

BULLETIN

SEMINARY EXTENSION

DEPARTMENT

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A Little Learning

Nothing so marks an incompetent interpreter as a few misunderstood ideas. A little learning, the kind most of us have helps, but it is unsafe as a guide or as a provider of proofs. Take the language of the scripture for an example. One who has had Greek and Hebrew for four or five years can understand some of the commentaries. He can see how certain ideas emerge in their discussions. He is, or may be, a competent listener. He can know the basis on which Goodspeed or Montgomery translates a word or why Robertson's Word Pictures challenges a translation. But he is only a bystander! Greek scholars whose acquaintance with the languages extends over a period of twenty-five to fifty years do not always agree! The knowledge of the Greek New Testament demands many years of diligent research and investigation. The same is true in the Old Testament. As a matter of fact there are schools of grammar differing widely on both languages so that it is well nigh impossible for these groups to agree.

For one who has learned only the elemental lessons to pose as a competent Bible interpreter is foolish. This writer has been a student of Greek for twenty years, but realizes his lack of competence. He has read every book of the New Testament in Greek. But what does

that say? Until one has become so well acquainted with the languages that he can feel free to express himself, until he can make reading it a second nature, he is really only a bystander. It is extremely doubtful if there are one hundred competent Hebrew scholars in America. But again, we find the experts who can with painstaking exercise pick out Hebrew words in the first Psalm, who do not hesitate to speak or write as if they had the final authority.

The only thing we are pleading is that we do not set up ourselves as authorities when we are not prepared to be authorities. We would also plead for a proper evaluation of your leaders. Too many are following the leadership of men who call themselves authorities when they are really no more than bystanders.

Do not be too shocked to hear this preacher say that the average welltrained seminary graduate has no better working knowledge of the Bible languages than a fourth grader has in English. I understand that a group of these "fourth graders" are going to translate the Bible! It would be humorous if it were not for the fact that some well meaning but unlearned preachers in high places will stand with them and declare to the folk that these, "second, third, and fourth graders" have

produced an authoritative, inspired Bible. Shades of Joseph Smith!

"I Failed To Take..."

Quite often we receive letters from seminary graduates who, in that although they have received B. D. or even Th.D. degrees, yet for practical leadership in church organization their training is incomplete. I am quite conscious of this possibility from my own experience. One of the most helpful courses of my entire seminary training was an elective.

Those who follow the bent of their interests in study can easily crowd too much study in certain fields to the exclusion of others. When confronted with problems of Religious Education in the church, there is little help to be gotten from Greek Grammar or Hebrew exegesis. Because of the possibility of this one-sidedness our seminaries insist that students broaden their training from those purely scriptural studies to other helpful subjects.

It is not possible to keep one in school long enough to offer training in every field for there are so many. Not many will remain to get another parallel degree such as the M.R.E. after they are graduates with a B.D.

The Seminary Extension Department is helping graduates who sense the need for further training by offering courses in Church Organizations, Church Leadership, Leadership in Evangelism, Church Counseling, Pastoral Ministries, Visual Education, and Church Recreation. In addition, there are courses in Personal Evangelism, Teaching, Missions, Preaching, Survey Studies in the Bible, and Book Studies in the Bible.

Although a preacher may be a seminary graduate, he can still receive help from one of these studies.

Accepts Call to the Ministry

Nothing humbles one so much as the knowledge that he has been used of the Lord in helping an individual find the will of God. Recently, one of our students wrote to this effect. For years he had stood off thinking that there was no way to accomplish the will of God in his life. He knew that he needed an education, that his chance of getting one was indeed small for he could not leave home to get into school. Now since he enrolled in the Seminary Extension Department for correspondence study he has been led to the will of God.

He writes, "I have accepted the call as pastor of the Drakes Branch Baptist Church and moved here the first of the year. I left a good job paying above \$6,000.00 a year to come here and I want to thank the Extension Department for making this possible. I knew I did not have enough education to answer God's call to the ministry, but now I know I can have it through this course. It has been the most help to me, and I feel that by continuing to study it I can become a qualified pastor."

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Mr. Gallman has just returned from a tour of East Texas. Contacts were made with associational leaders who will be working during the summer completing plans for centers to be opened in September.

If you are interested in having a center in your association, write to the Seminary Extension Department, P. O. Box 530, Jackson, Mississippi.

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CORRESPONDENCE STUDENTS.....
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