

BULLETIN

SEMINARY EXTENSION

DEPARTMENT

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HEARSAY EVIDENCE

In courts of justice, jurists have long since learned to put little dependence in "hearsay evidence," because "hearsay evidence" leads to wrong conclusions and conflicting testimony. It is easy to fall prey to "hearsay evidence" in other walks of life. I keep thinking of the many little newspapers and so-called religious publications that have attacked the new version of the Bible. Without having to take a stand one way or another, one should be led to question the ability of many of these men who have never produced anything in the way of critical scholarship, whose only efforts have been to destroy, disrupt, cast suspicion, disorganize, and create ill will.

For the most part, they are men who cannot get along well enough with other people to belong to a denominational group. This type of personality is not the reflective type; they are not the type for one to follow because they neither have the tools of scholarship nor the opportunity for its application.

I am not so concerned about these men, but I am concerned about those whom they are trying to influence. And every preacher, for some reason or other, is a lifetime subscriber to their papers. One should be very careful about following the quotations of such men because to do so is to fall into the trap of "hearsay evidence." There are about four publications that fall on the preacher without his subscription. The insinuations and reflections in them do not deserve to be followed.

The average preacher would do well to sit on the sidelines when it comes to the discussion of things that are out of his field. Most of us who have had seminary education are not qualified to do much more than read objectively, for it takes years of diligent research and an acquaintance with numerous fields to equip one to give an analytical study of biblical problems.

I met a preacher on a train once who said that he loved the King James Version of the Bible because the men who translated it were inspired of God. Historical study of the King James might reveal that the men were not necessarily inspired, but that they were good students of the Bible, Greek, and Latin. After all, translation is not a matter of inspiration; it is a matter of information.

If I may say something about the present situation, which to my mind is a glorious one, it would be: Be thankful that you are living in a generation when men have the courage to face the howling objective mobs of people who will not accept a new translation. Be thankful that you have men who are willing to face this, and yet who courageously attempt to translate the Bible. I am most thankful that I have had some knowledge of the men who led in this translation.

In order to be Christian in our attitude, let us quit accusing people on "hearsay evidence." In all the papers that have made accusations, one might well challenge their writers with, "Do you know Dr. X, Dr. Y, or Dr. Z? If

not, why do you say such things?" It appears to me that a Baptist preacher in order to be honest, to be honorable, and to be fair, needs to re-search his whole attitude and ask himself these questions: Do I know? Am I sure? Or is it all just "hearsay evidence"?

INDEPENDENT PREACHER!

Many preachers think that to be known as an independent preacher is a special virtue. With as many organized denominations as there are now in existence the vast majority of which are biblically centered with variations of polity and church government, it seems inconceivable that one would set himself up as an independent. To do so is to cast reflection upon all of Christianity, as if to say "You are all wrong. God has given me the answer." Actually, it is a ridiculous situation, for the gospel which such a one preaches was born in the spirit of unity and cooperation, though all the early preachers did not think alike. The New Testament and church history both testify to the fact that there were many variances and differences. Our Bible came to us in the spirit of cooperation and unity despite differences.

The independent actually says to the world, "I expect you to cooperate with me and help me build a church while I refuse to cooperate with others who have built a church." Again the independent says to the world, "My personality is such that it cannot fit into a situation where other people are working and thinking." If one cannot find his place as a part of the whole in Christianity or in some body of the Christian faith, can he be expected to exert influence as a leader? As such he must teach them the principles of organic cooperation. Having repudiated the first element of teaching, that is example, how far will his teaching go?

The real reason why this situation exists is that the independent man fears that he cannot rise above the ordinary level of the average preacher to become accepted as a leader, a pioneer, and one who excels. He fears the ordinary lot that will be given to him if he is thought of in any manner except as the unique. One might question seriously whether such

an individual has a right to expect support for his work, support for his radio program, and indeed a following.

NEW CENTERS

New centers will be opening in a number of places throughout the country in January. Among these are the following:

Albemarle, North Carolina, Rev. C. R. Hinton, Director.

Crestview, Florida, Rev. Hal Hunter, Director.

Vardaman, Mississippi, Rev. L. H. Haire, Director.

Bakersfield, California, Rev. J. G. Heard, Director.

Marion, Illinois, Rev. George Wright, Director.

Dry Prong, Louisiana, Rev. Moses E. Mercer, Director.

Muskogee, Oklahoma, Rev. Leroy Crawford, Director.

WE'VE BEEN THERE

During the past three months the director and associate have been in every state east of the Mississippi River where Southern Baptists work. In addition they have been in Missouri, Louisiana, Texas, and Oklahoma. Mr. Hodge has visited most of the centers in Florida, and the Carolinas and has been in Washington, D. C., and Maryland in the interest of new centers.

NOTICE TO STUDENTS IN SEMINARIES AND COLLEGES

If you expect to use correspondence credits for graduation, your lessons must be in our office by April 1. Your examination must be completed by this date also.

Rev. W. A. Whitten of Florence Miss. has been with the Department for one month as a part time worker. His work is confined to Mississippi at present.

Statistical Report: Extension center students, 2,846; correspondence students 1,642.