Shall churches contribute to the support of “Christian colleges” by cash on hand, by pledges, or by including some college in their “budgets”? That is the question. What is your answer?

Men are frequently unconsciously influenced in their thinking by their own interests. All agree that colleges and schools are human institutions and no man can make me believe that churches are dependent upon colleges for their existence. Colleges can be useful, or they can be a curse. A big endowment fund looks attractive to the worldly minded schemers; and such men can make great pretensions to soundness of faith and practice. Vultures will gather wherever there is much money.

As an individual I can give or not give to a college—that is strictly my own personal affair; but there is something wrong with a man’s thinking when he thinks a church is at liberty to do the same thing. If I am a member of a church that has made a pledge to a college, or has the college in its budget, I am forced to contribute to the college, or refuse to contribute anything on Lord’s days. Also it might be that the college the church is supporting might be such that I could not support. Besides, I cannot see that any group of elders has any right to pledge the members to support any college.

Many years ago the Foreign Christian Missionary Society began to tell each church how much it should give for missions. After that plan got going full-blast, I had a talk about it with A. D. Rogers. He, of course, favored the plan; but the church was bound to give the amount designated—that churches could give or not give, just as they pleased. (That sounds very much like what has been said about churches giving to colleges—give or not give just as they please). I made reply to A. D. about as follows: There are different ways to force people to do things—they can be surrounded by such conditions and circumstances that they have no choice but to fall in line or be counted out. Human organizations become more and more centralized and powerful. If one of your preachers fails to encourage the church where he preaches to send in its assessment, he will incur the displeasure of the higherup, and will soon have no place to preach. He will have to toe the mark, or be counted out. And A. D. has lived to see that I was right. Some time ago a prominent preacher said that, if a church has a preacher that opposed including some Christian college in its budget, that church should get another preacher. If all the colleges develop that attitude, their students will go out with the same spirit. If that spirit is not checked, the colleges will become the rulers of the churches and preachers.

Even now a lot is being said about “college trained preachers.” A man who will not preach unless he can be “college trained” is not fit to preach, no matter how much college training he has. And I do not like to hear it said the churches are dependent on Christian colleges for preachers. That puts colleges above churches, or does it make colleges the foundation of churches?— (From Firm Foundation).
In a late issue of the Firm Foundation, Brother N. B. Hardeman definitely supports the idea that churches may spend their money, or “The Lord’s money” in direct support of such human institutions as colleges in which the Bible and a lot of other things are taught. He uses up more than a page of the Firm Foundation with his picture in the middle of it trying to explain that his position in 1947 does not contradict his position in 1938. And even if it does he has “never sought to be consistent just for the sake of being so.” It is a good picture with that famous Hardeman smile which is contagious and has an engaging charm about it. I admit that I have always liked to see Brother Hardeman smile and even his picture is not hard to look at. It is better than the article. If he had confined himself to a n o s t e r c a r d he would have involved himself in fewer difficulties. The article does not sound like Brother Hardeman when he is right and sure of himself. It reads too much like Boswell, in the Boswell-Hardeman debate. I’m not going to answer the picture. It is all right, smile and all, except possibly a few years out of date, but under the circumstances I think it proper and right to make some observations concerning the contents of the article.

In 19% Brother Hardeman said:

“I am truly sorry that we cannot get together on matters relating to our schools. T certainly do not endorse the putting of our schools on the church budget. I would oppose having Fred Hardeman so placed. Such has ever been my sentiment.”

Now a man has a right to c h a n g e his position on any question if he has a cause to believe he was wrong but he should frankly say so and give his reasons. T e n c e r n heartily in this statement: “I have always rejoiced in the discovery of any truth and have gladly accepted it regardless of what T may have thought said in years m o n a l y.” T think that is a fine attitude. So T am in search of “any truth” Brother Hardeman has discovered lately that accounts for a change that everybody has noticed and many of his own preacher boys are shocked and disappointed over. This discovery of new truth or old truth hitherto unobserved should be contained in the long article but is it? I have been unable to discover one thing in it that all of us, including Brother Hardeman, did not know ten years ago. Brethren were building meeting houses, preachers’ homes, paying travelling expenses for preachers and putting them up in hotels when Brother Hardeman “certainly” did not endorse the putting of our schools on the church budget.” Some sort of a change has come over him and the size of the change and the reason for it is the “truth” I am trying to discover. Since he has not made the matter very clear in a long article I’d like to see him try it on a “postal card.”

I’m sure that this warning was not directed at those who are trying to do what Brother Hardeman did not endorse and so positively opposed in 1938 “If we are not careful, we will be straining out gnats and swallowing camels.” T suppose that was directed at the Bible Banner and able brethren in other papers who have recently echoed his own protest of 1938. I may need a small dose of Brother Showalter’s optimism but what I see in the cup doesn’t look like a gnat to me. It is too big for even a wiggle tail. It is at least as big as a tadpole and whatever it is, it doesn’t belong there and should be removed. Tt will not take anything as fine as a strainer to snare him. As to the camel I’m not ready yet to admit, that those of us who think like Brother Hardman did in 1938 are neglecting the weightier matters of the law. We are not conceding the opposition any m o n o m o n y on justice, merry and faith. Such a use of the Savior’s s u r e b bit of irony does not alarm us in the least. The digressives wore that threadbare on n g years ago. We cannot be brushed off in such arbitrary fashion.

Besides Brother Hardeman himself is not sure the thing, in the cup is a gnat. He a p p a r e n t l y has not yet made up his mind to swallow it but is just rolling it around under his tongue to see if he can
discover some truth in the way the thing tastes. He appears to have some doubts as to just how it would set on his stomach.

"It has been said that some of our schools are trying to get control of the churches and thus bind the schools upon them, thereby making the churches subsidiary to the schools. I deeply deplore this trend. I am conscious of the dangerous influence schools can exert. I know also the powerful influence they can have for good. Almost every departure from the ancient order has begun in our schools. Such is an impressive warning, but it does not necessarily mean that they must or will go astray."

That thing, whatever it is, is too big for a gnat, Brother Hardeman. Better back up and hitch on to your statement of 1938. You were right then and a postal card would contain the statement. A page in the Firm Foundation doesn’t serve to make you clear now. It will really be too much to expect that all the schools will fail to exert some of that dangerous influence you are talking about. Some of them have already “gone and done it.” Even you can see “trends” to deplore which do not belong to the gnat family.

Now let us suppose that a school starts off on a dangerous "trend" Where would it begin? Naturally, it would seek an unscriptural tieup with the churches. Where would it start? In the church budget of course. A man with enough vision to identify a gnat can see that. Our idea is to keep the “trends” strained out and we will have no camels to swallow.

It is my opinion that the schools have made an expensive mistake in bringing up this issue. It is costing them both money and goodwill. It is making and arousing fear and suspicion among the brethren. Of course we will be blamed with the whole thing. I have a long letter from Brother Earnest Beam charging us with responsibility for an immeasurable amount of party strife and dubbing us as sectarian. It did not surprise or disappoint me. I expected it. Those who introduced premillennialism are responsible for no strife. We opposed it and the responsibility is ours. Those who introduced the organ and societies to corrupt the worship and control the churches caused no trouble at all. We who opposed these things are wholly responsible. We are partisans. And now we are straining at gnats and swallowing camels because we are opposing some “trends” that are clearly a departure from the “policy” universally followed by the schools until recently! If we are stopped it will have to be by something more substantial than the digressives have worn threadbare for half a century.

Another thing! I do not like the flavor of the word “policy” that is being so widely used by the school men. It looks as though Brother Hardeman made that statement in 1938 with tongue in cheek so to speak. No. I am not impugning his motives. I am thinking of his latest statement. He explains that he had a mental reservation, that his opposition was on the ground of expediency. No principle of vital importance was involved at all. Now, whether he so intended it or not, that statement in such a setting was deceiving. I thought and the brethren thought he was opposed to schools in the budgets of the churches on the ground of principle. Schools are human institutions and the separate character and independence of the churches should not be endangered by so closely relating them to the schools. But it turns out that Brother Hardeman did not mean that at all. It is this sort of thing which is making so many brethren suspicious and costing the schools in confidence and financial support. In such matters a “policy” based on expediency, to be changed when administrators think it expedient, is not the kind of “policy” to build up confidence. There ought not to be any trick clauses in a “policy” either expressed or unexpressed. If Brother Hardeman’s opposition to placing the school in church budgets was a question of expediency such as whether to buy or not buy a railroad ticket or pay a hotel bill for a preacher, he should have said so when he made the statement. No one could even dream from the statement he made that he had such a thing in mind.

We are told that “several of the things for which churches spend the Lord’s money could well be omitted. They were borrowed from the denominations around us. There is no authority for such.” So what? Let the churches go ahead and do something else there is no authority for? That sort of conclusion was not justified by the textbook on logic I studied when I was in school. Let such churches be properly rebuked and taught better.

But what can a church spend money for?

"So far as I know, there are only two things for which a church has direct authority to spend its money. One is to preach the gospel, and the other is to care for the needy. All other expenditures are matters of judgement and of expediency."

"It seems that most anything can be done with the Lord’s money except to make a donation to a school in which the Bible is taught. If we are not careful, we will be straining out gnats and swallowing camels."

The "most anything that can be done with the Lord’s money" includes supporting a human organization of carpenters for building a meeting house, a preacher’s home, buying literature, maps
paying a railroad for a ticket to travel, a hotel for a place to stay etc. “There is no direct authority” for such. So what? Churches can make their treasuries available for the support of a human institution without any authority at all! Does this sound like Hardeman logic when he is right and sure of himself? Frankly, I’m not at all lonesome in my disappointment. It isn’t Brother Hardeman’s age. And I hope that this teetery way of-handling a public issue does not, become a habit, with him.

What kind of authority does a church have to build a meeting house or pay a hotel bill? If a preacher reaches a distant field, he has to “Go” doesn’t he? Seem as though I have seen that word somewhere in the Bible. When he gets there he has to have a place to stay doesn’t he? It might be a matter of expediency whether he stayed in a hotel or slept on a park bench. A church has to have a place to meet, seats to sit on etc. I can even cite scripture for it. Expediency might have something to do with the size of the house, its location, costs etc, but a thing cannot be expedient unless it is lawful. A man can walk or ride to get to a place, expediency might have something to do with it, but if it were not lawful to “go” it would and could not be expedient to either walk or ride there. What Brother Hardeman says about meeting houses, railroads and hotels and what Alexander Campbell says about “scribes, papermakers, printers, bookbinders and vendors of the oracles of God” and “all other matters that are purely discretionary” have nothing whatever to do with this issue of whether the schools shall not fasten themselves on to the churches for support.

I read an article from Russell Errett in the Christian Standard some years ago in which he sought to show that there was as much authority for instrumental music in worship as there was for “a church house.” His article was shorter and he made out at least as good a case with that line as Brother Hardeman does. He hit on something quite as unique as Brother Hardeman’s railroad and hotel illustrations designed to establish a church’s right to make “donations” to Bible schools, of course allowing that it is “expedient.” Said Brother Errett:

A Parallel Case

Taking up further the difficulty that some brethren have with the use of the instrument in worship, it is important to notice that what Jesus said to the woman of Samaria about places of worship is quite definitely a parallel to the words of Paul about singing upon which our friends so much depend. We refer, of course, to Eph. 5:19.

Jesus said to the woman, “The true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth.” Paul said, “Singing and making melody in your hearts.” If it is true that making melody in the heart excludes making melody on the instrument why is it not equally true that “worship in spirit and in truth” excludes worship in a particular building?

In one case the emphasis is upon the spiritual action and any accompanying physical action goes unmentioned; in the other case the same situation obtains.

As a matter of fact, the evidence in the conversation with the woman of Samaria is stronger than that in Paul’s letter to Ephesus, for Jesus specifically refers to the houses of worship at, Jerusalem and Gerizim—and with disapproval.

We are not, of course, opposing either church houses or instruments. We are simply trying to show how one Scripture passage is to be interpreted in the light of the other. Why should brethren be counted renegades if they read Paul as they read Jesus?

At that time the editor of the Bible Banner dealt with this bit of sophistry as it deserved. Brother Errett missed the point of both passages entirely. It is a little hard to argue with a brother who thinks that if a church pays a hotel bill or buys a ticket for legitimate passage that it is “donating” to the hotel or the railroad. If it buys Bibles it is “donating” to the publishing house or what have you, in its budget. Such lack of discrimination is not to be expected from a college president.

We are told that “numbers of brethren would like to see an article from some one specifying in detail a list of things for which a church can spend the Lord’s money, and also give a list of things forbidden.” So! Wouldn’t it be nice to toll us off into something like that and get us off the main issue. Nothing doing. The brethren can pretty well take care of the details of church work if they once get it into their heads that it is the business of the church to preach the gospel and look after the poor as Brother Hardeman says it is. Whatever they need in the way of Bibles, houses, transportation and the like in taking care of this business they will likely think of and provide without feeling that the logic of the situation obligates them to make “donations” to some human institution; that is, unless somebody
like Brother Hardeman runs around in circles before them until they get dizzy and confused. Brethren generally have been pretty well taught in discrimination concerning essentials and incidentals. It might confuse a few of them and make them forget the main issue if somebody with Brother Hardeman’s smile and reputation puts on a juggling act with everything from railroads to Sunday school maps, and then calls for an itemized account of legitimate church spending. It is my opinion that he would have better served both the school and the church had he left his views as expressed in 1938 on a postcard and just sent his picture to the paper. We could then have endorsed his views and smiled back at his picture and everybody would have been happy. As it is he has passed too many amendments to his original constitution.

As I anticipated when this scrap started, the proponents of church support for the schools have sought to inject the orphan’s home issue into it. The idea seems to be that if the churches are already doing as bad as they want them to, there should be no objection to them going ahead and adding something else just as bad to a budget all of which Brother Hardeman admits is badly needed for what the church is directly commanded to do. They seem to think they have a perfect parallel, which they haven’t. We are not going to leave a hot trail for a cold one, but it will not be amiss to make a suggestion or two for the curious or the crafty to ruminate on.

The orphan’s home has never raised any serious issues. There is no need to make it so under present circumstances. Everybody knows and admits, as far as I know that an orphan’s home is a poor substitute for a real home and that some churches do not very well resist the temptation to evade their real duty toward orphans by making token contributions to an institution. If we have just got to have some institutionalism mixed up in the work, homes for orphans and old people seem to be the most innocuous kind we can have. I do not recall any responsible brethren deploring trends toward orphans’ home control of the churches and of the dangerous influence they can exert. They do not boast of saving the church from utter poverty in the way of preachers and church leaders and ask where the church would be today if it had not been for the orphans’ homes.

So we shall just stick to the school question and try to help forestall the growth of those dangerous trends Brother Hardeman and others so deeply deplore. The school administrations themselves have it within their power to execute a “policy” based on principle which will make nearly everybody happy, secure them better support and leaves us with nothing much to criticize, and believe it or not we’d like that too.

THE UNITED STATES CENSUS

Nearly fifty years ago F. D. Srygley wrote the following under the above caption in the Gospel Advocate:

“Several years ago I started out in all good faith to be a Christian and obey all the commandments of God without joining any denomination, championing any party, or becoming a sectarian in religion. It is a pretty hard thing to do, I admit, but I could get along reasonably well on that line if it were not for this everlasting United States census ‘round up’ every ten years. These census fellows never can get the idea into their wooden heads that a man can be a Christian and yet not belong to any denomination. They seem determined to pen up the Lord’s people in little denominational stalls, so that they may be counted, marked, branded, labeled, and waybilled for heaven and immortal glory in ‘original packages.’ They are after me now to get me into the pen with ‘us as a people,’ and they will put a party yoke on every man who will wear it. I am going to keep out of the party pen of ‘us as a people,’ if I can, but if they force me into it, by the blessings of God I will butt the cross fences all down if I can and get all those little denominational, herds mixed up so that there will be but one flock, with Jesus as the Shepherd.”

Now that “we, as a people” have been again properly counted, with “our” schools and papers and orphans’ homes and what have you; and have been classified as one of the leading denominations in the country and duly impressed the government with “our” importance: we preachers can now get back to the main job of preaching the gospel and saving the lost, and the churches can get back to the tasks assigned them in the New Testament. If it so happens that our great Uncle Samuel did not get you listed and classified in this denominational “round-up,” do not be unduly alarmed. If your name is written in the Lamb’s Book of Life, you will finally reach heaven and immortal glory whether Uncle Samuel ever finds it out or not.—C. E. W.

LATER REVELATIONS

Later Revelations such as that claimed by Joseph Smith, Ellen G. White, and Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy deny the sufficiency and finality of the scriptures. They each constitute an additional message and if any one of them is genuine, the others are false and the Bible is incomplete and insufficient. The Bible alone did not produce Mormonism, Adventism or Christian Science. None of them began upon the earth until these so-called later revelations. The Bible alone will now not make one an Adventist, Mormon, or Scientist. If then the Bible is a complete revelation, all of these are false and counterfeit.
Among his other worries, Brother G. C. Brewer has Brother Earnest Beam on his hands. It seems that Beam takes hold and sticks tighter than anything Brewer has had to contend with including the Sommer boys. Brother Brewer did not want to get rough with him but had plans for sparing him, hoping for some signs of repentance. But Brother Beam does not want to be spared. He is actually hungry to be sacrificed. A paid emissary of digression could not do a better job of heckling in every controversy that arises than Brother Beam is doing in such instances as Brother Brewer cites. “Spare” him? Why, let him have it in the same place you are accustomed to castigating digressives. Don’t wait on endorsement. You have mine, at least for that job. I think that is all you need.

Brother Brewer wants “the backing of the colleges, of the papers, and of the brethren in general.” That is more backing than I’d want for a big job. Surely Brother Brewer does not need that much backing to dig a small potato like Brother Beam. I may decide to take a few pecks at him myself without any backing. Exposing his “fallacy” couldn’t be anything but a warmed over job. He has nothing that digressives have not been jabbering about for lo, these many years. He is pester me too. I have a five-page letter from him asking more questions than a kindergarten class at a zoo. He takes time out to deliver his opinion of me and all my works as though I did not already know and as though I cared. He considers my editorial conduct “shameful,” accuses me of “whittling away upon these little issues by which your souls dry up.” I haven’t asked his endorsement of anything I do or say and don’t want it. When a fellow works himself up into the kind of lather Brother Beam has, and thinks it is spiritual richness breaking out on him, there is not much that I can or care to do about it, except possibly hang a few warning signs on him for the good of others.

Sometimes when a voice begins to cry in the wilderness there isn’t much to do except let him cry it out, especially if he happens to be somewhat of a cry-baby to begin with. I wouldn’t worry about a battle with Bro. Beam. He is no “Goliath.” Just go ahead and give him a spanking and turn him loose and let him cry some more. You won’t even need the colleges and the papers and the brethren generally to hold him for you. He doesn’t rate that much attention. He rates more as a nuisance than a threat.

In view of Brother Beam’s expressed opinion of me, I am under go personal obligation whatever to answer any of his questions either publicly or privately. However, I feel no irritation or resentment, only wonder and regret, that a gospel preacher can allow himself to get in the state of mind Brother Beam is in. Without much thought of controversy or “battle” I may decide to hang a few helpful thoughts on the pegs of Brother Beam’s aberrations. Brother Beam possibly will not like it and will probably tell me so. Since he has a very low opinion of me already as a Christian and a brother, it really doesn’t make any difference.

First, Brother Beam is anxious for everybody to know who he is and tells them at every opportunity. He tells me as though I hadn’t seen it a dozen times before in various connections.

“For the record may I say in passing I am not a member of the anti-communion cup group, nor the anti-college group, nor the anti-class group, nor the anti-regular preaching party, nor the anti-orphan home party, nor the anti-premillenial party, nor any other anti-party.”

Now that is clear isn’t it? Brother Beam is not anti-anything but pro-everything including digression if Brother Brewer represents him correctly. Bro. Beam seems to be obsessed with the idea that a man who is nothing but a Christian and belongs to nothing but the church cannot preach the gospel and oppose error without becoming a factionist or building up a “party.” Yet, strange as it may seem he is eternally spoiling for a fight with anybody who doesn’t sing to the tune of his own hobby. He even has Brother Brewer excited over the prospect of coming “battle” which will be so near the size of Armageddon that Brother Brewer wants the backing of the schools, papers and brethren generally, as though the outcome of the battle would depend on all that gang holding up his hands.

If I had that much support I’d be a little afraid there was something wrong with me. Too much endorsement might be embarrassing. Suppose it became necessary to spank some of the endorsers? Sometimes they need it and I wouldn’t want my hands tied. I’ll endorse Brother Brewer to meet Bro. Beam, but understand I’m not guaranteeing that he won’t pull some sort of bonehead before he gets it over with. And I didn’t mean that as harsh criticism or lack of confidence. He is either smarter than I am, or I am smarter than he is. Sometimes he does and says things which do not exactly suit me.

But back to Brother Beam, Says he:
The brother is confused to the point of being beside himself. I have no new party and belong to nothing of the kind I am a Christian, a member of the body of Christ and have never belonged to anything else. If I am a member of any sort of sectarian setup I didn’t go to do it. I am not even awed by big names. Beam, Brewer, Campbell, Lipscomb, Larimore, they are not the source of my authority in religion. All I know for sure about such matters is what I read in the New Testament. Paul did not hold to the doctrine that there are Christians in such denominations as Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian “and other such churches” because there were no such denominations back there for them to get into. Bro. Beam wants me to tell him now. All right I’ll tell him now that if a man obeys the gospel as the New Testament teaches he becomes a member of the body of Christ, the family of God, the only church we read about in the New Testament. Such obedience does not make Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterians or any other sort of sectarian. Such set-ups are human affairs without New Testament endorsement. Brother Beam is certain that there are Christians among them. Brother Brewer is reported to have said that there are excellent Christians among them. Since I get my information from the New Testament and it is silent on some matters, I cannot be as dogmatic as Brother Beam and Bro. Brewer seem to be on the matter.

If there are Christians in the denominations, they went in after they became Christians and are where they have no right to be. I’ll admit that Christians, not the best variety of course, are eternally getting into things they ought to stay out of and that would be eminently true in this hypothetical case. Just how much of that sort of foolishness the Lord is going to put up with I’m not prepared to say just now, but if they get to heaven it looks like a hard race and a tight squeeze from here. If a sheep wanders around among the goats, he doesn’t have too much to gripe about if he is overlooked and not counted in the roundup. I wouldn’t classify him as an “excellent” Christian. He reminds me of Brother Caskey’s sheep who lost his bell and shed his fleece and ran with the goats so long he didn’t know sneeze-weed from clover.

You know there is such a thing as apostatizing, being cut-off, being spewed out of the Lord’s mouth and the like. Some of the brethren, including me and Brother Brewer, are getting a little uneasy about Brother Beam. One reason I have always been slow about disfellowshipping brethren is the fact that I can’t always tell just how long the Lord will put up with them, and I don’t want to give them up until He does. If Brother Beam can find any Christians among the denominations and is sure of their identity, he ought to spend part of his time getting them back where they belong and let up on his nagging of some of the rest of us who are contending for the faith and serving the Lord as it is written. He is getting to be as quarrelsome as a shrew.

“This now will do for this time” Brother Beam observes toward the close of five pages of rambling and ranting. I have had about till I want of him at one sitting. If I think it worth while I may answer some more of the questions he considers so killing. Or I may just turn him over to Brother Brewer in case the colleges, papers and brethren generally give him the needed endorsement.

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The average Christian in Texas today must feel much as did Isaac when he made the statement that is the title of this article. Nothing but such a state of confusion could be the result of the public and private statements, written and oral, of those connected with the expansion program of Abilene Christian College. Being sincerely and completely opposed to placing a college, any college, in the budget of local congregations and having had some personal experience with Bro. Robert M. Alexander, the campaign director of this program, relative to the matter, I submit the article which follows with the hope that it may focus attention on some of the peculiar and confusing aspects of the situation as it now exists.

TO KEEP THE RECORD STRAIGHT

It is to be clearly understood that this writer believes: (1) That Christians have the right to establish and operate such schools as Abilene Christian College and others; (2) That, in their sphere, they merit the full support, both moral and financial, of all Christians. This writer: (3) Does not oppose A.C.C.; (4) Does not oppose, as he understands its objectives, the contemplated expansion program; (5) Hesitates not to concur in all reasonable statements concerning the good accomplished by the school (past, present, or contemplated); (6) Has nothing but the kindest personal feelings toward any and all whom he knows connected with A.C.C. in any capacity: Be it further understood that nothing said in this article is to be construed as a personal reflection upon the character or ability of any of the men who may be-mentioned.

THE SOURCE OF THE CONFUSION

There is much confusion wherever I go in Texas regarding the policy and practice of A.C.C. with reference to the placing of the college, in the budgets of local congregations. The confusion is not due to “misrepresentations” of “enemks” of the school. Nor is it due to obtuseness on the part of the brethren. The blame lies squarely at the door of those who have assumed responsibility of speaking for the college in this matter. In all of the places known to me where Bro. Alexander has gone to represent A.C.C. in its expansion program, the distinct impression has been made upon the congregations that churches as such were solicited for contributions. If churches have not been literally asked for such contributions, finding the least sentiment favorable toward placing the college in the budget, Bro. Alexander has hesitated not to give it his unqualified endorsement and encouragement. This very thing occurred at 7th and Avenue G congregation in Temple where I preach. I told Brother Alexander at the time that I was definitely opposed to placing the college in the budget on what I conceived to be scriptural grounds (now he emphasises in the Firm Foundation that it is a matter of opinion). The implications of Brother Alexander’s statement are not overlooked by those who differ from him in the matter. Since Brother Alexander’s first visit with us, there have been letters many to the congregation over his signature soliciting funds. In one letter, he suggested pooling the contributions and sending them through the church treasury. The matter was considered in a meeting of the elders and deacons of this congregation and turned down. Since then, a letter has come from Brother Alexander to one of the members of this congregation, whom he knew to be favorable toward placing the college in the budget, soliciting his cooperation in prompting a rally of the elders and congregations of this section with the view to raising money for the school. In addition to this, only yesterday, the congregation received from Brother Alexander a package of tracts containing a generous supply of Brother Luther G. Roberts’ lecture on “Institutionalism.” In this lecture, Brother Roberts undertakes to prove (and fails miserably) that churches as such may support colleges from their treasuries. If it is not the policy and practice of A.C.C. to solicit congregations as such (as Bro. Alexander states in the Firm Foundation, April 22, 1947), why does Brother Alexander so persistently propagandize the churches to this end?

“CONSISTENCY THOU ART A JEWEL”

Is Brother Alexander consistent when he disavows a policy in theory while his practice so uniformly

THE VOICE OF JACOB BUT THE HANDS OF ESAU

JAMES W. ADAMS
avows it? If it is not the policy and practice of A.C. C. to solicit congregations as such, why did Bro. Alexander, a well-educated and talented preacher who has no trouble with self expression, include in his advertisement in the Firm Foundation of January 21, 1947 this statement: “If this endowment is to be raised, congregations must volunteer to raise and send in regular sums for this purpose”? Why did he write an editorial in the A.C.C. bulletin of March 1947 on “Should Churches Support Schools!” purporting to prove the fact it is scriptural for churches so to do? (He failed utterly in the establishment of his proposition). Why did he write an editorial in the A.C.C. Bulletin for April 1947 entitled “Christian Education An Adjunct to What”? in which he seeks to prove that the churches may support the colleges from their treasuries without their becoming adjuncts of the church?. Why does he, in the very article in which he charges Brethren Howell and Thompson with “misrepresentation” (Firm Foundation, April 22, 1947), affirm his faith in the scripturalness of the practice of putting the college in the budget? Why does he contend in the same article that congregational autonomy permits a congregation to do as she pleases about this matter? Finally, why does he characterize by implication as “opinionated” those who oppose the practice? In the answer to these questions, many are interested.

ADDING TO THE CONFUSION

Statements of others having vital connection with A. C. C. add to the confusion. If it is not the policy and practice of A.C.C. to seek support from the churches, why is Luther G. Roberts’ lecture on “Institutionalism” given such wide publicity by the college? Keep in mind the fact that Brother Roberts now teaches in A.C.C. and that his lecture was printed in the A.C.C. Bulletin of March, 1947, and is now reprinted in tract form and is being distributed from the office of the campaign director of the A.C.C. expansion program.

If it, is not the policy of A.C.C. to solicit the churches nor seek a place in the budget, why is it commonly reported that Brother W. R. Smith, Vice-president of A. C. C. advocated such from the pulpit of Southside church in Ft. Worth some weeks past?

If it is not the policy of A.C.C. to seek a place in the budgets of local congregations, why does Brother J. B Collins of Big Spring, Texas, President of the Board of Directors of A.C.C., urge it? I am reliably informed that he not only believes it should be done but urges that it be done. He said several years ago that it will be but a matter of time until the placing of the college in the budget will be the settled policy of the churches. Incidently a digressive preacher and a Baptist layman in Bro. Collins’ “neck of the woods” have already been known to remark to a gospel preacher, “There is no difference between you and us with respect to organizations. You have in a small way what we have in a big way”.

A STATEMENT OF POLICY

Since writing the foregoing, Bro. Don Morris, whom I know personally and whom I respect highly, has made a statement through the Firm Foundation concerning the policy of A. C. C. (See Firm Foundation, May 6, 1947). A few remarks are deemed necessary with regard to the statement. Brother Morris says: “When the campaign for the two buildings was started in 1943, it was decided by those directing the campaign not to ask any congregation of the church to contribute to the campaign as a congregation or to place the college in its budget. When the $3,000.000 program was adopted in April, 1946, the same decision was made. It should be said that when elders and members of a local congregation desire to contribute to the college, the college does not attempt to dictate to the elders how these finances should be handled, just as it does not dictate to any church on any matter”.

From these statements, it is clear that the matter of the church-supported college is not a question of conscience with these brethren but of policy. The very fact that the college accepts contributions from churches as such indicates that those in authority do not consider such to be an unscriptural procedure on the part of the church. Yes, it is not the policy of the college to solicit churches as such, but policy does not indicate the faith or conscience of a man or institution. Policy is determined many times by present circumstances, popular opinion, expediency, and the exigency of the moment. When these vary, policy varies to meet the sittutation. If the time should come when the view of Bro. Alexander and others becomes the prevailing attitude among preachers and churches, would the policy of A.C.C. be altered so as to be adapted to this brotherhood condition? All indications point in this direction. Not only is this true of A.C.C. but of other colleges among us as is indicated by the expressed views of 1938 and of 1947.

THE REAL ISSUE

The issue is this: May churches scripturally support colleges such as A.C.C. and others from the treasury of the church. If it cannot be established that such a practice is scriptural, then congregations may not do so nor may colleges conducted by Christians accept such contributions. If such a prac-
can be proved to be scriptural, then all churches may place the colleges in their budgets, the colleges may receive and solicit such contributions, and no one has the right to object thereto.

Brother Roberts says in the lecture on "Institutionalism", "The church of the Lord is divine in origin and purpose. Its purpose is to preach the gospel, edify the saved, and support the needy". No one could have said it better. The question confronting us, therefore, is this: May the church of the Lord, a divine institution, scripturally incorporate into its program and budget a work that is no part of her divine mission; namely, secular education and all that goes with it? If this does not seem to cover the issue in the minds of Brethren Roberts, Alexander, and others, perhaps they will affirm that: The establishment and support of colleges such as A.C.C. is a part of the divine mission of the New Testament church. Seriously, Brother Alexander might take such a position for he practically predicates the perpetuity of the church on the existence of Christian Colleges in the Firm Foundation of July 16, 1946, and when in Temple, he suggested that we should have parochial schools like the Catholics.

A FINAL PLEA

Brethren, the institutions among us are worthy of better defense than offered by their misguided friends. I believe them to be scriptural and right, but I know that the right to maintain them cannot be sustained on the basis upon which they are placed by some brethren. Let us keep them in their place or forever quit harping on the all-sufficiency of the organization of the New Testament church and the unscriptural organizations of denominationalism. Let us rather open our arms and embrace church colleges, publishing houses, publications etc. What justifies one will justify the other.

The organized system of denominationalism is utterly repugnant to the simplicity of the Son of God and His glorious church, therefore as long as God gives me breath to speak, and strength to wield the pen I shall stand in unalterable opposition to every movement that tends toward the corruption of the divine simplicity that inheres in the organization of that institution built by Christ, purchased by his blood, and dwelled in by God’s Spirit.

AN EXPLANATION

A slight difference in type faces will be noted by the critical eye in this issue of The Banner. This is due to the installation of additional equipment in the printing plant of the Roy El. Cogdill Publishing Company.

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THE EVIL OF TWO EXTREMES

CHAS. M. CAMPBELL

“Be astonished, 0 ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord. For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and have hewed them out cisterns, that can hold no water.”

Thus “the weeping prophet,” Jeremiah, summarized the circumstances which precipitated the Babylonian captivity of the ancient people of God, as he sought to rescue the name of God from disrepute and place the responsibility of the evil of their calamities with those to whom it belonged. And, it is apparent to reflecting minds that, while the case has, perhaps, found many parallels in subsequent history, it most assuredly possesses such relative to the controversy regarding the church and college in modern times. Those who have obeyed the gospel, and are therefore children of God, have committed two evils regarding the relation of the church and the schools and, as a result, the crime of division has been perpetrated until in many places the body of Christ lies prostrated before the scornful gaze of an unbelieving world. If any person doubts such, let him but cross the Ohio river and make an investigation for himself. If he is north of it, and has observed conditions, he knows it is a fact.

Now, neither evil consists in the admirable effort of some philanthropists, and a greater number of sincere individuals of lesser financial ability, to provide a literary education in a wholesome environment and under circumstances conducive to the development of Christian character, and in contradistinction to the multiple educational institutions where the one cell theory is glorified, organic evolution is deified, God is dethroned, the teachings of Christ are outlawed, and the Bible is either relegated to oblivion or with the greatest of charity placed on equality with the fables and legends of remote (not too remote) antiquity. And, if this principle had been adhered to inviolably, no logical nor legitimate objections could have been presented against the schools and the present controversy could not have originated.

However, since some who formerly preached and practiced the unassailable doctrine of complete separation of church and school have visualized the school’s ascendancy to a utopia challenging the ingenuity of Buddha in his fantastic description of his “trip to heaven,” the church has been victimized where brethren have been sufficiently credulous, or uninformed and the defense of this glorious institution has of necessity become the inevitable responsibility of every lover of truth. Brethren who certainly should know better, and who, in the past, declared they did know better, have compromised the school’s singular defense of its inalienable right to exist, as an adjunct to the home, and to receive the moral support and financial aid of individual Christians, by attempting to impose such obligations upon the church. In so doing, they have placed a potent weapon in the hands of the arch enemies of the school and the church, namely, the schismatic Sommerites, who, since the incipiency of the issue, which peculiarly enough arose immediately following Brother Potter’s refusal to appoint Brother Daniel Sommer president of Potter Bible school, have misrepresented the issue, antagonized the schools, divided the church, and maligned men who have been true to the church and friends to the schools. The latter were possessed of the intelligence to distinguish between an individual’s right to support a school for the reason of the advantages specified above, and the church as an organization, being either obligated or privileged to support a human institution. Unfortunately, the former were lacking either in the ability or the desire to make the necessary distinction, and prosecuting their course of opposition with a dogmatic and antagonistic spirit, strife, chaos and confusion have reigned supremely wherever they have had opportunity to inject their inanity, and inestimable evil has been resultant therefrom.

There is no justifiable defense for the evil committed against the church of the living God by the factious followers of Daniel Sommer, for the very sin which they have sought to charge against individuals who contend for the right of the schools to exist as privately owned and operated institutions, and be patronized by Christians, has ever characterized their practice with regard to the papers published by them. They are able to understand the difference between a privately owned and operated paper which is supported by individual subscriptions (and sometimes by congregations), but they cannot conceive of such a distinction where the school is involved. Moreover, the Sommerites have schools, and in which they teach secular subjects (often referred to as “Bible Readings”), and they conduct them in the church houses. They do not charge tuition, but they do charge board, so their practice in the final analysis is the church in the school business.

The method was the issue between J. C. Roady
and the church at East Liverpool, Ohio, and which Roady has denied. Nevertheless, good men, the elders of the church (at least two of them) have substantiated their report of the situation by a letter to Roady in which they declare he, and from “twenty to thirty” others, signed a letter, a copy of which they received (and presumably sent to many churches) complaining about “the young inexperienced college preachers, “saying “there will have to be something done about them or we will all be on the shelf.” Lately, Roady has printed a letter purporting to be the one sent out on the occasion referred to, but which the elders at East Liverpool deny receiving, or even seeing, and in which he requested a “Bible Reading.” The point is the same, however, the Sommerites have schools, and they teach secular subjects, and they conduct them in church houses.

A further and greater evil on the part of the anticollege faction is their contumacious spirit and the manner in which they will inveigle a congregation into a condition of strife and discord where the people have never contributed one cent to the schools, even as individuals, and none has ever attended, or even been on the campus of a “Bible school.” To my certain knowledge and within the circle of my acquaintance, they have divided congregations where the above circumstances characterized the congregation relative to the “Bible school.” The hobby of the American Christian Review is to contend about the schools, and, undoubtedly, if it did not have the schools to contend about, it would go out of business. The editor is so bitter that he actually engages in vituperation and writes derogatorily and descriptively with regard to the speech of the people of the South (because the schools are mostly in the South). Of course, we do say “you all,” but with reference to a plurality of persons, and we never say “you-ens” or “we-ens,” with reference to any number. Much more could be written, and shall be written, the Lord willing, and shall be written, the Lord willing, concerning the evil of Sommerism, which has just as certainly crystallized into a denomination in the north as the premillennialists ever dared to in the south.

Now, I have written at length in my explanation of the Sommer situation (and I write from the section of the country where they once dominated, and where they continue to make every effort to regain their lost prestige), that there need not be any misunderstanding of the issue which is before the church today concerning the church and the colleges, and that all who desire may know exactly where I stand, and have stood, if any have not known, or do not know. Likewise, the editor of the Bible Banner stands, and has stood, as firmly against Sommerism as he stands against the usurpation of the authority of Christ by the colleges in the present controversy.

As was emphasized by Brother Cled Wallace in a recent issue of the Bible Banner, the very position advanced in the recent Advocate editorial of Brother N. B. Hardeman (with the exception of the error of committing the privilege to the church of contributing to the support of the schools) was advanced by the editor of the Bible Banner while he was editor of the Gospel Advocate. And, for the benefit of those who propose to manifest apprehension regarding the editor’s attitude toward the anti-college faction, let me inquire, why should such fear exist regarding one who has passed through the crucible of controversy and has challenged (by his preaching and editorials) the very citadels of error and defeated the champions of premillennialism and denominationalism upon the polemical platform, while some who were so recently aroused from their lethargy to champion the Cause against the inroads of Sommerism, were sitting silently by, or else aiding and abetting the enemy in their slander campaigns against his character? Some have suffered like experiences in their opposition to Sommerism, and they also have fought faithfully against premillennialism and Bollism, but some others who are so positive at present in their determination to do battle with the anti-college folk, were little concerned about the church in the matter until very recently.

The Sommers have quoted Brother Foy E. Wallace, Jr., or rather, misquoted him (for, they isolated his language, and removing it from its context, made it appear to accomplish their desire) often lately, and he made no reply. This is easily understood. For, as he said to the writer, “they were misrepresenting” him, “and they knew it, and everyone knew it, and they knew that everyone knew it.” Certainly then, Brother Wallace has not had fellowship for the Sommerites in their errors, and they know it as well as all others. Even the congregation where Allen Sommer worships does not agree with him in his fight against the schools. The elders are the authority for this statement. They said “we simply inherited him.” Of course they could disinherit him, and they should, if he does not cease his divisive operations in defense of a hobby.

Notwithstanding the evil done to the church by the anti-college faction, another and as sinister an evil is being fostered and foisted by some who propose to be defenders of the faith and champions of the college, whereas, in fact, they are reflecting on the church and retarding the progress
of the colleges and supplying the anti-college group with a potent 'weapon with which to oppose those of us who have been meeting and defeating the latter in their course.

It is a well known fact that the presidents of the colleges are on record as opposing the idea of the churches being solicited in behalf of support for the schools, and even last winter when the Brown Street church was laboring to rescue the Barberton congregation from the domination of Sommerism, the major issue of the discussion being the question of the church contributing to the support of the schools, we assured the Barberton brethren that we were just as opposed to such a practice as the Sommerites had ever supposedly been, and then and there, the argument that the schools are on par with the Missionary Society went for nothing. It would not be so, however, were we to take money from the treasury of the church and commit it to the trustees of the colleges, for, such would undeniably parallel similar action regarding the Missionary Society. So, the present attitude is not new with me. I have always been, and shall always be, unalterably opposed to the church contributing to the schools and am fully convinced that such a practice is a compromise of principles for which the real defenders of the faith and the friends of the schools have contended, and a positive violation of the plain teaching of the New Testament. No man can contend that the colleges should be in the budgets of the churches (and that "the Texas church that does not have Abilene Christian College in its budget, needs a new preacher") and successfully defeat the Sommerites. In fact, one does not have to qualify as a Sommerite in order to reject such an innovation and imposition, but would be a very poor Christian if he did not, and vigorously! Some of us who have been battling with the Sommer element for years may sometimes need encouragement, but we do not need that kind, and it will not do the Sommerites much good. We must certainly deny that it is representative of the brethren in general and that it is in any sense a part of the category of Christianity. The fact remains, therefore, that some brethren would help more by not helping at all, until they decide to make a distinction, or rather to recognize the distinction that God has made between the divine institution, the church, and a human institution, the college.

Finally, the only alternative for those who refuse to be gathered into the factious folds of the anti-college group or be intimidated, coerced, or misguided by the usurpers among the schools, is to be panoplied in the amour of heaven and with the sword of the Spirit drawn in defense of the church of the Lord, defy all such to trespass the holy ground of her habitation, or to impose their schisms and schemes within her sacred sanctuary. If any such believe that they shall pass, they have only to continue in pursuit of their present ambitions, in order to learn the folly of another digression and the certainty of opposition that cannot be moved. The college is fine in its place, but its place is not in the church, and some brethren had better not try further to put it there. And, if in any sense, this article appears to present a conundrum, it is only because some brethren do not recognize the position of either the church or the college, and it is hoped that this statement of facts, along with other such articles, may serve to identify their respective places, and also to present a perspective of the situation prevailing at present, as well as to clarify the position of those of us who are determined to be faithful to the church while being friends of the college.

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ROBERTALEXANDER'S SAPOLOGY

Dear Roy:

I had the letter from you brethren in Lufkin a few days ago. I want to apologize for having written so poorly that you misunderstood everything that I said, even to the spirit in which I wrote.

I have no inclination to want to argue any point with you, for I concede that congregational autonomy gives you brethren the privilege of allowing me to come to Lufkin and talk to the brethren on Christian education, or to disallow it; and I have no inclination nor desire to over-ride the authority of any congregation for any purpose whatever.

Since the beginning of my campaign for A. C. C. I have neither asked any congregation to put the school in its budget or to give from its treasury to the support of Abilene Christian College; and I do not expect to do either of these during this campaign.

In writing the two former letters to that congregation I merely desired to find out whether or not you brethren would be willing, according to your own plan, to help us, and whether or not you would be willing to invite the brethren from various congregations in that section into a Sunday afternoon meeting on any date that you select, in which we can arrange to be there for the purpose of discussing our program with them and in order to find out whether or not there could be some way the brethren in these communities could give us some encouragement and support.

Since you brethren represent the only congregation in the state of Texas which has refused to let us come and discuss the problems of Christian education, I want to say that we have no inclination to urge you to do what you are not inclined to do, nor to fall out with you because you are not inclined to help us. If you find there is any way that you can help us and would like for us to come and speak on the subject of Christian education, I assure you that you will find that I have no inclination to over-emphasize the importance of the school, nor to make the school over-shadow the Cause of truth and righteousness.

I do not believe that the school nor any paper among us is vital to the cause of Christ; but I think that the school and papers are important, and are needed in the work that needs to be done for the cause of Christ.

Again let me thank you most sincerely for your letter and for your continued good will and for any type of assistance which you may see fit to grant us in the future.

Most sincerely yours,

ROBERT M. ALEXANDER
gregional backing and support and you evidence that in every appeal made and every letter written. In spite of all this you left the way clear to take refuge in the fact that “I have neither asked any congregation to put the school in its budget or to give from its treasury to the support of Abilene Christian College.” To this I would say, you are dodging the issue by the use of such specific terms. You cannot deny that the whole inference left in the letters written here and in your articles in the papers was that you were asking for congregational support as such. Your whole appeal has been made not to Christian individuals but to churches and it has been for church sponsorship and church support.

It is too late in your campaign for Don Morris or others to deny it too. They have had speeches made in programs back through the years in preparation for the course that has been pursued in this campaign and of course have been fully aware of all your utterances and have even been included in helping to map out your campaign plans. They have not raised their voices in protest to any of this effort to enlist “church support” for the school. They shall not now say that they do not endorse asking for congregational support for they have done that as much as you. It must either be defended because it is right or renounced because it is wrong.

Whether or not you have actually asked any congregation to put Abilene Christian College in its budget, you have announced to the world that you think it is all right to do so and have preached that doctrine so there isn’t any virtue in your not having actually practiced it, if you have not. In addition to preaching the doctrine, and coming so close to actually practicing it that by inference you have been taken to do so, you have also announced that if the congregation decided to thus do, you would accept the contribution. That amounts to saying, “I am not going to tell you to do it, and I won’t ask you to do it, but my hand is out and I would be glad for you to do it.” If I were you, I would put my hand out in front of my face instead of behind my back and practice what I preached, if I thought it was right and could be defended.

The brethren here understood that all you were asking was for this “congregation” to invite the other “congregations” of this section into a rally or meeting to discuss their returning home to their respective “congregations” and deciding upon some amount that said “congregation” could raise and then raise it and send it to you in your campaign. It was plain that the whole campaign was on a “congregational” rather than an individual basis, and that is what we don’t believe in down in this part of the country; and we won’t cooperate in having it preached and carried out. That doesn’t at all say that there aren’t some individuals down this way that would have contributed, as individuals, if they had been approached; at least they would have before Abilene became a church school.

You have a strange idea of congregational autonomy. Does each congregation have the right to determine for itself a question of right or wrong? Can the congregation decide for itself whether it is right or wrong to use instrumental music? Claude Witty seems to think so. Your thought seems to be that the congregation can decide by the principle of self government whether or not it is right or wrong in God’s sight for the church to support some extra curricular activity and do its own work through some human organization. I contend God has already settled this matter in heaven and in his word, and every loyal church on earth must abide by it. Any church that doesn’t, has rejected God’s government.

As to this being the only congregation in the whole state of Texas that has refused to cooperate in your campaign, that isn’t such a reflection if the stand that we have taken is right. We believe it is and are willing to defend it. If we should stand alone, which we don’t, we would still stand just where we are as long as we are convinced that it is right. It happens though that I know of others who are of the same persuasion. You were publicly opposed at Temple in your attitude and plans and according to my information it has happened elsewhere. We are getting enough commendations on the stand taken in the Bible Banner to know that we do not stand alone.

All that is embraced in “Christian Education” does not have to come through the channel of “our colleges.” There are many fine elders, deacons, teachers and preachers in churches all over this land that have never seen one of “our colleges.” To read your articles in the paper, Brother Alexander, one could only judge that you think the church would fail miserably in its work if we didn’t have “our schools.” I believe you have allowed yourself to misplace the emphasis and get mixed up in your values. You need to get out of the midst of dollar marks and big figures for awhile and regain your equilibrium. You have done yourself, Abilene Christian College and the Cause of Christ immeasurable harm with your campaign propaganda and should call a halt, retreat from your false position and correct the wrong you have done by renouncing your plea for church support for Abilene and other similar schools.

The digressive doctrine of expediency will not justify your position. It cannot be classified with meeting houses or other matters incidental to the mission of the church. The parallel for it is found in the missionary society performing the function of the church as an adjunct to it and supported by the church. That is absolutely indefensible. It is unscriptural and anti-Christian and wrong. “Our schools” must either recede from their newly adopted position in asking for the church to support them or it will be a fight to the finish against the latest effort Satan has made to corrupt the simplicity of New Testament Christianity.

Sincerely,
Roy E. Cogdill

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