

# BULLETIN

## SEMINARY EXTENSION

### DEPARTMENT

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VOLUME IV

DECEMBER 1955

NUMBER 12

#### DON'T FORGET THESE FACTORS

Even the casual student of the New Testament must be struck with the fact that the New Testament is not an original independent product. Throughout it reveals contacts with and dependence upon the Old Testament. One can study its character as a developed work and see its process. When the disciples began to preach about Jesus they had to preach him against the background of factors.

First, they had to relate him to scripture already accepted. Where did he fit into that which was already known to be inspired? According to the accepted interpretation of the Jewish hopes and prophecies, Jesus was not anticipated. It was the task of these men to show that he was anticipated when scripture was properly interpreted. "This is that which was spoken by the prophets," was a call for a fresh interpretation of what was spoken by the prophets. It must be realized that these men assumed themselves to be in line with God's prophetic revelation. They were true Jews attending the synagogues, keeping fasts, and going into the Temple.

Second, they had to reveal the Legal Tradition as a deviation from God's revelation. They had to show that therein these originators of the Tradition had misled Judaism.

Third, they had to show God's concern for non-Jews. This was the most difficult task of all. In each case where the apostles spoke of God's concern for Gentiles, the Jews rose up against them.

Fourth, they had to implement proof of the divine act of the Holy Spirit's work in them. The key to much of this under-the-surface activity was in the synagogue preaching. In the synagogue rabbi met rabbi in debate. The apostles began their activity by showing the synagogues that God's purposes had been distorted and misinterpreted in two important areas. In the first place they had become so attached to the Temple that they had localized God. In the second place they had misunderstood the chosen people idea. For them it came to mean a favored people--a people of destiny. But God had originally intended that they should conceive of themselves as being a people for God--- a people seeking to fulfil his purposes.

New Testament scripture, insofar as interpretation of Jesus is concerned, grew out of these factors. One can trace them in the New Testament. In Acts we have a picture of the triumph of God's purposes through those apostles who correctly interpreted these factors.

The sermons in Acts are remarkable preservations of types. Peter's past pentecostal address was the opening assault. One may note the fact that Peter declared him to be the Lord and Christ. But in addition Peter gave re-interpretation to the scripture (Old Testament). He attached the event of the moment (Pentecost) to a prophesy of the last days. Peter's method was to take the scripture uncritically and make the application to the event. The important

thing to note is that there was no attempt made to distinguish between those scriptures which were written to portray the Coming One, and those scriptures which spoke of other events but whose language coincided with the need of the moment. This was a true rabbinic approach.

Now when one goes beyond this use which these writers and preachers made to attach whole contexts to events which really have no connection with it except that certain passages reminded the preacher of the event; he is obsessing the passage.

#### BOOK REVIEW

Gaines S. Dobbins, WINNING THE CHILDREN, Broadman, 1953. \$2.00.

This work by Dr. Dobbins is the best work of this sort I have seen. He does the same thing here that he did in his former work, EVANGELISM ACCORDING TO CHRIST (1949) and that is, he orientates the reader into a sound approach at evangelism by pointing out the doctrinal elements involved. Here the relationship of the evangelism of children to the doctrine of original sin on one side, and to education on the other, is made.

The fourth chapter, "Re-examining Our Aims" is worthy of careful consideration. This subject deals with salvation to something--toward better ideals and usefulness. Too often we think of evangelism as "getting them into the fold," or saving them from danger, to the exclusion of values and potentialities of the personality that are released in the experience.

I heartily commend this book. Don't look for one chapter with all the cream of thought--it is all creamy.

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Statistical Report: Correspondence students, 1,629; extension students, 2,724.

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The Seminary Extension Department, its staff, and the Seminary Extension Commission wish for you and yours A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

#### THE RURAL CHURCH PROGRAM

The rural church emphasis now given by our denomination is a most needed one. It is an attempt to secure sound leadership and consequently a sound program of work for the rural church. Southern Baptists have such a program. What the rural church needs, the urban church also needs--a leadership and a following. The need for this program has been evident for at least two or three decades. In the past several churches were manned by one pastor. The preacher was kept busy preaching several times a week and perhaps working at some secular task on the side. With such a crowded schedule he had little time to study, plan, and lead.

The tendency toward a full time ministry finds some areas unprepared and also finds some preachers unprepared. The rural emphasis concentrates on the development of such attitudes as will make for this leadership and its response. It is not a new program for a church; it is rather a new emphasis of an accepted program. Of course there are adaptations. Taking the principles of our promotional program, rural leaders point out where it is advisable to revise certain emphases.

As much as anything else, this program intends to develop competent pastors with the ability and the courage to change what should be changed and further develop a workable program. As a matter of fact the rural churches have done quite well wherever they have tried it. Workers need not fear the new approach. It is mainly a matter of emphasis and application of known principles that have already proved to be effective.

#### HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

Pastors and church leaders would benefit from a study of Counseling. This is the first course in this field and deals with problems any pastor meets. This course is Religious Education 145. The price is \$10.00 by correspondence and \$13.00 in the extension center.