation. It was a rare experience to hear him relate his experiences with D. L. Moody, C. Campbell Morgan, John Howard, John Kelman, and others of equal note. He was a familiar figure at Bible conferences, and he was particularly fond of Northfield, the home of D. L. Moody. He was untiring in his interest in missions, to which his long service as President of the Board of Foreign Missions attests. His brother, the Reverend Walter C. Erdman, and his cousin, the Reverend Paul Erdman, both served in mission fields. Dr. Erdman's home was filled with mementos which he gathered on his travels to mission fields or which were presented to him by loving and admiring friends.

Dr. Erdman was privileged to know four presidents of the United States:

Woodrow Wilson, Grover Cleveland, Theodore Roosevelt and Calvin Coolidge. His interest in civic affairs is indicated by his concern for his beloved Princeton and by his service in community agencies. This interest in social and political affairs was communicated to one of his sons, Charles R. Erdman, Jr., who occupies a high political post.

Not only was Dr. Erdman a widely-known and popular preacher, he was also a voluminous writer. His works range in titles from *Within the Gateways of the Far East* to *Remember Jesus Christ*. In all, he published thirty-five books, and even during the last year of his life, he was in the process of writing expositions of Old Testament books. All of his New Testament expositions have been translated into Korean, and many of them into other languages. The pastoral insight, irenic spirit, evangelical warmth, and practical helpfulness expressed in his expositions of the books of the Old and New Testaments, make them a continuing source of inspiration and edification to countless readers everywhere.

The keen interest of Dr. Erdman in keeping up with academic matters was manifested by his faithful attendance upon the Symposium. On one occasion he presented an extemporaneous report of a most difficult book on continental theology in such a manner as to be unequalled in the history of the Symposium.

Dr. Erdman played a crucial and in many ways a decisive role during the twenties when the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America was involved in a bitter theological controversy. While a conservative in his theological views, he was irenic and tolerant in spirit. It was largely through a

combination of his conservative theological position and his charitable attitude that he was instrumental in maintaining the peace of the Church during his term as Moderator of the General Assembly. This theological issue was reflected in the Seminary community as well as it was in the Presbyterian Churches of Princeton. Though removed as student-adviser, he always remained popular with the students, and friendly towards his colleagues. His was a difficult role at a time when opinions were so divisive as to place students and faculty members in one camp or the other. Dr. Erdman was a symbol for the vast majority in the Presbyterian Church who wished to remain loyal to the standards of the Church and also keep the Church from being rent asunder.

His students will never forget his courses in the English Bible, because they were taught in an informal manner and combined exposition and inspiration in such a way as to be personally enriching to the students. His class sessions became models of teaching which many graduates found useful in later pastoral work.

His home was opened often to large groups of students, particularly during the holiday season. On such occasions, he would sometimes auction off some of his books with paper money he had minted and distributed to the would-be buyers.

Dr. Erdman once wrote that "he had a passion for friendships." He acknowledged that his life had been greatly enriched by wide contacts among various circles of Christian workers. He seldom declined an invitation to speak or preach, if he felt that his services could be of help. We remember his prodigal

generosity in making personal calls, presenting gifts, and assisting with financial aid those who were in need. And all of it was done with no ostentation; rather, he preferred to remain silent and unknown.

It was permitted to Dr. and Mrs. Erdman to have a long and happy life together. Had he lived until June, 1960, they would have celebrated their 68th wedding anniversary. On these celebrations the house was filled with members of the family and guests. And always the Erdmans were in their glory as gracious hosts. The Erdmans were blest with four children, thirteen grandchildren, and thirty great-grandchildren.

Dr. Erdman excelled as a toastmaster. This was evident particularly at Faculty dinners where his fund of stories never failed. He always was ready with the witty retort. He had a remarkable capacity to sense the situation and make the appropriate remark to suit it. And unusual was his gift of switching abruptly from the sublime to the humorous. This gift was also manifest at the annual Alumni dinner meetings as he presented his report as the perennial treasurer of the Association. It was during these Alumni dinner meetings that he also revealed his ability to lead in community singing. From the raucous "MacNamara's Band," through "Carry Me Back to Ol' Virginny," he led us to the deeply-moving spiritual "Steal Away, I Ain't Got Long to Stay Here."

It is most fitting that the Seminary has established a memorial to Charles R. Erdman. Because of his deep interest in the pastoral ministry and because the Seminary wished to recognize his long and distinguished service to the

institution, in 1955 the Board of Trustees established in his honor the Charles R. Erdman Chair of Pastoral Theology.

We of the Princeton Seminary Faculty wish to record our profound sense of loss at the passing of such a gifted, honored, beloved, and influential colleague and friend. His life and ministry are firmly written into the history of this Seminary, the life of the Church, and into the lives of those who taught and studied here. We will miss his friendly and inspiring presence, his warm concern for and support of the Seminary, his noble and challenging example of Christian living, his youthful and inquisitive interest in Church and theological matters, his generous

and wide service in a number of community agencies, his warm and gracious enthusiasm for friendship which was communicated in winsome smile, humorous anecdote, written note, encouraging word, meaningful gift, or personal visit.

We are grateful to God for the gift of Charles Rosenbury Erdman, through whose devoted discipleship to Jesus Christ we have been richly blest. Though dead, he yet speaketh to us in accents strong and clear.

Charles T. Fritsch
Bruce M. Metzger
Elmer G. Homrighausen,
Convener

SPECIAL LECTURERS

L. P. Stone Lectureship

Ivan Engnell, Th.D.
Professor of Old Testament,
University of Uppsala

Subject:

Forms of Religion in Old Israel

Students' Lectureship on Missions

The Reverend John Coventry Smith
General Secretary, Commission on
Ecumenical Mission and Relations

Annie Kinkead Warfield Lectureship

Jacques Courvoisier
Rector, University of Geneva

Subject:

Zwingli, A Reformed Theologian