

BULLETIN SEMINARY EXTENSION DEPARTMENT

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MEET THE PROFESSOR

Philip B. Harris, B.Ed., M.R.E.:

Professor Harris was born in Creal Springs, Illinois. He received his B.Ed. from Southern Illinois University and his M.R.E. from Southwestern Seminary. He has completed his residence work for his Doctor of Religious Education.

For five years he served as a teacher and athletic director in Illinois. In June, 1943 he went to the Sunday School Board as Superintendent of Young People's Sunday School Work. In 1949 he went to Southwestern Seminary as Associate Professor of Adolescent Religious Education. In addition to his work at the Seminary, he is serving as youth director of Broadway Baptist Church, Fort Worth, Texas.

During the past summer he attended the Baptist Youth Congress and made a tour of some ten mission points in South America.

Professor Harris is author of Religious Education 155 (Church Recreation), which uses as its text, A Handbook for Church Recreation Leaders, by T. B. Maston.

HOW DEEP ARE YOUR CONVICTIONS?

It is more important to have depth in one's convictions than to have postiveness. Anyone can assert his belief or notion with much postiveness. "I believe" and "I think" can be expressed so easily that the expressions become trite. We all

believe. But how much information is involved? We hear a lot of people assert that they believe the Bible is inspired, every word, every page, every line, etc. That is a wonderful faith. But how much information is involved? Has this faith confronted some issues? Has it, for example, made a careful study of the order of events in the Gospels? Many do not even know that such closely connected books as Matthew and Mark contain different order of events. Is Mark's order of the temptations correct or is Matthew's correct? John reports an altogether different chronology. Words of Jesus are not the same in Luke and Matthew. Did Matthew's account of the great commission occur at a different time from that reported in Acts?

This article does not intend to challenge inspiration. The writer sincerely believes the Bible to be inspired. But when one is so dogmatic that he cannot see the issues involved, he is often unfair to those who confront them.

Sometimes we hear such statements as "There is no use of the term church in the New Testament that does not apply to the local body only." It is well to believe as many of us do that a Baptist church should be an autonomy. But how much information goes into these radical statements? Issues should be confronted as we read and study in order to be in

position to come to convictions. The soundest thinkers are those who know that there is no easy road to a complete faith in God's word. It is easy to pick up sentences and paragraphs in the Bible and enlarge them into sermons. One can do this without ever coming to face the issues involved. It is not necessary to take a course in Source Criticism to preach. But a study which will help you to know the basis of your faith is good.

This is why we keep urging you to read many books. Read those which seek to disprove your position and meet arguments. You do not really know your own position until you see the other man's position in the light of his logic. For example, do you know the scriptures upon which non-Baptists base their reason for infant baptism and sprinkling?

Every man's conviction is settled in what appears to be sound logic. We must seek to deepen our convictions by seeing them in the light of the issues they involve.

BOOKS

James Stewart, A Faith To Proclaim. New York: Scribner's Sons, 1953, \$2.50.

When I bought this book, I was deceived by its size. Its small 160 pages give the impression of simplicity; but it is not simple. Punctuated by German, Latin, and Greek words it involves some of the most profound ideas afloat in present day theology. However, if you read it carefully these profound factors are not too difficult. Essentially, Dr. Stewart seeks to show that the basic Christian truths which have been preached through the centuries have survived the storms of cynicism and radical criticisms. The basic issues of our Christian faith are reviewed and emphasized. Dr. Stewart calls for vigorous preaching on these issues.

I would commend this work with one reservation, if it is too difficult in places one would best omit judgment, because Dr. Stewart is a sound

theological thinker. His area of thought lies deeper than the surface.

Rockwell C. Smith, The Church in Our Town. New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1945, \$1.50.

This fine work has been written by one whose general approach is sound. It is written mainly for churches in the council group, but discussions on rural life form a background which would be helpful to all church groups.

The author does not attempt to impose his denominational pattern upon the reader. When this book was seen by a noted teacher of Religious Education, he stated that he uses it as a textbook in the rural church course in college.

Read this fine book along with others and add notes to your own. I commend it to all.

THE DIRECTOR'S TRAVELS

It has already been shown that the west is big. Last month I saw its vastness and its challenge. For 27 days we traveled by train, bus, airplane, and automobile into every far western state except Nevada, Wyoming, and Montana. Much could be written about it but its growth was particularly impressive to me. Now the west is undergoing growing pains but within ten years it will become a highly developed mission field. California already has 60,000 Southern Baptists, Washington-Oregon 70,000, Arizona 17,000, and New Mexico is above 60,000. The most phenomenal growth is in California which has averaged a gain of one third each year since its organization. Two centers have been established as a result of our visit and others will doubtless develop.

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