

THE

Crown of the Hill

A Stroke Straight to the Center



BY

W. E. Hatcher, D. D., Richmond, Va.



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In the name of the Trustees of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, I appear before the Baptists of the South with a message. It is a weighty matter indeed, which I bring, and I claim the attention of every man and woman who believes in an educated ministry.

Let it be said at the outset that the Southern Baptists have only one theological seminary. On this one they are well united, and desire no other. There are other strong and well equipped theological schools in our country, owned and operated by Baptists, and doing excellent work, but the Baptists of the South—about two millions of them—are agreed in having just one Seminary of their own, and into that they have concentrated their resources, and around it

have entwined their hearts and hopes. Already the South is fast becoming distinguished for the geniality and unity of its ministry, for its doctrinal harmony and the joyous comradeship of its preachers.

In our Seminary at Louisville, we have our forces organized for educating our ministers of all grades of advancement and endowment, and for all forms of ministerial service. Our courses of instruction are varied, flexible and adapted to that diversity of gifts, which is characteristic of the Christian ministry everywhere.

The spirit of our Seminary is conservative, open to the light of truth, courageous in research, sympathetic with thorough scholarship, and yet far from radical tendencies; reverential toward the Word of God, and committed to the salvation of the whole world.

It is not too much to claim that our Seminary at Louisville holds a lofty place in the respect and confidence of the Baptists of the world. While the bulk of its students come from its well-defined territory, it finds patronage in every part of our American Republic, and not a little as well from beyond it. The accredited

representative of our Seminary is a guest of honor in every Southern Baptist assemblage.

Nor need we be ashamed of the Seminary itself as an educational output. It has its seat in the beautiful city of Louisville, and in the most attractive portion of the city. Its halls, its dormitories, its libraries, and more yet, its scholarly corps of teachers, its high spirit of evangelical fervor and missionary progress, make it an institution of which the Baptists of the South are justly proud. It can almost be said that it is the solitary as well as the one unifying possession of Southern Baptists. Let it be added that the Baptists have it to hold. It is theirs by chartered rights, and legal guarantees that nothing can break. The Baptists themselves must break before the Seminary can be lost. Its properties are held by Baptist Trustees, representing every state, and nominated by the Southern Baptist Convention, the number from each state being determined by the amount of money contributed by that State to the endowment of the school.

But this statement cannot stop here. To tell this much and omit the rest would be unfair to the Seminary, and to its friends.

The Seminary has not attained unto its full growth and power.

Let us explain. True, we have the largest number of students of any Baptist theological seminary in the world, but bear in mind that we represent nearly two million Baptists. The demand for men far outstrips the supply which the Seminary can furnish. We cannot take all of the students who need theological training, and are needed by the churches. Already our teaching force is grievously inadequate. We need more teachers, and in all departments, sorely need assistant teachers. We are coming to the point also, where we must have more buildings, more departments, more professors, better equipments, and by all means a better library. The truth is that we have not money enough to run the Seminary. Last session, painful as it is to say it, we had to spend for repairs and improvements, fully ten thousand dollars beyond our income. This, I admit, is like letting fly an unhappy family secret, but, dear friends, it had to be done.

Some of our friends need to pause for a little sober thinking. The denomination decreed at the outset, that all instruction at the Sem-

inary should be free. It is given to men who give up all for the ministry, and of course we would not be willing to charge them tuition. Here, then, is a great school, handling three hundred men, and needing to handle as many more, and yet not receiving one copper in the way of compensation for its work.

Besides, the Seminary has no rich alumni. The sons of the Seminary grow not rich in earthly store. They love their Alma Mater, and honor her by godly service, but they have little to put into her treasury. The people in the pews must take care of the Seminary, and this they have good reason to do. The Seminary constantly enriches our ministry, and the pew fattens on the fruits of the Seminary.

It was hinted just now, that the Seminary has become poorer of late by unavoidable over-spending, but the trouble comes in another way. Some of our investments have expired recently and we cannot invest to such an advantage any longer. This shrinkage is hitting us a hard blow, and we find it necessary to raise the signal of distress.

Take one fact and dream over it. Our Seminary handles about as many students as are

found in four or five of our excellent Baptist seminaries, and yet each one of these schools has more money for current expenses than we have at Louisville. This fact ought to bring all lovers of our Seminary to action.

Our friends never were in such fine shape for making the Seminary all that it ought to be, as they now are. We never had so many rich people as in this good year, 1907, and many of them have not helped the Seminary at all, or at most, only in a small measure. If our rich Baptists could get together and talk the matter over for two hours in a sympathetic way, our Seminary would have all it needs.

But the Trustees make another appeal. In these recent years of plenty, prosperity has come home to uncounted thousands of Baptists. Not that they are rich, but they are well-to-do. They have fitted up their homes thoroughly and have a good bank account. They are intelligent, fond of the church, and believe in Baptist doctrines. They love their pastor, and love him all the more because he is educated. There be some who mourn because their pastors are uneducated, and the best way for them to win their desire, is to put their hearts in living uni-

son with the Seminary. The best blessings come to those who are quick to give. Those who bless the Seminary, the Seminary always blesses.

At the meeting of the Seminary Trustees, in Richmond, May, 1907, it was decided that the fiftieth anniversary of the Seminary, which occurs in 1909, should be marked by a Jubilee Celebration. Meanwhile, the friends of the Seminary are to be asked to raise for the endowment of our great school the round sum of four hundred thousand dollars. The request is not exorbitant. It is the amount which is necessary to give the Seminary the ability to enlarge its work, and to conduct its business without embarrassment. It is the hope of the Trustees that the Convention may find it agreeable to meet in the city of Louisville in 1909, for the fitting celebration of our Semi-Centennial, and the most practical and substantial schedule of celebration will be by having in hand by that time the four hundred thousand dollars.

Now it is to the task of raising this needed four hundred thousand dollars, that the friends of the Seminary ought most urgently begin at

once to address themselves. We are attempting little more in this paper than to indicate what we are to undertake. It is hoped that among the many thousands of homes into which this paper shall go, we may find:

1. Twenty men who will give us five thousand dollars each. Let these favored men of money lead in this matter. Their action will carry us far out on the way. Let each Trustee find his man, and send in his name.

2. We ask one hundred men to give us one thousand dollars each. They be very many—those thousand dollar men,—men who can, and ought, and we pray God, may give us one thousand dollars apiece.

3. We ask one thousand men to give each, one hundred dollars, paying in cash or installments, as they may prefer.

4. We ask every church, in city or country, large or small, rich or poor, to give us a Sunday morning collection, taken not in the baskets, but by open subscription, and taken after long and ample notice, after distributing Seminary literature and after a burning appeal by the pastor, and by at least two addresses by brethren of the church selected for that pur-

pose. Surely no church will forget or deny a request like this.

The Trustees greatly desire that during this new movement for the more adequate endowment of our Seminary an endowment for at least one Chair may be secured. It requires sixty thousand dollars for this purpose, and it opens an opportunity for those of liberal means and large hearts to perpetuate their influence by supporting one department of instruction in the Seminary. Money thus given is faithfully guarded and only its interest is used, and in this way, for generation after generation, a gift for this purpose will live and quietly do its gracious work for the ministry. Where is the man or woman who will come forward and render this noble service?

Already the Chair of Theology, known as the Joseph Emerson Brown Chair of Theology, has been endowed, and will hold in perpetual remembrance the name of the illustrious Governor of Georgia. We gratefully mention also the David T. Porter Chair of Church History endowed by Mrs. Rebecca P. Bartlett in honor of her brother, Mr Porter. In the former case, the money was given by the gentleman after

whom the Chair is named, and in the other case a good lady endowed the Chair of Church History in honor of her brother. Additional Chairs may be endowed, and it is left to the donors to designate the person whose name is to be associated with the Chair.

Another privilege lies in reach of the public-spirited and generous friends of the Seminary. For thirty thousand dollars a school in the Seminary may be endowed. This gift could also become a memorial in honor of some loved one, and would constitute a monument which, while commemorating the virtues of the dead, would constantly assist in the work of ministerial education, and bring honor to the Redeemer's name. Who will gladden the Southern Baptists' hearts by a gift in so good a cause?

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