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Recommended Citation

Berry, Alva, "Why Did They Leave Us? A Friendly Discussion of the Bible Class Question" (1955). *Stone-Campbell Books*. 157.

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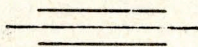
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WHY DID THEY LEAVE US?

A FRIENDLY
DISCUSSION

of

The Bible
Class Question



BY ALVA BERRY



WHY DID THEY LEAVE US?

A QUESTION

BY

BY

THE BIBLE

QUESTIONS

BY ALVA PERCY

THE BIBLE CLASS QUESTION

By ALVA BERRY

John was born in a little city in Texas in the year of nineteen hundred five. He was of rather poor parentage and due to his father's poor health he had to quit school at an early age. He was a hard worker, and strictly honest in all his dealings. He became interested in religion and obeyed the Gospel at an early age. He began at once to do everything he could for the cause, and was admired by all the brethren of his congregation, which was known as the Crest Avenue Church of Christ. It was commonly called, by most of the members, "the Loyal Church". It was a small congregation whose teaching was done mostly by the home members, except when they had their annual summer meeting. One reason for this practice was lack of funds, and another was they did not believe it scriptural to have a located preacher. They did believe in allowing preachers to come on monthly appointments, and followed this practice to some extent. They were strictly opposed to promising a preacher a certain amount for his services, believing this to be equal to setting a price on the Gospel. They sometimes sent a preacher away with a very sad heart, because he did not know how he was going to meet his living expenses. They were strictly opposed to teaching the Bible in classes. They would refuse to use any preacher who would tolerate class work to any extent. However, if a preacher would send in a report to the "Apostolic Way" stating that he was opposed to Sunday School, women teachers, and all other innovations, they would use him even though they knew very little about his character otherwise, or how he stood on vital issues.

John married when he was nineteen, establishing a home of his own. Soon several of the older men of the congregation moved away, and the only remaining man who was forward enough to do any public work in the church passed away leaving John as the sole dependence for the public duties of the church.

He had been thoroughly taught that we should do everything exactly as the Bible teaches it, and should leave off everything not plainly taught in the scriptures. He had heard so much talk against taking man's word for things, and following commentaries and such like that he did not purchase a commentary for many years. He failed to find any specific scripture teaching us to dismiss the assembly with a prayer, or sing an invitation song, so he just left these off. The visiting preachers criticized him for it, and some laughed at him, but none could convince him that these things were scriptural.

Eventually a preacher by the name of Sam Brown held a meeting for the Crest Avenue Church. Brother Brown was a very affectionate old man and soon he and

John became quite attached to each other. One day when he and John were discussing some of John's peculiar practices, Brother Brown remarked in a very kind and solemn way, "John, it is just as sinful to make a law where God has not made one as it is to violate one he has made." This made a deep and lasting impression on John's mind and soon he gave up his notions concerning the dismissal prayer, the invitation song, and several other practices which were not shared by most of the other "Loyal brethren." However, this still left him with the notion that it was wrong to use individual communion cups, Bible classes and regular preachers.

John was perhaps somewhat above the average in thinking for himself, but the notions which were rooted and grounded in him were hard to get rid of. However, one by one he learned the truth concerning his prejudices through his own studies, or some of the better thinkers among the preachers learned the truth and taught him. He was more zealous than many among his associates and was eager to learn any truth that would enable him to do more in the service of his Lord.

During the meeting with Brother Brown several converts were added. Soon afterwards a young man by the name of Bill Johnson from a neighboring town moved into the congregation. The editor of the "Apostolic Way" wrote the Crest Avenue Church concerning Bill and among other things said, "He is as firm as the Rock of Gibraltar." John was very glad to have Bill to help him in the work and they soon became bosom pals.

Bill had been brought up by very strict parents, and was taught that to commune with the Sunday School brethren was spiritual adultery. His parents would much rather he would attend a Sunday ball game, go fishing or even go to some distant town with a group of rough worldly boys that attend church and commune with the SS group. So Bill considered the SS group of the church of Christ about the worst religious group to be found and the most to be shunned.

John had not been taught so strictly, and being of a kindly disposition, and realizing that if any one is saved, he will be saved by the mercy of God, he was inclined to be more tolerant toward the SS brethren than was Bill, and most of the other "Antis". (I do not use this word "Anti" with any disrespect, but only for want of a better word to express the thought. I love every one of them. I was one myself until recent years. Nor do I mean any disrespect by the term "Sunday School group". Since this is commonly used by the Antis, I deem it the easiest term to use to get the thought over to them and to others).

John was much displeased by the harsh attitude the other brethren had toward the SS group and he began at

an early age to treat them with courtesy. He would introduce them to the "Antis" and even visit with them, when it was convenient to do so. He thus hoped to win some of them, and indeed he did win some over to his views. Some of the brethren commended him for his friendly attitude, but warned him not to be led off. Others were frankly uneasy about him, being afraid that he was too soft.

Not long after Bill moved to town, some older men moved in also, and eventually were appointed elders, but John and Bill were still the ones who did most of the thinking for the church. This was especially true of John. He would learn the truth on some vital subject and then teach it to Bill and the two would teach it to the elders and the rest of the church.

When John and Bill were about twenty-five years old, a preacher from Georgia, Bill Nix by name, held a meeting for the Crest Avenue Church. Brother Nix was more bold than any other preacher they had had during the life of the leaders in charge. He boldly taught them that they should use individual communion cups. He showed by the scriptures that the word cup as used by Christ always meant the drink element in communion, and the container was not even mentioned. His reasoning was so plain that John saw it right away and he did not have much difficulty in convincing Bill and the elders. But old Sister Brown objected very strongly to putting in "the wasp nest", as she called it, and she succeeded in stirring up considerable feeling. Eventually they put in the individual cups, and Sister Brown became reconciled to them. Two or three members who had not been regular in attendance quit meeting.

The next year Brother Nix came back, and this time he showed by the scriptures that the method used by the early church to convert the world was for a preacher or group of preachers to locate at a place and stay as long as necessary. He called attention to the fact that Paul stayed at Ephesus three years (Acts 20:31) and showed that according to the Bible chronology Timothy was there five years later even though they had had elders for at least five years (I Tim. 1:3). He also showed Paul and Barnabas stayed at Antioch a whole year (Acts 11:26). He showed further that Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch and stayed a long time (Acts 14:28).

He showed also that Paul, Barnabas and certain others went to Jerusalem (Acts 15:2), and returned to Antioch (verse 30), and that Judas and Silas were there, and did a great deal of teaching (verse 32). He showed then that after the whole group had tarried there a space, that they were let go in peace, but that Silas, Paul and Barnabas abode there still, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also (verses 34, 35).

Brother Nix reasoned that since we have so many

examples of located preachers, and no examples of regular yearly meetings as was the practice of the "Loyal" brethren, it was very foolish to oppose the plan which could be proved by plain scriptures, and to practice the other simply because it was considered to be expedient, and not to violate any principle of scripture. This was so plain that John and Bill both saw it immediately. However, they had some difficulty in convincing the elders and the rest of the congregation. Sister Brown again saw fit to talk very freely against the "changeable attitude of the brethren" and stirred up quite a bit of discord. However, when the elders decided to employ a preacher, Sister Brown and others settled down and worked harmoniously, and the church took on a new life and growth.

At first no salary was paid the preacher, but he just promised to work with the church, and the elders promised him that they would supply his needs. The elders got together, however, and decided how much they thought he should be paid, just as they had always done when paying a preacher for a meeting. They also consulted the preacher as to his expenses and needs. After a while a visiting preacher asked one of the elders why they did not pay him a set amount and let the preacher know in advance what to expect, so he would know how to plan his expenses and meet his bills. The elder replied that he did not know of any scripture authorizing such procedure. He was reminded that no scripture authorized the elder's deciding how much to give him. The elder argued that to set a price on the gospel was making merchandise of it. The preacher replied that the elders were setting a price when they decided how much to give, and the only way they could avoid setting a price was to put the money in a sack or other receptacle and let the preacher just reach in and get some without knowing how much he was getting. Soon the elders were convinced that the scriptures do not tell us who shall decide how much to pay a preacher, nor whether to promise him in advance how much he shall expect. They were convinced that this matter and under the heading of expediency and Christian liberties. They met with the preacher and discussed the matter and decided on a salary for him. This pleased John, for he had already seen the foolishness of opposing a salary. He realized that a preacher could have his mind on the money and have the attitude of a hireling, and be condemned for such attitude, without knowing in advance how much he was to receive, just as easily as if he knew; in fact he had seen some that showed that attitude. He knew that the highest paid preacher among the "antis" was one who would not accept a set salary, but would refuse to go to weak churches. He arranged his work among the ones who would pay well.

Sister Brown did not like the salary idea and talked it privately, with both male and female members, and wrote to one of the preachers whom she thought would

oppose it, but he replied in a way that did not encourage her in causing discord, and so the matter was dropped.

About this time a large percentage of the "anti churches" saw the inconsistency of the notion that it was wrong to have a located preacher and paying a set salary. Still there were some who put up a very hard fight against both. They were really in most cases, not opposed to what the brethren who employed located preachers were doing, but they accused them of having "The hired pastor system", and of letting the preacher do all the work, and many other things which were not true. In short, they put up a straw man and fought him, instead of fighting what was really being done.

About the same time, some of the more thoughtful brethren began to realize that it was inconsistent to be so strict in disfellowshipping the SS group and so lax in discipline on other issues. They realized that if they were as strict on other things as they were on this one, that there could not be any organized work, but each man would be almost alone, and scarcely able to fellowship anyone but himself. They therefore, began to advocate a more tolerant attitude toward the SS brethren. Some fought the leniency and became even harsher toward the SS group. They began accusing them of all sorts of unreasonable things such as specially training men to act as termites, to infiltrate into non-class churches and destroy them from within. They branded as dishonest those who were being convinced that class teaching is not a sin. In short their intolerance can be described by no milder term than frenzy. In their religious paper they began to publish articles that were calculated to create in the minds of the reader an attitude of suspicion, intolerance, and even hatred. (Brethren, you who hold this intolerant attitude, if the only thing you desire is to keep your members from believing in SS, you are acting wisely, for hatred, intolerance, distrust and prejudice are your strongest weapons. But if you want to have the spirit of our Blessed Saviour Jesus Christ, you will have to leave these things off, for they are not like him).

When John realized how far wrong he had been on the located preacher question, the cup question, etc., and saw the attitude of those who opposed such things he began to wonder if he might not be mistaken on the Bible class question too. So he began to investigate with an open mind. He and Bill had several arguments on different phases of the subject, but Bill was always so positive that he was right that he did not give John a chance to tell him why he did not see things as before. Bill would do just like most of the "antis" do when arguing with one who is beginning to change. He would go over the old arguments, which John had used all his life, and not let John answer, so he did not realize just how much

John really had changed until he announced his change. After this he was even worse about doing all the talking. But more about this later.

John's affection for his brethren was great, and even after he decided it was no sin to teach Bible classes, he still did not want to leave them. He was compelled, however, to let them know to a great extent how he felt about the subject. His desire was to get the brethren to see the terrible mistake they were making in having such an extreme view on the subject as to withdraw fellowship from one who believed in classes and at the same time show tolerance toward others who were doing things very plainly condemned by the scriptures. In contending for these principles, he of course, would bring out arguments to show that classes were not wrong, and so he was branded by the leaders as a dangerous man, and was not allowed to have any public part in the church affairs, not even to dismiss the assembly. There were some in the congregation whose conduct in daily life was far from being complimentary, but who held out strongly against classes, or anything even resembling them, and these were permitted to do anything of a public nature which they were inclined to do. Of course, John could not help seeing the inconsistency of this attitude, and could not feel that he could work satisfactorily under such conditions, so he placed his membership with one of the churches having Bible lessons.

This hurt Bill a great deal, but his love for John was so great that he would not cast him off as a friend. Some of the brothers, and most of the sisters found consolation in accusing John of changing over for popularity or through some other low motives. One sister told Bill that John changed because he hoped to get a job from a certain SS brother who had a nice dry good store, and thus he hoped to get a better paying job than he had. To this Bill replied: "I have known John a long time, and if I ever saw a man who was honest I believe him to be one. He may be losing his mind, but he is not dishonest."

Bill and John visited each other quite often, and usually had some argument about the SS, but Bill was so dogmatic in his contentions that he would not give John a chance to give his views. When John would start to bring out a point Bill would interrupt and give him some old argument that he had made many times over to others, and which in many cases he could do a better job of giving than Bill.

Finally, one night when they were about to part, having argued till they were somewhat peeved at each other, John said: "Bill, I will never discuss this subject with you again except in an orderly way. We are getting no where, and I am afraid we are losing some of the affection we have had for each other, but if you will

discuss the subject with me in an orderly way, I make this proposition: I BELIEVE I CAN PROVE BY LOGICAL AND SCRIPTURAL REASONING THAT EVERY OBJECTION YOU HAVE TO CLASS TEACHING IS BASED UPON IGNORANCE OF FACT, IGNORANCE OF THE SCRIPTURES, OR A MIXTURE OF THE TWO."

This angered Bill somewhat, and he raised his voice and said: "John, you know you can't do any such thing."

John quietly replied: "Bill, do you mean to accuse me of dishonesty?"

Bill humbled down and said, "Well, I do not see how you could think that you can do that." "Well, just give me a chance and I will show why I think so," said John.

After much discussion of methods of procedure, Bill agreed to present his objections one at a time and discuss only one objection until they either agreed or decided it was impossible to agree for a least a while, and then proceed to another, etc., until they had covered all the ground. It was also agreed that after they had finished one objection it would not be brought up again until they had covered all the ground.

At a convenient time they began their discussion. Bill exultantly presented his first objection, confident that John would never get anywhere proving he was wrong even on it.

Bill's first objection: "The Sunday School is an institution without any sanction whatever in the Scriptures. It is a man-made organization doing the work which God ordained should be done by the church. I Tim. 3:15 was given to show that the church is the pillar and ground of the truth." Bill made quite a touching speech, lasting some five minutes and almost came to tears exhorting John not to dishonor the blood bought institution by using a man-made organization to do the work which our blessed Saviour ordained that it, and it only, should do.

John: "Bill, what do you mean by the expression 'a man-made institution or organization'?"

Bill: "I mean a Sunday School having its organization separate from the church."

John: "Bill, I do not uphold such a thing any more than you do, and I do not believe you can find a church of Christ in this city or any surrounding city that has what you are objecting to. So this objection is based on ignorance of fact."

To this Bill did not agree, and some time was spent at the telephone, and even a few long distance calls were made, and every answer was to the effect that the church did not have nor believe in any such thing. Bill learned to

his great surprise that the class teaching was only a part of the work of the church, all of which was under the supervision of the elders or leaders of each church. So he proceeded to offer his next objection. But John asked him if he was convinced and willing to admit that teaching can be done in classes without a man-made organization. He very reluctantly admitted that it could, and according to the rules of the discussion he could not again refer to class teaching as a man-made organization. So Bill was thrown from his prepared track, and he offered a new objection which was the same objection worded differently to try to make it fit the facts.

Bill: "The class system of teaching is a thing untaught in the Bible. It is an unscriptural practice. 'All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works' (II Tim. 3:16-17). There is not even a hint in all the New Testament that any church had any such arrangement. The scriptures do not furnish us unto it; therefore, it is not a good work. Why do we not read where Paul commended the churches for their efficient class work and their nice buildings with their different rooms for the different classes, etc? Why did he not tell them to admonish the sisters who were teaching the little folks and the juniors to be diligent, etc? Because they had no such arrangement, of course. The Bible is as silent as the grave on class teaching."

John: "Bill, before I answer your last speech, I wish you would give us the scriptures for the things which the 'antis' practice."

Bill: "If you will mention one thing I advocate that I cannot read a 'thus saith the Lord' for, I will give it up."

John: "Where is your scripture for calling a preacher? I can find many places where they were sent, or went on their own accord, but not one place where they were called."

Bill, turning triumphantly to Acts 16:9, read: "Come over into Macedonia, and help us."

John: "Notice that the next verse says 'the Lord called them'. I was talking about a church calling a preacher."

Bill: "Well, I cannot think of one now."

John: "Use your concordance, call your smartest preacher, search all you please, you will never find it."

Bill: "Well, I guess I cannot find one for that, but, John, honestly do you think that is on a par with the SS?"

John: "I am not claiming that one thing is on a par,

but I will make you an argument that is on a par and even better than any you can make against class teaching. There is not a hint in all the New Testament that any group of elders, or leaders ever (1) got together and decided to have a summer meeting, (2) nor decided to write a preacher, (3) nor got a reply that his time was all booked for a year ahead, (4) nor set a time for the meeting, (5) nor a place, (6) nor advertised it in their favorite religious paper, (7) nor built a brush arbor, church house, nor any such thing. (8) No place did Paul ever write and say 'I held your last summer's meeting and am booked for the next'. (9) Never did he commend a church for their nice modest building, (10) with a restrictive clause in the deed. (11) Never did he commend them for their Wednesday night meetings. Bill, we have been listening to only one side of the question. Our preachers have led us to believe that just because the work of the SS group is doing it not stated in detail in the Bible, it is therefore unscriptural, and at the same time we have been practicing things for which there are even fewer of the details specified.

"We have been upholding a sect, the Anti SS sect of the church of Christ. We have been fostering division, and division is wrong. You can ask one of our super-loyal brethren for advice concerning the soundness of a preacher, and he will almost always answer with only one thing in mind. That one thing is whether or not he is strong against the SS. We have been identified with a group who can be tolerant with those who do not agree with them on the war question, divorce and re-marriage, lodge membership, general church discipline, and matters of almost every nature; but who on one thing cannot tolerate a difference of opinion, and that one thing is what they have been taught to call SS. An attitude of that kind makes one a sectarian. Sects are usually started by somebody's stressing one portion of the scriptures, or his notion concerning it, far out of all reason, and then in withdrawing from those who disagree with him. In some cases they may have the truth on one or two important Bible doctrines, but they neglect to learn the truth on others. In many cases the outstanding doctrine of a sect is erroneous. That is exactly what you and I have been doing, Bill. That is what the anti SS group is doing. They are making a sect of themselves by stressing an idea all out of proportion, and at the same time they are wrong in their contentions, and I will show you why.

"As already stated they cannot find a hint in the scriptures for some of their practices, but are disfellowshipping the SS brethren on the grounds that the scriptures furnish us unto all good works and do not say anything about class teaching, when actually there is more to be found favoring class teaching than can be found favoring the summer meeting."

Bill: "John, do you think it is wrong to have summer meetings?"

John: "No."

Bill: "Then why are you making all the fuss trying to prove they are unscriptural?"

John: "I am not. I am just trying to show you that the objections usually given to class teaching can be as reasonably given to what we have always practiced, and that whatever reasons can be given to support summer meetings and the other things we have always practiced can be given in support of classes. I will listen now, and I urgently request that you give us your reasons for contending that it is scriptural to have summer meetings."

Bill: "I will accept that challenge. Jesus said 'Go teach all nations.' This command is given in several places and I do not deem it necessary to quote, nor cite references. We are not told the necessary details for carrying out this command, and so long as we do not violate a principle of scripture, we are at liberty to furnish all the necessary details for carrying it out. The Bible is a book of principles. Very few details are given for carrying out the commands. If they were, we could never learn them. The Bible would be such a large library of books the average person could not read it through in five or ten years. Details are to be placed under the heading of expedience. In expedience we have liberty but not law. The conditions we are living under today will not permit men to go out on their own, and we would never get much preaching done if we had to depend altogether upon some church sending a preacher to us as you say it was done back there. So we must figure out some way to get it done, and God will hold us responsible for not doing it, if we fail."

John: "Thank you, Bill. You are getting your eyes open now. The details are not given; that is right. The New Testament is a book of principles. The details are matters of expediency; in them we have liberty, in law none. You cannot stay with these great truths and remain an 'anti.' Jesus commanded us to teach. As you said, this command is given several times. Yes, the Bible is very plain on this point. God's people have always been emphatically commanded to teach his laws to their children and the people around them who would hear, and in the New Testament we are commanded to teach all nations. As you so truthfully state, we are not given the necessary details for carrying out this command. You have justified your summer meeting system of teaching on the one command to teach all nations, even though all the examples given in the New Testament are examples of sending instead of calling. We have reversed the thing and call them; that is, the 'antis' do. The 'pros' are doing

quite a a bit of sending along with the calling, but I fear they are not doing nearly enough. I cannot see how you can condemn teaching a Bible class after making the argument you have for the summer meetings. You uphold your 'summer meeting system' of making disciples on the grounds that the details are not given, and then condemn the 'class system of teaching' on the grounds that the details are not given. Bill, can you not see the inconsistency of such a position? I believe I can show a great many more details for class teaching than you can for summer meetings. In fact, I can think of only two of the details for the summer meeting and I believe I can give a scripture for almost every detail for class teaching."

Bill: "Why, John! How can you say that?"

John: "Well, just show your details, and then offer your objections to the details for classes, and I will answer them one by one according to the agreement."

Bill: "Well you know that we have many examples of teaching by the lecture method."

John: "Yes, that is one detail."

Bill: "In Acts 13:42-44 we have an example of setting a time for the meeting and coming together."

John: "Yes, they set the day, but nothing is said about the hour and minute, but I will give you credit for three details: lecturing, setting time, and coming together. Now go on."

Bill thought for a good while and said: "I cannot give another."

John: "All right, now give your objections to class teaching and I will supply the scriptural reasons for the details as best I can. I admit that in some cases the scriptures are not very specific, but I believe that they will average up better than the ones you have given for the summer meeting system."

Bill: "There is no example of dividing a group for the purpose of teaching."

John: "Matthew 13:1-9, Jesus taught great multitudes, and verse 10 says 'his disciples came to him'; a small group taken from a large group. 'He answered and said unto them', and he goes on and teaches them many things.

"Now turn to Mk. 9:14-27. Here we see Jesus teaching a great multitude, and in verse 28 we read: 'And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately,' and he taught them privately. Here are two examples of teaching a small group taken from a large group, and the latter seems very clearly to imply that Jesus purposely went into the house to get away from the multitude

for the purpose of teaching the disciples privately. But, Bill, many of the churches do not divide for teaching, but go directly to the class rooms before going to the general assembly, and the 'antis' refuse to fellowship them just the same as the others, so the difference is not over the dividing. The New Testament abounds in examples of teaching small groups, Bill, but I think this sufficient for the present."

Bill: "You mentioned class rooms. Where is your scripture for class rooms?"

John: "We have already covered that point. Do you not remember how you showed me that Paul never did commend any church for their nice class rooms, and I called your attention to the fact that we have no reference to any church building at all, and the restrictive clause, etc.?"

Bill: "I beg your pardon, I should not have brought that up again."

John: "That's all right, Bill."

Bill: "Now give us your example for teaching several classes at the same time."

John: "The same chapter, Mark 9, verse 2, says Jesus took three disciples 'and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart.' Reading on down to the thirteenth verse, we see he taught them many things. And verse 14 shows that the disciples were teaching the multitude while Jesus was teaching the three. This is a clear cut example of our Jesus taking a special group aside for the specific purpose of teaching them a special lesson, and then the two groups being taught at the same time."

Bill: "Now, John, do you think this is on par with what the SS folk are doing?"

John: "I am not claiming it is on par with what we do, but it is a little better than par, compared with what you or any other man can do for a number of the arrangements to carry out your 'summer meeting system of teaching', and still you claim it to be scriptural. Will you admit that this is better than you can offer for some of the arrangements you make for your 'summer meeting system of teaching'?"

Bill: "Yes, I guess I will have to admit that it is, but why do you have to keep calling it my 'summer meeting system of teaching.'"

John: "Pal, I was doing that to try to impress your mind with the fact that it is as much a system as is class teaching. The 'antis' have the idea that the class brethren are using some system or some arrangement that is entirely different from any arrangement which the 'an-

tis' use and different from anything sanctioned by the scriptures, but, Bill, this is just as far from facts as can be. The practice of having a summer meeting every year is just as much a man-made system as is the practice of teaching Bible classes."

Bill: "Here is my worst objection. You are not only doing something you cannot find command or example for, but something which is actually forbidden. I Cor. 14:34 commands 'Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law.' And he even goes on to say that they cannot even ask a question and says it is a shame for a woman to speak in the church. Now turn to I Timothy 2:8-14, the Revised Standard. 'I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or quarreling; also that the women should adorn themselves modestly and sensibly in seemly apparel, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly attire, but by good deeds, as befits women professing religion. Let a woman learn in silence with all submissiveness. I permit no woman to teach or to have dominion over men; she is to keep silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.' Now there you have it. These scriptures are too plain to need any comment. You are violating these plain commands of God." (Here Bill almost broke into tears again, for he was a good sincere man and his love for John was great. Then he paused and awaited John's reply).

John: "Bill, I admire you for your zeal and I appreciate very much your desire to convert me back to the truth as you see it. We have always been pals and I hope and pray that it shall ever be the same. I love you as a brother and a very dear friend. Bill, in reality there is no difference between the 'antis' and the 'pros' on the scriptures you have just read."

Bill: "John, how on earth can you say that?"

John: "Well, you give me your interpretation of these scriptures and it will be mine; there is absolutely no difference. The difference is that you accuse us of allowing the women to teach in the church, when we are as opposed to that as you are. Now you explain these scriptures to make them fit your practice of allowing women to teach in homes where groups gather, talk at church dinners, even on Bible subjects, talk before services and after dismissal, at the general assembly of the whole congregation, ask and answer questions at singing schools, etc. When you have explained these things, you will have answered the whole argument to my full satisfaction."

Bill: "John, do you believe it is right for a woman

to teach in the public meetings of the church?"

John: "No."

Bill: "Then why are you trying to uphold it?"

John: "I am not. When a woman teaches a group of little children in a room to themselves it is private teaching."

Bill: "Of all the inconsistencies I ever heard that caps the climax. Suppose you should read in the paper a big display ad: 'All are invited to our big private banquet at the Blitz Hotel'. John, I have always considered you to be honest and reasonable, but if you continue to call a thing private and at the same time invite the public to attend I cannot continue to believe you are both honest and reasonable. I am afraid you are slipping. I am afraid your mind is getting bad."

John: "Now let us look at the picture from a little different angle and see how it looks. In the Blitz Hotel are private guest rooms. All are invited to the hotel. The public is welcome to come to the hotel and they are welcome to assemble in the lobby, but suppose someone should call you into his private room at the Blitz and shut the door and say, 'Bill, I have a secret to tell you.' Would you exclaim 'For pity sake do not tell it here in this public place if it is a secret'? Bill, I believe you can see the inconsistency of that argument. I used to fall for that same argument. I do not know why it took me so long to see the inconsistency of it, but it seems that prejudice is sometimes stronger than reason. The idea that inviting the public to the public meeting makes each class public is just as unreasonable as to contend that each room in a public hotel is a public place. Are you willing to give that point up?"

Bill: "I guess I will have to. You have made it so plain I cannot do otherwise and be honest."

John: "Good! I knew you were honest, but I was afraid your former training had such a hold on you that you had not yet gotten rid of enough prejudice to see it. Prejudice is very powerful, and let us pray to get rid of all we have left. Now we got side tracked a little. I believe it is still in order for you to give your interpretation of the scriptures forbidding women to teach, or properly speaking, restricting her in her teaching."

Bill: "Now, John, we know that the prohibition is that she shall not speak in the assembly. And, of course, the assembly is not mentioned in the passage in Timothy, but we have to interpret it in accordance with the one in I Corinthians, because the woman is commanded to teach and we know that this passage does not have reference

to private teaching. And as for singing schools, the purpose for which we assemble has to be taken into consideration. When we meet to study music it is not the church. When we meet around the table to eat a common meal, it is not on a par with the assembly mentioned in I Cor. And surely a woman's talking privately to one or a few, before or after services even though the others are present, is not what Paul had in mind when he made the prohibition, for the others are not hearing her and it is public teaching that is forbidden."

John: "Bill, you have done a good job explaining these scriptures. You have fully proved that teaching a class of little children privately in a class room is not on a par with teaching in the church. You have done a good job of answering your worst objection to our practice."

Bill: "I do not get it. I do not see how you can say I have proved it all right for a woman to teach when God commands her to be silent."

John: "Well, you say it is private when she teaches or converses with a few around her, even in the assembly before and after the services. You rightly stated that the purpose for which we meet has something to do with what is proper. You admit that you can do private talking at a public place just so the public is not hearing what is said. In fact, I do not know anything that can be said that will give a better explanation than what you have already given. If it is not church when we meet to eat, if it is not church when we meet to study the command to sing and to learn to put it into practice, if it is not church when we come together for worship until the house is called to order, and if it is not church after it is dismissed, Bill, please tell me how you can call it church when a group of little children go into a class room to study the word of God."

Bill: "I guess I will have to admit I am unable to answer that one too."

John: "Well, do you have any ground left to stand on?"

Bill: "I still cannot see how it can be private when a large room full are present."

John: "Jesus taught the twelve privately. He also spoke privately to the disciples as related in Luke 10:17-24, and it seems evident that the seventy were present. Anything is private when the public is excluded. Private has various degrees of meaning from one being alone and all others, excluded. In the case of a woman teaching children, the thing that makes it private, is that others are excluded. But many of the brethren believe that it is expedient to hold all classes down to a relatively small

group so they will feel free to discuss the scriptures, as that is one of the greatest advantages of class teaching. It encourages questions and provokes thought."

Bill: "If the classes are private, and as we both agree, women can teach privately, why may not a woman teach the adult class?"

John: "That is a very good question, but I believe that I can answer it satisfactorily for anyone who is open minded. Both passages restricting a woman's teaching (I Cor. 14 and I Tim. 2) refer to the law that was in effect before the gospel dispensation. And I Timothy 2 even goes all the way back to the beginning. She has always been required to be subordinate to man. If a woman was designated by the church as a teacher over men, that would be putting her in a position of authority over the man. It is unthinkable for a woman to be designated teacher of men in things pertaining to the religion of Christ. When a woman teaches a man, even at home, she should be careful not to assume an authoritative attitude. I have had four women among the 'antis' to assume an overbearing attitude toward me for each man that has done so. It seems strange to me that a woman will try to teach a man that he will be lost for leaning toward a group who she thinks are giving women too much authority, and while teaching him assume that she is the knowing one. I have had them take that attitude toward me ever since I began to advocate our ceasing to make class teaching a test of fellowship. Bill, it has been my observation that the women among the class churches do not usurp authority over the man as much as they do among the 'antis,' and I have been told by others who have been on both sides that this is true. Why do the 'antis' not withdraw from the women who boss their husbands, those who assume a position of authority over men in private agreements on the scriptures? It is because the sect is founded on the anti class idea. They are not so concerned about the women's staying in their God given place as they are in maintaining their sect. Most of them do not realize this, but it is very evident to those who have their eyes open."

Bill: "Well, really I cannot see any reasons for classes. They do not divide according to ability, but only according to age."

John: "Bill, it is to be admitted that it is impossible to arrange so as to have each one in a group best suited to his needs and ability, but is that enough to make it entirely useless to try? And if you could prove that it is inexpedient, is it right to divide the church over differences about expediences?"

Bill: "They will put a man who cannot even read and who has just obeyed the gospel in a class with adults

when he is not as capable of understanding the deeper things as an average twelve year old child."

John: "Bill, is this the rule, or a very rare exception? Are there many such cases?"

Bill: "Not very many I suppose."

John: "Shall we call it a complete failure, just because we can find difficulties? Even if you could prove that the class work is of no profit, that would not justify you in making it a test of fellowship. It is wrong, Bill, to withdraw from brethren for mistakes of judgement. We must be able to prove they have violated the scriptures before withdrawing from them. If class teaching is inexpedient, let us teach the brethren so and not maintain a division over it."

Bill: "Now let us notice Deut. 32:2. 'My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distill as the dew as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the shower upon the grass'. You see, John, his word is suited to all alike, just like the rain is suited to the tender herb, and the mighty oak alike. We do not have to put a tarp over the tender herb to keep the rain off, so we can weaken it down to suit the little plant; neither do we have to weaken the word of God down for the children."

John: "Bill, I can see as much argument in that passage for classes as against them. Honestly, I do not believe the passage has reference to what you have applied it, but I will make you an argument for classes out of it just to show you it can be done, and believe it is a better argument than I have ever heard made on it against them. He spoke as though the small rain was suited to the tender herb and the shower to the grass and we might carry it further and say, the down pour to the mighty oak. I have seen tender herbs literally washed away, and others covered up, by heavy rains, and I am sure you have also. So he says as the small rain upon the tender herb, and the shower upon the grass."

Bill: "But notice it is said that it shall fall as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the shower upon the grass. You say that the small rain is suited to the tender herb and the shower to the grass, so his word will fall just as needed in each case."

John: "Bill, I know that you do not believe that all can read the Bible for themselves and profit from it without help as much as they may with help. We are told that 'It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe' (1 Cor. 1:21). 'And it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multi-

tude believed.' So there is something in the way we speak. And any preacher who is worthy of the name recognizes the fact that he has to fit his speech to the hearers. I have heard many of the 'anti' preachers say that if a preacher could not survey the audience and tell something about what kind of preaching would be suited to them, he was not much preacher. I also see books advertised in the papers published by the 'anti'brethren such as Bible story books specially recommended for children. We all recognize the fact that children need special instructions. So if the teacher has ability, he can teach the word in a way that it will be as the small rain upon tender herb and as the shower upon the grass. Bill, you know that when a hard rain comes, it washes tender herbs away if they are not properly protected. So the illustration does not fit your idea at all, but fits the class idea better. You know also I am sure that when a preacher preaches a deep sermon for adults, the children are seldom interested. I know that you do not use the same procedure, the same language, the same scriptures, when teaching your children that you do when teaching adults. Do you?"

Bill: "Well, no, I don't."

John: "No one else does. We all recognize the fact that different ages need different instructions. The only time the 'anti' preachers do not recognize this fact is when they are trying to make an argument against classes."

Bill: "The SS is a failure. Their children are no better instructed than mine. I will put my children up against any of theirs and I believe they are better instructed than any you can find who have been to your beloved SS."

John: "Now, pal, don't get irritated. If you could prove it a failure, you would still not have proved that it is right to disfellowship the brethren for using it. I can point you to numerous examples where the summer meeting system was used and many were baptized, but when the next year came they nearly all needed restoring. But that does not prove it wrong to have a summer meeting. Furthermore, you will have to admit that the 'pros' are outstripping the 'antis' many times over in converting the world. I fail to see how you can call it a failure."

Bill: "The world wants something popular. The SS is popular in the eyes of the world. It is not right to cater to the world and try to please men and practice unscriptural things just to win numbers. The SS folk are like Israel in the days of old. They want to be like the nations around, or like the denominations. In I Sam. 8:5

they demanded a king, and we know what happened to them as a result of rejecting God's way for their own."

John: "Bill, I answer your last accusation first. The thing the Children of Israel demanded was something different from what God had taught them. Now turn to Ex. 13:21, 'And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night.' You see God was leading them in a very personal way, and yet they soon forgot this and demanded a king. At the time, they were being mistreated by Samuel's sons, but they should have prayed God to remove the ill treatment instead of asking him to change this order of rule. So God said, 'For they have not rejected thee (to Samuel) but they have rejected me, that I should not rule over them.' (I Sam. 8:7). This seems to be very far from a fair comparison to the SS brethren's using a method for carrying out the command to teach. And I have repeatedly called your attention to the very obvious fact, that the things you and I have always approved are as far from being detailed in the Bible as the practice of teaching classes. But, I should not be impatient with you; it took me a long time to get my eyes open, and after all, I think you are coming along pretty well. Let us notice I Sam. 12:22, 'For the Lord will not forsake his people for his great name's sake.' If you will read the full context down to this verse, you will see that God thoroughly rebukes them through the prophet, and thoroughly convicts them of sin, but he still did not refuse to acknowledge them as his people. But the 'antis' refuse to acknowledge the class brethren because they practice class teaching when more of the details for classes can be found in the Bible than for the summer meeting system which they practice. You call the class teaching unscriptural; but that is the point to be proved. You should not refer to it as being unscriptural until you have shown better proof than you have thus far.

"Now concerning the popularity, you are right in saying it is wrong to practice unscriptural things for popularity. But since class teaching is not unscriptural then this would not apply. If you mean it is unscriptural because it cannot be found outlined in detail in the New Testament, that would condemn your practices too, as I have fully shown. Notice I Cor. 10:33, 'Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved'. He is here talking about eating, which is neither a sin to do nor to leave undone except as circumstances cause it to be so. Paul is willing to please people in a matter of expediency, 'That they may be saved.' Rom. 15:2 says, 'Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification.' So we see, Bill, that in matters that are neither sinful in themselves nor commanded of God, we are to be governed by the effect it will have on others. So the argument that it is popular in the eyes of the world is in favor of class

teaching. If you cannot prove it to be a sin to practice it, that argument alone would justify it. You have heard our brethren admit many times that SS is popular in the minds of people. We know that most people wonder at any one's objecting to it. So in view of the fact that we are looked upon as cranks for objecting to classes, and in view of the further fact that we are commanded to try to please people, this makes it our duty to have class teaching, unless we can prove it is wrong. So, pal, you have lost your popularity argument, too."

Bill: "Everybody admits that our practices are right. They have never caused division. The SS has caused division all over the brotherhood and you say division is wrong. Now why do you not quit advocating a practice which causes division?"

John: "Bill, you are mistaken. Everybody does not admit that your practices are right. I have a letter in my possession in which a brother condemns the practice of calling preachers, having short meetings or even any meetings unless the preacher does the preaching without expecting any pay for his services. I know of brethren who tried to withdraw from another brother because he wanted to have preachers come from out of town and preach. They also claimed it was not scriptural to build a church house. The brethren who contend for only one container in the communion service claim you are causing division by having more than one. Bill, if we should refrain from everything some people object to and make a disfellowshipping law out of, we would never do anything. Each congregation is a self governing body, subject only to the laws of Christ. We do wrong when we call in question their right to rule themselves in matters of expediency. So long as we cannot show plain scriptures condemning their practices, we should not hesitate to fellowship them. You may say the SS has caused division. If the elders of a church decide to put in class teaching, and use precaution not to stir up strife and a few brethren rise up against them and withdraw, I cannot see why the SS caused division. I think it would be the cranky stubborn ways of the objectors.

"Suppose some small group should object to the way you brethren carry on at Crest Avenue, and call on you to prove that it is scriptural, and withdraw from you because you cannot find in the Bible details for what you are doing, would they be acting in a fair, scriptural way?"

Bill: "No, the burden of proof is on the objector. He should prove that we are violating some Bible principle or some scripture or not object to what we are doing. The details are not given for scarcely anything, and for any one to cause division over details is wrong."

John: "Pal, can you not see that your reasoning puts the **BURDEN OF PROOF ON YOU?** You are objecting

to the arrangements we are making for teaching, and unless you can prove that we are violating a Bible command or principle, you are the one who is causing the division."

Bill: "We are told in Matt. 15:13, 'Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.' Did God plant the SS?"

John: "Bill, what is meant here by 'plant'?"

Bill: "I have always heard the brethren use it to mean an institution of men, like SS, missionary societies, etc."

John: "So have I, but the context does not show any such thing. It has surprised me very much since I began studying this question with an open mind, to see the great number of arguments we have been making by mis-applying scriptures. Now, let us notice the context of this scripture. You see here in verse 2, Matt. 15; the Pharisees were contending for the custom of washing before eating, so if anything is meant concerning doctrine, it is simply a practice, or custom. The Pharisees had made a law of custom and Jesus was condemning them for it. Now who is binding customs, the 'pros' or the 'antis'?"

Bill: "I have always been under the impression that the SS folk were forcing their ideas on us, but I guess that we are sometimes guilty ourselves. However, I know I have heard of instances where the 'antis' were told if they did not like the classes they could just get out."

John: "Bill, I am sure that wrongs have been committed on both sides, and still are being committed. In every instance of church trouble that I have had accurate knowledge of, the trouble has been more personal than doctrinal. I believe if we could always maintain love, we could keep down division. I believe that if some should force arrangements, and do so over the protests of the elders, or the majority, or even go at it in such a hasty and uncharitable way, that division resulted, they would be causing division. On the other hand, if the majority wanted class work and the elders decided to put it in, and a few objected and caused division even though the elders used patience with them and tried to teach them to be submissive in matters of judgment, then beyond question the objectors would be to blame.

"As it is, the division occurred in most places before you and I had anything to do with church affairs. We do not know who was to blame. If we did know, the ones to blame are dead and gone now. The ones now living are not responsible for the dividing, but they are responsible for maintaining the division, and I know that the 'antis' have a standing invitation to meet with the 'pros' at Highland Street Church in Abilene and discuss their ob-

jections to class teaching in a similar way to what you and I are now doing, and they have refused to do so. At the debate at Brownfield, Brother Harper invited them to come to Highland as friends and brethren and lay their objections before the 'pros' one by one and try to iron out the differences as brethren and friends. One 'anti' offered to debate, but refused to discuss the question as brethren and friends. I also know that in many instances the 'pros' have called on the 'antis' to lead prayer and have recognized them in other ways. Very seldom in recent years have I seen this happen on the other side. I do not believe many of the brethren who practice class teaching would withdraw from any brother because he refused to have part in their classes. They will meet with the 'antis' for worship. They do not generally make it a test of fellowship. Now, Bill, answer me truthfully. Who is maintaining the division?"

Bill: "How can you say they fellowship us when they never call on one of our preachers to preach for them?"

John: "First, they do occasionally. They called on Brother Dennis Kellog at Winters, before he was even suspected of changing his view, but of course, that is an exception, so I will answer your question as if your statement were true in every instance. I will answer by asking you a few questions. Can you fellowship brethren who use only one container?"

Bill: "Yes, if they will fellowship me. Usually they will not fellowship me. I can fellowship any one that prefers only one container, but if they go around causing division over it, of course, it would not be wise to call on them to preach."

John: "Well, then you can fellowship them without calling on them to preach. Can you not?"

Bill: "Yes, I can call on them to pray and give thanks and such like. And I can commune with them where I do not know that they have caused division and proved themselves heretics."

John: "Now just apply the same reasoning to the 'antis' and the SS brethren and you will see that the 'pros' are not maintaining the division."

Bill: "I will have to admit that we are doing more to maintain the division than they, but if what you say is true, if it is right to have classes and we are a bunch of heretics, and are the 'anti' SS Sect of the church of Christ as you have stated, then it seems to me that it would be the duty of the SS folk to withdraw from us."

John: "In some cases it might be necessary to withhold fellowship from the 'antis' on the grounds of heresy, but as I said before, in most cases, the ones now living are

not responsible for dividing. They are in ignorance of what the real issue is. They have been taught that the SS people have an organization separate and apart from the church. In fact, they have been taught so many inaccurate ideas, that I, for one, did not know for years one-tenth of what the real issues were. We cannot afford to make laws in matters of expedience. If these brethren do not want classes as we have them, it is not a sin for them to refrain from having them, although they are depriving themselves of an effective way of teaching, and as you stated, a way the world likes. They are killing their influence for good, to a great extent, by being so cranky. If they would not make a law of it, we could be in peace and harmony on all essential matters, even though we disagreed on matters of expediency. It is comparable to the church at Crest Avenue's fellowshiping the little church out at Elm Ridge where, as you know, poor old Brother Drake refuses to allow Wednesday night meetings for fear they will lead to something unscriptural."

Bill: "John, if you can fellowship us as you say you can, why did you not stay and work with us?"

John: "Bill, you answer that one for me. I know you can if you will think hard."

Bill thought a moment and said: "We would not let you work very much, would we?"

John: "Right, pal, and that is the case almost everywhere. If a brother lets it be known that he does not consider it a sin to teach in classes, they will not allow him to take any public part in the assembly. If he teaches, even privately, he will be accused of being a wolf in sheep's clothing. Of course, he might not if he would refuse to state his views on class teaching, but he will be asked questions and will have to tell his views or flatly refuse."

Bill: "If we are doing all of this you accuse us of, and I will have to admit to most of it, and if we are the ones who are wrong, then it looks as if you would have to consider us heretics."

John: "Pal, that is a very hard thing to decide. No doubt some should be dealt with as heretics, but owing to the fact that the ones now living, were not responsible for the dividing of the church and are in ignorance of the real differences, we will have to deal patiently. Stances determine our attitude toward them. Let us try with them, and let the local conditions and circumstances with all the love and patience we can have to teach them the truth, and let the circumstances determine whether we can fellowship them or not. I can commune with them anywhere that I do not know what their attitude is, for I do not consider it a sin to fail to have

classes as we do; it is only a mistake of judgement. Do you have any more objections to discuss?"

Bill: "I cannot get it through my head that it is scriptural to have an institution or method which was instuted by a man, that is Robert Raikes, instead of Jesus Christ, and in the eighteenth century instead of the first century."

John: "We have really covered everything you mentioned in this objection, but I'll give attention to it again. Robert Raikes did not institute class teaching. He is given credit for being the founder of the Sunday School because he and others started a SS and he gave it publicity in his 'Gloucester Journal' and thus put it on its way to being widely publicized and used. See **Encyclopedia Britannica** Art. Robert Raikes. But according to the same authority, under the heading 'EDUCATION' and the sub-heading 'The Sunday school movement', we find that several others had taught Sunday schools before Raikes did. **BUT TEACHING WAS DONE IN CLASSES EVEN BEFORE THE TIME OF CHRIST.** The Jewish Rabbis taught the Old Testament scriptures in classes. In proof of this I offer a quotation from Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. V, page 43. 'One teacher was employed for every 25 boys. If the number reached 40, he was given an assistant'. And S. P. Dugan on p. 12 of his book, **Students Textbook of Education**, says, 'the method was exposition, question, and disputation.' History of New Testament Times by Robert H. Pfeiffer says on page 49, 'The need for general education created two distinct institutions, the Synagogue and the school; their importance in strengthening and perpetuating the spiritual commonwealth of the Jews cannot be overestimated.'

"Nothing is known of the beginning of these two institutions, but they were flourishing at the beginning of the period we are concerned with, 200 B. C.'

"Page 50 says, 'The Bible was also taught in the schools, together with wisdom. Ecclesiasticus consists mainly of the classroom lectures of Ben Sira; Wisdom for him, was both the Jewish religion and its revealed charter, the Pentateuch.'

"On page 367 it says, 'Ben Sira was a teacher, and his book to a large extent consists of his classroom lectures edited in poetic form for publication. He invites the unlearned to attend his school, (which he calls beth ha-midrash) house of learning. A term occurring in 51:23 (Hebrew text) for the first time in extant records, but common later as the name of advanced schools for Biblical Study.'

"Just remember, Bill, we are discussing teaching the Bible in classes, and not an institution called Sunday

school. I have called it SS for the sake of brevity, and I have no serious objection to the term except that it may cause prejudice. Of course, it is a teaching service and that makes it a school. It is taught on Sunday and that makes it in that sense a Sunday school, but the brethren do not have an institution, nor an organization other than the regular organization of the church."

Bill: "Will not the same reasoning you use to prove class teaching scriptural prove it is all right to use instrumental music in the worship? Why can we not fellowship the Christian Church?"

John: "The Christian Church is just another denomination. They do many things more obviously unscriptural than using instrumental music. They even have a name that was never applied to the church in Apostolic times. They receive members without baptism who have never been baptized for the remission of sins, and do many other similar things.

"Concerning using an instrument in worship: When the Lord tells us what to do and stops, we must stop where he stops. We have both command and example for singing and making melody in our hearts, but no place is it **hinted** even, that we should play an instrument. If we should use 'unleavened' bread and 'fruit of the vine' plus corn bread and beans, in the communion service we would be committing the sin of presumption. We would be presuming God would be pleased with a service of our own making. God has commanded us to sing. If we add playing of an instrument, we have added to his word and are guilty of the sin of presumption. No Church of Christ ever used an instrument of music in the worship until some time in the second century so far as can be determined by history, and it was much later than this when they became commonly used. See **Church History For Busy People**, pp. 92-93. This shows that the Apostles and early Christians did not consider using an instrument a part of the command to sing. The difference between this and the teaching question is that the command to sing does not include the command to play, but the command to teach does include making arrangements to teach. We have enough examples of different methods of teaching that we know any method that is decent and orderly is all right. We have **absolutely no stress** laid on arrangements except that all things should be done decently and in order. We have so few details stated that it would be impossible to carry on the work of teaching in an effective way without supplying details according to our judgement; therefore, we must supply them. No one can scripturally withdraw from another because he does not follow his own pet notion of arrangements."

Bill: "You promised to show more details for class

teaching than I could show for summer meetings."

John: "I have shown the details as you gave your objections one by one, but I will group them together now. You gave three: They set time, came together, and used the lecture method. If it is right to set a time for one work of God, it is right to set it for another, and the same is true of coming together, so I have these two the same as you have them. And as stated before, the New Testament abounds in examples of teaching small groups. This makes three details. It also abounds in examples of teaching by the question and answer method. In Matt. 13:36 we found that Jesus sent the multitude away, and he went into the house and taught his disciples. This is an example of taking a small group from a large one and teaching them. Mk. 9:28-29 is another example of the same. And verses 9 and 14, the same chapter, show that two groups were taught at the same time. I could show other places in both the Old and New Testaments, but this is sufficient to show that more details can be given for class teaching than for the summer meeting system of teaching."

Bill: "John, do you think these examples are on a par with your SS?"

John: "I am not claiming they are on a par or equal to what we do in all respects, but they are better than equal to what you give for the arrangements of the summer meeting system of teaching. Are you convinced that I have shown more details for class teaching than you have for summer meetings?"

Bill: "Yes, I will have to admit that you have. I have always thought that I could read my practices in the Bible, but I see now that we do not have the details, but we are at liberty to supply all the details necessary, so long as we do not violate any principle taught in the scriptures."

John: "Are you willing to admit that you have failed to prove that teaching in classes violates any principle taught in the New Testament?"

Bill: "I have not done a very good job of it. I will have to study this some more."

John: "Well, pal, since we have taken notes on the discussion, you and I both can study it all we please, and I will thank you to call my attention to any mistake I have made, and I pray God that I may have the grace to give up any point wherein I am wrong."

Both John and Bill re-studied the subject closely and discussed it often. Bill finally admitted that his contentions were based on ignorance of fact, ignorance of the

scriptures, or a mixture of both, just as John had proposed to show; then he was forced by the Crest Avenue brethren to quit having anything to do with public affairs of the church, and, of course he placed his membership with the congregation where John was worshipping.

This left the little Crest Avenue church without a leader of much ability, and John and Bill soon convinced the more open minded and zealous ones they were in error. Some few of the most radical ones quit the church and began meeting with a little group on the outskirts of town who held to the one container idea. Then John and Bill were urged to return to Crest Avenue. They gladly did so and several members from other churches that were overcrowded went there also. They built a larger house and began an effective program of work, including class teaching. This brought the Church of Christ in the city to almost perfect unity, for the only dissenting group was so weak and negative minded, that very few of the town's people even knew it existed.

As the reader no doubt knows, the characters in the foregoing treatise are fictitious. If any name in it appears to be used to fit someone with that name it is accidental. The facts and circumstances brought out in the discussion are as nearly as possible reproductions of actual happenings and what logically would have happened under the circumstances supposed except perhaps the happy ending, and that Bill was willing to give his reasons for believing in summer meetings. I have put this question to a large number of 'antis' and never have I been able to get any better reasons than Bill's why summer meetings and the arrangements for them are scriptural. Why can they not see that their proof texts also allow proof for classes?

I want to request any reader of this treatise and especially my personal friends, to study it carefully and prayerfully, and if I have not been fair in presenting both sides as they really are; if I have left out a strong argument that either disputant should have made; if I have failed to present facts and scriptures as they really are, I want you to call my attention to the same. If I have made any mistakes, I want to correct them.

I love the 'anti' brethren, and do not wish to do anything to hurt their feelings or hurt them in any way, but I would give all I possess of this world's goods and much more, if I had it, to see them give up their contentious ways and go to striving for "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

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