

# **Address by the Rt. Rev. Edwin A. Penick D.D. Bishop of North Carolina**

## **Delivered at the laying of the cornerstone of the new Chapel of the Cross February 20, 1924**

The erection of a church building on the campus of a great university is significant in many ways and for many people.

First it is replete with intimate and tender meaning for the donor in a way that no one else can understand. Here rises a monument in granite to symbolize the enduring affection of one human heart for another, and to perpetuate the blessed memory of loved ones who have "died in the Lord." What could be more befitting than that the noble impulses of faith and love should seek to find embodiment in a temple, built for the worship of One in whom "the whole family in Heaven and earth is named" and whose triumphant Son revealed that it is not death to die but, for the faithful, life eternal and more abundant?

For the parishioners of the Chapel of the Cross this service, I venture to believe, is an occasion of gratitude. For they see in this new structure not only the outward sign of growth and progress, but the expansion of their facilities for spiritual ministrations to the life of the University. The happy design of the architect in incorporating the beautiful and hallowed old church building with the new in harmonious grouping typifies the desire of this congregation that in laying the cornerstone for future service, nothing whatever shall be lost from the honored traditions of the past. The Chapel of the Cross shall soon be "bring-ing forth out of its treasury things both new and old."

I think of the students who will worship here. For them this structure is more like home than any building on the campus. Here they will share in the precious things of family life. Here they will feel the invisible presence of loved ones, especially in the mystical fellowship of the Holy Communion. Here they will join in the refrain of favorite hymns or lift their hearts in prayer on the rich cadences of a scriptural liturgy. Under the roof that will shelter this spot they will hear echoes of boyhood and girlhood days when the voices of parents and children mingled in family devotion around the fireside altar. We stand on the spot where students will make their life decisions and dedicate themselves to idealistic service. Already, in anticipation of the crises of youth that this new church will look upon, we feel that we stand on holy ground.

Members of the University faculty will worship here. I doubt if any more earnest prayers will ascend in this house than those which rise from the hearts of these keenly sensitive, intelligent, responsible men. A sense of dependence upon God is characteristic of true leadership. Self-sufficiency belongs to shallow souls. The burden of a commission to mould the future of impressionable youth is heavy enough to crush any superficial mind that dares to teach without dependence upon that wisdom of which the fear of God is just the beginning. Scientists, historians and philosophers will kneel in humility here like the wise men of old who fell down and worshipped the infant Christ.

Finally, the Word of God will be preached in this place. And I pray that this Word may always be "rightly divided." Let it be proclaimed to every generation of students that Scripture speaks with the authority of Truth, and that the Church, her divinely commissioned interpreter, welcomes reverent investigation of her teachings from any source. Let it be said to self-conscious, inquiring dispositions that in the family of God mental and temperamental differences are tolerantly and sympathetically allowed. May the pulpit of this Church shout in the ears of thinking men and women that Truth can never be arrayed against Truth any more than a God of Holiness can contradict his own character. There is no real enmity between true science with its characteristic humility and the Christian Church with her unpretentious open mindedness. They walk together hand in hand in the joyous arduous search for Truth. I

say again and again that here no essential antagonism is so much as known. Friendly, therefore, towards her neighboring lecture halls, eager to seize upon material discovery and to show its harmony with spiritual truth, quick to sympathize with honest doubt and slow, exceeding slow, to denounce or condemn, standing as a witness on this campus to the supernatural background and foreground of all life, testifying to the presence of God in creation, in history and in the hearts of men today, and certifying to all the neighborly duties involved in man's relationship to God -- upon this "law of liberty," which is the spirit of Christ, as upon a cornerstone may this church be built.