

# BULLETIN

## SEMINARY EXTENSION

### DEPARTMENT

Lee Gallman, Director      Box 530      Jackson, Mississippi

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#### Meet the Professor

**Findley B. Edge: A.B., Th.M., Th.D.:**

Dr. Edge was born in Albany, Georgia. He received his A.B. degree from Stetson University and his Th.M. and Th.D. from Southern Seminary. He was a fellow under Dr. Dobbins, also served as a tutor and instructor.

His pastorates have been the First Baptist Church, Apopka, Florida, Simpsonville and Campbellsburg, Kentucky. His graduate study was done at Columbia University and Union Theological Seminary, New York. Dr. Edge has recently been transferred from the School of Theology to the new School of Religious Education at Southern Seminary.

He is the author of our course Religious Education 115 (Teaching Principles). He has included in the study guide much of the teaching material used in the seminary classes. It has been especially planned to help teachers or those dealing with teachers in the Sunday School. It is considered one of the best approaches to the teaching method.

#### Commentaries

What is a commentary? It is a book of comments on the scripture. That is a general definition; but it can be broken down into several more specific explanations. The work of a commentator is to help the reader get a good grasp of the meaning and message of the passage or passages under discussion. In order to do this it is necessary to get a background of the book or books being discussed, the purpose of the authors, the conditions of the people to whom or for whom the work was intended, and the occasion which prompted the writing.

A good commentary will give an exposition of the paragraph (or group of paragraphs), point out peculiarities in grammar, explain the meaning of significant words, and show how different commentators have understood the passage or word. The homiletic sections deal with suggestions for preaching. The older commentaries give credit for homilies as well as for expositions. Some

commentaries go on to suggest sermon outlines and illustrations.

While it may appear that the preacher would be best served by a full commentary suggesting outlines, homilies, and illustrations the reverse is more often true. Homilies, outlines, and illustrations often become a stock type in the homiletic commentaries while illustrations become threadbare with continued use. A fresh preacher usually depends on expository commentaries rather than upon the homiletic. Critical commentaries deal with problems which relate to an understanding of the passages. A critic is not one who goes about "criticizing the Bible," but one which seeks to discover facts relating to the meaning of the Bible. For example, if a preacher says Paul wrote Hebrews, he is just as much a critic as one who says that Paul did not write Hebrews. The critical commentary is very helpful to those who must confront issues involving such matters. But several factors make the use of critical commentaries impractical for most pastors.

In the more recent times the One Volume Commentary is coming to be recognized as practical. Several of these would be helpful even for those who have the larger works. It must be remembered also that the specialized Bible is a commentary. There are several types. The two most famous ones are the Schofield and the Thompson's Chain Reference. To speak of these two works as if they were special Bible editions is erroneous; they are commentaries. One might ask, "which commentary would you recommend if you were buying only one?" That depends on one's education and his outlook on study. For one who has not been to college and who has not read widely, I would concentrate on a few essential "tools". The three greatest needs are: (1) A good dictionary (Merriam's Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, or Funk and Wagnall's The Standard Dictionary, or The American College Dictionary, also called A.C.D., are sound). Avoid

cheaper type works; their definitions are not accepted; (2) A good Bible dictionary (Hastings and Harpers are the better, but Peloubert's and Smith's are acceptable and cheaper); (3) A One Volume Commentary (Jamieson, Faussett, and Brown, and Dummelow's are the best). A concordance will also prove to be valuable. (Three are widely known--Young's Analytical, Strong's Topical, and Crudin's).

Among the larger commentaries, The Pulpit Commentary is most helpful; its expositions are sound but its critical information is old. The American Commentary is a New Testament work produced by Baptist scholars of fifty years back. It is a good work. Matthew is the best volume of the work. Matthew Henry is a good older work but too wordy. Moffatt's commentary is excellent as an interpretation but its conclusions should not be accepted without question. Every pastor would do well to get several volumes in this series as a contrast to more fundamental works.

The new work called The Interpreter's Bible would not be of much value to those who had no schooling in Bible criticism. It is the best illustration of the method of present day liberal scholars. Baptist preachers will not accept the pre-suppositions of its cynical scholars. Of course there are many good articles and the expositions are brilliant, but the approach is not always reverent. A very good method of buying books on the Bible is to purchase individual works instead of sets. The later Introductions to the New Testament give bibliographies on individual books. The second-hand book stores generally have lists of these commentaries. Among these are Kregel's Book Store and Baker's Book Store both of which are in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Some statements have been avoided which might be misunderstood, but for those who have an interest in certain commentaries, we should be happy to evaluate them according to our point of view.

#### Steps for Setting Up Centers

Last month we outlined something in the nature of how a center should be set up. In view of the fact that so many associations and pastors' conferences are writing to us about this work, we would like to include this month an outline of how a center should be set up. First thing to remember is that this is not in the nature of promotion work directly connected with the association and state convention; that is to say it need not be an associational project. However, in view of the

fact that all things proceed from the association any plan which a group of pastors would set up should be submitted to the association for its approval. With this in mind the following suggestions may be helpful:

1. Let a pastors' conference, or an executive committee, or a group of interested pastors vote to promote the work.

2. Elect a committee whose duty would be to set up the work. If this is a large body which had voted such as a regional pastors' conference, it would be well for this committee to be composed with representative members from various associations.

3. Let this committee meet and do the following things: Elect a director, a registrar, select a place of meeting, select an opening date, decide on the time of week when the meeting should be held, and list a group of possible teachers.

4. Let the committee report this back to the body which is sponsoring the school. After the director and registrar are elected, then the committee plus these two officers should proceed to elect a course of study to be offered in the first semester and select the teachers.

5. Let this combined committee decide on the budget and the cost of courses. This cost should be based on prices which are quoted to the center from the Seminary Extension Department and will be furnished to any person or group of persons who write for it.

6. A careful survey should be made to ascertain the number who will enroll. After deciding on the courses, it might be well to circulate a letter stating the courses which will be offered and then ask the pastors to indicate the various courses in which they intend to register. Others may also enroll in this school so the pastor may approach his church asking those who are interested to join with them.

7. After the possible enrollment has been decided on, write to the Seminary Extension Department, P. O. Box 530, Jackson, Mississippi indicating the number of courses which you expect will be needed. This should constitute your order.

8. Advertise and publicize until everyone knows what you are going to do.

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