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**Union Theological Seminary
in Virginia**

Centennial Celebration

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OCTOBER THIRTEENTH AND SIXTEENTH,
NINETEEN HUNDRED AND TWELVE.



RICHMOND, VIRGINIA
1912.

UNION SEMINARY IN HOME MISSIONS.

By the Rev. Egbert W. Smith, D. D., of Nashville, Tenn.

The extraordinary task assigned me is that of pouring an Atlantic of glorious history into the teacup of a twenty-minute talk. The method I shall have to adopt is that of the elderly patient in a hospital who was seen one day running pantingly along the corridor. The next day at the same hour he did the same stunt. The third day instead of running he took to skipping. To anxious and inquiring nurses he explained that he was carrying out the directions of the doctor, who had written on his box of pills, "Take them two days running, then skip one." What troubles me in covering my immense theme in so short a time is not the running I must do, but the vast amount of skipping.

One morning at Chapel, when the Seminary was in old Prince Edward and the hard benches were decorated in part with the class of '86, made illustrious by Vance and me and eleven others, there appeared before us a man I had often heard of but had never seen. Slender, erect, vibrant, with the flash of a sabre in his eye, and an electric energy and passion in his speech, he described to us the conditions in the Appalachians, the pitiful need of workers, and the thrilling triumphs of the gospel among the mountain folk.

He was then leading the great Kentucky Synodical Evangelistic movement, seconded by W. D. Morton, another Union man of a similar big heart and Christlike passion for lost men. That Synodical movement brought thousands to Christ in Kentucky, but its greatest fruit, I believe, was its firing the other Synods with evangelistic zeal and lifting our whole church to a new sense of its Home Mission needs and duties.

But this Union man was not content with leading so notable a movement. In 1897 he organized a Society for reaching the

neglected American Highlanders, through which in ten years 362 missionaries have labored exclusively in these wild mountains, making 51,000 visits, holding over 22,000 public services in 10,000 places, teaching 879 Bible schools with 40,000 pupils, reporting over 6,000 conversions, distributing over 10,000 Bibles and Testaments and 125,000 tracts, building 56 churches, schools and mission houses, including three Colleges and an orphan asylum.

That is the kind of Home Mission leadership that Union Seminary has given to the church and the nation, and I may be permitted to say that when the roll of her faithful alumni is called up yonder few, I believe, will be given brighter crowns or greeted with louder acclaim than Edward O. Guerrant.

From Kentucky the Synodical movement crossed over into North Carolina, and there it was mainly organized by Union men. Dr. W. D. Morton was its first evangelist, Dr. Alexander Sprunt and I its first superintendents, and Dr. Peyton H. Hoge was the chief framer of its constitution and most influential member of its controlling committee.

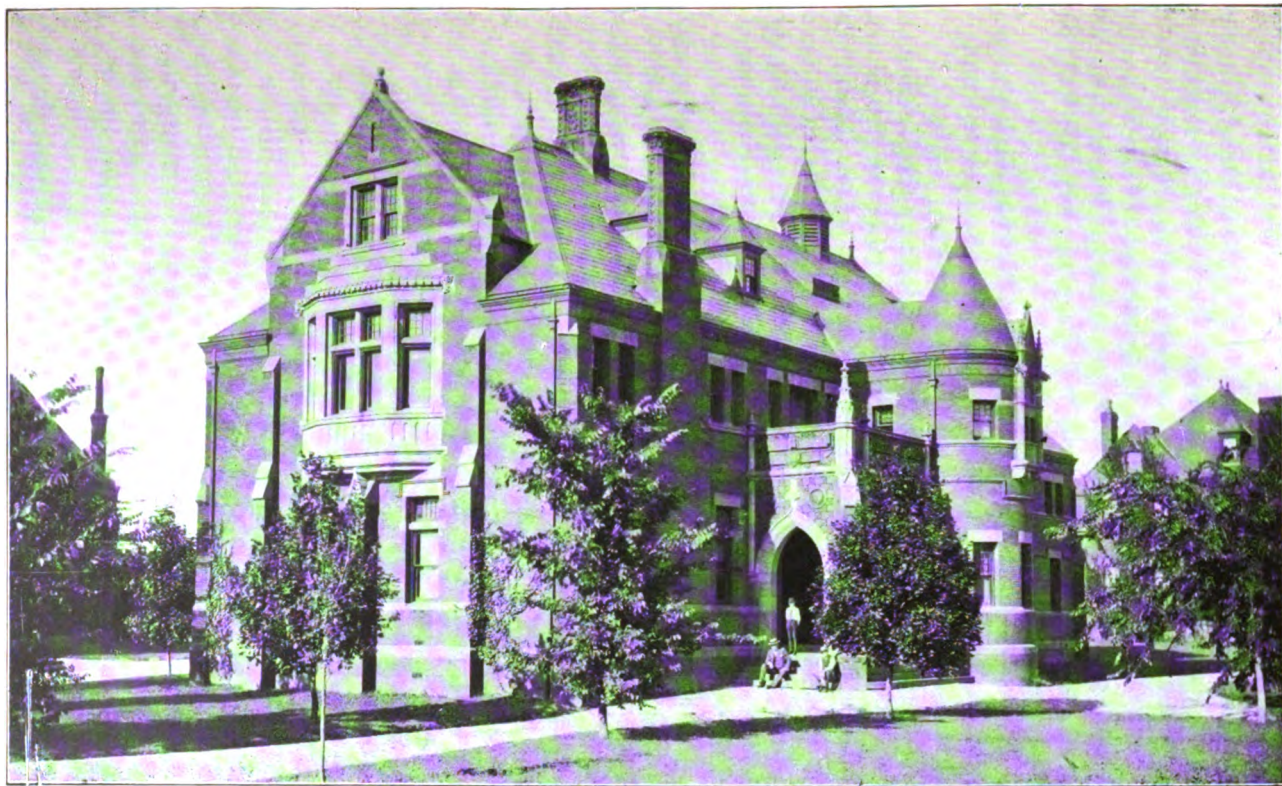
These brethren and Dr. H. G. Hill and others will remember how in Synod after Synod we had to fight for the new movement's life against the twin arguments that it was unscriptural and unconstitutional. There was nothing tame about those Synod meetings.

"Bliss was in it that dawn to be alive,
But to be young was very heaven."

How the movement went on to an immense and ever-growing success, is known to the whole church. The Synod has itself declared that rarely, if ever, has there been a movement of so much importance to North Carolina Presbyterianism.

In the twenty-two years of its history, two-thirds of its workers, five-sixths of its controlling Committee, and all of its Superintendents except two, have been sons of Union.

In the noble work of the Virginia Synod, the record of Union is even more remarkable. Here 90 per cent. of both workers and Committee, and all the Superintendents, have been Union men.



SPENCE LIBRARY.

As we look back through fifteen years of the Missouri Synod's work, two facts tell the whole tale. One is that for more than half that time the work has been led, as it is led today, by a Union man. The other is that if, on the Synod's official letter-head, you count the printed names representing both the governing and the field work, you will find that more than half the names are Alumni of Union Seminary.

We have not time even to glance at the Synodical work in other States, though in every one Union men have borne a prominent part.

When we turn to the Presbyteries and look up the Union men who have been efficient Chairmen or members of the Home Mission Committees, we find their name is legion. Hundreds upon hundreds of them all over our Church have served in these vitally important positions, and have been, and are today, mighty factors for the sustaining and upbuilding of the Kingdom of Christ in our Southern land.

How fundamental, yet how difficult and often thankless, this kind of work is, what unweariedness in well-doing it requires, and what financial genius to make one dollar habitually do the work of three, every Home Mission Committee knows. Who says that the day of miracles is past? I have it on unimpeachable testimony that an alumnus of this Seminary served in a Mississippi Presbytery for fifteen years as Home Mission Chairman, and paid all salaries quarterly in advance. While in sacred silence we meditate this incredible thing, we shall all agree, I know, that none but a Union man could have done it.

Of the spirit and efficiency of the home missionaries trained and sent out by Union, it is impossible to speak too highly.

Think of Sam Glasgow, of Virginia, far away in the artificially irrigated delta of the Rio Grande, spreading himself over a field 30 by 60 miles, and seeing in three and a half years two churches grow to six, twenty-four members become two hundred, no missionary and aid societies spring into eight with 75 members, no Sunday schools become six with 45 members, and no church buildings blossom into a round half dozen worth \$11,000.

Or from this low and hot delta region let us leap up 4,000

feet and look at Edgar Tufts and his Lees McCrae Institute in the mountains of North Carolina. Starting 13 years ago with nothing, and without incurring any debt, it now has 200 acres, 6 buildings, 8 Christian teachers, and has trained 500 mountain girls to be the educated Christian mothers and teachers of the next generation.

This is the kind of work that Union Home Missionaries are doing on plain and mountain. They are making the spiritual wilderness to blossom as the rose.

Neither should it be forgotten in this connection that during the vacation of four months every year the Seminary sends 75 student workers to labor in our mission fields.

When we turn to the General Assembly's Home Mission work we find that for nearly four-fifths of the entire time that work has been led by Union men, and when a year ago a Superintendent was needed for the great mission work transferred to the Assembly by Dr. Guerrant, 'twas a Union man called to fill the important post.

We find also that since the Assembly added the Evangelistic Department the two men she has appointed as her General Evangelists have both been sons of Union.

When we look back to those days that tried men's souls, and think of the noble work done by Union men as army chaplains, and of that Virginia alumnus who ran the blockade to supply the Southern soldiers with Bibles and Testaments; when we let our eyes range over the field today and note the work done in mill towns, in college towns, in city missions, in prominent pulpits that radiate mission zeal and put their strong arms under weak churches all about them, in evangelistic effort, Presbyterian, Synodical and Pastoral—in all these and other departments we find Union men so numerous and conspicuous that we are not surprised to discover that the founder of our Seminary began his ministry as a home missionary, and that the first young men's society ever organized in the South he organized in Richmond to push Home Missions.

One morning last fall in the course of my travels I found myself in a small town with several hours to spare. Having nothing else I could well do, I borrowed a buggy and drove four

miles out into the country to interview a few members of a little rural church on the subject of Foreign Missions.

I distinctly recall that drive for two reasons. The first is that in the course of it I stopped at an ordinary looking farmhouse and talked with an ordinary looking farmer, who wrote me out a check for \$500.00. The other is that the charming old gentleman who drove me described to me the deep impression made upon him as a boy by seeing and hearing the great Dr. Daniel Baker, the man whose name stands third on the Centennial Catalogue of our Seminary, since he was trained in its atmosphere, and personally taught by its President, and no doubt inspired by its influence to the mighty work of his life.

The extent and success of his labors were astounding. Pastor, author, evangelist, frontier missionary, college founder and president, in all and through all and dominating all, ambassador of God to men—he represents that virile type of consecration for which our Seminary stands, that lays every gift of voice and mind, every attainment in grace and learning, under tribute for the saving of men from ignorance and sin to the knowledge and service of God.

The marvelous power of his preaching is not surprising to one who reads his sermons. They represent the best kind of sermonizing, the kind taught in our Seminary. I do not wonder that Dwight L. Moody secured their reprinting in England on the ground that they were the best sermons he knew of for general distribution. Though written 80 years ago, they are supremely modern in every good sense of that word, doctrinal and yet practical, weighty with thought and yet winged with passion, vivid with imagery, pulsing with life, aiming from first word to last at one target, and that target the winning of men from sin to Christ.

Dr. Baker never loses the preacher in the essayist. He never sinks the ambassador in the exegete. His sermons prove and move. They teach and reach. They yearn and burn. To call him an evangelistic preacher is to convey an unconscious libel on the Christian ministry. Not to be an evangelistic preacher is to be a man not called to preach the evangel of a crucified Saviour.

There are many heresies abroad, but the deadliest of all is the heresy that the chief function of the Church and the ministry is to conserve the truth once delivered to the saints. Not conservation but aggression, not the making of defenses but the making of disciples, is the chief business to which God has called us. To put the accent anywhere else is to turn the gospel wrong end foremost. It is the stagnant pool that breeds corruption; the running stream keeps clear and sweet. The source of our Seminary's power and success, the secret both of a pure theology and a conquering Church, lies in putting that first which Christ put first, the forward march of the kingdom of God.

"Go ye and make disciples." This was our Lord's final command to his Church. This was the master purpose of Paul and his fellow apostles. This is the keynote of the Bible music, running through every chapter and ringing loudest in the last to linger longest in the memory. "And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come; and let him that is athirst, Come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

It was this redemptive passion, caught from the heart of Christ, that moulded the life of Daniel Baker from the time he left the Seminary Hill to that day 42 years later, when, in the Lone Star State, to whose uplift he had given so mighty an impetus, he calmly folded his hands upon his breast and murmured with his parting breath, "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit."

His voice has long been hushed, yet his work abides; and the mantle of his large vision, his conquering faith, his inspiring leadership, seems to have fallen upon another son of Union, who, in the capital city where Dr. Baker lies buried, is sending his influence into every corner of that continental State.

When I think of the streams of consecrated influence that this Seminary has been pouring forth for 100 years to the glory of God, the good of men, the uplift of nations, I stand in awe before the immensity of her fruitfulness.

Her sons, where are they? Nine hundred are laboring to-

day, each in his fruitful field, to make this world a safer and sweeter and holier place.

Six hundred after the long day's toil are resting. Their tired bodies are sleeping, some in city or village cemeteries, some in peaceful country church-yards, some under the waving grass of the prairie, some in mountain coves, and some in foreign lands. Their souls are with Christ.

"O blest communion, fellowship divine!
We feebly struggle, they in glory shine,
Yet all are one in Thee, for all are Thine."

In heaven they live, yes, and they still live on earth. They live in the hundreds of thousands of lives made better by their labors, and these lives are touching other lives with blessing, and these others still in circles ever multiplying and ever widening, till God alone can tell, and eternity alone can measure, the total of blessing to the world.

We rejoice to know that this mother of 1,500 sons is stronger today than ever before, with larger resources, with warmer friends, with more students, with brighter prospects, with the blessing of God upon her more richly manifest than in any year of her past one hundred.

As she enters upon her second century let us rally round her with a deeper love and a more earnest prayer that her future may not dim but diadem her past. When her second Centennial is celebrated other speakers will hold the platform and other audiences will give them ear. At that gathering our places will be vacant. But we hope and believe that with tender memories and loving benedictions we shall be looking down unseen from the House not made with hands.