

# BULLETIN

## SEMINARY EXTENSION DEPARTMENT

Lee Gallman, Director

P. O. Box 530

Jackson, Mississippi

---

Volume V

JUNE, 1956

Number 6

---

### TRADITION AND SCRIPTURE

Jesus confronted some of the same problems of orthodoxy that we face today. A climax is found in the fifteenth chapter of Matthew relating to the issue of scripture versus tradition. The problem of the orthodox was how to perpetuate a sound scriptural faith without changes. The answer was in a tradition of scholarly authoritative pronouncements made by scribes. The scribes were specialists in theology, polity, ethics, and prophecy. The Pharisees tried to keep step by obeying their precepts. This was orthodoxy. It refused to trust Moses or the prophets to pervade the conscience and mind; it refused to trust the common man's faith. This is our issue today.

In a world that is bursting at the seams with ideas, we fear the possibility of a free thinking Christian church led only by the scripture and the spirit of God. In order to correct a few ideas that our people might have, therefore, we find an undercurrent of feeling that Baptists ought to develop a creed that will crystallize for all time our traditional beliefs. We have almost developed an oral tradition of interpretation in our favored doctrines. Anyone who disputes the notion that Paul in Romans 7 is crying over the impossibility of living the ideal good life breaks the chain of tradition. "So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." (7:25b). Traditional interpretation gives the flesh

licenses to run amuck, undisciplined and uncontrolled. One who veers from this interpretation is under suspicion. Many other issues are involved such as eschatology, election, the cross, the resurrection, typology, Baptist polity and practices, and traditional terminology.

We cannot avoid an uncomfortable fact at this point. There is a consistent incompatibility between the informed alert Bible student and the traditionalist. There is no way to bring about a subserviance to tradition for one who has studied carefully except through dishonesty. This does not mean that a student is bound to agree with everything he reads. But it does mean that so much of the tradition is wrapped in mis-information that one loses his servility to it when he discovers an acceptable body of information.

To the traditionalist this appears to be a repudiation of the faith once delivered to the saints. But the reverse is true. The narrow limits of interpretation which tries to perpetuate certain characteristic ideas which were held by a few men a hundred years ago, and which must be supported by a syllogism of apparent logic is in fact a repudiation of this faith. The mind of spirit led men who have prepared themselves to think and study when tempered with experience is the soundest approach to interpretation. If we would perpetuate our faith we must do it through a thoroughly trained ministry with only the Bible as our instrument of authority.

## TESTIMONIAL

"The lack of Bible knowledge and Bible background had always disturbed me, and I have always wanted to fill this inadequacy with true facts and interesting data about the people in the Bible, where and how they lived, and their problems. To attend a seminary was impossible for me, but the seminaries have reached out and extended me the opportunity to go to the seminary through their extension classes given in the area in which I live. We study the same texts that we would if we attended the seminary. . . . I take three courses each Monday night and thoroughly enjoy them. I am positive that God wants us to study to have a good foundation to stand on. Perfect teaching cannot be done by imperfect people; therefore improvement can be made as long as we live. . . . All in all, my school night is one of the best nights in the week."

Mrs. R. A. Kreager  
North Hollywood, California

## Statistical Report:

Correspondence Students	1,785
Extension Students	3,629

Total enrollment May 22, 1956 5,424

Our newest extension center is the Vernon Parish Louisiana Seminary Extension Center which opened May 22. Rev. T. J. Crosby of New Llano is the director and Rev. Virgil Wilson, Night, Louisiana is the registrar-treasurer.

Since the Convention last year, two field workers have been added to the staff of the Seminary Extension Department. The Rev. Ray K. Hodge of Raleigh, North Carolina, is our representative on the eastern seaboard, and Rev. W. A. Whitten of Jackson, Mississippi, represents our work in Louisiana, Mississippi, West Tennessee, and East Texas.

Rev. Ray K. Hodge has just com-

## COUNT ME OUT

While pressure groups on two extremes are demanding a head count in the present race situation, and while there is a general breakdown of responsibility on the part of the leaders of both groups, others may choose sides. I do not feel compelled to choose between two evil courses, neither of which is going to succeed and neither of which is working for the best interest of all.

I do not believe any sensible person could live in the deep south long without accepting the fact that here is a social structure that cannot be overturned within a short period of time. That which is *ultimately right* is one thing, but what is *now proper* and therefore a right procedure is another thing. There are some facts of this life situation that should be considered.

On the one hand, I do not choose to be swept off my feet by theorists and idealists just because somebody said *this is it*. The changes that would occur in Alabama and Mississippi (to say nothing of Georgia, Louisiana and Arkansas) upon integration suddenly brought about would redound to the ill of all concerned, including the Negro.

On the other hand, I cannot stand up and be counted among those who are spelling out a doctrine of emotional hate. I do not choose to be counted among those who will offer pious proof through misuse of the Bible for our present situation. We are in a wrong condition of life. It is a repudiation of Christian principle and love. It is a state of backwardness and selfishness. Any move to perpetuate our present condition

pleted a tour of the Western states where he met many of the extension directors and workers. Rev. W. A. Whitten and the director have visited the states of Oklahoma, Texas, and Louisiana where new centers are contemplated.

is a move to crystallize social injustice. I cannot join such a move, for I believe in the rights of man of whatever color or race, to grow, develop, advance, and obtain recognition. Brotherhood is a goal of Christian teaching and Christianity in man's heart will develop this spirit.

The most serious problem which we confront is a lack of communication. We have almost arrived at the place where any position other than one of the extremes cannot find a hearing, and those who hold positions compatible with the extremes must content themselves to speak only to groups that already agree with them.

### A STRANGE PROBLEM

While talking to a seminary leader not too long ago, I was confronted with the question, "What are we going to do with the growing number of preachers in Southern Baptist life? He pointed out that there was a problem involved in placing graduates and a much larger problem involved in finding places for student pastorates. The figures that have been quoted many times from recent surveys indicate that there are between eight to ten thousand young preachers in our seminaries and colleges. It is evident that we do have an increasing number of preachers and as a matter of fact we have a growing number of preachers without pulpits. This can be evidenced by looking in the back of any state convention minutes or *Southern Baptist Convention Annual*, and note the number of preachers without pastorates.

This is rather a peculiar problem in many ways because in addition to there being a "preacher problem" there is also a "church problem." Many churches are without pastors. In a recent issue of *THE WATCHMAN EXAMINER* it was pointed out that in one of the northern states there is a tremendous shortage of

ministers, and indeed some of the outstanding pulpits of that state have been vacant several months. Everything indicates that we are going to have an increasing number even yet of ministerial students. Of course, there is a very good way to put a stop to this: you do not have Christian workers called out of cold, lifeless, spiritless atmosphere. If our churches will "cool off" they will decrease the number of young men who feel the call to the ministry.

I may be blind on one side, or the other, but somehow this is not the big problem as far as I can see. It may well be that we need to take stock and ascertain if our looseness in pastoral recommendations does not need to be revised. There is a chance that we could speed up the procedure in the local churches in the matter of calling a preacher, but I should like to point out several possibilities. Believing in the Providence of God as I was taught by a rather rigorous Calvinistic background, I think every preacher called of God is called to serve a purpose, and that there is a place for him.

It seems to me that there are three very practical solutions to the hypothetical problem. The first is in the matter of meeting the needs in our rural church area. More and more the rural churches are demanding and must demand well trained men. We are just a decade this side of the on-rush of the Roman Catholic Church in our rural south. Actually, the south is already feeling this impact. I say the south because it is in the south that the Roman Catholic Church has made its greatest bid for rural work, and it is in the south where Southern Baptists are strongest in the rural churches. I am convinced that there are hundreds of churches in the rural areas now that need to be revived, others are weak because they have a part-time program. Many of these could be full-time.

It seems to me that the second op-

portunity that we have is that of starting new churches. We are turning our attention more and more to the city since we have initiated the rural church program, and this is proper. For Southern Baptists have not yet learned the technique essential for the evangelization of a great metropolitan area. There is hardly a city within our territory that does not need scores of new churches. Of course, you cannot make Baptists leave a big church and start a new one. Many of our large churches should change their whole attitudes toward the starting of new churches. It is not in the city alone where we need new churches; many of our smaller towns should begin new work. And in addition, we should think of the states as offering opportunities in rural areas. In one church field in California I drove with the pastor over 150 miles of dirt road through the country where new works might be started. This church field was so far out that some people had to drive over 20 miles to get to church. The answer there, as in many other areas, is in the establishment of rural churches. We should begin literally hundreds of rural churches in Ohio, California, Illinois, Michigan, and without a doubt in many of our deep south areas.

Of course, there is a third possibility, and that is more of our pastors should migrate. This is a step that should be taken after much care and prayer. It should be done with the co-operation of the leadership in the new states. This is a problem that will cease to be missionary in a little while, for there are many young indigenous folk being called to the ministry in the new areas. They, of course, can do a better job than an "outsider."

There is another possibility which is almost unthinkable in the minds of some people, and yet from the point of fulfilling our Christian mis-

sion I do not see how we can escape. The greatest mission field Southern Baptists know anything about, far greater than any foreign field, is that of the Negro population in this country. Someone said recently that it is "heroic" for a person to go to Africa, but "moronic" for him to work with Negroes in the south. The Negro people desperately need leadership now, but there are many problems involved in the pursuit of a ministry among them. However these problems are not insurmountable.

It is evident that God is expecting a great deal of Southern Baptists in view of the ever increasing number of young men and women who feel the call to Christian service. There is a place for them, and this place will be open to them in time if they follow the leadership of the Spirit.

—:—

### NEW PATTERNS OF WORK

The flexibility of the Seminary Extension Department is being dramatically demonstrated through our cooperative efforts with the colleges in Kentucky and western Tennessee. We are jointly promoting centers in these areas. The colleges provide supervision for teaching, while both groups, colleges and the Department promote vigorously. The colleges get the advantage of public relations in the state and the Seminary Extension Department is able to extend its services in reaching more people. This also offers a fine opportunity for promoting good relationships between two types of institutions. We will be able to offer extension workers work shops on the college campuses and give a better quality of work. Publicity bears the imprint of this relationship.