

BULLETIN SEMINARY EXTENSION DEPARTMENT

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VOLUME VI

FEBRUARY 1957

NUMBER 2

WE MUST MOVE TOGETHER

In our day of great emphasis, we may be tempted to over emphasize some area of Baptist life. One can easily see how a leader in any type of Baptist institutional life or organization can see his program as most important. When you hear the need of people in evangelism, education, socially, and otherwise, it is tremendous.

But we must see our work as a unit and move along together. There is a tremendous need for a more fervent Christian witness. This need is so evident that to list the reasons why will not actually add to the picture. If we could seriously approach a total Christian witness we could change our generation. There is a pagan world growing up about us.

We need to plan new missions in strategic places throughout our land. I do not know how this should be accomplished, but I know that there should be an organization for Christ in each community. We need to advance in stewardship consciousness and practice; we need to develop the internal growth patterns of our churches through the Training Union, Sunday School, and other groups. There are many other areas of service that must be explored. In "the regions beyond" there is need for men and money. The need is so great that no one can adequately express it.

Every agency sees its services needed. None are expecting to "level off" their budgets, personnel, or facilities. I have yet to meet an executive who feels that his project has reached its peak in service and ministry, or that his budget is too high.

Where are we headed? Will our expansion reach a "leveling

off" process? Will we have a stabilized budget within a foreseeable future? How many should Baptists win each year? How big should our organization get? How large should our buildings be?

There is no end to the needs and services. We will have larger demands for hospitals, children's homes, and new institutions. Baptists are on the move. The evangelistic goals, the stewardship goals, and the missionary goals have reached into every area of our life. New states have been entered in the east and in the west, and the end is not yet. The advance in these areas may be misunderstood by some but the advance continues. It would not be proper to stop, or try to stop, advance into these fields of service and ministries. The pioneer efforts and the crusading spirit have made us. We have been changed from a Calvinistic apathetic people to a people of vision and work.

As we move in these fields we must not forget the importance of other areas. We must grow in understanding, in attitudes, and in knowledge. Our people are a wonderful folk, but they are not always a learned folk. They have convictions, but they do not always have comprehension. They know the terms of the gospel claims so as to preach evangelistic sermons, but they do not know enough about Christian ethics or theology. They believe in missions in Africa, but cannot break the caste system in their own community. They can tithe, but they cannot think constructively. We need leadership. We need learning and schools marshalled for the cause of Christian education.

Schools, colleges, and seminaries are essential to the development of a leadership and a

cultural life. Our people know, understand, and have attitudes in proportion to their leadership. Leaders know and understand in proportion to their training.

BOOK REVIEW

PROTESTANT BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION, completely revised edition, by Bernard Ramm. Boston: W. A. Wilde Company, 1956.

For some time many of us have been seeking a book on interpretation that is reliable, usable, and understandable. An older book by Terry, BIBLICAL HERMENEUTICS, is too large a work for the average student. In addition, it is so old that modern methodology does not fall into any of its categories. A book of lesser quantity and quality by Pearson, KNOWING THE SCRIPTURE, contains some good elements, but does not actually lead the student beyond what he already knows. Dr. H. E. Dana's fine work, SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES, contains much that the average student would not care to engage; yet until now it was the best book to offer in the field. It is still one of the finer works for advanced students.

When Dr. Ramm's first book came out he admittedly created a work "prejudicing the case for premillennialism." We think that no sound approach at interpretation begins with such limitations. The original was a fine piece of work. Its analyses of various uses of the Bible were excellent. The author has added approximately 100 more pages and to some degree has eliminated the original objectionable features. Yet many of us flinch at the use of the term "literal" in interpretation. We are not at all in agreement with his interpretation on typology, but the author has certainly made a contribution to the thinking of the average reader in this field. Insofar as we can see the only typology the New Testament knows anything about is that which a writer pulls out of its context by way of illustration in the same sense that some folk try to illustrate the Trinity with a triangle.

The author is not only well acquainted with this field, but he is conversant with the literature of the New Testament as well as the Old Testament from the

earliest times until now. His historical material and analysis of this type of interpretation are most complete. He has made a real contribution in the matter of the use of the critical approach, and has delved into the principles involved. In all fairness there is no doubt that this writer has grown both in his comprehension of this field and also in his ability to judge the values of many approaches at study.

One would take issue with him on his interpretation of inerrancy. To say that the Bible is without error and without contradiction is to demand a careful scrutiny of every line, check every figure, and search for all the numbers. This, of course, is not expected to be done in order to understand our Bible. Nevertheless the use of the term "inerrancy" is an unfortunate use whether it is related to the Old Testament or the New Testament. We will also be lost in his interpretation of typography and in general the trend toward literalism. Yet there is a streak of freedom, fairness, and open mindedness in this work that is altogether wholesome. In dealing with the millennium he is most fair to all three of the main positions.

I would commend this work to any reader, but I would also suggest that a few other works be used along with it. In my humble judgment, PROTESTANT BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION and SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES by Dana stand almost alone in this field today. The author does not give a classified bibliography at the close of the book. Dr. Dana gives such a bibliography, but his is not complete, showing neither the publisher nor the date of the publication.

A great need for preachers now, I think, is an understanding of principles, acceptable principles of interpreting and understanding the scriptures.

STATISTICAL REPORT

Correspondence students	2,076
Extension Center students	<u>4,625</u>
Total	6,701