

MERCER MEN STAND HIGH IN NEW YORK

University's Wholesome Influence Felt in Big City.

By Congressman W. D. Upshaw

As an old Mercer man and a Georgian, I was tremendously refreshed and gratified on a recent visit to New York to find two former Georgians—two honored sons of Mercer University—holding the "center of the stage" as the effective pulpit champions of orthodox Christianity and vital evangelism.

They were, and are, John Roach Straton at Calvary Baptist, 57th street, Manhattan, and Jasper C. Massee, at the Baptist Temple in Brooklyn. I did not get to hear Massee (of whom I am very fond personally and with whom I had delightful fellowship in a meeting in Raleigh when he was the beloved pastor of the Tabernacle church there), but I heard splendid things about the wholesome impression he had made during his brief ministry there—the size of his crowds and the reason for their size—the ringing eloquence of his delivery—the winning evangelistic note in his preaching and his aggressive championship of "Oldtime Religion."

The Old Straton and the New

I have known two John Stratons in one man in my brief time. I knew him first as a gifted, ambitious strippling of eighteen, confidently and successfully selling his own mental and lingual commodity called "day dreaming" and fighting his way on a precocious platform toward the inspiring campus of Mercer University. And when John Straton got there that historic campus was more inspiring. Frequently in the chapel rallies, but more often in the Old Ciceronian hall in the mimic contests of college debate, Straton stirred anew the flagging spirits of Mercer, just waking to new life—new name and fame under the magnificent leadership of the princely P. D. Pollock. I saw John Straton lead the charge as the shouting Mercerians followed, not in a game of baseball (however fine) or a game of football (however terrific), but in a brilliant battle of wits in the forum forensic, until he became the most "medalsome" young collegian who ever trod the campus of Mercer; walking, as Graves said, of Grady, "from easy effort to success."

Rallying to His Standard

I see them now rallying to his standard—J. C. Flannigan, Mark Bolding, Walter George, Harpley Lawson, Sidney Hatcher and Ad Moncrief, debaters and orators all, who in oratorical battles that wholesomely stirred the State, carried the victorious "Orange and Black" of Mercer waving in triumph over many a hard-fought field! That was John Straton as I first knew him. But alas, I did not see him often at the twilight prayer meeting in those regal days of eloquent splendor! If he ever led a Y. M. C. A. meeting for those eighteen months I don't remember it. But the influence of those nightly prayer meetings and the glorious vital atmosphere of a great Christian institution, carried the ambitious young orator back to the altar of a Godly preacher-father's home, and John Straton went back to rock-bottom and straightened up with God. Shortly after I left Mercer I read with great delight that Straton had stirred a great crowd of students and friends of Mercer, dedicating all his talents for the remainder of his life to Christ and His cause. Very soon I met Straton on the train and told him how glad I was to read in The Christian Index that he had run up his flag in active service for God. I shall never forget his answer: "Yes, Will, I feel so much happier since I determined to give myself to unselfish service for the Lord. The ethical teacher is fundamental in the world's up-building, and whether I preach or teach I have determined that, without reservation, God shall have my best." Then the way was clear. The full dedication of such talents and such enterprise and energy as John Straton possessed carried him speedily into the pulpit.

And on a recent Sunday in the largest Baptist church in America's greatest city I saw the new Straton in action. And in the sacred fellowship of his beautiful home-life on the banks of the Hudson I saw the new Straton revealed. Knightly still, genial still, eloquent still, ambitious still, but every atom and energy and

impulse shined on the altar of orthodox, evangelical Christianity! And that is New York's—that is the world's greatest need: Straton found at historic Calvary, blessed for forty years by the brilliant ministry of Dr. Robert Straut MacArthur, a situation beset with terrific modern-day problems. But, thank God, a strong hand and wise leadership won for "Oldtime Religion," social justice and evangelism that really evangelizes. About three hundred have joined the church during his pastorate of three years. His gifted wife, who was Miss Georgia Hillyer (mighty good Baptist stock) has been a constant inspiration to his great work. Pastor and people are mutually devoted, and while many Gotham churches shut up shop and go on a summer vacation with some pastors, more interested, I fear, in their golf score than in the number of souls won to Christ, old Calvary's batteries thunder on, summer as well as winter, belching forth the Biblical anathemas of Sinai against spiritual wickedness in high places, and offering in tender persuasive power the cleansing blood of Calvary's Redeemer as God's only remedy for sin.

How many times on that beautiful Easter Sunday did I thank God for the humble consecration of such masterful leadership in America's greatest metropolis!

It is only natural that three years of such vigorous work with tongue and pen should give Straton a commanding place in a dozen different organizations for religious benevolent activity. His new book, "The Menace of Immorality," is enough to "wake the dead" in the seething centers of wickedness. "The Dance of Death," "Church vs. Stage," and "Religious Democracy" are all notable utterances—trumpet calls to the fundamentals of Christian civilization.

I thank God and take new courage when I see my old college thus projecting the vital influence of Christian education in America's greatest city.

LIBRARY IS HOME OF MERCER MASONS

The Masonic Club of Mercer has secured a room in the library building for their weekly meetings, and will immediately begin to furnish their quarters with tables, chairs and other equipment necessary for real club activity.

In past years the Masonic Club has been handicapped in not possessing a room they could call their own, but now the square and compass fellows say they will soon be comfortably situated in permanent quarters and will begin to put their club on the map at Mercer.

The Masons among the student body will not secure a charter or maintain a regular lodge here, but will content themselves for the present with a highly fraternal social club. They will also secure the services of prominent Masons of the State from time to time to speak in their halls.

Prof. George Sparks, P. A. Murray and other men active in student life at Mercer have taken the lead in organizing the present Masonic Club and getting the rooms necessary for the meetings. Many representative men among the students are members of the Masonic order, and it is stated that there will be no lack of material each year to make the Masonic Club permanent in Mercer's college life.

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