

BIBLE STUDY CLASS-EXTENSION

AS WE have recognized the growth of grace and knowledge amongst the Brethren in the various Bible Study Classes we have thought and prayed over the matter of their usefulness as laborers in the Vineyard. At first the Society encouraged and assisted several of the Brethren in outside work. However, as others made application for similar recognition we soon saw that the Society would be in danger of getting into trouble, either by endorsing and assisting some not worthy, or in failing to assist some who were worthy. And anyway, the attempt of the Society has always been to follow the Apostolic injunction, "Without partiality and without hypocrisy." – James 3:17.

We therefore withdrew all special co-operation outside the regular Pilgrim force, whose names appear on the last page of THE WATCH TOWER or are specially announced. We cannot shirk responsibility for these, and, without wishing to cultivate a captious or critical or fault-finding spirit, we now say that we earnestly request that the dear members of the Society everywhere shall report anything in the conduct or teachings of the Pilgrims which to them may appear contrary to the instructions of the Word – at variance with the "faith once delivered to the saints." Do not discuss such matters slanderously, but report them kindly and lovingly to the Head Office at Brooklyn – "Pilgrim Department." It does not follow that we will agree with you and censure the Pilgrim. But as the Pilgrims represent the Society it is proper that we should know the influence of their lives and any peculiarity of their teachings. This would not be in the nature of slander unless the narrator attempted to color the facts and to make out a case of condemnation.

THE NEW EXTENSION PLAN

About six months ago a plan developed by which we believe the Society will be able to co-operate with hundreds of dear Brethren in the exercise of their talents in the spread of the Truth. This plan, so far as

we can see, is as free from objection of every kind as any human plan could be. It will make the different classes responsible for the Extension Work, and the Society will thus be working through and in conjunction with the classes. It is not a plan by which one class will undertake to shepherd another or several classes indefinitely. It is our thought that we expect Divine Providence gradually to raise up in each class Elder Brothers who would be thoroughly competent to care for the local interests, and before long be able also to engage in the Extension Work. The plan we suggest relates only to Extension, as follows:

(1) Any class is invited to join in this Extension movement provided it has amongst its regularly chosen **[R4822 : page 155]** Elders a sufficient amount of talent available for outside work, without jeopardizing the welfare and prosperity of the class.

(2) If a class have a superfluity of ability amongst its Elders, more than is necessary for its own proper prosperity, it should consider its own surrounding territory in which there are no classes, and should select several fields for active service. The class should designate which of its Elders it believes to be well qualified for the giving of three Chart Talks, and which of its Elders **[R4822 : page 156]** would be qualified to give three Talks afterward on the Day of Judgment, Ransom and Restitution, and the Manner of the Lord's Coming. The Society is prepared to supply Charts for such use, and also a little pamphlet for such speakers, giving outlines for three Chart Discourses – the same to be filled out by the speaker. The three succeeding Talks could be given very much along the lines of the presentation in *STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES*, or those Chapters might be read after thorough study and practice, if that prove the most advantageous method.

At the conclusion of each discourse the following one should be announced and the hearers and their friends cordially invited. At the closing of the third Chart Talk, the speaker should announce the name and topic of the Brother who would speak on the following Sunday, making such interesting and voluntary comments as the situation would

permit. At the close of the second speaker's three meetings it would be well to inquire how many of the audience felt sufficient interest in Bible Study along dispensational lines to come together regularly as a class of Bible Students. The speaker should explain the Berean Study Classes and should counsel as respects the most suitable time and place for such classes, and should promise that, if desired, the class sending him would send some one of their number to assist them until they should get started in these Berean Studies and be able to make progress by themselves, etc.

(3) The getting up of these Extension Classes would involve labor and expense. Sometimes court-houses, sometimes the school-room, sometimes the Church lecture-room, sometimes an unused chapel, sometimes a picture theatre, sometimes a conservatory of music – as the case may be – is obtainable. Quite frequently those in charge – learning that the meetings are for Bible Study, and that no admission fee is charged, and that no collection is lifted – are willing to give the premises free, or with a nominal charge for the janitor's service or light or heat, etc. Sometimes a small price must be paid. But in any event it should be thoroughly understood that from three to six meetings are purposed and are to be advertised for successive Sundays. And payment should be made in advance and a receipt secured, so that there might be no misunderstanding before the advertising matter would be prepared for circulation.

(4) In connection with all such meetings the Society is glad to cooperate. It will furnish free copies of *Everybody's Paper*, on the back of which will be an announcement of the Chart Talks for each of the first three Sundays. Everything will be complete except the name of the meeting-place and the dates. These could be printed in by a local printer at a very small cost, or could be stamped on with a rubber stamp. The circulation of these papers will mean the distribution of many sermons, which may do good work, aside from those who will be drawn to the public gathering. We will supply these in proportion of one to every six of the English-speaking population of any town, district or city, upon

application. The population figures include children, and one in six would generally represent the number of families.

The expenses for the meetings the classes are usually able to bear, and the traveling expenses for close-by towns is small. However, the Society will be pleased to co-operate with any classes not prepared to bear the full expenses of these meetings, provided the report sent in seems to justify the expenditure. In making such a report the class, through its Secretary, should give us particulars and say what proportion of expense the class is prepared to bear and how much money it would be necessary for the Society to contribute, in order to carry out the programme.

(5) The Society does not wish to deal with the speakers directly, but prefers that they should be responsible to the Ecclesia which sends them forth, even as Paul and Barnabas were sent forth, first by the Church at Corinth, and made their reports directly thereto. The Society prefers to have reports monthly, on the printed blank which we supply, through the duly elected Secretary of the Class.

(6) All correspondence (except such as is strictly personal and could be attended to only by Brother Russell) should be addressed International Bible Students Association, care of Extension Dep't. All correspondence on this subject should be addressed in America to the Brooklyn Tabernacle; in Great Britain to the London Tabernacle; in Australia to Melbourne, and in the Scandinavian and German countries to their respective offices.

(7) What we have said foregoing in respect to English meetings may be applied equally in respect to services in other languages in proportion as opportunities permit.

THIS WORK ALREADY COMMENCED

We have already made a trial along the above lines. Some seem not to have gotten our thought fully on some points. Nevertheless the good

work has already commenced. We have already reports from 145 classes. And already 512 meetings have been held, with 16,392 in attendance, as shown by reports up to April 1. Let the good work go on wisely, moderately, lovingly, zealously! The harvest is great; the laborers are few in comparison to the great field to be reaped.

Let us emphasize again in respect to all communications on every subject – that the Society, and not individuals, should be addressed, and, if convenient, the Department should be indicated on the envelope. Letters otherwise addressed will be more or less likely to fail of prompt attention; individuals may be sick or absent, but the Departments remain, and always give prompt attention.

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