

**The SHOWALTER-CLARK
DISCUSSION**

—ON THE—

**LORD'S DAY
Bible School**

This Book Belongs To
RONNY F. WADE

Involving a Consideration of
The Class System and Women Teachers

Price 50 cents per copy; \$5.50 a dozen

1940
Firm Foundation Publishing House
Austin, Texas.

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PUBLISHER'S ANNOUNCEMENT

During the last few years considerable interest has been manifested in many localities among the churches of Christ in regard to the teaching of the Bible in classes on the Lord's days, and of the work of women in teaching such classes. The discussion in the following pages appeared in the columns of the Firm Foundation some months ago. Much interest was aroused, and innumerable calls have been made for its publication in more permanent form. We have decided to respond to this demand, and have accordingly issued this pamphlet. All the essays written by Brother Clark and offered us for publication appeared in the paper, and are reproduced herewith, together with the several replications by Brother Showalter. If this little pamphlet may be the means of securing reconciliation and harmonious and energetic action among the people of God where the cause has sustained loss from want of these things, our highest expectations will be met.

We send this message forth with a hope and prayer that it may be an instrument in the hands of God for the accomplishment of much and lasting good.

Austin, Texas, October 1, 1922.

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION

This new and enlarged edition of the "Lord's day Bible School Discussion" is printed in response to persistent calls from many since the first edition was exhausted several years ago. This new edition includes some further correspondence that followed the publication of the first edition. The first eighty-eight pages is a reproduction of the former pamphlet and the remaining part of the book has to do with later correspondence that seems in place in connection with the friendly exchange of essays on the subject of the Lord's day Bible school. It is fair to state that Brother Clark did not approve of publishing the first book and will probably not approve of the publication of this new edition. His objection, if I understand him, is that the publication is unfair to him because he did not use as much space as I—that his articles were shorter. My answer to this is he was accorded all the space he asked for. Every article he wrote was published in full, not a word or a sentence was left out. Had he wanted more space it would have been allowed him. Brother Clark was not invited to the discussion. He wrote in reply to an article written by the editor of the Firm Foundation. His article was published and reviewed, and, when he wrote again, the same was true. All he wrote was published, and, if he did not say all he desired, it was certainly no fault of the editor of the Firm Foundation.

This book is presented for what it may be worth as a contribution on an interesting, vital, and important issue. It is not exhaustive, and the careful reader will find some phases of the discussion where he may desire a fuller elaboration. Certainly more could be said. The following pages, however, will serve to enlighten and guide the reader in his quest for truth as revealed in the Holy Scriptures.

—G. H. P. Showalter, Austin, Texas, April 1, 1940.

LAW AND CUSTOM

G. H. P. Showalter

Webster defines "custom" as follows: "A habitual or usual course of action; a usage or practice." His second definition is, "The whole body of practice or conventions which regulate social life; recognized usage." His third definition is, "Long established practice, considered as unwritten law." With remarkable tenacity humanity will cling to established customs. These practices may be reasonable or unreasonable, right or wrong, proper or improper; sometimes they are even ridiculous, still people will cling to them because custom has prescribed them. Some one has said: "An ounce of custom outweighs a ton of reason." With most people this is doubtless true. They are controlled by custom rather than the dictates of sound reason, or even of faith.

A story is told of a circumstance in the German army some years ago that illustrates the force of custom. A new commandant had been appointed over a military constabulary located at a certain point. Taking up his new duties and making inspection, he observed that every morning a detachment of soldiers was sent out to guard a small patch of ground. He made inquiry as to why this was done, but found no one who had any explanation to offer other than it had been the custom for years back. When the records were examined, it was found that some twenty years before an officer in the army stationed at that place had a cabbage patch on this particular piece of

ground, and a guard was kept on duty to protect his property. Of course, the cabbage, in due course of time, were removed, but the orders for the guard were not cancelled, and hence the practice was kept up, no one observing or noticing or caring why. It is said that a pet fox, long chained to a post, has been known to continue to run around the post for as much as two days after being released, not recognizing his freedom. So powerful is the force of habit and practice.

A good custom should be kept up, but we should be careful to discriminate. A bad custom should not be tolerated any more than any new practice should be adopted without proper reason. Much in religion is a matter of custom. It may be safely assumed that by far the greater part of all the religious practice of the world is a matter of simple custom. Much of it is unreasonable, and much is even ridiculous; still the people persist in their religious practices because they have been accustomed to doing so in the past. Their fathers went to mill with a peck of wheat in one end of the sack and a rock in the other, and they continue to do the same because their fathers did it. Practically all the religion of paganism has been handed down from former generations as a matter of the customs of the people. Many of these customs are hoary with age, and are revered by the people as divine oracles.

It would be delightful if we could conclude that Christendom is an exception in their regard for custom, but it is impossible for us to reach this conclusion. We are confronted on every hand by practices among the various religious bodies that have no sanction in the Bible, and that find their only source for justification in the realm of tradition and custom.

The Presbyterian minister, who is a scholar and who will tell you that the original word for baptism means simply immersion, still will continue to practice sprinkling because his fathers have done so, and this has become a settled practice in his church. The missionary societies and other human organizations are established for the same reason. They have become customary among religious workers. Our own people, members of the churches of Christ, should form an honorable exception to this rule. In many things they do. However, the faith of some seems not to rise above the standard of custom. What we have been accustomed to see and do, we continue.

What we have observed as practices among the churches of Christ, to some people, becomes law. The law says that persons should be immersed. It does not say whether we should be immersed in a river, a creek, a pond, a pool, nor whether this water should be about the meeting house, a mile from the meeting house, ten yards from the meeting house, or in the meeting house. It seems that any reasonable person who esteems the truth of God could not possibly misunderstand or misconstrue such simple divine law. Still we meet with people who are opposed to being baptized in ponds, but they must go to running water. Not long ago I heard a minister state in public that a baptistry was an innovation. A baptistry is simply a place where people are baptized. If water of suitable depth is provided in the building where people meet for worship, or about a cave where people meet for worship, or along the edge of the grove where people meet for worship, it is a baptistry, a place for baptizing people. We should not, of course, because

we have been accustomed to seeing people baptized in a pond, object to their being baptized in a river. We should not because we have been accustomed to seeing baptisms performed in a river try to create schism in the body of Christ by claiming that it is unscriptural in a baptistry at a meeting house. He who starts this kind of doctrine, and unsettles the minds of the weak by such teaching, is sowing discord among brethren, and should seriously consider his condition in the sight of God.

The Lord requires that we break bread on the first day of the week. The details connected with this are not given and are not a matter of law. They are regulated by custom, and are different among different congregations. We might put the bread and wine on the table and all of the members come reverently around and partake. If the table were large and the number of members few, this would be an orderly and appropriate practice, and there would be nothing out of harmony with God's word in it. If the congregation is large, they might all pass around the table in order, take the bread and wine, and return to their seats. They might all come forward and in an humble manner kneel in an orderly way and receive the emblems from the hands of one or more of the elders or deacons. This custom has been observed by some, and has some claims to merit. The members might remain in their seats in different parts of the house, and the deacons wait on them, carrying to them the bread and wine.

In distributing the wine, some use one cup for the entire congregation. This is not common except in a very small church. It would be a tedious process to

distribute with one cup, the wine to a very large congregation. Most congregations use two or more than two cups. Some use quite a number of cups, and some use individual cups. Customs differ widely in these matters, nor is it necessary for all the churches, to do this exactly in the same way. Still, we have some brethren, who have been accustomed to some particular practice in the communion service, and they disturb the faith of the weak by claiming that their custom is the only custom authorized of heaven. All such persons should remember that it is a serious thing to sow discord among brethren, and that the Lord has pronounced a benediction upon those who love peace, but that the maledictions of heaven are for those who sow discord among brethren.

The Lord requires that we contribute of our means on the first day of the week. This is the law, and is simple and easily understood. There is no ground for division along this line. The churches, generally accept this law and observe it. But the details of presenting or handling this offering are not prescribed in the law, and are therefore a matter open to the good judgment of those making the offerings. Some congregations have always had the practice of passing some sort of receptacle among the members for their convenience in making their offerings. In my childhood days this was the general practice of the churches of Christ in the locality where I lived, and it appeared to me to be a convenient and orderly custom. It appeared just as natural and proper as for the deacons to carry around the bread and wine. I would have thought just as strangely of a change in this custom as I would for the deacons to cease to carry

around the bread and wine, and members, instead, be called to go forward to the table to take the bread and wine. However, there are many congregations that have the practice of having their members carry the offerings up to the front of the house and lay them on the table. There are some that have a box or convenient receptacle where the members are to pass by, and there drop their offerings. These are matters of detail, and are not stipulated in the law. Had the Lord required that we should carry the money up and lay it on the table, then this practice alone would be lawful. Since this is not mentioned, and there is no mention of how the offering should be made, it is wrong for us to contend for one special custom, to the disruption of the membership of the body of Christ. He who does so should examine himself and study his own case carefully to see whether his faith is based upon the law of God or upon the customs of men.

The Lord requires that his disciples should teach others the truth. The word "teach" is a generic term, and may be satisfied in a large variety of ways. We may teach publicly, privately, orally or in writing; we may teach by example and by precept. We may teach children and others in classes, or we may teach all in one assembly. The details of teaching are not given in the law. The law for teaching is "Teach," and those who fail to teach disobey God. One man comes up and says he does not believe in class teaching. If the law of God sustains him, in this statement, it is a position we should all take. If the law of God does not sustain him in his position he should abandon it. If there is a restriction in the law that prevents such teaching, then we should abandon it. If it is wrong

to teach in classes when we are teaching the Bible, it would be wrong to teach in classes when we are teaching other branches of study. If not, why not? Where is the provision in the law of God that stipulates that the Bible should be taught only in some special way, and that all other ways of teaching are wrong?

But one has not been accustomed to teaching in classes; he has been accustomed to teaching or seeing the teaching done by the so-called gospel preacher, simply employing the method of speech-making to promiscuous audiences, and he decides that this is the only way to teach. He who takes such a position should look most carefully for his reason for so doing. I received a letter from a man a few days ago who stated that he had taken the Firm Foundation for a long time, but that the Firm Foundation had gone over to the Sunday School, and therefore he would discontinue the paper to his address. I do not know how long it will be till he will discontinue the Bible to his address also. But the brother fails to understand that he is the one who is making the change, and not the Firm Foundation. If the Firm Foundation has not been right, it would be proper for it to change. However, the Firm Foundation occupies the position it has occupied during the many years that are gone. The Firm Foundation has always opposed the Sunday schools of sectarianism, and the missionary societies instituted by men, maintaining, with the stoutest possible contention, that all of this work should be done by the members of the body of Christ. When we oppose the Sunday school we do not mean that the church should discontinue teaching the Bible. On the contrary, we maintain that the church

should do the teaching, and not endorse or institute or establish Sunday schools for the purpose as the sectarian denominations have done. The Bible study on the Lord's day should be a work of the church. There is no need of a separate organization, and there is no justification in neglecting this work. Many thousands of children are going uninstructed because some one has thrown stumbling blocks in the way of some of the churches along the line of Bible teaching. Those who have assumed to teach that Bible study on the Lord's day or any other day of the week is wrong, and that the church should not engage in it, should be very careful to investigate the ground for the position they occupy. They will doubtless discover that they are influenced by custom, and not by the law of God. Their contention is not a part of the law of God; neither indeed can be. God's law places no such restraints or restrictions. God's law imposes no such limitations as these brethren propose. When such limitations are arbitrarily imposed, and discord sown among brethren by such arbitrary contention, these brethren should very seriously and prayerfully consider the sin of the schismatic, and of the one who is so thoughtless or perverse as to sow discord among brethren. They should consider that the blessings of God rest upon those who revere the law of God and not upon those who are controlled by custom rather than divine law.

CHAPTER TWO

SOME QUESTIONS FOR BROTHER SHOWALTER

In his editorial on "Law and Custom" in the Firm Foundation of April 12, Brother Showalter has something to say about a Sunday School and its opposers that may be considered quite strong or very weak, the difference depending upon the viewpoint of the reader. In order to clarify matters a little and bring out more clearly Brother Showalter's position, I submit for his candid consideration the following questions, asking that he favor the readers of the Firm Foundation with clear-cut answers in the near future:

1. According to the custom of the New Testament churches, what kind of Sunday School should a church have?
2. According to the custom of our religious neighbors, what kind of Sunday School could we have?
3. Does the "law" of God authorize a church to maintain a Sunday School of any kind to teach the Bible? If so, where is the proof? Now do not quote the Great Commission in answer to this question, for this Commission may be just as logically used to cover the Christian Endeavor, missionary society, etc. We want you to find something in the New Testament that at least resembles your Sunday School.
4. If the church does this teaching, why call it a Sunday School?
5. If you have nothing in the church at Austin but the church itself, why do you call any part of its work a Sunday School?

6. Is it not a fact that you use the term "Sunday School" in imitation of the "custom" of the sects about us? If not, why should you use it? I am sure the "law" of God does not once use it.

7. Is it not a fact that you regard the Sunday School as the church when you are trying to keep out of the Digressive camp, and then deny that it is the church when you are asked to apply 1 Corinthians 14 to your position?

8. You may say the Sunday School is neither a separate organization, such as Digressives have, nor the church working under its bishops, but a plan to enable individual Christians to teach the Bible. If this be true, how much teaching do the bishops in Austin do in the church assembly on Lord's day?

9. Are not the bishops the divinely-appointed teachers of the church?

10. Do the bishops of the Austin church teach on an average fifteen minutes a Lord's day after Sunday School?

11. Am I in error when I affirm that the so-called loyal churches of Christ in Texas that have preaching every Sunday, with a Sunday School meeting before preaching, are not taught the Bible by their bishops, or elders on an average of fifteen minutes a week, outside of Sunday School and prayer meeting services?

N. L. CLARK.

BROTHER SHOWALTER'S REPLICATION

1. According to the plain teaching of the New Testament Scriptures, a congregation of disciples of Christ may or may not teach the word of God in

classes. They are under obligation, however, to teach the truth in an effectual manner.

2. Most anything. They differ widely, not only in what they do and teach, but also in their manner of doing and teaching.

3. The law of God most certainly authorizes the teaching of the word of God in classes, and these classes may be taught on the Lord's day as appropriately and Scripturally as on any other day of the week. Where is the Scripture that says we should teach the Bible on certain days only? A school in which the Bible is taught, I would call a Bible school, whether the teaching is done on Sunday or some other day. The name "Sunday School" is indefinite as to what is being taught, and, moreover, is a term that has long been used among sectarians to apply to an institution that I would be very far from defending. The proof that the Bible may be taught in classes is found in the great commission, and in every other passage that requires the children of God to teach the truth. I am sorry that you have turned against the great commission, and do not want to hear it quoted. I deny that it "covers" or authorizes the Christian Endeavor or the Missionary Societies.

4. Those among my brethren who speak of class teaching on the Lord's day as Sunday School, use this term as distinguishing the day on which the teaching is done, and the manner of doing it. The term implies nothing as to what is being taught, and might be used as well in referring to the teaching of mathematics or science, if such school were being conducted on Sunday. If to "call it a Sunday School" is really the seat of Brother Clark's trouble, I am perfectly

willing to call it something else. In fact, I don't "call it a Sunday School." I call it a "Bible School." Is a Bible school wrong? If so why do you teach them? Do you persist in pushing the name "Sunday School" on the class work I am defending, and claiming the term "Bible school" for the same or similar work you are doing, merely to try to impress some that there is a difference? Have I not as much right to the term "Bible school" as you have? Or, do you now oppose the Bible schools? Who coined the name, "Gunter Literary College and Bible School?" Do you endorse the Bible school at Gunter?

5. I do not think Brother Clark himself knows what he means by this question. "Nothing in the church * * * but the church itself." What does he mean by the "church itself" being "in the church"? However, he will answer his own question when he answers this: If you have nothing "in the church" at Fort Worth "but the church itself" why do you call any part of this work a "protracted meeting"?

6. (a) It is not a fact. (b) I do not use it.

7. It is not a fact.

8. They use their own judgment, under the direction of the law of God, as to how much time they consume in teaching. They do not always use the same amount of time.

9. The bishops are the divinely appointed overseers of the churches. They are not divinely required to do all the teaching.

10. The teaching by them personally, or under their immediate direction, usually consumes much more than fifteen minutes.

11. You are undoubtedly in error.

When I wrote the article on "Law and Custom" I intended to point out what seems very clearly apparent that the practice of many professed Christians does not rest upon the word of God, but rather upon custom, that is not prescribed in the Bible. I sought to show that many of the incidentals in carrying out divine commands vary, and that no arbitrary custom should be imposed upon the churches as an item of faith and made a test of fellowship. I did not intend to provoke controversy, but since Brother Clark has called for a further explanation, I very cheerfully answer his questions as above. Brother Clark is far from making himself clear as to what his real position is. He seems to use the term "Sunday School" much in the way the sectarian people use the word "Campbellism" when they are unable to meet and grapple with the real issue. In order that we may understand Brother Clark and know where he stands, I submit for his consideration the following questions. I hope his answers will be clear and categorical:

1. Does the great commission, or any other passage of the New Testament bar class teaching?

2. Do the New Testament Scriptures authorize the teaching of the Bible in classes on every day of the week except Sunday?

3. Is it Scriptural to teach the Bible in classes on the Lord's day, when the class teaching does not interfere with the regular meeting of the church for worship?

4. Are the bishops of the congregation the only ones authorized by the New Testament Scriptures to teach on the Lord's day?

5. Can the Bible be taught in the class system by

Christians without such work being a "Sunday School"?

6. Is all class teaching on the Lord's day by Christians a "Sunday School"?

7. How many male members of the congregation must teach each Lord's day at the time of the worship in order for the worship to be Scriptural?

8. Do the New Testament Scriptures authorize women to teach the doctrine of Christ?

9. Do the New Testament Scriptures permit women to teach classes?

10. Are women authorized by the Holy Scriptures to teach by the class system all other branches of study except the Bible, but forbidden to teach the Bible?

11. Would a Bible school that is Scriptural during the other days of the week, and that is taught from nine to ten o'clock on these other days, be unscriptural if taught on the Lord's day at the same hour, provided this hour does not conflict with the worship of the saints a little later in the day?

If Brother Clark will give us clearcut, unequivocal answers to the above questions, there will be some basis for understanding. I made myself perfectly clear in my former article on the subject of the Sunday School, and I claimed, as I have always claimed, that the great and important work of teaching young people, and all other people the truth, should be conducted by the church and by individual Christians, and not by some human organization. In opposing humanly made missionary societies I have always sought to magnify the church as a sufficient missionary society for doing all missionary work. The same is true in regard to the teaching of the Bible. When I have opposed the sectarian "Sun-

day School" as an institution of men, I have sought to show the importance of the teaching being done by Christians themselves and by the church, without human organization. If Brother Clark means that all sorts of class teaching are unscriptural and wrong, let him say so plainly, and the issue will be drawn. What I want to know, and what our readers want to know, is whether Brother Clark is opposed to class teaching. If not opposed to class teaching, whether his contention is that class teaching on all days of the week is right except Sunday, but wrong on Sunday. If that is his contention, let him distinctly avow it, and we will, at least, have the advantage of a clearly defined issue.

CHAPTER THREE

BROTHER SHOWALTER'S QUESTIONS ANSWERED

I sincerely deplore the fact that there appears to be room for controversy over a religious question between me and Brother Showalter. Twenty years ago he and I were neighbors and co-workers in the interest of school and church at Lockney. Since then we were class-mates in the University of Texas and were together graduated from that school. We have been together in various kinds of work a great deal and we have been close friends for half a life-time. But the truth of God is more important than any personal attachment; hence it is my duty, however unpleasant, to contend earnestly for the truth as I view it, no matter who may oppose it. I always admit that I may be in error. Others as sincere as I have been found in error. But one's conscientious convictions of the teachings of the truth in the light of reason, must be his guide in deciding all questions affecting the truth. It would probably pay me well in popularity and in purse to find myself able to agree with Brother Showalter and others on the issues involved in the controversy now before us. But before I can thus agree, I must be shown that I am now on the wrong side of the question.

In order to reach correct conclusions, it is important that all terms used in a controversy be very definite and unmistakable in meaning, and that all issues between disputants be very clearly stated. To that end, I submit for careful consideration the following propo-

sition: Christians may assemble as individuals, independent of church or other organization, to teach the Bible at any time and place and in any manner they choose, so long as such work does not interfere with the Lord's appointments. Brother Showalter will affirm this proposition; so will I. Here we are agreed. But Brother Showalter will, I suppose, affirm the following proposition also: The so-called Sunday School, or Bible school as it is usually conducted among the churches of Christ in this country, is an assembly of individual Christians to teach the Bible which does not interfere with the Lord's appointments. I deny this. Here then is the issue now between us. I have other objections to the Sunday School, but now I believe that its interference in various ways with the Lord's appointments is the most serious objection of all.

I now proceed briefly to answer Brother Showalter's questions: 1. "Does the great commission or any other Scripture bar class teaching?" Answer: Outside of the church assembly, No! 2. "Do the New Testament Scriptures authorize the teaching of the Bible in classes on every day of the week except Sunday?" In so far as the day is concerned there is no difference. 3. "Is it scriptural to teach the Bible in classes on Lord's day, when the class teaching does not interfere with the regular meeting of the church for worship?" It would be permissible if it could be done, provided there exists a reason why all such teaching cannot be as effectively done in the assembly. To establish the right to do such work you must do two things: (1) Prove beyond a doubt that such work in no way hinders the Lord's work; (2) Show why this teaching cannot be as well done in the church assembly. 4. "Are the

bishops of the congregations the only ones authorized to teach on the Lord's day?" No, but they should certainly do a large part of it. 5. "Can the Bible be taught in the class system without such work being a Sunday School?" According to some advocates of the Sunday School, any systematic teaching of the Bible on Sunday is a Sunday School, on Monday, a Monday School, etc. Do you endorse this position? If so, answer your own question. The sixth question is virtually answered under the fifth. 7. "How many male members must teach each Lord's day at the time of worship to make it scriptural?" This depends upon circumstances. But I deny the right of any set of male members to employ one man called the "Minister" or "Pastor" at so much per sermon to do all their teaching for them. This is one of the nicest side issues connected with the Sunday School controversy. 8. "Do the New Testament Scriptures authorize women to teach the doctrine of Christ?" Yes, but not in the local church assembly. 9. "Do the New Testament Scriptures permit women to teach classes?" You have studied so much about teaching "in classes" that you cannot ask a question about anything else. I admit your right to all the classes you want in any man-made arrangement you may desire. I deny the right to divide the church assembly as a body, into classes, or broken parts, for teaching, voting, or anything else. The body is the Lord's, and it is one. 10. "Are women authorized by the Holy Scriptures to teach by the class system all other branches of study except the Bible, but forbidden to teach the Bible?" Why any man will ask such a question, I cannot tell. Do you think, Brother Showalter, that I ever believed anything that would justify you in asking

me such a question? This is all the attention I can afford to give to such a question. 11. "Would a Bible school that is scriptural during the other days of the week, and that is taught from nine to ten o'clock on these other days, be unscriptural if taught on the Lord's day at the same hour, provided this hour does not conflict with the worship of the saints, a little later in the day?" I should say no in regard to every such case you find. But, Brother Showalter, we are talking about things as they are, not as they might be. The real issue between us is a living, practical reality, and concerns what the churches are really doing, not what they might conceivably do. Let the scales fall from your eyes, my brother, and take a square look at the workings among us of the Sunday-School Pastor system. Then if you feel like defending it in the columns of your paper, just say so; and I promise your readers some interesting things against your position.

N. L. CLARK.

BROTHER SHOWALTER'S SECOND REPLICATION

My long and intimate acquaintance with and personal esteem for Brother Clark leads me to value more highly than I would, otherwise, the above answers, criticisms and explanations. I very much appreciate his apparent sincerity and earnestness and the willingness he here expresses, and which seems ever to have been his disposition, to learn the whole truth and to do the whole will of God. I love honesty of heart. One reason why much controversial writing and speaking is unfruitful in good results is that those engaged in it are seeking

victory rather than the discovery of truth. I have no patience with those tricks in polemics that are designed to ensnare and entangle an opponent and contribute nothing in making manifest the truth. There is no good reason why we all may not, with perfect good will and kindly consideration for the thoughts and feelings of others, prosecute an inquiry for truth on religious questions. I would be unwilling to discuss an issue, however clearly defined, with one whom I regarded as dishonest. I might recognize an obligation to expose his position or reprove his dishonesty, but controversy, to be of real value in the discovery of truth calls for mutual confidence, by opponents, in each other's honesty.

In regard to the question here under discussion I am convinced that much harm has been done by a misunderstanding on the part of some and by carelessness on the part of others as to the real issue involved. The same terms have been used in sense widely different by some who have taken part in this controversy. This may easily lead to unintentional misrepresentation. To take a perverted or distorted view of an opponent's position and to seek to foist it into the discussion to his injury is wrong. We must not permit ourselves to build a man of straw in order to have something to fight. An issue that cannot be stated with accuracy, fairness and clearness is unworthy of consideration. An issue that is so vague and indistinct that it is not susceptible of being expressed in words, is hardly fit to engage the attention of sober minded men and women. The consideration of such real or supposed differences among the people of God will lead to strife and discord rather than to a better knowledge of the truth. Of this class of questions Paul made mention when to Timothy he wrote

(2 Tim. 2:23, 24) "Foolish and ignorant questionings refuse, knowing that they gender strifes. And the Lord's servant must not strive, but be gentle towards all, apt to teach, forbearing." People are not apt to teach when they are contentious about words to no profit but to the subverting of those who hear. There should be a correct statement of the things or the practice or teaching which we oppose. All should most scrupulously avoid a misstatement of facts, or a misrepresentation of an opponent's teaching or practice.

For these reasons I submitted to Brother Clark the questions which he so kindly answers in the foregoing. I wanted to know his real position—what he believes and teaches; what he proposes, advocates, defends, and what he opposes—how far we agree and wherein we differ. I am grateful to him for the answers he has given. It is the most lucid expression of his views on this subject I have ever seen. Some of my questions may have appeared to him and to some of my other readers as really impertinent. But for my purpose they are clearly in order. The disturbance that has been instituted in some of the churches of Christ over the question of Bible classes on the Lord's day is of a character sufficiently grave to warrant an accurate knowledge of the causes that have brought it about. It is not strange that much written matter purporting to give explanations from both sides finds its way to my office. Any needless strife and division among my brethren I have always deeply deplored and I have therefore looked with no small degree of care to discover the causes of the discord and alienation that have, in many instances, blasted the brightest prospects of the conquering progress of truth and the salvation of lost souls.

As I listen to catch a faithful report widely discordant notes are heard. Some write and pride themselves with having caused the division, invariably arrogating to themselves an exalted measure of piety, and a superabundance of loyalty. From a zeal for the Lord of hosts they have "torn up the church," opposed what the other brethren are doing, and withdrawn themselves from the rest of the church! But there seems to be no common ground for these except, perhaps, in the use of a few stereotyped expressions, phrases and terms most of which are susceptible of different meanings and give rise to ambiguity. To them the terms mean one thing, to their opponents another and quite different thing. Among those who oppose the Bible school work all sorts of views are taken. It is hardly possible to find a class of people entertaining such a mixed variety of views. Some object to the Bible teaching because it is done in classes—do not believe the Bible should be taught in classes. I have just received a 19-page manuscript from a brother to whom apparently this is the only objection—does not think the Bible should be taught in classes—does not think one who learns the Bible in a class has learned it in the right way, does not think the apostles taught classes. He finds in the New Testament but two classes of food, viz.: "milk of the word" and "strong meat," but that no one of us can tell which is which, therefore both should be thrown out together to all the people, whether young or old. If those of us who are skilled in the word of righteousness can't tell milk from meat, that may be, somehow, those who are ignorant of the word of righteousness, and who never heard of meat or milk either; may guess, which is which, and which they need, and happen onto it. But we,

as far as we are concerned, must be sure to throw out the meat and milk in one platter, because we cannot tell which is which. I take it from the brother's argument that he does not know whether the terms of pardon in the great commission belong to the alien or to the full grown man in Christ. And he closes his brilliant and exhaustive line of argument by reminding me that he shall expect to see his piece in print, and that I must not, as has been done by some, treat "in silent contempt" his great article simply because I am unable to answer "undeniable facts." Well, if we did not have so many efforts on so many different subjects possibly our readers might have opportunity to get the full benefit of these replete ratiocinations, but we can't give space to everything that is offered us, and we are left to the necessity of risking our own judgment in the selection of space filling matter.

But another objects to the classes not because they are classes, but because they are taught on the Lord's day. Another objects because women teach them; women should not teach classes, or anything else, and woe to him who learns anything from women in a Sunday School class! Another says if classes are taught on the Lord's day it is a Sunday School, the sects have Sunday Schools and we will not be loyal if we are like the sects. Another says the classes are wrong because it is dividing the assembly. These and so many other objections are offered that I felt it necessary to secure from Brother Clark statements that set forth his real position. Many seem to look to him as a leader, who, I think, have a very poor conception of what his teaching along this line embraces.

I am very glad to note that Brother Clark's teaching is now clear to all in the following particulars:

1. He claims that the word of God authorizes class teaching, and this not only on the other days of the week but on Lord's day as well. I am glad that he is so clear on this point. Now since this method of teaching is generally conceded by teachers as being the most effectual and there is abundant opportunity to teach people the truth in this way and God has required of us that we teach the truth, are we not liable to err if this work is neglected?

2. He claims that the class teaching should not interfere with divine appointments for the assembly in the matter of worship on the first day of the week. He is correct in this contention and I am glad to cooperate with him in urging this upon the brotherhood.

3. He agrees with me that the bishops are not divinely required to do all the teaching on the Lord's day.

4. He says it depends upon circumstances as to how many male members should teach on the Lord's day at the time of worship. I am sure that in this matter he is correct.

5. He admits that it is right for women to teach Bible classes on the Lord's day or other days, but denies that women should teach in the assembly at the time of worship. That is exactly right. I would oppose those who contend otherwise. If classes are being taught Lord's day morning by men or women, or both, this work must cease when the time for the appointed worship comes. This is the general practice among the churches of Christ. A brother reads a lesson; a brother presides at the Lord's table; a brother gives thanks for

the bread; a brother gives thanks for the wine; a brother makes a talk, or several make talks; brethren pass around the bread and wine; brethren collect the offering; a brother dismisses the assembly; the women keep silent. That is the practice of the churches where I go.

6. Brother Clark declares that a Bible school may be taught on the Lord's day Scripturally. That is exactly what I claim and what I teach.

Brother Clark thinks that some of the churches in actual practice have something that he calls "Sunday school" that is wrong. He does not tell wherein. But I am abundantly willing to concede that there are mistakes made by brethren. Tell them exactly where it is. But do let them do what you say the word of God authorizes: Have Bible school on the Lord's day, and other days, too, where practical, and let both men and women teach these classes as you say the Bible permits.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE FIGHTING OF STRAW MEN AND THE
RAISING OF FALSE ISSUES

Men have wasted a great deal of energy upon the discussion of false issues. This is often the course practiced by dishonest debators when they realize their inability to meet an issue squarely. Even honest and conscientious men become so anxious to save a cherished cause that they are led unwittingly to raise a false issue and spend their time in discussing it.

This, as it appears to me, is often true in the current discussion of the Sunday School question. The real issue is the question, does the Lord authorize in any way the arrangement for worship on Lord's day that now obtains among the churches in this country? If he does, we should do all we can to encourage it; if he does not, we cannot afford to endorse it. Brother Armstrong, Brother Showalter, Brother Kurfees and others of great logical and scriptural ability have set up a man of straw, raised a false issue. They talk about disciples' coming together on Sunday before worship, without organization, simply as individual Christians to teach the Bible. They ask, "Who can object?" They have in mind an ideal to which, perhaps, no one can raise a logical objection. But nobody is debating such a case, unless, forsooth, they can cite such an instance. Even a few isolated cases would not suffice. Our contention relates to the prevailing custom of the churches among us.—N. L. Clark, in *Apostolic Way*.

BROTHER SHOWALTER'S THIRD REPLICATION

Raised a false issue indeed! The false issue has certainly not been raised by those who believe in and practice Bible school work on the Lord's day. They are not shooting at the "classes" and are not setting up a man of straw to shoot at. Who has been shooting at "division into classes," "women teachers," "Bible schools" and "Sunday Schools"? I have not set up a man of straw, Brother Clark, "Thou art the man." Who is it that has raised a disturbance in the churches all over the country about Bible schools on the Lord's day, which you now agree are scriptural?

Brother Clark says, "The real issue is in the question: Does the Lord authorize, in any way, the arrangement for worship on Lord's day that now obtains among churches in this country?" If that is the real "issue" why not discuss it and quit talking about "division into classes," "Bible schools on the Lord's day," and "women teachers," all of which Brother Clark has told us the New Testament authorizes? Why does not Brother Clark himself, also, "authorize" and advocate them? Why is it that where the so-called Anti-Sunday School brethren hold sway they have neither "women teachers," "classes" nor "Bible schools" on the Lord's day? If these are not the question, and the question is about the worship, and "the churches in this country" are at fault in the manner of conducting their worship, why not encourage the Lord's day Bible school which the Bible authorizes and address yourself to the matter of correcting the worship which you think is out of joint?

If the "Apostolic Way" stands for anything it certain-

ly stands opposed to Bible schools on the Lord's day (which it usually calls Sunday School), class teaching, and women teachers on the Lord's day. In the very same issue of the "Apostolic Way" from which I quote the above extract I notice a message from a certain D. F. Nichols of El Paso, Texas. He seems not unwilling to accuse himself of being immensely loyal; in fact one might conclude that he has an embargo on all the loyalty in El Paso. He speaks as one who has the knowledge to tell us what is the matter with the churches and the brethren—all except himself—and as one having the sanctions and endorsements of the editors of the "Apostolic Way"; they record no criticism or protest. He evidently thinks he knows what this new doctrine is that opposes the present order of things among the churches. Now Brother Nichols has it this way: "In reference to Brother Glenn and those who believe and teach as he does, I am sure they are wrong in having their S. S. with women teachers divided into different classes. . . ." "And let me beg you to lay aside all these man-made institutions, such as the Sunday Schools divided into classes with women teachers." Brother Nichols tells one tale about the classes, Brother Clark another. What does the "Apostolic Way" stand for anyhow? Or is it fighting a man of straw, constructed from the fruitful imagination of those who say and do not—who declare that class teaching is right but oppose those who engage in it?

I fail to see where Armstrong, Showalter, Kurfees or Hinds have built a man of straw or raised a false issue. For my part, I have always contended for the scripturalness of having special meeting for Bible study on the Lord's day at times that do not conflict with the meeting

of the assembly for worship. At these special meetings those being taught may be divided into classes and women as well as men may teach. I would not endorse dividing into classes the worshipping assembly on Lord's day. Brother Clark agrees at this point. There is no issue between us, and he should not construct a man of straw in order to provide a target. Yes, indeed, men have wasted a great deal of time in the discussion of false issues, and I do not know of men who have argued more on a false issue than those who oppose Bible class work on the Lord's day. To teach the Bible in classes "before worship" is exactly what I have contended for all the time, and now Brother Clark comes up and says that to this "no one can raise a logical objection." No indeed, nor a scriptural objection either. The question, then, is settled, unless some one is determined to raise a "false issue." If the Bible class work "before worship" is right, let that part of the controversy be dismissed by agreement, and let us, as reasonable people, proceed to study the subject of the worship.

It may be that this subject also may be just as easily settled. Then let peace and harmony prevail among us and let the cause of truth be pressed gloriously on unobstructed by those schismatic, unhampered and unhindered by those who see things that in reality have no existence and in fact do not appear.

CHAPTER FIVE

BROTHER SHOWALTER AND HIS SUNDAY
SCHOOL AGAIN

In the Firm Foundation of May 10 appeared my answer to certain questions from Brother Showalter and his comments thereon. Much of what he says is fine, but Brother Showalter fails to meet the real issue that I raised. Whatever may have been his intention, his remarks are apt to leave the impression upon many readers that he and I agree upon the Sunday School question, that I have conceded the whole ground. I accept Brother Showalter's summary of my position theoretically, but I deny that the popular practices of the churches among us are in harmony with his ideal. I am complaining about what the churches are doing. Brother Showalter has set up a plan by which he claims Christians may conceivably work in harmony with the Lord's will, but his yard-stick does not fit in its measurement the real thing it is supposed to measure. He supposes that the Sunday School, as it is carried on, in no way interferes with the Lord's work. He then attempts to make out his case by getting Brother Clark to admit the possibility of such an arrangement as would resemble in leading respects the work that is actually being done. From such reasoning he draws the conclusion that Brother Clark has accepted Brother Showalter's position. This, on his part, is quite an astute bit of sophistry; but it is a clear case of petitio principii, or what is called "begging the question." My contention is that the growing and popular practice

among our stronger churches is not in harmony with the will of God, that with our boasted loyalty we are drifting as rapidly as human pride and weakness will permit, into the worst sort of digression.

Brother Showalter, like the defender of any other religious error, has taken his bearings, figured the cost, analyzed and summarized and theorized about what the people of God may or may not do, until he has no doubt satisfied in his mind, and probably his conscience too, that the Lord approves of what the larger churches in our cities especially are doing on Lord's day.

I am not, in the usual sense of the term, debating; for Brother Showalter's practice is on trial, and he has not yet consented to defend it in the regular form of proposition and argument. Hence I am not ready to enter into detailed argument of the issue. But in order to call attention to the importance of the subject, I shall give a brief statement of some of my objections to the popular order in question. In the first place, it provides an unnecessary arrangement for teaching the Bible. This detracts from the interest otherwise taken in the Lord's arrangement. This, when properly considered, will appear self-evident. 2. The teaching done in the Sunday School could be more effectively done in the Lord's institutions—the home and the church assembly. Let him who takes issue with me here give a reason for his contention. 3. In connection with the popular manner of using the "minister," the Sunday School absorbs the time and attention that should be given to the teaching, to edification by the brethren in the assembly. 4. The plan virtually rules out the elders, especially from the work of teaching in the assembly. 5. The growing demand for entertaining preachers, es-

pecially young men, is raising up among us a class of fairly well-educated clergymen who are serving the churches in the capacity of "pastor." These men cannot properly be evangelists, and many of them are not scripturally qualified for bishops. 6. The spirit of the times, expressed in jazzy music—light, sentimental, gushing melody—finds its way through the Sunday School into church worship. A recent writer says: "The eighteen million Sunday School scholars of America have been brought up largely on jazz, soft soap Bible paraphrases, and amorphous, melodic curves. Through a nondescript collection of ill-smelling jazz, jungle and juice, we have been making children hot-blooded animals rather than sensitive, worshipping souls."

But this is enough on this line for the present. My sole purpose in crossing Brother Showalter's path was to call attention to certain growing evils, as I see them, in the churches. I would not, upon any consideration, say anything that would disrupt a body of my brethren over a petty issue involving simply a matter of opinion or preference. I am as anxious to preserve the peace and unity of the Lord's people as is Brother Showalter. What a happy state would be ours were we so perfectly agreed among ourselves that Brother Showalter or I could find a cordial welcome and feel entirely at home in any assembly of our people for worship in all this broad land! But such is not the case. Why? It is the old story of divisions over humanisms in the Lord's work, a repetition of the sad experience of thirty years ago. I pray that those among us who have the direction in the greatest measure, of our activities as a religious body, may see before it is too late whither we are drifting, and that they may have the grace of

God and love of their brethren in sufficient measure to enable them to lead us out of the dangers of division and utter ruin that confront us.

I am a very busy man. I have little time to read or to write, and I have no time to carry on a war of words to no purpose. But if a discussion, formal or informal, of these issues will do good just now, I am ready to enter it. I was for five years one of the editors of the Firm Foundation. Brother Showalter is now the editor. We, perhaps, in this way, are so related to the readers of this paper that we would be quite acceptable to most of them as the disputants in a discussion of this question. I leave the decision to Brother Showalter. Whatever may be his decision, let us all resolve that we will strive more prayerfully and more lovingly to correct every error in our hearts and lives. Let us strive diligently to know and do the Lord's will in all matters, whether it pleases men or not. Let us be willing to put away from our church practices whatever is unnecessary, untaught, and whatever gives offense to brethren.

N. L. CLARK.

BROTHER SHOWALTER'S FOURTH REPLICATION

That Brother Clark may be permitted more fully to express himself I append hereto a clipping from his pen published in the Apostolic Way of April 15:

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"My observation has been that one of two methods of procedure obtains in almost every congregation: 1. People assemble at the appointed hour, have a few songs, a prayer, the S. S. lesson, then some one 'waits on the

table' (as he expresses it), making the same set remarks the audience has heard every week for years; or he simply says, 'You know your duty, hence I shall make no further remarks.' This is the practice where the church has no one to preach every Lord's day. 2. The S. S. proceeds in the usual way till eleven o'clock, at which time the 'minister' speaks. At the expiration of his speech, some one 'waits on the table,' usually reminding the auditors that they have been there already long enough. This custom obtains wherever the church has a 'regular minister.'

"If I have misrepresented my brethren, I should like to know it, and I most sincerely beg their pardon. If I have stated the case as it is, tell me where the work of the elders as teachers of the congregation comes in? In fact, aside from what the preacher does, where is any teaching done in the worship? I lay at the feet of at least ninety per cent of the churches I have known, the charge that they absolutely leave out of their public worship the teaching of God's word. They either do the teaching in a S. S. which they claim is dismissed before worship, or they turn it over to an evangelist whose scriptural work is to preach to sinners. Now, brethren, in arranging for, or in conducting discussions of this issue, let us try to take things as we find them, instead of creating imaginary conditions that obtain in very few cases, if at all.

N. L. CLARK."

It will be recalled that this little exchange of views was occasioned by Brother Clark, who asked me a number of questions in connection with some remarks I made on the class system of teaching, in an article on

"Law and Custom." Brother Clark did not set forth his own position. I thought I knew it but was sure that many of our readers did not, and for that reason, asked him several questions designed to bring forward, in terms that were clear and unmistakable, his real position. Brother Clark is very dear to me, not only as a brother in the Lord but as a personal friend and co-laborer. I would not do him an injustice and I do not want others to misunderstand or misrepresent him. I am fully aware that nine-tenths of the strife over the so-called Sunday School question comes from those who are simply opposed to teaching the Bible in classes on the Lord's day. Not long ago a brother was telling me how very loyal his congregation was. He declared they were going by the New Testament themselves, let others do as they may; and that they had just built a new house of worship, and had put it in the deed that no Sunday School classes with women teachers, etc., should be conducted in or about the building. Brother Clark and I would both be barred from having a Bible school in the building on Lord's day, notwithstanding we both regard it as a thing scriptural and right. Those who, in various localities, are going out from the churches and causing division on the "Sunday School" question do not have any Bible school at all on the Lord's day and will not attend such work even when conducted by others at an hour that in no way conflicts with the time appointed for the worship. There are possibly some exceptions, but the above is the rule. Now all of this is out of the question so far as Brother Clark's position is concerned. He is not an "anti-Sunday School" man at all. He is thoroughly in line with Bible school work on the Lord's day—certainly in faith, if not

in practice. What he does complain of is mixing the class work with the worship of the assembly on the first day of the week. I am anxious to do Brother Clark the justice to have his position clearly defined. Some things in it may then be objectionable to some of us, but for my part I really think these objections will be found to be few in number and that the differences will not at all appear irreconcilable. Let us sincerely hope so.

I shall submit by number a few observations on Brother Clark's remarks.

1. Brother Clark summarizes the results of his observations among the churches and declares "that one of two methods of procedure obtains in almost every congregation." One of these methods is the case where there is no preacher, the other where there is a preacher. In each case he confuses "S. S." with the worship. I would not endorse a mixing or merging of a Bible school with the meeting of the assembly for worship. I have frequently made this plain. Some of the churches may mix these but most of them, I think, would plead not guilty. I know we do not at Austin.

2. A "preacher" is just a Christian. Of course he is a teacher, and aside from what might be regarded as his leading work in teaching aliens the way of life he may, as may any other capable brother, teach the church. He certainly has a right to a place in the assembly, and to the privilege of teaching in the assembly. The elders should teach but are not to do all the teaching. Brother Clark does not believe or teach that the elders should do all the teaching even at the time of worship in the assembly. Certainly they should be supervisors of it. They are overseers. Their name

(bishop) implies as much. There are some cases, doubtless where they do not teach enough personally; then there are cases where they try to do too much teaching in the assembly. Prudence and circumstances, with the word of the Lord should govern. Doubtless the preacher is relied on too much in some churches, and not enough in others. To the correction of such irregularities, as opportunities present themselves every devout child of God should address himself.

3. We should avoid too nice a distinction between the work of "preacher" and "layman"; "preacher" and "elder," etc. Suppose a brother who is capable of teaching, and engaged most every Lord's day teaching in the assembly, begins preaching the gospel to the lost. He does not thereby forfeit his right to teach. If an elder who has served well as teacher in the assembly goes to preaching he does not thereby disqualify himself as "teacher." All preachers should be teachers. And, in a very important sense, all true teachers should be preachers of the gospel. We read that upon the great persecution at Jerusalem the whole church was scattered abroad except the apostles, and those that were scattered abroad "went everywhere preaching the word." This referred to all, both men and women, and doubtless related to both public and private gospel evangelism. The word in this case rendered "preaching" might better be understood by reading it "evangelizing." In fact this is the Anglicized form of the Greek word employed. I see no real excuse or ground here for the great ado that is made in some localities to the disruption of churches over what the disturbers call "Sunday School." The Bible

classes taught at an earlier hour have nothing to do with it, and Brother Clark concedes that they are Scriptural.

4. Brother Clark was undoubtedly busy—too busy to notice carefully what he was writing—when he charges me with begging the question. He knows too much about logic for this. What I am doing is to derive from Brother Clark is his own terms an expression as to what his teaching is. I did not say or claim that all the churches are doing just as Brother Clark thinks they should, or that he would endorse all the Sunday Schools in all the churches. I modestly pointed out that Brother Clark regards it as Scriptural for Christians to teach a Bible school on the Lord's day, that they may have classes, and that women may teach in them. To beg the question is to assume the point at issue, and this I did not do. I am perfectly willing for any logician to pronounce upon my case. But Brother Clark refers to my reasoning as "an astute bit of sophistry" and employs, with reference to me, the expression "like the defender of any other religious error," he not only runs dangerously near *petitio principii* but to a violation of one of the fundamental rules of honorable controversy. He simply assumes and states without proof that my writing is "sophistry," and that I am a "defender" of a "religious error." But really I do not think he meant it that way and I do not so allege. I regard Brother Clark as too good a man to resort to any crooked dealing or unfairness in argument.

5. If the teaching done in the Bible school can be done "more effectively" at home, or in some other way, I say, do it that way. I raise no objection. Do it that way and this way too, if both are all right. If it can be

done "effectively" at one place, and "more effectively" at some other place, I say do it at both places. And if we can locate a place where it can be done most "effectively," let us, by all means, do it there, too. The important thing is to do the teaching in a Scriptural way, and Brother Clark agrees with me that the Bible school on the Lord's day is a Scriptural way to do the work. Christians have the opportunity to teach, and should teach, their own children at home, but not often the opportunity to teach others there. Many of those in the Bible school do not come from Christian's homes, are not being taught and will not be taught at home.

6. As to teaching "more effectively" in the assembly, I would not detract from its importance or effectiveness. But the teaching in the assembly is primarily for the "assembly" itself, the membership of the church. Surely Brother Clark does not mean to tell us that this is the most appropriate and proper place to teach aliens.

7. What Brother Clark quotes in regard to eighteen million S. S. scholars being nourished on light jazz music, soft soap Bible paraphrases, etc., has no pertinency whatever. He knows I contend for no such thing. The writer from whom he quotes evidently was not referring to the churches of Christ, as we have no "eighteen million" or even one million pupils in Bible classes, and it must be remembered that Brother Clark has conceded all I contend for in the matter of the Bible school and class work. I presume the allusion in his quotation is to the Sunday School of the sectarian world which he knows I do not endorse.

8. As to ruling out the elders, absorbing time with "ministers" and "Sunday Schools," that should be used

in the assembly to edification, demands for "fairly well educated clergymen," "pastors" and all that, Brother Clark, I am sure, does not think I advocate this. I shall continue to appreciate Brother Clark's efforts to check and curb this tendency wherever it crops up. I doubt not that many mistakes are made along these lines. Some kind words or well prepared articles directly to the point just here would be timely. Brother Clark has been misunderstood by many. He is opposing "tendencies" rather existing conditions. Some "conditions" among us he might not approve. Most of us find numerous mistakes and blunders among the churches, often because the brethren really do not know any better. Let us encourage them in doing what they are doing that is right, and wherein they may err, let us in kindness, meekness and love show unto them the "more excellent way."

Since writing the foregoing I have received from Brother Clark the following and as it adds nothing to what has already been examined I publish it without further comment than to say the article of mine which he reviews was written before I received his "last reply" to which he refers and which is published above. I have no disposition to treat with prejudice or partiality the products of his pen. Neither would I advocate or defend the interference of a Bible school with the regular worship of the "assembly" on the Lord's day. To try to impose upon me such a task is to disregard my sentiments and put me in a false light.

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Brother Showalter and "The Real Issue"

In the Firm Foundation of May 24, Brother Showalter

quotes a brief article from my pen entitled "The Real Issue," which appeared in the Apostolic Way several weeks ago. Upon this article Brother Showalter offers some pretty strong (?) comments. I suppose that my last reply to him on the Sunday School question was already in his office, but for some reason Brother Showalter preferred to quote my brief article from the Apostolic Way and make his attack upon it. I have no objection to his using anything I write, but I shall still expect him to publish my article of last week, for it contains some things I am anxious for his readers to see.

[Said article had already appeared in print, but had not reached Brother Clark when he wrote.—Publishers.]

Before I say anything here about the real issue between us, I call attention to some of his sayings in the article of May 24. Brother Showalter charges the opponents of the Sunday School with raising disturbance among the churches over "class teaching," "women teachers," etc. But since Brother Clark has discovered that these things are not the real issue, we should quit talking about them and discuss the worship instead of the "Sunday School"! I have no doubt, Brother Showalter, that you and many like you would be mighty glad if the rest of us would let up on the Sunday School for a while and talk about something more comforting. But it is easy to tell why we have said so much about the name "Sunday School," "classes," "women teachers," etc. Here it is, Brother Showalter: Most advocates of the Sunday School among us have 'till recently contended that the Sunday School is the church at work under the supervision of the bishops. A few years ago I had a debate with A. W.

Young at Denison in which he affirmed the right to have women teachers in the assembly, to divide the congregation into classes, etc. Brother Whiteside in debate with me in these columns virtually took the same position, although he was cautious enough to keep some of it in the background. A few years ago Brother Ledlow published a tract on the Sunday School question, gotten up by ten leading preachers, each writing on some particular phase of the question. The trend of this entire tract was to teach that the so-called Sunday School is identical with the local church assembled for worship. Some brethren went so far as to call the Lord's supper the worship, trying thereby to harmonize their Sunday School practices with the Bible. Now, all the "disturbance" we have raised, Brother Showalter, over the things you mention, was raised in opposition to this view of the Sunday School. And we expect to continue to raise as much disturbance as we can in the minds of honest brethren who will listen, whenever we meet those who teach that the Sunday School is identical with the church.

But in more recent days men like yourself, M. C. Kurfees and J. N. Armstrong have come to advocate another view of the matter. You tell us that the Sunday School is not the church, is not under the bishops, is, in fact, at least in theory, under the supervision of nobody in particular; that it is simply a kind of "get-together" meeting of individuals to teach the Bible to all comers. This change of ground by the advocates of the Sunday School logically requires a change of front on the other side. It was to meet you and those who agree with you that I wrote the article published in the Apostolic Way on "The Real Issue."

Brother Showalter says I am the man who has raised a false issue. Maybe so! but as I have charged him with doing so, I am under obligation to prove my accusation. This I now proceed to do. I lay down the following proposition: Christians may assemble as individuals to teach the Bible at any time and place and in any manner they choose so long as they do not interfere with the Lord's appointments. Brother Showalter and I both endorse this proposition. There is, in so far as I know, absolutely no difference between us here. This proposition permits us to teach the Bible in our schools during the week, to hold special meetings at any convenient time, such as many churches call prayer meetings, to get together an audience anywhere and preach to it, to go out by twos, threes or any other number to evangelize the world, etc. None of these meetings, however, must be permitted in any way to interfere with the Lord's appointments. If they do, they must be abandoned, at least by those thus hindered. Now for the false issue: Brother Showalter assumes that his Sunday School and its attendant practices in no way hinder the Lord's work. He then tries to make it appear that I and others oppose the meeting to teach the Bible just because some call it "Sunday School," or because it has women teachers, is divided into classes for instruction, or for some other vain reason. Thus he raises a false issue, "sets up a man of straw." What I want you to do, Brother Showalter, is to meet me in the columns of your paper on the real issue between us. I oppose the Sunday School as an organization, separate from the church, on the ground that it is useless in the nature of the case, and moreover it competes with the Lord's institution, the

church. I oppose the Sunday School when men speak of it as identical with the church assembly, because this assembly should not be called "Sunday School," should have no women as teachers, and should not be divided into classes for instruction. You and I agree on these views. Why then do you continually oppose me over them? But I also oppose your very modern Sunday School, which I have said no man can logically oppose as an ideal arrangement, on the ground that it does not really exist anywhere I have been, but instead thereof an arrangement obtains that does interfere with the Lord's appointments. Please quit assuming that your Sunday School, as it is now operated, does not interfere with the Lord's work, and set yourself to the task of proving it, for this is the "real issue," at least between us.

N. L. CLARK.

It is needless to enter into a logomache. Brother Clark himself concedes my position. He admits that I am "theoretically" right. If I am right in theory then let the theory be put into practice. Of course I cannot defend something that Brother Clark finds at some place or in some congregation that is not in accord with my teaching. That some of the churches have made mistakes may be true. I do not think, in this case, the wrong is so general as he seems to suppose. But if I teach that a man must obey from the heart in the matter of repentance and baptism in order to remission of sins, am I thereby obligated to prove that every professed Christian has actually "obeyed from the heart"? I can teach the people what I think the Bible requires, but I will not always find their conduct

perfect along these lines. Of course I will not affirm their practice perfect. One point of very serious failure is the failure to have Bible school on the Lord's day when it is authorized of God and is so much needed in every neighborhood.

G. H. P. S.

CHAPTER SIX

BROTHER SHOWALTER'S SUNDAY
SCHOOL AGAIN

In Firm Foundation of June 7th appear two articles from my pen with some comments by Brother Showalter.

I now offer what may be my final effort on the subject for the present. Were it not that Brother Showalter persists in avoiding the real issue I raised and consequently keeping in the background the important matters I was discussing, I should not write again. For the sake of clearness and truth, I shall state again briefly the points at issue between us:

1. Brother Showalter believes that Christians may and should collect together children and others at the meeting house on Lord's day to teach them the Bible, taking care always not to interfere in any way with the Lord's day meeting of the church. This supposed meeting is not under the supervision of the elders, has no superintendent, no organization in fact, etc. It is simply a voluntary meeting of individual disciples and others to study and teach the Bible. Now, Brother Showalter, is this description true to the Sunday School (or Bible school) at Austin, where you worship? If so, your readers should know it; if not, your practice does not accord with your theory. I may be misinformed, but I think you will find the majority of our churches that have the Sunday School either place it under the supervision of the elders or have some-

one elected as superintendent in reality, if not in name, to direct it.

Again, if this statement misrepresents the churches, I am very anxious to know it. You should know, by virtue of your position, what the custom of the leading churches is on this point. You, Brother Showalter, owe it to all concerned to correct me through your paper if I misrepresent my brethren. In fact, I should be glad to know that I have misunderstood the churches on this point and that they are not guilty of either having women teachers, etc., in a meeting of the church under the bishops, or of organizing another body outside the church, called a "Sunday School."

2. If the work you are defending is not in reality what the world calls a "Sunday School," why use this name to designate it? Words are signs of ideas. Names suggest character. Every argument you or I ever made against denominational names for the church, every objection we raise to the name "Campbellite" applies logically to this name, "Sunday School."

You oppose the organization by that name that numbers perhaps eighteen millions of members in this country, and yet you are willing without protest to permit your brethren and sisters at home to call by that name what you say is an entirely different thing!

If I should come to Austin to hold a meeting with your home congregation and should persist in calling the church the Methodist church, either in public or in private, you would most certainly and seriously object. Again, I am persuaded that ninety per cent of those who attend the Sunday School in any of our larger centers, such as Austin, Cleburne, Dallas, and other

places, think of their Sunday School work as the exact parallel of such work in the denominational churches around them. If I am correct in this, those people ought to be taught better. In other words, Brother Showalter, you should use your pen to teach brethren that we as a people really have no Sunday School. But you prefer to call it "Bible school." I grant that this term is not so objectionable as the term "Sunday School," because it is not so apt to be misleading; provided, that you really have what you claim to have under that name.

But is this same "Bible school" organized? Does it have any officers? Who superintends its workings? Is it, in fact, no organization, simply a voluntary meeting of all who come, to study the Bible?

I have done for the present. I have written to elicit truth, to correct error, to arouse interest in a matter that must in the end prove to be more than a trivial notion. Alas! that so many good people, including preachers who are usually thoughtful, look only at the surface of our religious practices. Very few nowadays appear to think of far-reaching tendencies. They see the popular trend, they are carried away with the feeling of victory because of apparent success in reaching the world, they overlook the vital distinction in these perilous times between real, spiritual worship and service on the one hand and carnal, social entertainment on the other. With many of our preachers, who ought to know better, the all-important thing in church work is to make the public services of the church entertaining to the gay, giddy, and worldly minded.

The church of Christ is a spiritual institution,

designed primarily to lift the sinful soul into fellowship and communion with God. We must measure our religious practices by this high standard or we must forfeit all our claims to being identical with the New Testament church.

N. L. CLARK.

BROTHER SHOWALTER'S FIFTH REPLICATION

I publish the above effort for the reason that I am abundantly willing for Brother Clark to make himself understood by our readers, if he can possibly do so. If he has not expressed himself fully and plainly in the five articles he has written it is certainly the fault of no one but himself. If he has not set forth his exact position on the point at issue, it must be from his own inability to do so. But Brother Clark is a man of no mean ability, and, on most questions, finds no difficulty in the expression of his views with a clearness that makes them intelligible to all. Why his confusion in this particular instance the patient reader is left to judge. Brother Clark thinks it needful that he explain again, because Brother Showalter persists in avoiding the real issue. If I have done this thing it seems that my gifted respondent would have set forth the "real issue" in terms that are clear and intelligible, to my shame and humiliation before our readers—unless, perchance, the poverty of the English language stands as an effectual barrier. He is good in English and can certainly tell us in what an issue consists, and especially a "real issue," unless said "real issue" turns out after all to be such a shadowy, indistinct phantom as to defy approach and elude detection or discovery. You might shoot all day

at the cattle and horses and trees and water fowl so vivid to the beholder in the optical illusion of the mirage on the western prairies and hit nothing. All day long the spent balls would fall harmlessly on the wide expanse of the extended plain. Hunters in looking for wild cats have been known to find them, and shoot, and shoot, and point out the terrible appearance of the ferocious game to their fellow hunters, but when all approached nothing appeared but some harmless, mossy stump or log or jutting rock. I really believe that Brother Clark would do well to put on his spy glasses and very closely examine his wild cat before he fires so many ineffectual shots into the unoffending mountain slope. Showalter has not "kept it in the background," but Clark fails to bring it forward. It still remains in his custody, and he has not been hampered or hindered in any way. Brother Clark, maybe the "background" where this "real issue" reposes is beyond the distant horizon at a point vastly remote from mortal vision and forever safe from the perils of logical assault.

If there is any issue at all, it is on the question of teaching the word of God in classes. In my article on "Law and Custom," I referred to an issue that has arisen in some localities in regard to class teaching, the custom of teaching in classes prevailing in some localities but not prevailing in others. It was shown that a mere matter of custom should not be made law; because I may not participate in class teaching I have no right to oppose the one who does, unless the law of God is against it, and the law of God is not against it. Upon the change of some questions and answers with Brother Clark, it transpired that he held

nothing whatever against my contention. He seemed apprehensive of some "tendencies" and pointed out that the Bible school must not interfere with the Lord's day worship. But I do not contend for it to interfere with the Lord's day worship. It will be recalled that in the following fundamental points there was agreement:

1. Christians may teach Bible classes.
2. Christian women as well as men may teach Bible classes.
3. Bible classes are scriptural.
4. Bible schools are authorized by the New Testament.
5. A Bible school may scripturally convene on the Lord's day, or any other day of the week.
6. A Bible school, usually composed of both church members and non-church members, is not to be confused with the assembly as such, composed of those only who are members of the church.
7. A meeting of the Bible school for the study and teaching of the Bible must not be merged into, mixed with, or interfere with the meeting of the saints for worship on the first day of the week.
8. Women, though permitted to teach classes in a Bible school on the Lord's day or any other day, are not permitted to teach in the "assembly" when the saints meet for worship.
9. The meeting of the saints "to break bread" (Acts 20:7) on the first day of the week is a divine appointment.
10. Contribution, prayers, exhortation and teaching are other items to be observed when the saints meet for worship on the first day of the week.

11. The items of worship in 9 and 10 being matters of primary concern to Christians only, must all be of an order that would make for God's glory and for the edifying of believers. They are engagements not intended primarily for the instruction of aliens.

12. In connection with 11 it follows that the teaching, exhortations, talks of whatever nature, should be so prepared and designed as to reach and affect believers rather than aliens. The meeting is for worship. It is a time for religious devotions, for the spiritual exercise of the household of God. At this point, some congregations may not discriminate as carefully as they should. I think that, really, just here is one of Brother Clark's chief troubles or grounds for criticism, and I feel sure that if he will direct the energies of his splendid ability with tongue and pen to this point he will find a well meaning and responsive brotherhood not only ready and willing but anxious to hear and make improvement.

13. Elders are not the only ones authorized to teach at the meeting of the saints on the Lord's day. They should however, exercise a supervision over all that is done by the flock, not only at the meeting for worship but at other times. They should be "apt to teach" and this aptness they should cultivate.

14. I suppose we are fully agreed that the meeting of the assembly for worship on the first day of the week is not for "preaching," the term here being employed to designate matter of special address to unbelievers or aliens. That aliens, however, might be in attendance and might be affected by what is done or said at such a meeting appears clear from Paul's language in First Corinthians 14:23-25.

I do not understand that a congregation is granted from the Lord an exemption from the supervision of the elders when they are teaching a Bible school. It is the business of the elders to have a supervision over all their religious work.

Brother Clark this time is very nicely inquisitive about the exact manner of procedure in the Lord's day Bible school at Austin. He is rather persistent in calling it Sunday school, or rather "S. S.," though for what reason I know not, since such designation is neither acceptable to him nor pleasing to me. Is it to arouse prejudice? He wants to know about a superintendent and about whether the work is under the supervision of the elders or bishops of our congregation. The elders most assuredly have supervision over all religious work done by the membership of the congregation. One of the requirements of a bishop is that he understand and hold fast the sound doctrine and be able to convince the gainsayer. The word episcopos rendered "bishop" means a "supervisor," an "overseer." Certainly the bishops at Austin are overseers or supervisors of all the religious activities of the church, and particularly so in the matter of teaching, whether in a Bible school, protracted meeting, or publishing a paper, each of which Brother Clark approves.

Brother Clark's number "2" sets forth nothing new. He asks why designate it a "Sunday School" (a thing I do not do); then why do I not protest its use (a thing I have repeatedly done). He thinks the "Sunday School" is on a level with "Campbellite," and that every objection against this latter term may be logically used against the former. Not every one perhaps,

Brother Clark. The word "Campbellite" means a follower of Campbell. Surely the word "school" is not objectionable. And even the word "Sunday" does not necessitate the idea of following the leadership of some uninspired man. I need not pause here to recite again my objections to the term "Sunday School." But a school may of right be called a school, and a school where the Bible is taught may appropriately be called a Bible school. I prefer, for several reasons, "Bible schools" and "protracted meetings" rather than "Sunday Schools" and "revival meetings."

Brother Clark once said something of a debate. So far as a debate, formal or informal, is concerned, Brother Clark has already been doing his best in an "informal" effort, and as to a formal debate it would be necessary for him to deny some proposition that I affirm or else affirm a proposition that I could consistently deny before there could be a debate of this kind. He offered to follow and review my writing if I would defend the practice of the churches of Christ. But Brother Clark certainly knows that I am not logically in the affirmative here. Brother Clark concedes my contention that a Bible School is all right. But he complains of the Bible schools and says they interfere with the worship. To establish this proposition, is his labor and not mine. His is the *onus probandi*; and how well he has succeeded in the efforts he has made our readers must judge.

Brother Clark, in seeking to tell us what he is opposing, or what proposition he will deny, tells us that two methods obtain among the churches, one where they have "preaching" and one where they do not have "preaching." He approves the songs and the

prayers; also the Bible classes if conducted before the worship. Then the only real opposition he registers is against the brother who "waits on the table," as he expresses it, "making the same set remarks the audience has heard every week for years," or, in the other instance, "waits on the table," "usually reminding the auditors that they have been there long enough." But Brother Clark, is that really the proposition that you expect me to affirm? Have I advocated that a brother should make the same "set remarks" at the table each Lord's day; "remarks" the auditors have heard for years? I could not affirm this in order to find something you can deny. I feel sorry for the poor brother who is ignorant, and who makes a feeble, failing effort at the Lord's table. In fact, I feel sorry for everybody who does not know any more than Brother Clark and I know. We do not know any too much. Brother Clark fails here to locate the "real issue," for he and I are agreed as to the impropriety of a brother's making the same stale, trite "set remarks" each time at the Lord's table. They usually do this where they are poorly taught, and where they do not want to be taught, are opposed to Bible classes and "preaching," or teaching.

I desire that peace, harmony and good will prevail among the people of God. I have seen no cause for division over the "Sunday School question" and since this little round with Brother Clark I see less excuse for it than ever. I do not think that serious divisions are likely except for reasons other than the Bible school work. It is true that some little defections have gone out from the churches in several localities that are claiming the "Sunday School" as the cause. But

my observation has been to the effect that in nearly every instance they went out for some other reason and took up the "S. S." as a later consideration. In some instances they had already been excluded from the church for causes that had nothing to do with the "S. S." and they did not object to the Bible school before they were excluded from the fellowship. Then they claim persecution and call for sympathy, and some "anti-Sunday School" preacher flies to the rescue, comforts them in their tribulation, and the separation becomes permanent.

May the cause of the Master run and be glorified through the faith and persistent activity of those who recognize the necessity of always abounding in the work of the Lord.

G. H. P. S.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SOME SUGGESTIONS

I have received dozens of letters from leading preachers and others in reference to the recent informal discussion of the Bible school work on Lord's days. I have been earnestly desirous that the breach be not widened, but that harmony might be secured, and good will and co-operation prevail among the brethren. I believe that Brother N. L. Clark, who has participated in the investigation of the subject, has had nothing but the desire and expectation of securing harmony and peace among brethren. I give below some suggestions that I have just received from a very prominent and good man among us, who does not wish his name used. The most of the points, I think, are well taken. I am not giving his matter in quotation, as the thoughts, though practically all expressed by him, are not quoted in full. I trust they may be helpful to the churches, to elders, and to others who are in the position of leadership among the churches, in adjusting their difficulties, and in securing the very best possible results in teaching the Bible. I am certain that there is a great need of attention to this matter just at the present time.

*

The "Sunday School" controversy seems about settled. Why not definitely and finally settle it and then proceed to put efficiency into a great service our Lord has commanded?

I think we are about agreed on the following:

1. Christians may meet, as such, under the control and supervision of the elders of the local church, at any hour on any day, when it does not conflict with some other act of worship or service, to teach the word of God to any and all who are willing to be taught.

2. The elders may designate one of their own number or any other member of the congregation, who may, in their judgment, be better qualified, to have direct supervision of this work.

3. Those to be taught may be divided into classes according to age and advancement.

4. Teachers may be provided by the superintendent, with the advice and approval of the elders, for each class. These teachers may be selected from among both men and women.

If I am not mistaken we are agreed on the above points. As far as I know this describes what our brethren are trying to do.

Not a "Sunday School"

The above work does not constitute a "Sunday School" as that term is ordinarily understood any more than it constitutes a "protracted meeting," or the "hour of worship" described in 1 Cor. 14.

A "Sunday School" is an independent organization. Its membership consists of church members and non-church members. This membership elects its own officers and controls its own work. It has its local, county, state, national and international organization. This organization is independent in membership and control.

The work being done by churches of Christ is in no

way identified with the "Sunday School" and does not resemble it. When we refer to our work as a "Sunday School," we may understand that we are using the term in a special and not in its ordinary sense but the general public certainly will not so understand, and will be led to understand that our work is identical with the "Sunday School." This will also be true of our children unless we are constantly calling their attention to it. Then why not cease using the term "Sunday School"? The term "Bible school" or "Bible classes" describes the work we do. They sound just as well. They do not confuse our work with the "Sunday School" organization. Some good brethren cannot in good conscience use the term "Sunday School." I cannot see that any of us are called on to make any kind of sacrifice in leaving this term entirely out of use in referring to our work.

The term, properly understood and used, is not wrong. But there is much danger that it will not be properly understood and used. If it were a necessary term, then we would have to use it and do the explaining necessary to have it properly understood. But it is not a necessary term. It causes much misunderstanding. It stands between good brethren. Can't we by common consent, quit it?

If we will do this I think we can stand together and give our thought and attention in the future to making this great service of Bible teaching efficient. In the past there has been a spirit of doubt and hesitation caused by a lack of common understanding of just what we are trying to do. This has necessarily resulted in a lack of positive, aggressive, constructive work.

Haven't we now reached a common ground on which all of us can stand, the points outlined above? Can't each local church now go about making this work strong, aggressive, constructive, efficient. God has placed on his church no greater responsibility than that of teaching his word. I think we are as nearly together now as to the what and how of our congregational teaching as we are on the what and how of our protracted meeting or preacher teaching. It seems to me that every church can now dismiss all doubt and hesitation and proceed to put into its service the best of which it is capable.

Why not dismiss the "Sunday School" idea and forget it; quit calling each other "Sunday School," and "anti-Sunday School," and put God's church to work teaching the word with all its power; each local church proceeding according to its own methods, simply seeing to it that the church as such does the work and that the work done is teaching the word, the truth?

G. H. P. S.

CHAPTER EIGHT

AN OPEN LETTER TO BROTHER SHOWALTER

Dear Brother Showalter:

I find among our brethren so much interest in the recent controversy between us and so much misunderstanding concerning some things that were written that I desire to say a little more about it. Brother Tant says in the Firm Foundation that Showalter and Clark are agreed. Tant means that Clark has given up his former position against the Sunday School. Other preachers are reporting the same thing wherever they go. All this is done in the face of my detailed objections to any kind of Sunday School that I have ever seen. You, Brother Showalter applied my concessions in such a way as to place me in a false light before your readers. For example, in your last reply to me, you say that I admit "Bible schools are authorized by the New Testament." Then you leave the reader to suppose that I have endorsed your so-called Sunday morning "Bible schools." If you or any other representative man among us will affirm the proposition I have just quoted, I will deny it. Of course, by the term "Bible school," I mean what is commonly called among us "Sunday Schools." The difference between what I believe and what you say I believe is exactly the same as the difference between the affirmative and the negative sides of a proposition. Can the reader see this? In my former articles I tried to get down to the real issue. To do this, I tried to distinguish between what might be done and what is

being done. But you persist in torturing my statements into the support of a thing I have always opposed. But I am nothing, the cause at stake is everything.

I entered the controversy with you hoping thereby to reach ground on this question, upon which all could agree, and thereby be able to avert a threatened open division. I thought, Brother Showalter, that you and I, by virtue of our relationship to the brotherhood and our personal regard for each other, might be able to agree upon and advocate some plan that would be acceptable to both sides of the unhappy controversy now dividing congregations all over the country. But when you say that the so-called "Bible school" (or Sunday School) is under the jurisdiction of the elders, you destroy all my hopes of reconciliation. Paul plainly forbids a woman's teaching in the church (1 Cor. 14). If your Bible school is under the elders it is in the church. If a woman teaches in it, she violates God's positive law. There is no way around this conclusion. Hence, brethren who believe the Bible and at the same time consider the Sunday School under the elders of the church, can never accept your position. As certainly as we live, Brother Showalter, your position, advocated by the preachers among us, will bring another open division. Already it is upon us. Churches are being torn asunder, where unity and peace should prevail. Who is responsible? This question was asked thousands of times when the music controversy was on, some twenty-five years ago.

The denominations of the country are in a great stir. Internal troubles threaten the utter disruption of some of the strongest of them. If we would quit our

foolishness, lay aside our humanisms in religion, most of which we borrowed from our neighbors, advocate the principles for which the fathers of the Restoration stood, and present a united opposition to errors in religion, we could accomplish the greatest achievements for God since the days of the apostles. But will we do it? No. There is too much carnality among us, too many preachers who are anxious to win notoriety and lucrative positions for themselves, too much disposition among our leaders to imitate other people and keep up with the procession. I predict, and I sincerely deplore it, that in a short time this Sunday School issue will make the one body of our great brotherhood two. When we consider it aright, there is really no reason for such result. How easy it would be to drop the thing that is causing the trouble, let all the teaching on the Lord's day be done in the assembly, taking care not to violate God's law anywhere! All the good accomplished by the Sunday School can be easily done in the church assembly. The children and sinners can attend this meeting as well as any other, and all can be tught together by the most competent teachers present. This arrangement would settle this unfortunate controversy among us, and make of us a united and strong power for God's truth. Why can we not be satisfied with God's way and word?

N. L. CLARK.

BROTHER SHOWALTER'S SIXTH REPLICATION

The chief reason why most religious discussions fail to result in much good is that the real point at issue is obscured. Those who are of the contrary part, mag-

nify supposed defects in an opponent's position and often allege against him what he does not believe, endorse or defend. For this very reason I was careful, when Brother Clark joined issue with me to learn, by inquiry of him, what his position really is. I have read so much harsh criticism of the brethren, on the part of many who cry out "Sunday School," without defining what they mean by the term, that I wanted to know the sense in which Brother Clark uses the term. I am just as far from endorsing the organizations of men among the sectarians known as Sunday Schools as Brother Clark. But I do maintain that the mere fact that these same denominational churches try to teach the Bible in the wrong way, should not argue against our teaching it in any right way, and I have always understood and taught that the class system of teaching is scriptural, and therefore, right. For this reason, I asked Brother Clark certain questions in order to get his position on this very point, and he agreed that my position is correct. Now I feel that if it is scriptural and right it ought to be done, and Brother Clark must certainly say, amen. The real difference then, seems to be that I am doing and encouraging others to do the thing that Brother Clark and I agree is right on this subject, but Brother Clark is not. Who ever hears of Brother N. L. Clark's teaching a Bible class on Sunday or encouraging others to do so? I understand that he approved it and engaged in it years ago at Gunter, but quit. Why, if it is scriptural and all right?

Brother Clark refers to my statement in regard to the elders. I said that the elders are supervisors or overseers over all the religious activities of the mem-

bers of their respective congregations. Will Brother Clark deny this? I am really amazed at the position he seems to take here. If I understand him he seems to teach that the sole business of the elders is to supervise the members when assembled for worship on the Lord's day. What do they then do, Brother Clark? resign until next Lord's day meeting? Or, do the members then then all resign for a week so that they may do what is scriptural and right to be done, but in connection with which the elders can have no authority or voice whatever? I still say that it is not only the privilege but the duty of the eldership to look after the spiritual welfare of the members on all the days of week, and a member does not become exempt from such supervision if he preach a sermon, teach a class or publish a paper. The elders are to serve every day in the week, and all of each day, and they are not authorized by the Scriptures to quit every Lord's day as soon as the worship is over, only to return again to their post of duty a week later, when the church meets for worship. Brother Clark leaves with us the impression that he thinks elders must not have anything to do with anything where women are not kept silent, therefore the elders must relinquish their supervision over the flock if the women teach classes. The elders must herd the women off and see that they are silent during the time the church is "come together in one place," and, serve as shepherds over the flock, at least the flock of women and others who are disposed to do something in the great work of soul-saving, if they engage in class teaching (a thing Brother Clark acknowledges to be Scriptural). What are these women, anyhow, Brother Clark, goats? Poor things, the elders

are not to shepherd them, except at the Lord's day worship, and then it is only a matter of seeing that they keep silent and worship; and let the men do all the talking. In all seriousness, if they are exempt from the supervision of the elders while they are teaching classes, it must follow that this exemption holds at other times with the one exception—the meeting of the whole church. Surely the elders have little to do—much less than I have heretofore understood.

But Brother Clark's logic is of the most amazing sort: "If your Bible school is under the elders, it is in the church. If a woman teaches in it, she violates God's positive law. There is no way around this conclusion." Then, Brother Clark believes that in order to teach a Bible class, you have to quit the church. But he admits that it is Scriptural and right to teach Bible classes. Then he has them in the church and out from day to day, and from week to week. Suppose they do some meanness while they are out of the church and the elders undertake to call them to account for it. All that they would have to do would be to say that the elders have no supervision over them then, that they were not "in the church"; and they would quote Brother Clark to prove it. They "go in and out and find pasture." Now we have an interpretation of this passage, I suppose, in the church and out for "pasture."

It is true there is carnality in many of the churches, and many other things need correcting, and I am willing and ready for the heartiest co-operation with all true Christians to assist in checking it, but you attribute too much merit to your contention when you suppose that it will be a means of causing a general divi-

sion. There is nothing in the contention and it will not stand. Of course, there will be insignificant defections of good meaning, but misguided people, who will pull out to start little factions. This has always been. There has never been a time since the days of Paul, the great apostle, that there have not been factious spirits, schismatics. Such spirits usually claim to be far more loyal than the rest—in fact, the "only loyal ones." A bunch like this started up in a Texas city some time ago. They built a house and put in the deed that there should never be any "class teaching" in the building. They have played out and quit, or gone and since I started this article, I have received from a member of the church a letter making inquiry as to what to do with or in reference to the property. A few Christians live there who would like to worship and work for the Lord. The sister says: "I think most of all, if not quite all, are in favor of the Bible class and if we cannot do anything in regard to the deed, would you advise us to quit this church and rent other quarters." She adds: "We do not want a modern Sunday school, but we do want to teach the young people and children the Scriptures." Now Brother Clark admits that such class teaching is Scriptural. The brethren who had the property deeded in that way are great admirers of Brother Clark, and I am certain, thought they were doing just what he would endorse. Why does he not come out in the open and tell his readers just what kind of "class teaching" by both men and women on the Lord's day, he does endorse. He has admitted that such teaching is Scriptural. I dare say that most of the readers of the "Apostolic Way," think that any kind of class teaching on the

Lord's day with both men and women as teachers is sinful and wrong and one cannot be "loyal" and do that way. And their leaders in that paper have led them so to think.

Brother Clark concludes with the suggestion that when properly considered, there is really no cause for division, and with this I heartily agree. But he proposes as a remedy: "Let all teaching on the Lord's day be done in the assembly." But why do it all in the assembly, since Brother Clark admits the Scripturalness of doing class teaching all the rest of the day, if the brethren and sisters desire to do it? I have never heard, it seems to me, a requirement so arbitrary. Where, in all the writings of inspired men can be found the suggestion that the "assembly" on the Lord's day is the only place where children and sinners can be taught. There is something radically new in such teaching. The assembly of the saints on the Lord's day is for worship, and the very idea that this should be made the chief place for teaching sinners and children, in fact, the only place and time on the Lord's day not only has not one hint of authority in all the writings of the apostles, but it is perfectly absurd and ridiculous on the very face of it. Of course, Brother Clark cannot pull the churches into such an arbitrary and unscriptural scheme. Now, if disruption of some churches is the result of the contention of some who push into the body of Christ such a strange notion, such a new and unheard of idea as this, who is responsible? It is the same old story. He who drives in the wedge splits the log.

As Brother Clark's letter constitutes a criticism of my "remarks" in our issue of July 19, I am reprinting

below the article, so that all may judge as to the pertinency of his strictures. I am delighted to assist Brother Clark, in any way I can consistently, to secure and maintain among the churches of Christ, that unity, peace and love which is so precious in the sight of God.

G. H. P. S.

I publish the above effort for the reason that I am perfectly willing for Brother Clark to make himself understood by our readers, if he can possibly do so. If he has not expressed himself fully and plainly in the five articles he has written it is certainly the fault of no one but himself. If he has not set forth his exact position on the point at issue, it must be from his inability to do so. But Brother Clark is a man of no mean ability, and, on most questions, finds no difficulty in the expression of his views with a clearness that makes them intelligible to all. By his confusion in this particular instance the patient reader is left to judge. Brother Clark thinks it needful that he explain again, because Brother Showalter persists in avoiding the real issue. If I have done this thing it seems that my gifted respondent would have set forth the "real issue" in terms that are clear and intelligible, to my shame and humiliation before our readers—unless, perchance, the poverty of the English language stands as an effectual barrier. He is good in English and can certainly tell us in what an issue consists, and especially a "real issue," unless said "real issue" turns out after all to be such a shadowy, indistinct phantom as to defy approach and elude detection or discovery. You might shoot all day at the cattle and horses and trees and water fowl so vivid to the beholder in the optical illusion of the mirage on the western prairies and hit nothing. All day long the spent balls would fall harmlessly on the wide expanse of the extended plain. Hunters in looking for wild cats have been known to find them, and shoot, and shoot, and shoot, and point out the terrible appearance of the ferocious game to their fellow hunters, but when all approached nothing appeared but some harmless mossy stump or log or jutting rock. I really believe that Brother Clark would do well to put on his spy glasses and very closely examine

his wild cat before he fires so many ineffectual shots into an unoffending mountain slope. Showalter has not "kept it in the background," but Clark fails to bring it forward. It still remains in his custody, and he has not been hampered or hindered in any way. Brother Clark, maybe the "background," where this "real issue" reposes is beyond the distant horizon at a point vastly remote from mortal vision and forever safe from the perils of logical assault.

If there is any issue at all, it is on the question of teaching the word of God in classes. In my article on "Law and Custom," I referred to an issue that has arisen in some localities in regard to class teaching, the custom of teaching in classes prevailing in some localities but not prevailing in others. It was shown that a mere matter of custom should not be made the law; because I may not participate in class teaching I have no right to oppose the one who does, unless the law of God is against it, and the law of God is not against it. Upon the exchange of some questions and answers with Brother Clark, it transpired that he held nothing whatever against my contention. He seemed apprehensive of some "tendencies" and pointed out that the Bible school must not interfere with the Lord's day worship. But I do not contend for it to interfere with the Lord's day worship. It will be recalled that in the following fundamental points there was agreement.

1. Christians may teach Bible classes.
2. Christian women as well as men may teach Bible classes.
3. Bible classes are Scriptural.
4. Bible schools are authorized by the New Testament.
5. Bible schools may Scripturally convene on the Lord's day, or any other day of the week.
6. A Bible school usually composed of both church members and non-church members, is not to be confused with the assembly as such, composed of those only who are members of the church.
7. A meeting of the Bible school for the study and teaching of the Bible, must not be merged into, mixed with, or interfere with the meeting of the saints for worship on the first day of the week.

8. Women, though permitted to teach classes in a Bible school on the Lord's day are not permitted to teach in the "assembly" when the saints meet for worship.

9. The meeting of the saints "to break bread" (Acts 20:7) on the first day of the week is a divine appointment.

10. Contribution, prayers, exhortation and teaching are other items to be observed when the saints meet for worship on the first day of the week.

11. The matters of worship in 9 and 10 being matters of primary concern to Christians only, must all be of an order that would make for God's glory and for the edifying of believers. They are engagements not intended primarily for the instruction of aliens.

12. In connection with 11 it follows that the teaching, exhortations, talks of whatever nature, should be so prepared and designed as to reach and affect believers rather than aliens. The meeting is for worship. It is a time for religious devotions, for the spiritual exercise of the household of God. At this point, some congregations may not discriminate as carefully as they should. I really think that, just here is one of Brother Clark's chief troubles or grounds for criticism, and I feel sure that if he will direct the energies of his splendid ability with tongue and pen to this point he will find a well meaning and responsive brotherhood not only ready and willing but anxious to hear and make improvement.

13. Elders are not the only ones authorized to teach at the meeting of the saints on the Lord's day. They should, however, exercise a supervision over all that is done by the flock, not only at the meeting for worship but at other times. They should be "apt to teach" and this aptness they should cultivate.

14. I suppose that we are fully agreed that the meeting of the assembly for worship on the first day of the week is not for "preaching," the term here being employed to designate matter of special address to unbelievers or aliens. That aliens, however, might be in attendance and might be affected by what is done or said at such a meeting appears clear from Paul's language in First Corinthians 14:23-25.

I do not understand that a congregation is granted from the Lord an exemption from the supervision of the elders when they

are teaching a Bible school. It is the business of the elders to have a supervision over all their religious work.

Brother Clark this time is very nicely inquisitive about the exact manner of procedure in the Lord's day Bible school at Austin. He is rather persistent in calling it Sunday School or rather "S. S.," though for what reason I know not, since such designation is neither acceptable to him nor pleasing to me. Is it to arouse prejudice? He wants to know about a superintendent and about whether the work is under the supervision of the elders or bishops of our congregation. The elders must assuredly have supervision over all religious work done by the membership of the congregation. One of the requirements of a bishop is that he understand and hold fast the sound doctrine and be able to convince the gainsayer. The word episcopos rendered "bishop" means a "supervisor," an "overseer." Certainly the bishops at Austin are overseers or supervisors of all the religious activities of the church, and particularly so in the matter of teaching, whether in a Bible school, protracted meeting, or publishing a paper, each of which Brother Clark approves.

Brother Clark's number "2" sets forth nothing new. He asks why designate it a "Sunday school" (a thing I do not do); then why I do not protest its use (a thing I have repeatedly done). He thinks the "Sunday school" is on a level with "Campbellite," and that every objection against this latter term may be logically used against the former. Not every one, perhaps, Brother Clark. The word "Campbellite" means a follower of Campbell. Surely the word "school" is not objectionable. And even the word "Sunday" does not necessitate the idea of following the leadership of some uninspired man. I need not pause here to recite again my objection to the term "Sunday school." But a school may of right be called a school, and a school where the Bible is taught may appropriately be called a Bible school. I prefer for several reasons, "Bible schools" and "protracted meetings" rather than "Sunday schools" and "revival meetings."

Brother Clark once said something of a debate. So far as a debate, formal or informal, is concerned, Brother Clark has already been doing his best in an "informal" effort, and as to a formal debate it would be necessary for him to deny some proposition that I affirm or else affirm a proposition that I could consistently deny before there could be a debate of this kind.

He offered to follow and review my writing if I would defend the practices of the churches of Christ. But Brother Clark certainly knows that I am not logically in the affirmative here. Brother Clark concedes my contention that a Bible school is all right. But he complains of the Bible schools and says they interfere with the worship. To establish this proposition, is his labor and not mine. His is the *onus probandi*; and how well he has succeeded in the efforts he has made, our readers must judge.

Brother Clark in seeking to tell us what he is opposing, or what proposition he will deny, tells us that two methods obtain among the churches, one where they have "preaching" and one where they do not have "preaching." He approves the songs and the prayers; also the Bible classes if conducted before the worship. Then the only real opposition he registers is against the brother who "waits on the table," as he expresses it, making the same set remarks the audience has heard for years, or in the other instance 'waits on the table,' usually reminding the auditors that they have been there long enough." But Brother Clark, is that really the proposition that you expect me to affirm? Have I advocated that a brother should make the same "set remarks" at the table each Lord's day; "remarks" the auditors have heard for years? I could not affirm this in order to find something you can deny. I feel sorry for the poor brother who is ignorant and who makes a feeble, failing effort at the Lord's table. In fact I feel sorry for everybody who does not know any more than Brother Clark and I know. We do not know any too much. Brother Clark here fails to locate the "real issue," for he and I agree as to the impropriety of a brother's making the same stale, trite "set remarks" each time at the Lord's table. They usually do this where they are poorly taught, are opposed to Bible classes and "preaching," or teaching.

I desire that peace, harmony and good will prevail among the people of God. I have seen no cause for division over the "Sunday School question" and since this little round with Brother Clark I see less excuse for it than ever. I do not think that serious divisions are likely except for reasons other than the Bible school work. It is true that some little defections have gone out from the churches in several locations that are claiming the "Sunday School" as the cause. But my observation has been to the effect that in nearly every instance they went out for some

other reason and took up the "S. S." as a later consideration. In some instances they had already been excluded from the church for causes that had nothing to do with the "S. S." and they did not object to the Bible school before they were excluded from the fellowship. They then claim persecution and call for sympathy, and some "anti-Sunday School" preacher flies to the rescue, comforts them in their tribulations, and the separation becomes permanent.

May the cause of the Master run and be glorified through the faith and persistent activity of those who recognize the necessity of always abounding in the work of the Lord.

G. H. P. S.

CHAPTER NINE

MY SECOND OPEN LETTER TO BROTHER SHOWALTER

Dear Brother Showalter:

In the Firm Foundation of September 13th appears my brief article on the much-discussed Sunday School question, written in the form of an open letter to you. Upon this letter you offer certain comments that amaze me beyond expression. As I read and re-read what you say in a spirit of levity and fun-making about the authority of bishops of the church of Christ, I wonder how many of our readers appreciate the real meaning of what you say. Again I wonder if the Showalter that I once knew so well is really still wearing the name! One of the first lessons I ever learned about the teachings of the people with whom we are identified was, that the general church, including as members all Christians, identical in that sense with the kingdom of Christ, is one thing; and that a local church, organized with its bishops and deacons as a local church government, is quite a different thing. More than ninety times in the New Testament the word church is used in this sense. The bishops and deacons at Philippi had no authority as such in Corinth, etc. Since the distinction holds without doubt, it follows that an individual Christian may do many religious acts without regard to the authority of the bishops. Of course, if a member of the church where there is a local congregation does "some meanness" (as you put it) the public interests of the church in

that place demand that the congregations give attention to it. But you, Brother Showalter, would have the elders supervise all religious acts of the members of the church. This calls for some questions: 1. Is the publication of the Firm Foundation under the authority of the bishops at Austin? 2. Do the elders of the church at Luling oversee Sister Clarke's orphanage? 3. Is the school at Thorp Spring, or the one at Abilene or Gunter, under the supervision of the elders? If so of what elders? 4. Do the elders of the Austin church or any other, have anything whatever to do, in their official capacity, with the work of an evangelist who holds meetings wherever he pleases without constituting them? 5. Is the family worship in any Christian home in the land under the jurisdiction of the elders? 6. Are not all these things matters of religion? 7. The so-called Digressives believe in putting the management of schools, papers, even suppers, etc., under the control of the elders. I don't agree with them, do you?

In the light of my last paragraph, what becomes of your silly twaddle about the elders resigning between Sundays, about members quitting the church except when it is assembled in one place, etc.? According to your position a man could not give a penny to a beggar, or do any other act as a Christian, except by the authority of the elders! If I understand you, your conception of an elder of the church makes him a veritable pope. I should be glad to know that you do not believe what you seem to advocate on this point. For the benefit of the many readers of the Firm Foundation who do not know the distinction between the government and work of the local church and

that of the general church, I shall submit the following synopsis:

General Church	Local Church
1. Officials—Christ and the apostles.	1. Officials—Bishops and deacons.
2. Members—All Christians.	2. Members—Christians in local body.
3. Laws—Extend to all acts.	3. Laws—Extend to certain acts.
4. Admission—By F., R., C. and B.	4. Admission—By recognition of body.
5. Worship—Individual, usually private.	5. Worship—Congregational, public.
6. Members—All one.	6. Members—Men and women.
7. Exclusions—By Christ.	7. Exclusion—By the congregation.

I have presumed that any fairly informed reader of these lines knew these distinctions already. But it appears that a man of Brother Showalter's caliber doesn't know them. I have not here made an argument in support of my position, because, to me, no argument seems necessary.

Brother Showalter, you have been misinformed concerning my practice at Gunter. The little church meeting in the afternoon at the Methodist meeting-house when I went to Gunter from Lockney in 1903, had a Sunday School. In a few months the Sunday School was dropped; and I am sure that any one who was a member of that church then, will tell you that my influence put it out. It is my time to remind you, Brother Showalter, that we worked together in the Lockney church the year before I went to Gunter. We had no Sunday school then, as you know. A few of us

met on Sunday afternoons to study Bible subjects; and so strict were we then, that even in that meeting, a woman never asked a question. You remember this, I am sure. Were you at that time in favor of such "class teaching" as you now carry on in Austin? If so, I certainly misunderstood you; and I am sure that everybody else at Lockney did. Your father opposed the Sunday School till he died. We used to think you agreed with him, but I suppose we were mistaken. Be entirely candid now, Brother Showalter, and tell us: Have you changed your views since we were neighbors at Lockney in 1902? If you have not, many of us then misunderstood you. If you have, you should say so frankly, and tell us why. I once engaged actively in Sunday school, Y. M. C. A. and other similar work. At that time I was a Baptist. When I gave up Baptist religion I gave up with it all humanisms in the service of God. I am not ashamed to say that I changed. And when you or any other man convinces me that I am wrong, I shall change again.

But I have said enough for this time.

N. L. CLARK.

BROTHER SHOWALTER'S SEVENTH REPLICATION

It is clear that Brother Clark is evading the real difficulty involved in his position on the duties of the elders in the local congregation. I pointed out how ludicrous were certain phases of his contention, and he comes back by saying it is "levity." Well, he introduced it. Levity is the Latin word of lightness. It is light, Brother Clark, to argue, as you did, that

the bishops in a congregation are to exercise their duties as overseers, only when the church is assembled for worship on the first day of the week. There are innumerable difficulties involved in such a contention, some of which I have suggested in my reply to your "open letter" but none of which you have ventured even to try to remove. The elders are to feed the church of God, taking the oversight thereof. Is this oversight to cease when the worship of the assembly ceases on the first day of the week? They are to "watch for your souls," the souls of the members. I wanted Brother Clark to come forward with some good reason for his position that this should cease when the worshipping assembly breaks up on the first day of the week, only to be exercised again when another such meeting convenes. If this is not his position, I do not understand him.

This new doctrine, to my mind, is about the most novel I have yet encountered. Peter said (1 Pet. 5:2) to the elders: "Feed the flock of God." His language is evidently highly elliptical. He should have said: Feed the flock of God a little while on Sunday and then let them browse on the devil's commons the rest of the week. The later versions render it: "Shepherd the flock of God." Are they to be shepherds of the flock only a part of one day of the week? This would be the situation according to Brother Clark. If you can't answer this, name it "twaddle" and call another number.

But, to what must be the unutterable disappointment of all readers, he makes no effort to bring forward any reason whatever for this new and strange contention. True, he gives a nice little sermon out-

line on The Church Local, and the Church General. What on earth has this to do with the subject? There is no issue here—none whatever. It is the affairs of the “local church” that are under consideration. You say that in the local church the “officials” are “bishops and deacons.” Very well. Now the point under consideration, Brother Clark, is in regard to the duties of these same elders or “bishops.” Is their overseership confined to one day of the week? Till Brother Clark advanced such a notion, I had no idea that any one would so contend. I answer his seven questions as follows:

1. The publication of the Firm Foundation is the work of the publisher. His deportment as a Christian is at all times under the supervision of the elders or bishops of the local church of which he is a member. Suppose he should teach in his paper that sprinkling and pouring are baptism. Brother Clark thinks the elders would have no jurisdiction, no supervision, no authority. Just let him proceed, I suppose, unless he teaches these errors at the meeting of the assembly on the Lord’s day! Brother Clark is liable to decide that this is “levity.” Perhaps so, but it is his, not mine.

2. I don’t know.

3. Every Christian engaged in the conduct of these schools is under the supervision of the eldership of the local congregation where he holds his membership, and this supervision lasts seven days in the week. Suppose one of the instructors teaches infidelity, and another dances and frolics and does many things unbecoming to a Christian. Should the elders disregard it all because they resigned their “official” overseer-

ship at the last Lord’s day when the assembly was dismissed, the said overseership to go into operation again only when the church meets on the next Lord’s day for worship?

4. An evangelist does not sever his church relationship when he leaves his home and goes out to preach the gospel. His conduct as a Christian, and as a teacher, is subject to the supervision of the eldership where he holds his membership, the only body of men on earth that have ecclesiastical jurisdiction over him. And if he should preach the doctrines of men instead of the doctrine of Christ he should be withdrawn from as a heretic, even if the teaching is done on a week day instead of on Sunday, and out in the evangelistic field instead of at home.

5. Yes. Suppose a family should decide to erect a golden calf and worship it as family worship in their home. According to Brother Clark the elders should have nothing to say. Yes, Brother Clark, levity—lightness—that’s the right word.

6. Yes, and for this very reason the bishops should exercise their duties as shepherds of the flock.

7. No. Brother Clark seems to be mixed up in regard to details of one’s life and conduct and the matter of oversight and observation. A Christian may farm, run a school, publish a paper, or do something else as he sees fit. But as a Christian his deportment in any activity, whatever it may be, is under the oversight and observation of the bishops of the local church where he holds his membership. It is all right to give a penny to a beggar and the bishops do not object. But suppose a member gives a penny or a thousand dollars to establish a den of vice. Is it not

the duty of the elders to object? And unless a man would desist from such conduct is he worthy to be retained in the fellowship of the church? Perhaps he will call this "silly twaddle." It is much easier to do this than to answer my argument.

Brother Clark is like a bee in a tar bucket. The more he wiggles the more helpless his predicament. Brother Clark, honey bees have no business in tar buckets. They ought to be out gathering honey before the flowers fade and it is all gone. You should, by all means, abandon the defenseless position you are trying to occupy and be out saving precious souls that are going down to destruction, and encourage others to do so in Bible schools and other ways before it is too late.

Brother Clark is "amazed." Well, what of it? Lots of people have been amazed. It is no new thing for people to be amazed, nor for them to be amazed at the sound doctrine of Christ. When Paul preached at Damascus "all who heard him were amazed" (See Acts 9:21). Several times it is said the people were amazed at the teaching and the works of the Savior. People of strong convictions or of strong prejudices either are likely to be amazed at the teaching that does not accord with their views. Brother Clark is clearly in error just here, and of course is amazed at the doctrine of Christ.

There is nothing pertinent in Brother Clark's reference to the work at Lockney. He concedes that it is right to have classes on the Lord's day and for women as well as men to teach said classes. This is exactly my contention, and it matters not whether we had or did not have them at Lockney. I was at Lock-

ney as president of the school there for nearly ten years and during much of that time taught four Bible classes through the week. There was not so much apparent need under such circumstances for such classes on Lord's day. Part of the time I did teach a class on the Lord's day. But I taught and thought, then as I do now, that we have the same authority to teach such classes on the Lord's day as on any other day; and Brother Clark has agreed with me. Where is his point here? I guess this is "twaddle." I knew there was something distinguished about it, and now we have found a name. Brother Clark was at Lockney only one school term and he will recall that during that time we had a class on Sunday afternoons for Bible study. I do not recall that the impropriety of a woman's asking a question in this class was ever sprung.

It seems to me that the allusion to my father is rather small. Certainly there is no argument in it, whatever. The logic of it would seem to be this: Brother Showalter's father believed and taught certain things therefore Brother Showalter is very wrong if he does not teach the same things. Now, I never had the pleasure of meeting Brother Clark's father, but from what he has told me of him I deem that he was a lovable character. Still he died a skeptic. Should I argue that on this account Brother Clark should become an infidel, just to be like his father? This is not exactly what Brother Clark meant, but this is all the logic there is in it. Now, my father was a most devout student of the Bible during practically all of his long life and he was a man of strong convictions and strong faith. It is seldom that father and son

are more nearly perfectly agreed on religious questions than were he and I. I recall that when I was a boy he used to oppose the Sunday school, such as the sectarians had, and I do the same today, but he sent us (the children) to the Bible classes at that time taught in the Church of Christ where our family held membership, and they all called it "Sunday School." He did not teach in it himself, as he had appointments for preaching on Lord's days, and I recall that he was not in perfect accord with the Sunday School management in some particulars—one that a Presbyterian lady was one of the teachers. He did not favor this. During these years he was an elder in the congregation. During the last years of his life he wrote and spoke some against the Sunday School and I think that his views of the subject were largely mine, though perhaps not entirely so. At any rate among the last conversations I had with him on religious subjects, we discussed freely the Sunday School question, and I asked him his opinion of the class teaching we were doing in Austin, and he offered no objections.

Brother Clark was with us in a meeting in Austin several years ago, and if our Bible school met his disapproval at that time we never learned it from him. He seemed to endorse it. Brother A. Ellmore preached for us for two years and found no fault with it. My father preached for us and endorsed what we are doing.

Yes, Brother Clark, you left the Baptists because they were wrong, and you showed yourself a man in doing so. You did exactly right. Now you ought to leave this little faction that has undertaken to oppose

the teaching and study of the Bible in classes on the Lord's day. They are wrong, as well as the Baptists.

I have tried to be patient, but I really feel that Brother Clark is doing himself a great injustice. He has agreed fully to the essential particulars of my contention, and all this dodging about from one remote and impertinent thing to another equally remote in logical relation, is simply absurd. It appears to me so out of place in the splendid, good man that he is, and so far from the clear and conclusive manner that has ever been his style in the treatment of subjects where he was armed with sound logic and the Scriptures of divine truth.

I suppose this will close this informal discussion, as Brother Clark has advanced nothing new and has been fully heard. I have treated him with the utmost fairness and consideration and have published all he wrote. I believe this is his eighth article. I do not favor long, drawn-out discussions with no idea as to when they will end. This is not the function of a religious journal—certainly not of the Firm Foundation. There are too many other subjects to be considered. Had I known when Brother Clark "butted into" me that he wanted to write so many articles I would have had some understanding as to number of articles. I have not yet seen the pertinency of his assailing me on my article on "Law and Custom," since he has clearly admitted every point for which I contended in said article. However, if Brother Clark feels that I have treated him with the least degree of unfairness, let him send in another article and say all he desires to say, and let the discussion close.

I shall not permit this little discussion to lessen my high esteem for Brother Clark. He has come up through much opposition and many trials and has done no small service for the Master. He has been plain and I have, but in using plainness I have not been harsh nor discourteous, at least I have not so intended. I think that Brother Clark will modify his views some day, if not immediately, and that God will yet use him for the accomplishment of much and lasting good. He is conservative, and that is well. I appreciate that. He has observed some "tendencies" among the churches that have to him appeared alarming. Doubtless at least some of his observations are well taken, and it is important that we all be on our guard against any aberration from the simple faith. But by all means let us be urgent in doing what may be easily recognized as a Scriptural course of action in the matter of teaching the truth. What has become of the young people where Bible classes on the Lord's day and other days of the week have been abandoned? Many of them, and even children of preachers, too, have wandered far from God. I stand for Bible classes. This may not save them all but it will help—it will save some.

THAT SHOWALTER-CLARK DISCUSSION

In the Firm Foundation of September 26 the editor of this paper announces the publication in tract form of what he calls: "The Discussion of the Sunday School Question by G. H. P. Showalter and N. L. Clark."

True, we had a brief, irregular, and very incomplete discussion of certain phases of the Sunday School Question. At its conclusion, Brother Showalter proposed to bring it out in tract form, to which I objected. As he did not then publish it, I supposed he had regarded my protest and that the matter was settled. At that time I proposed to discuss the subject with him in a series of articles of definite length with a view to putting the debate into tract form. He declined. He would much rather publish a controversy in which he wrote much more matter than I did, in which we had no stated proposition, and in which I was to lead on a question involving his practice.

Now, since he has acted thus, I challenge G. H. P. Showalter to discuss with me in the Firm Foundation, in a reasonable number of articles of length agreed upon the following propositions: "The New Testament authorizes the Sunday School (or Bible School) as it is arranged and conducted by the churches of Christ in such places as Austin, Dallas, and Ft. Worth, Texas."

Six or more articles by each of us of about one thousand words each on this proposition would be

worth publishing in tract form and could be properly called a discussion of the Sunday School Question. It is now up to you, Brother Showalter, to accept this challenge or fly the field. Which will you do?

N. L. CLARK.

Several things should be considered:

1. How do I know that Brother Clark would be any better satisfied with another discussion than he was with the first?
2. This is about the first time that I ever heard of one of "our brethren" conducting a regular, religious discussion and then being ashamed to have it published.
3. The discussion has already been published in the Firm Foundation where it was read by probably no fewer than fifty thousand persons if we take the number of readers for each copy of the paper circulated according to usual estimates. Why the "protest" against printing the discussion in tract form? Brother Clark invited himself to go before some fifty thousand readers and was given all the space he asked for on the subject in an informal discussion. Did he do his best? Ought not a gospel preacher and teacher with so vast an audience to recognize the obligation to do the best that is in him? If he did not do the best he could, then would he likely do any better now? Has he learned something now that he did not know at that time?
4. Whatever the informal discussion covered, or did not cover, it is quite clear that the whole tottering cob house of those who oppose Bible classes on

the Lord's day has been hopelessly demolished. All efforts of its disconcerted admirers at re-building will look foolish and in vain to a thoughtful, patient, loyal and faithful brotherhood.

5. Another discussion covering the same ground is useless unless Brother Clark simply acknowledges his defeat and thinks he can do better this time than he did before. Has he learned something new that he now wants to tell?
6. Brother Clark has already conceded everything for which I contend. Does he want to waste time and fill space to no purpose?
7. He refers to my using more space than he used in the discussion. This was not my fault; it was his failure. If he had any more to say, why did he not say it, or write it? He was not limited in space nor in number of articles. The very idea of his being treated with the least particle or with the least degree of "unfairness" is ridiculously absurd and absurdly ridiculous. Every line he wrote was published and if he had offered more on the subject that would have been published also. Now he talks about a "discussion" with limited amount of space. Could we expect him to do any better in a limited amount of space than in an unlimited amount of space? Ah! Brother Clark, that is not your trouble.
8. No one could possibly have been treated with more consideration than was Brother Clark in the other discussion. Every article he wrote, every line, and every word was published. In my last article, I offered him further space if he felt that he had been treated with the least degree of "unfairness." He did not take it. He quit.

9. If such courteous and exceedingly generous treatment by me accorded Brother Clark is called by him "unfairness," I do not believe that it would be possible for me to conduct a discussion with him that he would call "fair."

10. Brother Clark is an editor of a paper published over in Georgia. It would certainly be "fair" for him to publish the first discussion in that paper before asking me to run his second effort in the Firm Foundation. To refuse to do this is clearly "unfair," indeed.

11. Why single out Austin, Dallas and Ft. Worth? After the discussion about them, would you then want another discussion about the practice of San Antonio, Houston and Amarillo; then another one on the Bible schools of Amarillo, Lockney, Denton and Sherman? How long would you want to keep framing propositions for a discussion? one hundred years?

12. He says I "declined" to discuss the question. Brother Clark is surely dreaming. I did no such thing. He invited himself and offered himself as a suitable man to discuss the question with me either "formally or informally" (see Showalter-Clark Discussion, page 35). Then he proceeded upon his own initiative in an informal discussion and the readers of this paper know very well whether Brother Showalter discussed the question or whether he "declined" it.

13. Brother Clark thinks he was at a disadvantage because he was in the affirmative when I ought to have been. But who put Brother Clark in the lead? Who invited him? Who solicited him? He assigned his own position. He invited himself to challenge my contention and then made a pronounced failure.

He hitched himself up in the lead and balked, and now he tries to kick out of the traces.

14. The discussion was already public property before the tract was printed. Brother Clark wrote for the press and the public eye. Suppose Clark, Tuerman, Trott, Harper or Noah Cowan had thought enough of the discussion to print it in tract form? What would they have thought of me if I had offered a stout "protest" and gotten mad? Would they not have regarded my action as an acknowledgement of defeat?

15. Such bewilderment among a lot of people I have not seen before, as is shown by all the Apostolic Way contingency. They remind me of a flock of wild geese when their lead goose has been bagged. A hunter told me that he shot the lead goose and that as the fowl came down the whole flock came swooping and tumbling and he thought in his soul he had killed the whole flock. He explained that flocks of wild geese were always headed by a "lead goose" that directed their movements, and that where it went they all went and when it fell, they all fell. It looks as if I have bagged the "lead goose." I asked Harper to print the discussion in his paper. He wrote he would see about it; then he wrote again he did not know that Clark and I had had a "debate." Blissful ignorance! They tell me that out in West Texas, Charley Watkins has told that Showalter would not publish one of Clark's articles—that everything would have been all right if the other article had been published—that Clark would have explained himself. Now "Charles," if they have reported you wrongly, speak up, and let us correct the matter. If they report you

correctly, why did you tell it? Every article Clark sent to me was published. Another old brother, a good old man, and a gospel preacher, who has headed a defection that pulled off from the church and caused division, writes me of his great surprise that Clark would admit that "classes" are right, that he pulled out from the church because he thought they were wrong and now he asks my assistance in getting himself right again—wants a little further explanation on some points. But I cannot give all the reports I have received and am receiving—their name is legion for they are many. Such a demoralized bunch, I have never before seen. Truly the "lead goose" has been bagged and the whole flock of geese has been captured.

16. Brother Clark has already had my reply in regard to his blustering challenge. (See Showalter-Clark Discussion, pages 56 and 74). Here it is, "Brother Clark once said something of a debate. So far as a debate, 'formal or informal,' is concerned, Brother Clark has already been doing his best in an 'informal' effort, and as to a 'formal' debate, it would be necessary for him to deny some proposition that I affirm or else affirm a proposition that I could consistently deny before there could be a debate of this kind. He offered to follow and review my writing if I would defend the practice of the churches of Christ. But Brother Clark certainly knows that I am not logically in the affirmative here. Brother Clark concedes my contention that a Bible school is right. But he complains of the Bible schools and says they interfere with the worship. To establish this proposition, is his labor and not mine. His is the *onus probandi*; and

how well he has succeeded in the efforts he has made, our readers must judge."—G. H. P. S.

F. F., Oct. 24, 1922, page 2.

"THAT SHOWALTER-CLARK DISCUSSION" AGAIN

The Firm Foundation of October 24 contains a brief statement from me concerning the tract entitled "The Showalter-Clark Discussion of the Sunday School Question." Brother Showalter comments at length upon this statement. Should I consult my personal feelings in the matter, I should say no more. I have lived long enough and mingled with mankind enough to learn that few people really think for themselves, that churches usually follow the lead of fashion about as closely as people do in matters of dress, and that most preachers and other people are simply going to be fashionable in church work no matter what Jesus and the apostles say about it. I have also learned by experience in debate that intelligent men who espouse any cause, no matter how erroneous, may study the question at issue from their point of view until they can with apparent sincerity argue stoutly to make themselves and others believe the grossest error. Therefore, in so far as the hope of doing most of my readers any good is concerned, I am very pessimistic. But beyond my feeling in the matter lies another consideration. This consideration is the interest of the Truth. I am under the greatest obligation to my Lord to contend for every principle of his Truth to the extent of my ability whether any

one else agrees with me or not. I know that I am on the unpopular side of this Sunday School question. In fact, many of those who oppose the Sunday School do not agree with me all the way. I am writing this article as I have written before to clear up certain matters about the tract above mentioned and to set forth what I believe to be the truth concerning the subject under consideration.

In Brother Showalter's comments upon my last article, he again forgets himself far enough to misrepresent the facts two or three times. In paragraph number six, he says, "Brother Clark has already conceded everything for which I contend." Several times in the discussion we had two years ago, he made the same claim. Brother Showalter presented a supposed case in which individual Christians, wholly without regard to any local church organization get together children, sinners, and other Christians and teach them the Bible in a way that in no wise hinders the Lord's appointment for the meeting and worship of his people. I said I could see no ground for opposing such a meeting. But I have never seen such a meeting! I am reasonably sure it is not found in the so-called loyal churches of Austin, Dallas, and Fort Worth. I believe these churches are typical of the churches involved in this discussion. This is why I asked Brother Showalter to defend the practices of these churches. Brother Showalter has made a garment to order that he thinks will meet the requirements of the Lord's law and at the same time permit us to be fashionable in our church work. He also flatters himself that he has at last succeeded in getting even Brother Clark to pass favorably on his ready-made garment. But

when he tries to make his statement fit the practice of the churches, Brother Clark and others can see all manner of misfits. Since I have so signally failed to show Brother Showalter in literal statements where he has repeatedly perverted my teachings, I offer him the foregoing figurative statement of his course. Maybe, he can understand it better.

Next, I shall call attention to his paragraph sixteen. Here, he quotes from his tract on pages 38 and 50 concerning my challenge to enter into a regular discussion with me. Aside from everything that has been said by either of us about the matter, the simple facts in the case are these: 1. I never did consider the discussion we had a fair, free, and full debate. It was a sort of irregular exchange of views concerning what constitutes the real issue in the case, concerning Brother Showalter's "supposed" case (described above), some personal matters, etc. Not a preacher among us can take the tract containing the discussion and say fairly and justly that it is really a "debate" in the proper and common sense of that term, on the Sunday School Question; 2. When Brother Showalter, some two years ago, proposed to publish these articles in tract form, I challenged him to enter into a regular and definitely-planned debate with a view to putting it, when finished, in tract form; 3. He refused then and still refuses to do this very reasonable thing. Instead of coming up to the task like a man, he raises a great dust of bluster and blow. This is rather "smart" on his part, because he knows that many of his readers will mistake this kind of thing for an argument.

I objected to his publication of the former discus-

sion in tract form for the following reasons. 1. I was satisfied that he would name it as he has a debate on the Sunday School Question, thereby making the impression on the average reader that it was a fair representation on my part of the arguments against the Sunday School, which I never designed it to be; 2. When put into tract form, the matter was closed so far as the average reader is concerned. For example, when I read a debate in book form on any question, I take for granted that both disputants have done their best to establish their respective positions concerning the issue at stake. As long as such a matter is running irregularly in the newspaper there is always the chance for either party to write again and thus continue the discussion. Of course, I always do my best on any occasion. I suppose Brother Showalter does. But in the discussion we had two years ago, I made no attempt to present a case against the Sunday School in general. I was writing about how it interfered with the worship; 3. I objected to the tract because I felt sure that preachers would do just as Brother Busby is doing, that is, distribute the tract among brethren as a genuine debate of the issue. Why cannot preachers of the gospel be fair with each other? A debate on this question was held in Texas since the discussion under consideration, between two capable brethren, which has been published in tract form. I refer to the Taylor-Cowan debate. I have not read it, but I am inclined to think that it is a far better discussion of the Sunday School question on both sides than was my tilt with Brother Showalter. Why doesn't Brother Showalter advertise the Taylor-Cowan Debate? Why doesn't Brother Bus-

by circulate it where he goes? I do not know whether these two brethren are more or less capable of debating the question than are Brother Showalter and I, but my understanding is that they entered into a regularly planned debate and made arguments pro and con covering the whole issue. This, Brother Showalter and I did not attempt to do. All of Brother Showalter's bluster about Clark's doing his best, about writing for fifty thousand readers, and about my being ashamed of my efforts, is the veriest "buncombe," and I believe he knows it. I must accuse him in this instance of "playing to the galleries," simply for effect.

I have but one object in challenging Brother Showalter for a debate, that is to give our readers our best thoughts on all parts of the issue. Had we never commenced a discussion, I should be content to leave the debating on the question to such men as Taylor, Cowan, and others who seem capable and anxious. However, since we have crossed swords over it, I feel that we should finish our task in a fair and somewhat complete way.

I have several objections to the Sunday School among which are these: 1. The New Testament churches got along without it; 2. It interferes with the Lord's plan; 3. It has been thoroughly tried and has failed to produce the desired results; 4. It opens the way to all manner of digressions in the Lord's work; 5. Instead of building up the church, it saps the very life out of it; 6. It is clearly borrowed by our brethren from the denominations; 7. It is inconsistent with our plea for a return to New Testament methods.

Finally, I ask only for fair treatment at the hands of any man. I urge all my readers to read, reflect, pray, watch for tendencies in the wrong direction, and be satisfied with the Lord's way.

N. L. CLARK.

F. F. Dec. 5, 1922, p. 4.

BROTHER CLARK'S COMPLAINTS

Before reading this article, the reader will please turn to page four and read what Brother N. L. Clark has to say on "that Showalter-Clark Discussion."

It is fair to Brother Clark to state just here that he sent the article to this office some two or three weeks ago. A casual reading of it impressed me that Brother Clark does himself such an injustice and places himself in such an unenviably awkward attitude that the kindest and most merciful treatment of him would be to keep his final failure out of the paper and consign it to the waste basket, or return it to him for revision, or, better, for destruction. I am a busy man. I have had much other matter to engage my time and till now have not given his manuscript careful reading.

Brother Clark avers that in so far as doing most of his readers any good is concerned he is "very pessimistic." I suspect that most good and faithful brethren agree with him. For my part, I judge he is undoubtedly correct. He will certainly do very precious little for the cause of Christ unless he changes his subject or gets on the right side of the question that now absorbs his attention. But I do not attribute his failure in this respect to the same cause that Brother Clark

does. I have not yet "lived long enough" to conclude that the "churches of Christ," in matters relating to the kingdom of God, "usually follow the lead of fashion about as closely as people do in matters of dress and that most preachers are simply going to be fashionable in church work no matter what Jesus and the apostles say about it." I am sorry that Brother Clark is moved to give expression to such a low estimate of and confidence in his brethren. I think Brother Clark's failure is not justly packed off on the brethren. He is himself responsible. It is the teacher and not the pupil. It is the "leader" and not those whom he would lead that has brought on this acute attack of pessimism. It is your leadership in the wrong direction that the brethren decline to recognize or follow, Brother Clark, and for my part, I think it speaks well for them.

Brother Clark is wonderfully interested now in a "regularly-planned debate." He is sick at heart because the other discussion was published; still he wrote it for publication in the columns of the Firm Foundation where its publicity was far greater than in pamphlet form. He does not think it was "fair, free, and full" and thinks "it was a sort of irregular exchange of views." My part of it was regular and I am not responsible for the irregularity of his part of the discussion, nor for the ridiculously inconsistent attitude in which he placed himself. Moreover, if giving a man all the space he asked for, and publishing every line he offered is not "fair," I confess I do not know how to treat correspondents with fairness in the public prints. But it was not "full!" Why did you not fill it "full," Brother Clark? Did your supply run short? But it or he was

not "free." Who tied you, Brother Clark? Was your pen placed under an embargo? Brother Clark was given every consideration, and I confess that I never saw a man in discussion more completely tied, hand and foot, with the power of truth. He is like a lone wolf in the mountains with his foot in a steel trap, but he walked into it himself and I see no reason to believe that he will walk any better along the same trail if given his liberty and another opportunity.

Now all his bluster about a "definitely planned debate" is idle and boastful. I am persuaded that he does not want to debate; otherwise he would have stated a proposition that involved the point at issue. He proposes the most vague and indefinite thing for a proposition, something that he knows does not cover the question under consideration. He wants me to affirm that they are scriptural in their Bible school work at Dallas, Fort Worth, and Austin. Now to defend all the brethren at Dallas, or Fort Worth would necessitate a stay there on my part for a considerable period of time and a very close observation of their work. Moreover, to defend all that disciples do at any place would be to claim perfection for them and this Brother Clark well knows is ridiculous. It is the right of brethren to teach the Bible in classes on the Lord's day that I defend and if Brother Clark did anything it was this that he challenged. Suppose I say that the Bible authorizes a gospel preacher to hold a protracted meeting. Am I thereby placed under obligation to affirm that every gospel preacher, has, at all times, acted scripturally in all he has done during every protracted meeting he has ever held? Brother Clark's challenge would amount to

just about this. I would be very far from affirming that Brother Clark has acted scripturally in all he has done in every protracted meeting he has held. I teach that baptism is for the remission of sins. Am I thereby required to affirm that every person baptized is actually forgiven? It would be necessary for me to know the hearts of all men to thus affirm. I would affirm in debate that all Christians should lead holy lives. But I would be very far from affirming that all of them are doing so. I would not affirm that the life of Brother Clark is perfect, however much I esteem him. His outburst of ungodly indignation in a private letter to me when he learned that I had published the discussion in pamphlet form indicates to me that he is below the New Testament standard in the matter of self-control. Now we will see whether Brother Clark really wants to debate. Here is my proposition: The New Testament Scriptures authorize us to teach the word of God in classes. This is what I teach and what I am willing to affirm. Will he deny? Then let him affirm: It is a damnable sin to teach the word of God in classes. This I will deny. If he will not meet these propositions, he is unwilling to face the real issue as it is represented in the brotherhood today. Brother Showalter has not declined to meet any man on any religious subject in debate. But Brother Showlater will have something to do with what propositions he affirms or denies. Brother Clark is perfectly willing to debate if he can tell me just what to affirm. But I know quite well what to affirm and shall have something to say on this myself before any debate begins in which I am to play a part. Brother Clark's proposition does not really approach

the issue. It is not a question of what some local congregation is doing; it is as to what the New Testament authorizes done. When we have determined this we will be in position to teach the churches what to do. Brother Clark, in his bewilderment, has the cart before the horse.

"Dead and Don't Know It"

The No-Bible School element is certainly hard pressed. They have nearly as many views as to what the real issue is as there are individuals among them. As I now recall their contentions they are pulling at their load in six different directions. No wonder the load itself stays "in status quo" like Kuropatkin's army. They don't get anywhere and everybody knows why but themselves—they don't know. Only one thing that they have apparently agreed on and that is that it is a damnable sin to teach the Bible in classes on the Lord's day and they will not affirm this in debate. On such doctrine, their souls have delighted to feast. Now, Brother Clark has kicked this pan of gravy over and into the fire and just what they are to do next no mortal can foretell. They remind me of the Irishman's turtle with its head cut off—They are "dead and don't know it."

Lost the Issue and Cannot Find It

This No-Bible School element is a new thing in the churches of Christ. Leading brethren in the churches have for a long time opposed the adoption in our work of the sectarian Sunday School with its religious organization apart from the church, with

its conventions, its delegates, its officialism, its national and international affiliations, connections and responsibilities. I have myself spoken and written against this. But so far from opposing the good work of teaching the Bible we have urged that Christians, as such, be diligent to teach the Bible in classes as well as in other ways. Now we are confronted by an opposition to this very kind of work, and among those who present themselves in opposition few seem to have the same idea or to stand for any one thing. Brother Clark states in his article that many of them do not agree with him "all the way." That is correct. And if any reader knows of any two of them "agreed all the way" I would like to know who they are; I want to congratulate them. They don't know what they stand for nor what the issue is between themselves and the other brethren, but it is very clear to others that as a little defection from the church they are making a miserable failure and in fact are already in the vanishing stage.

Found the Issue and Ashamed of It

I have just received a copy of the "Apostolic Way" for November. This is what might be termed the "official organ" of the "No-Bible School" defection. On the front page, Brother H. C. Harper quotes my request made of him recently to publish the Showalter-Clark Discussion in the Apostolic Way, and he quotes my language: "I still think that it should be published in the Apostolic Way." Then he surprises all reasonable people by his comment: "The truth is, that this matter was in no sense a discussion

of the Sunday school (or Bible School, as Showalter calls it) question. What was it? The matter, when carefully read, will show that it was a search for the question. And * * * the question was found." He does not think it a "discussion." Ah! No. Well, what was it? I wonder if Brother Harper would recognize a "discussion," if he should meet one coming down the road. I believe he once taught school. Now, he does not know what a "discussion" is. Let him take the dictionary and look at the word. No wonder he touches things modestly. Since the "discussion" they all seem disposed to deal delicately with the subject. But Brother Harper is blissfully unaware of how his own rope has tied him hard and fast, hand and foot. He says that the Showalter-Clark "discussion" was a "search" for the question and admits that we found it. To be sure, the real issue was found. Brother Clark realized it and now you say you do. Then, in heaven's name, why do you not publish it in your paper? Are you ashamed of it? Are you afraid to let your readers see it? Found the issue and won't let his readers see it! You see the issue; Brother Clark sees the issue; everybody who read that "search" sees the issue. Yet you decline to let your readers behold the darling issue! Say, Brother Harper, I will give you one hundred dollars in money if you will publish that discussion in the Apostolic Way. You need not call it a "discussion"; just call it a "search"—you might head it, "Searched For and Found at Last." Now if you want a hundred dollars, easily earned, just say so. I'll pay it if I have to take up a collection. Let

those believe who can that Brother N. L. Clark wrote seven articles trying to tell what the question was he wanted to discuss, and now does not want anybody to see it. Ah! brethren, don't trifle with the matter. It is the merciless analysis of these same seven articles in the same connection that gives all the No-Bible School Advocates the heart ache every time they read it.

Inexcusable Inaccuracies

I fail to understand Brother Clark's manner of dealing with facts and facing issues.

1. He refers again and again to our discussion in this paper as being "some two years ago." As a matter of fact his first article appeared in May, 1921 and the last in October, 1921, scarcely more than a year ago. The discussion was put in pamphlet form one year later and not "two years" later.

2. He says in regard to the discussion: "At its conclusion, Brother Showalter proposed to bring it out in tract form to which I objected" (See F. F., October 24, 1922). This is another blunder. The suggestion to put the discussion in tract form was published in June, 1921 when the discussion was scarcely more than half done. (It closed in October, 1921.) The proposition to put the discussion in tract form was not at the "conclusion" but just about the middle of the discussion.

3. But his memory lapses again when he says that "Brother Showalter proposed it." If he will turn to the records he will find that others "proposed" it and that from the standpoint of the pub-

lisher, I merely stated that the Firm Foundation would publish the pamphlet if there was sufficient demand for it. There seemed to be sufficient demand for it and it was published. Two brethren from different localities wrote me urging that it be printed, offering (each of them) to handle five hundred copies. A number of others offered to use as many as a hundred each. Many wrote the office for the files of the issues containing the discussion and we were unable to supply them. The demand justified the printing of the pamphlet—that's all. It was the brotherhood that insisted, and not Showalter. I fail to see why Brother Clark should object since it cost him nothing. He was not called upon to meet half the expense, a thing that might reasonably be regarded as "fair."

4. In a similar lawless treatment of facts he goes after me pretty hard for saying that he conceded my whole contention. I refer the reader to the tract itself as a reply. My contention was for Bible classes on any day of the week including Sunday, at any convenient time, not to interfere with the time for worship on the Lord's day, for men or women either to teach, etc., to all of which Brother Clark agreed. (See the pamphlet itself, pp. 53-54 and elsewhere.)

Why He Objects to Publication of the Pamphlet

Brother Clark ought certainly to be awarded a prize for ingenuity in his endeavor to try to find a reason for objecting to publishing the pamphlet. In addition to his effort in our issue of October 24, he now sets out three reasons:

1. He never did consider the discussion "fair, full and free"; it was an "irregular exchange of views" etc. If giving a man all the space he asked for, publishing every line he wrote in the most conspicuous place in the paper does not appear "fair, full and free" to Brother Clark, there is no need to try further to make anything in print appear that way to him. He might want more space or another discussion for some other reason but I certainly see no pertinency in calling for it on the ground of a want of fairness, fullness or freedom, in the other discussion.

2. His second objection is that when he reads a debate in tract form he supposes each disputant has done his best to establish his contention and that most people are satisfied to let the issue be closed with that. Then he declares he did his best! Well, well! If there were anything at all in such an objection, it would be as much against me and to my loss as against him. But he forgets this.

3. But another objection in his number one is that I would publish and call it a "debate." Well, this objection is null and void, for the reason that I did not call it a "debate." I called it a "discussion." You may call it anything you wish, Brother Clark. Do as Brother Harper has done, call it a "search."

4. But he thinks the brethren will circulate it as a debate. If that is a damage to him, it would be to me also. Really and truly, Brother Clark, is there not some other reason you have that is being kept very secret, that you have not yet brought out and never will bring forward? If I had occupied the

position you took and had written as you did, I would be ashamed to circulate it too.

Brother Clark declares there is a debate in circulation in tract form, namely, a debate between Brethren Taylor and Cowan which he has never seen and which he imagines "is far better" than this one, and wants to know why I don't advertise it. Well, one reason is, I did not know such a debate was in print. Is Brother Cowan trying to keep it hid out and away from the people, just as you are with the "Showalter-Clark Discussion"?

Brother Clark closes by setting forth seven of his "several objections" to the "Sunday School," and I presume these are his strongest ones. Of course, if some of the brethren should want these printed in tract form, they would arouse his ire, but here they are for the paper.

1. "The New Testament churches got along without them." Brother Clark could have added, "and they got along without religious newspapers." Does this prove them wrong?

2. "It interferes with the Lord's plan." Not necessarily so, at all. If by "the Lord's plan" he refers to "the Lord's day worship" for the saints I have stated that I would endorse no procedure that would do this.

3. "Thoroughly tried and failed to produce desired results." If "desired results" are to teach the people the truth and lead them to obey the gospel of Christ, Brother Clark would have a hard time proving this. All people are not converted of course. What about the children and even preachers' children, too, of many who oppose Bible school on the Lord's day?

Are they all Christians, pious, good, and godly? Do they all respect, honor and obey their fathers and mothers? Think a moment here, before comparing "results" of attending and not attending Bible school on the Lord's day. Almost without exception there is growth in those congregations that faithfully teach the Bible in Bible schools on the Lord's day. Were the nine churches of Christ in Ft. Worth and the seven in Dallas built with or without Bible school on the Lord's day?

4. "Opens the way for all manner of digression in the Lord's work." If the Lord authorizes us to teach Bible classes (and Brother Clark admits that he does) I do not see how doing what the Lord requires done, and in a way the Lord authorizes it done, opens the way for "digression."

5. "Instead of building up the church it saps the very life out of it." Doing the Lord's will does not sap the life out of the church. Brother Clark admits that it is the Lord's will to teach Bible classes on the Lord's day. Alas! for Brother Clark! Such a puny effort!

6. "Borrowed from the denominations." Not at all, Brother Clark. You have already admitted that it comes directly from the apostles—the kind of work I am defending. I asked you if "teach" in the great commission bars teaching and you admitted that it does not, and that it allows both men and women to teach Bible classes on the Lord's day.

7. "Inconsistent with our plea for a return to the New Testament." It is entirely consistent with "our plea" to teach the Bible in classes on the Lord's day, as it is authorized by Christ and his inspired apos-

ties. If not, "our plea" should be subjected to a revision; or better, abandon it and adopt God's "plea" to "teach" and save the lost.

Conditions for Another Discussion

1. Let Brother Clark see to it that the other discussion is published in the Apostolic Way, the No-Bible school organ. I have given all the publicity so far; it is time for Brother Clark to offer at least a little space. I am sure he will say this is "fair." The infrequent issue and modest mailing list of the said "Apostolic Way" would still leave me giving most of the publicity. When people debate they should be willing to share equally the burden and expense of publicity.

2. Brother Clark says that he does not make the Sunday School a test of fellowship, while Brother Cowan maintains that it should be made a test of fellowship. I must ask that they first hold a debate and eliminate this very grave difference before I condescend to waste time on a defection that does not agree among themselves.

3. I shall expect Brother Clark to hold a debate also with Dr. Trott and settle the class question. Dr. Trott is against the classes. Brother Clark is in favor of them.

4. When the foregoing conditions have been complied with, Brother Clark must be content to let me state my proposition in terms that express my sentiments. To enter a discussion of such a proposition as he proposes means to undertake a discussion that is not of general interest. The brethren in Oklahoma or Missouri are interested to know a scriptural course

of procedure for themselves. And a discussion of this nature should benefit them and all others. They are not particularly or directly concerned about the details of the work and worship of some congregation at Dallas or Lockney (Texas). They want to know what the Bible teaches. A proposition that has to do with the details of how congregations in the woods of Arkansas, or the swamps of Mississippi, or, forsooth, in Dallas, or Ft. Worth, or Austin, carry on a protracted meeting or teach the Bible, is not of special interest to them. They want to know the teaching of the New Testament as it may apply to churches of Christ in general. I am really surprised that Brother Clark would think of trying to discuss the subject in any other way, and his proposed question for debate indicates either that he has a very poor understanding of the point at issue, or it is simply a dodge and a subterfuge.

May the dear Lord in divine compassion lead and direct us all to a greater knowledge of the truth and to an unwavering confidence in his holy word.

—G. H. P. S.

F. F., December 5, 1922, pp. 2, 3.

ALL CHRISTIANS SHOULD TEACH PEOPLE THE WORD OF GOD

Debates—Good, Bad and Indifferent

Christ was engaged almost continually in debates with the religious leaders of his time. Paul and all of the apostles followed the example of the Savior. They met and defeated the claims of the Pagan philosophers and false religionists. They continued their debates among false brethren. They regarded it as important to correct errors that arise in the church. The leaders in the churches of Christ—those who have the strongest faith and greatest loyalty to the cause of the Christ—these have always been disposed to contend earnestly for the faith.

Last week I had the pleasure of attending a debate at Mahomet in Burnet county, Texas. J. D. Tant and J. N. Cowan were the disputants, the writer acting as moderator for Brother Tant. The Lord's day Bible school as it is usually conducted by the churches of Christ was the subject under discussion. Each disputant affirmed a proposition involving his practice while the other denied. Brother Cowan is a ready speaker and usually pleases if he does not entirely satisfy those who are already on his side of the question. The procedure of the disputants in carrying on the debate did not involve a very careful definition of terms or a clear analysis of the propositions under discussion. However many interesting and a few enlightening things were brought forward for the consideration of the people who were in attendance.

Brother Tant sustained his reputation for presenting logical and Scriptural argument that could not be overthrown. Brother Cowan endeavored to make his proposition clear to all and to support it with the Scriptures. His inability to defend his favorite hobby must have been apparent to any and all who listened without any bias or prejudice. I shall not consume space here to set forth in detail arguments of either of the speakers; however I would like to make some observations on the issues involved between these two brethren and the respective points of view which they represent. Brother Tant made contention in favor of the Lord's day Bible schools upon the well known command of the Savior and of the apostles to teach people—all people—and observed that "no method of teaching was specified," and therefore any practical method is authorized by the Savior and his apostles. On the other hand Brother Cowan lays down as his predicate that whatsoever in our religious practice is "not after the traditions" received from the apostles is not of God and should be discarded; also that we should withdraw ourselves from those who practice such things. Here is the passage he relies on in the support of his position.

"Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which ye received of us" (2 Thess. 3:6).

So far as the above statement of Paul is concerned, there is no difference among us. We are all agreed that this requirement of Paul should be observed. There is, in reality, a difference only in the method

of procedure in carrying out the requirement. Brother Cowan's contention is that the Lord's day Bible school as it is conducted by the churches of Christ is not after the "traditions" of the apostles, simply because such exact procedure was not detailed by the apostles. His inconsistency appears, however, in the fact that he is perfectly willing to write for religious periodicals which was not a method detailed by the apostles and also to hold protracted meetings and to follow numerous methods that are not specifically required anywhere in the writings of the apostles. To make the position of Brother Cowan clearer, he pointed out time and again that a Bible school or Sunday school is not the church at work, because those engaged in the study are not all members of the church. Some of them are members and some of them are not members. He fails to see that the very same objection may be urged against his protracted meetings that he holds from place to place where some are members, some are backsliders, and some are not members of the church at all. The same is true of any tracts, books, and periodicals through which he may endeavor to teach and of many other methods of teaching that are being used. The burden of proof then rests upon Brother Cowan and all of his followers to show that any method of teaching is barred by the Scriptures and why. We have contended against the organization of societies separate and apart from the church, but the Bible schools directed by the churches of Christ are not such organizations. If any are such they should change. They are simply a systematic method of doing what Christ and the apostles required.

The real point at issue, then, must be: What is included and what is excluded in the term "traditions which they received of us"? All that the apostles delivered to men to observe and keep must be included—nothing should be left out—and all that these inspired men left out should be excluded—nothing from that source should be brought in—nothing. The only thing that troubles the "anti-Sunday school" brethren in this special connection is the manner of teaching. Now they admit that teaching is one of the "traditions" given us by Paul and the other apostles. So teaching the Bible should not be excluded—it is one of the traditions given us by Paul and the other apostles. In fact such teaching should not be neglected—it should be done in order that people may learn the right ways of the Lord—this the opposers of Bible schools freely admit.

But they oppose Bible schools on the Lord's day—as to that on any other day. They tell us the Bible school is not the church because it consists of people—some of whom are members and some of whom are not. But so also is the ordinary protracted meeting. It is simply a method of teaching the people. Brother J. N. Cowan teaches in this way. Why? Certainly not because Paul or any other apostle detailed this special method. They did not. But to invite a promiscuous attendance of people—saved and unsaved—out to hear the truth in a series of Bible subjects considered by a gospel preacher is one method of doing what Paul authorized and required in the "traditions" delivered to Christians. The very same thing is done when loyal churches of Christ teach the Bible in a Lord's day Bible school—or by any other method

as to that. The method of the teaching is not one of the "traditions." In the very nature of the case it could not be. Any method will do and is acceptable unless distinctly barred by the scripture. The class method is not so barred. Neither is the Bible school as generally conducted by churches of Christ a distinct religious organization different from the church. If so the protracted meeting is also. True, one speaks at a time in the protracted meeting, but one speaks at a time—and only one at a time—to each class or group in the Bible school. A preacher, in holding a meeting, takes the liberty to have as many and as few as he may wish in the large group he is teaching—others should have the same liberty and be accorded the same privilege. Who is a preacher? Certainly not a priest nor a high church functionary of some sort with qualities and commissions that are superhuman. He is just a man—a simple Christian who wants to teach the people the truth of heaven—if he is a true disciple of the Lord—and other Christians have the same rights and privileges. No Christian should be restrained from teaching. They should be encouraged the rather and helped in so doing. There is little enough being done in this great work at best. No one should be restrained on the account of the method used, since no limitation is placed on methods that might be employed. One can write well, but is not an effective speaker. He wants to write so that people may read the truth—let him write. Another holds meetings. Another teaches a class—let them teach. In every way Christ is preached and therein we should rejoice.

These preachers and debaters—though few they

be—who don't want anybody to teach except just as they do, should read the case where the disciples came to the Savior to complain about a fellow they found operating in the name of Christ. They forbade him, said they, because "he followeth not us." So do these Bible school opposers. The Savior rebuked them—not the fellow they found performing service in his name. Some are too anxious to be followed. And when people do not "follow them" they are much disturbed. Let us follow Christ and the apostles. One of the "traditions" they have left us is to teach the people who are in need of being taught the word of God. A great many methods are available and should be used. So long as we do what the Lord requires, simply as Christians—members of the body of Christ—in no other name than the name of Christ—and in no other organization or institution than the church, we are safe. A Sunday school or Bible school is not an organization separate and apart from the church—at least it should not be—no more so than a "protracted meeting." Thousands are going down to destruction because they know not God—they have never been taught. At best, little is being done. We should do more and not less and should help and encourage rather than hinder and discourage those who are teaching the dying people the unsearchable riches of Christ.—G. H. P. S.

F. F. June 2, 1936, p. 4.

THAT COWAN-TANT DEBATE

By N. L. Clark

In the Firm Foundation of June 2, Brother Showalter has a lengthy editorial concerning a recent debate on the Sunday school question between J. N. Cowan and J. D. Tant. I am not writing this as a comment on the debate, for I did not hear it. Neither is it my purpose to reply to anything Brother Showalter said. My object is to call attention again to the issues on this subject that have produced division among us.

First, we are not divided over the necessity of teaching the Bible. Those who oppose the Sunday school are accused of opposing the teaching of the Bible. On the other hand, one of the most serious objections we have to the Sunday school is that it fails to teach the Bible. For a hundred years the denominations and many of our churches have faithfully used the Sunday school as a means of teaching the Bible. What is the result? The masses of our people are densely ignorant of the Bible. If we are to use some special method of advancing Bible knowledge, why not try something else? Why resort to an institution that has been tried so long and found a failure?

In the next place, we are not divided over a "method of teaching." In so far as most of the so-called "anti-Sunday school" brethren are concerned, I am sure they would accept any method of teaching that does not clearly violate some teaching of the Scriptures. The lecture method, the question and answer

method, written or spoken method, etc., would be at least permissible.

In the third place, the division was not really caused by the "class question." Here is another false issue. We are accused of making the formation of classes to teach the Bible a test of fellowship. Those who favor the Sunday school (or Bible school) agree that the church assembled for worship should not be divided into classes to be taught. Hence there is no issue here.

Brother Showalter calls attention to the fact that in the meetings for worship and especially in protracted meetings we teach Christians and sinners, old and young. He concludes there can be no logical objection to the Sunday school on that ground. In this he is correct.

What, then, is the real objection to the Sunday school? In addition to its failure to produce desired results (already mentioned) it is clearly a distinct institution either in the church or added to the church. It bears all the marks of such an organization and I dare say three-fourths of those who attended its meetings so consider it. Our religious neighbors look upon our so-called "Bible school" as the exact parallel of their "Sunday school." It is the thing itself, not simply its name, that some of us cannot accept.

Why do we object to an institution added to the church? Because it must be by human authority, because it proposes to do what the Lord ordained to be done in another way, and because for the latter reason, it interferes with the Lord's appointments.—N. L. Clark.

F. F. July 7, 1936, p. 2.

METHODS OF TEACHING

In another column our readers will find a short article from Brother N. L. Clark, of Fort Worth, Texas, making some comments on a recent editorial reporting the Cowan-Tant debate and making some observations on the Bible school in general. I am glad that Brother Clark has written, and we cheerfully provide space for the article. It is a pleasure to read an article such as Brother Clark has written from a man of his standing and attainments. We certainly do not want him to be misrepresented, nor to appear in an unfavorable light. Any unnecessary thing in the practice of the churches of Christ that brings about division ought to be removed—certainly so if it is necessary in order to union. The unity of God's people is a precious thing—not only this, but it is desired and required by the Lord.

Brother Clark does not object to teaching the Bible in classes nor to women teachers—nor to a Bible school, except on the ground of its "failure to produce desired results." Of course, if a sermon, or paper, or protracted meeting, or Bible school, or any other course of procedure as a method of teaching the truth fails "to produce desired results," it would suggest an abandonment of the poor producer and a resort to some other method of teaching. However, much of the teaching done by the Lord and his apostles failed "to produce desired results," and when they used different methods in teaching, they often "failed to produce desired results." Noah, when he was trying to

teach the people the way of truth as a preacher of righteousness, "failed to produce desired results," but, nevertheless, he kept on preaching. I do not think that his work and faithfulness should be condemned because his method did not "produce desired results." Neither do I think that we should quit publishing a paper or printing tracts, leaflets and books or teaching Bible schools on the Lord's day solely on the ground of a "failure to produce desired results."

But Brother Clark does not seem to attach much importance to this objection. What he calls "the real objection to the Sunday School," he sets forth as "a distinct institution either in the church or added to the church," and that "it bears all the marks of such an organization," and he avers that three-fourths of those who attend the meetings of the Bible school so consider it. If such is the case, Brother Clark has ground that is well taken. I have, myself, many years ago, urged such an objection against the Sunday school. Others have done the same. Brother Clark could do a good work in seeking to set aside such a conception of the work, and, if in existence, such an organization for the work of teaching the Bible. There has been, I think, much improvement—the brethren are doing better—they have learned better.

For my part, I have visited many of the Bible schools and I believe that the position that Brother Clark takes is an extreme view of the matter. The Bible schools, as they are generally conducted among churches of Christ where I have gone, are really no such thing as Brother Clark suggests, but on the contrary, they are understood to be nothing but meetings where

members of the church of Christ may spend some time in teaching the Bible. During the last fifteen or twenty years, particular attention has been called to that matter through the columns of the Firm Foundation and among the churches by the Firm Foundation's editor and other writers and speakers. However if such obtains, we want Brother Clark to know that we are as much opposed to it as he is and we are not denying that such may be the case in some places. I have confidence in my brethren to believe that most of them, at least, would be glad to modify their work so as to eliminate the essentials of an institution separate and apart from the church, if their existence is pointed out to them.

I have confidence in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ for the accomplishment of all religious teaching and practice. I believe it is fully sufficient for the Lord's work, and am strictly and persistently opposed to the establishment of any other religious institution within the church or out of it. Brother Clark does not oppose missionary societies and religious societies of other kinds more stoutly than does the editor of the Firm Foundation. However, it is my persuasion that an enormous amount of good is being done in teaching the Bible by members of the church simply as Christians in a Bible school. Thousands of those who are baptized every year have received much of their instruction in the Bible schools. To presume that the whole work is a failure is hardly supported by the facts, but since Brother Clark does not object to Bible school work as such, does not object to women teachers, nor to classes, and objects only to the establishment of an institution other than

the church, we are at a loss to know why Brother Clark does not encourage such class work and promote it among the churches of Christ, leaving out, of course, the institution other than the church. Why does he not start some Bible school work, carefully eliminating the idea of an institution outside of the church? He starts protracted meetings, which he acknowledges are similar.

I believe that if Brother Clark would go among the churches of Christ that are conducting Bible schools on the Lord's day, he will find that their work is not as objectionable as he has supposed. I believe he will find that it is not generally some institution other than the church or so conceived of by the ones who are conducting it, but that rather he will learn that the loyal churches of Christ today that are conducting Bible schools on the Lord's day, are striving to do so simply as members of the church of Christ, and striving to carry out their duty and obligation as such under the frequent and insistent requirements of inspired men—that all who have named the name of Christ, wherever they go, should be engaged in teaching the truth of the gospel plan of salvation as opportunity is afforded them.

It seems like we have come to a pretty pass when young men of fine intelligence and young women, as well, who have learned and obeyed the truth and are faithful in the church can qualify and be highly commended as teachers to teach in all worldly branches of learning—to teach classes of children everything else—but are forbidden to teach the Bible, in Bible classes. There is something wrong just here.

For my part, I fully believe that it is possible, prac-

tical, and certainly Scriptural for Christians as such—simply members of the church of Christ—to gather together people who need teaching and instruct them in the right ways of the Lord. This, I know, is what is being done in hundreds of places throughout the land. Where deviations from this course are made and mistakes of other kinds are being made, I do not believe that it would be a difficult matter to bring about an improvement to the extent of the elimination of anything, and everything, that is unscriptural from the standpoint of organization, if those engaged in the work are approached in a proper way by God-fearing and faithful men interested in the unity of the people of God and in the progress, growth, development, and power of the kingdom of Christ.—G. H. P. Showalter.

F. F. July 7, 1936, p. 4.