

BULLETIN

SEMINARY EXTENSION

DEPARTMENT

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EXTENSION CENTERS JOINTLY PROMOTED IN THREE STATES

Following a pattern developed with Union University, the first to begin a joint extension project with the Seminary Extension Department, Kentucky Baptist schools and colleges and Oklahoma Baptist University have entered into an agreement with the Seminary Extension Department for state-wide extension work. Similar programs are under consideration in other states.

The plan does not affect existing extension work done by faculty members in formal branch class work; it adds to this the adult education procedures promoted by the Extension Department. This joint program is developed where the state-wide extension operation has not developed.

In December a meeting of extension directors will be called by Dr. Davis Woolley for the purpose of setting up a Baptist extension association. The purpose of this organization is to be educational. It will facilitate the development of literature and experimentation. In addition the organization will serve to interpret the developments in adult education to leaders in Baptist extension services.

BOOK REVIEW

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY, George S. Hendry, Philadelphia, The Westminster Press, 1956, 128 pages. Price \$2.50.

In five chapters Hendry examines the inter-relationships of the Holy Spirit on 1) Christ, 2) God, 3) the Church, 4) the Word, and 5) the Human Spirit as understood in current theological circles. The contentions of Barth, Ferrè, and others are examined in the light of tradition, reason, and scripture. He gives a good deal of space to those explanations by Barth and others that are supposed to explain the Trinity but really confuses the issues. (continued p. 2)

MISSING THE POINT

The observance of baptism and the memorial supper in a Baptist church is a sacred moment. To witness a New Testament baptismal service in which the new believer submits to a symbolic re-enactment of the sacrificial death, burial, and triumphant resurrection of Christ is of no little significance to the Christian observer. To participate in the memorial meal in which the elements used describe pictorially the broken body and the shed blood of an obedient Christ likewise leaves the worshipper in an awe-struck mood of consecration and devotion. In no other way can so much of the Christian gospel be proclaimed than in the administration and participation in these two church ordinances. It is almost unthinkable that a person would leave the baptismal scene or the memorial supper without first having the memory of Christ revitalized. What a sublime memory the ordinances give us.

It is regretfully strange, however, that christendom has so handled these sacred occasions that rather than serving as great unifying forces they have been the objects of great controversy resulting in division. So great and so dark have been the clouds of ecclesiastical meandering that at times the very purpose and meaning of the ordinances was certainly overshadowed if not forgotten. Each century and decade has inherited many extremists and proceeded to add its own to the procession. So varied and extreme are the beliefs and practices of Christian groups in regard to the nature, method, ingredients, frequency, and administrator of the ordinances that rather than serving to commemorate the redemptive acts of Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection, they present the

problem of choosing a local fellowship that believes and practices according to a particular belief or interpretation.

It is not to be assumed that one should disregard the nature of the ordinances. Many extremists appear at this point. The traditional Roman Catholic emphasis on the sacramental view states that in essence one partakes of the actual body and blood of Christ in the elements and they become effective life giving forces in his life. Another extreme is that of placing too little emphasis upon the value and significance of the ordinances. They are looked upon as mere symbols and tender reminders but possess little value in demonstrating gospel truth in everyday living. Such a thing then as the mode of baptism fades into the oblivion of relative unimportance. Baptists deny both these extremes.

Likewise other factors affecting method and participation need careful consideration. Such matters as frequency of observance, the pre-requisite of a Christian experience of salvation, the value of the ordinance occupying the central place in a worship service serve to add or detract from their essential meaning. It seems, however, that a suggestion might be in order. In the administration and observance of the ordinances with all the minuteness of method and detail, it is possible to miss the point of their essential meaning.

The manipulation of certain elements in a specific manner does not necessarily insure a fulfillment of their meaning and purpose. The ordinances are vehicles of divine "truths" not grace, but when observed in an atmosphere of controversy they confuse and frustrate. It is possible to be exact in detail and wrong in interpretation. In other words one can miss the point entirely. Without assuming that one can interpret the purpose of these sacred acts of worship in this small space, I would venture this assertion: Whatever else may be derived from the ordinances their pictorial presentation should affect a dynamic memory of Christ and his completed redemption. As such they serve as valuable agencies of unity and worship. As objects of controversy they are reduced to legalistic rituals which separate the very body they are designed to symbolize.

W. A. Whitten

(Book Review continued)

But Hendry is also confused when he gets to the Church. The relationship between the Spirit and the Church is, according to him, midway between the position of the Roman Catholic Church which claims that the Spirit is canalized in the Church through apostolic authority and the descendants of the Ana-baptists whose position he calls enthusiasts. The latter expects the Spirit to deal with the individual without regard to the church. This is brushed aside as a bottomless pit of self-deception. The Spirit is present in a sacramental element when the apostolic testimony is given. When the incarnate one himself answers the prayers of the faithful he is thus extended.

Actually, the author falls into the pitfall of many other controversialists who make clay pigeons and then proceed to shoot them. Baptists (one in his classification of enthusiasts) would not accept his delineation of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in a few paragraphs as these.

This is, however, a very excellent work and one that I heartily commend.

Lee Gallman.

Center Stimulates Study

Seminary Extension courses lead to greater challenges in Christian education and larger opportunities for Christian service. Dr. Thomas S. Messer, Director of the Extension Center located at Baptist Student Center in Cape Girardeau, Mo. reports that numbers of his former students have gone on to more advanced study as a result of having taken night courses in Bible.

This center was set up in 1954 and was the first class to be graduated from a Seminary Extension Center. Of the five graduates, three are progressive pastors and two are engaged in advanced study. The fact that the extension work has stimulated a quest for more concentrated study is just one of the rewards of offering these courses in Bible and related religious subjects.

STATISTICAL REPORT	
Extension Center students	3915
Correspondence students	<u>1981</u>
Total	5896