Published Monthly in Defense of the Church Against All Errors and Innovations

"Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of truth"—(Psalms 60:4)

"Lift ye up a banner upon the high mountain, exalt the voice unto them."—(Isaiah 13:2)

NUMBER EIGHT  OCTOBER, 1947  VOLUME NINE

THE PULSE OF THE PREACHERS

Dear Brother Wallace: In recent issue Bible Banner, Brother John Wolfe makes an invaluable contribution of his observations at George Pepperdine College, Los Angeles; this article should pave the way for a clarification; and, the college should be the most interested and active. Capable men, who are unbiased, should be invited to participate in an expose- through discussion both oral and written. We are grateful for contributions of schools of criticism as to integrity, genuineness and credibility; but deplore the partisan spirit of destructive critics which has been refuted and confuted from time to time. Was Christ the Son of God? Did he approve of the ancient scriptures? Were the trained and inspired apostles deluded when they spoke of the "scriptures inspired of God" and holy men moved by the Spirit?" Such courses are unfair to the students; and impose extra duties upon many of us-reforming the deformed! Sincerely, J. E. Wainwright, San Diego 1 California

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I wish to state that I do appreciate the good that is being done in holding forth the trust of the Lord. It is good to know that we have able men who still insist in having things done as they should be—"According to Scripture." Some seem to feel that if "an Eldership," decides to do a thing, their decision makes it right. If that were true we could bring in the brass-band, sprinkle babies, and do most anything we desire.

so "We want the Scripture for Orphan Homes, Meeting houses, preacher's salaries...." I have heard these Brethren cry loud and long: Jesus went down into the water, as evidenced by His coming up out of it. Of course, that is right. The command to Worship, Preach the Word to ever creature etc. evidences the need of ways and means. I have never considered myself a writer; but if some of these arguments get much weaker I think I shall, during an afternoon "nap," answer a half dozen of them.

Did I hear somebody say that somebody said that the Lufkin preachers were the only ones who had failed to cooperate? I don't need to tell you that "That Ain't So," But it Ain't!

As far as the outcome of the issue is concerned, it matters little where I stand; but as far as matters of fact and truth are concerned, I want all to know that I, and the Brethren here, are fully behind you and shall continue to fight for the truth.—Chas. L. Heron, Arlington, Texas.

* * *

I have just read the last issue of the BANNER with much interest. I am persuaded you have been and now are doing much good through this medium. By all means every preacher and elder should read the BANNER.—T. H. Tarbet, Jr., Richmond, Va.
Some queer goings on have been appearing in the Gospel Advocate and the Firm Foundation of late in connection with what has come to be known as “the college question.” The responsibility, as far as I am concerned, rests with the writers who are saying the odd things. There is no difference between us and the Firm Foundation on “the principle and the law” as far as I know. The editor has spoken out against putting the schools in the budgets of the churches. I do not know how the editor of the Gospel Advocate stands on the matter. If he has said, I have overlooked it.

Whatever a man’s honest convictions are, even if he is honestly wrong, he ought to speak and write with some degree of sanity and regard for reason. He should manifest some poise and at least be tolerably balanced. We do not expect perfection along this line but we cannot think up a good excuse for going hog-wild.

Brother W. L. Totty in the Gospel Advocate wants to “Let there be Light” and thinks the way to do it is to have a big debate between G. C. Brewer and Foy Wallace. Being a humble sort of fellow, he proposes to write the propositions for both sides and turn Foy over to the “tender mercies of the gentle tongue of G. C. Brewer.” Then in the cockiest sort of way he asks: “Will he let it ‘pass’?” My first three guesses is that he will. He has never been known to grobble up irresponsible challenges with silly propositions written by the opposition. There isn’t anything ignoble about passing a bantam crowing on a fence.

Imagine a man who thinks he is a debater demanding that an affimant affirm that his “position” is the only scriptural position.” He tacitly admits that our position is scriptural, but he thinks something else is. In that case who affirms? Since Brother Totty doesn’t seem to know, somebody ought to tell him.

In the first place, the Bible Banner has no way to prescribe for operating the schools, much less the only way. Brother Hardeman says they are human and private business institutions some what like a hardware store, only they are selling education. They are not church institutions. Let those who operate them do so anyway they please, but stay off the church. This appears to be both reasonable and scriptural. Brother Totty thinks this is “Sommerism.” Well, honestly, I didn’t know it. Is it possible that I have been a “Sommerite” for lo, these many years and didn’t even know it? I admit I haven’t had much “trick” with “Sommerites.” I have seen only a very few in my whole life and they appeared to be fairly nice people. The strange creatures Brother Totty has been tangled up with must be pretty potent in view of the jimminy fits Brother Totty has when somebody like us reminds him of them. Something poison must have bit him.

The clumsy effort to scare us and confuse the brethren with the bogey-man of “Sommerism” is both thin and silly. Brewer “bluff,” Totty “bluff,” Hardeman “bluff” or what have you, it won’t affect anybody favorably who has a brain cell working. “But the Sommerites have always flocked to Wallace” according to Brother Totty. That might be classified as “lugubrious howling.” Besides what else is wrong with the statement it is false. Because “the Sommerites have always flocked to Wallace” Brother Totty thinks the churches ought to put the colleges in their budgets. He is a debater you know and admits it. Brewer, Hardeman and Totty always stick to the issue! The thought of “Sommerism” doesn’t make me have spasms like it does Brother Brewer and Brother Totty. It even seems to make Brother Hardeman act a little batty of late. My impression has always been that a dyed-in-the-wool “Sommerite” would not fellowship either Brother Totty or me. I admit, however, that Brother Totty is a little harder to fellowship than I am. I don’t hate ‘em like he appears to, and if they want to flock to
me with “the position” I occupy, I’ll give the whole shebang the right hand of fellowship. Besides, “the Sommerites” have not “always flocked to Wallace” as our agitated brother avers. The old he himself, the daddy of them all, started this flocking business to Brother Hardeman not very many years ago. Brother Hardeman was so tickled that he and Brother Briganic, who by the way does most of Brother Har-de-man’s writing for him, broke out in paens of print and declared that no difference worth speaking of existed between them and Brother Sommer. They even accepted Brother Sommer’s objections to the church going into the school business and took the same position then that we do now. Brother Hardeman declared that his sentiments and those associated with his had “ever been thus” or something to that effect. He liked Brother Sommer then a lot more than he did Brother Brewer and Brother Brewer didn’t like either one of them any better than they did him. Brother Hardeman said along about then:

“I certainly do not in-dorse Brother Brewer’s statements and would oppose any congregation putting Freed-Hardeman in their budgets. Such has ever been our sentiments."

He says that neither he nor Brother Brewer has changed. They are tied together now. I suggest that if Brother Tatty really wants to have some fun that he hang them over a clothes line and let them scratch it out. It develops that Brother Brewer is as full of contradictions as Brother Hardeman is. He cannot very well affirm anything now. After all his “bluff” about wanting to debate just anybody, he refused to sign up with Brother Otey for the discussion of a specific proposition. No, he doesn’t want to debate.

It hasn’t been too long since we were both “safe” and “sound.” Brother H. Leo Boles challenged us for a debate on the “war question.” He insisted on writing out an affirmative proposition for us and would accept nothing else. We very properly, Brother Hardeman and Brother Tatty thought, declined to affirm an unfair proposition. Brother Hardeman thought our handling of the Boles proposition was “well put.” Brother Tatty is rabidly against the conscientious objectors. In fact some well-informed brethren who know him think he is rabid about everything he goes at. So now since he is playing the role of valet for Brother Brewer, he adopts Brother Boles’ way of challenging, only worse, crows as much like Brother Brewer as he knows how. We have been chided before for cowardice in declining to debate screwy propositions. We did not fall for it then and will not fall for it now. Mayb.3 Brother Hardeman would now li’te to affirm “Brother Brewer’s statements.” They seem to be in perfect agreement, on “the law and the principle."

A late issue of the American Christian Review offers some evidence that the Sommerites are about to take wing and flock away from Wallace.

“Usually accurate and fair, yet the Bible Banner (June ‘47) stoops to give space to that lile that because Daniel Sommer wasn’t chosen head of Potter Bible College, Sommer began to oppose such misnamed schools. Well, if that’s the way the Banner chooses to play, the readers can expect just any thing from now on. . . but it does seem just too bad that a good journalistic reputation has to be soiled and so lightly tossed aside by catering to a fellow who hates the memory of Daniel Sommer more than he loves truth.”

Now, wait a minute. You are hot under the collar. You should have cooled off a bit before you let the printer get hold of that. Maybe we are not as bad as you think we are. It is real refreshing to find somebody, even “a Sommerite” who thinks we have been “usually accurate and fair” and admits that we have had “a good journalistic reputation” is so hard to establish and maintain that I didn’t even know we had it. I know a lot of nice people who think we don’t, but I have always consoled myself with the fact that it is plenty hard to tell the truth all the time and maintain “a good journalistic reputation” at the same time. So we decided to let the journalistic reputation go hang. I lost my journalistic reputation several years ago and never even stopped to go back and look for it. It’s upkeep is too expensive anyway. Besides the thing never did fit me. It was too narrow in the middle and too short at both ends. It required that I be too nice to some folks who didn’t deserve it. I think we are entitled to a “stop” now and then according to the law of averages, but we ought always to be “accurate and fair” or at least try to be, and believe me we do try. Now, “that lie” or any other lie ought not to be published. If Brother Campbell “hates the memory of Daniel Sommer more than he loves truth” he ought to quit it and go to loving is enemies. And I get the impression that the Review maybe doesn’t love Brother Campbell as much as it ought to. A little bird whispered to me that it doesn’t love Brother Tatty much either. Aside from “the law and the principle” I can’t say that I blame it much. Brother Tatty is a little hard to love at times. But then you know the Lord loves and chastens at the same time. Now about “that lie.” Brother Campbell obviously thinks it is true. The Review thinks it knows that it is an old “lie.” I have heard it off and on all my life and still don’t know whether it is so or not. It is easy for some people to believe, hard for
others, and impossible for still others. I personally never did put much stock by it and I hope the Review is right and Brother Campbell and others are mistaken. It'll do to quit talking about anyhow. I met Daniel Sommer one time and had a conversation with him. I heard him make a brilliant speech. I liked him. He used to make me pretty sore at times, but then I'm doing the same thing to other folks at times, or oftener. Brother Showalter says that Brother Armstrong told him that:

“He had his debates with Daniel Sommer on the college question years ago, but that, as the schools are now going, Sommer was, after all, largely correct in his criticisms.”

The chances are that Brother Armstrong and Brother Sommer would have gotten along pretty well together in their later years. Both have gone-to heaven we hope-and we can afford to let them both rest in peace. Now, the Review ought to cool off a bit and quit sobbing over our departed “journalistic reputation.” If it can help us keep the schools and Brother Brewer trimmed down to the size of their britches without going to an opposite extreme just as bad or worse, we may yet be able to flock along together. You ought to be able to see where my “journalistic reputation” went to. At any rate we feel capable of giving Brother Totty’s challenge the same “well put” treatment we did Brother Boles’, without any help from the Review or anybody else.

We saw something else in the Firm Foundation I suppose should be classified as an “odd.” Brother M. V. Showalter, a brother of the editor of the Firm Foundation seems to be out of step with both his brother and us. His “observation” is that “treatments of this topic manifest strongly a preacher-writer ecclesiasticism in the church today.” He thinks that we writers “seem never to care” what elders of the churches think and that we “expect those men to accept without question the writers’ opinions.” So his solution is to quit writing and let the elders of the churches decide these matters. Simple, isn’t it? My impression has always been that such matters ought to be decided according to “the law and principle” laid down in the New Testament. As a preacher and a writer, if I think the elders decide wrong by what principle am I to be “esteemed” from saying so? There may be an elder here and there who knows more than I do, but I doubt it. Now, don’t get me wrong. I have “submitted” to a number of elders who didn’t know half as much as I do. I never take charge of a church where I preach and if Brother H rdeman and Brother Brewer are a mind to and keep snooping around they are liable to find some church I have preached for doing some things I did not and do not endorse. If expressing my honest convictions contributes to the building up of “a preacher-writer ecclesiasticism in the church today” I don’t know that I can hold it. What does Brother Showalter think an editor should do? Personally, I don’t think I have as much influence with the elders of the churches as he seems to think I have. My “observation” is that if elders think I’m right they act accordingly and if they think I’m wrong they follow their own “think” in the matter. Churches and elders quite generally do as they please. Even if all elders should put the colleges in their budgets. I still reserve the right to express the conviction that they are wrong in that action. What would have happened if the pioneers had kept quiet and let the elders decide whether or not to have the instrument in the worship? Or whether to put the missionary society in its budget? Brother Showalter has made an odd suggestion. I think he has made a very, very lame excuse for an unscriptural practice. He will, of course, continue to think as he pleases. In this case we agree with the practices of his brother, the editor of the Firm Foundation.

Brother Frank Cox of the Firm Foundation thinks “we are discussing dead issues” that “should have long ago been buried” and that we should quit it and go to fighting the Catholics. The editor of the Firm Foundation is right and Frank is wrong. These are not “dead issues.” It is refreshing and encouraging to find Frank even willing to fight the Catholics. He will probably write a sermon outline and print a prayer occasionally against the Catholics, which they will never see, but we will continue to discuss any issue we think affects the church even if Frank does think it “dead.” I may try to regain my “journalistic reputation” some day but it has never occurred to me that Frank could be of much help to me along that line. He doesn’t like “tirades or abusive” language. Neither do I and I glad Frank has changed. I recall that a few years ago when the Christian Soldier made precisely that sort of attack on us, it tickled Frank so that he ordered two hundred and fifty copies. That is the issue that G. C. Brewer circulated in the Lubbock church. I’m glad to hear that he lost his taste for that sort of thing.

Now, that we have looked over some of the “odds,” there is one thing appearing in the Firm Foundation in several installments that may be called an “end.” Brother S. H. Hall has thought the thing “through.” As usual Brother Hall always dreams and talks big things, even when he is talking about what he has done in Atlanta and elsewhere. He thinks the church ought to go into the school business on a big scale and can never touch the hem of the garment of the great commission until it does so. It appears not to have occurred to him that the early church carried out the great commission without going into the school business. He thinks we ought to have at
least one thousand schools and really outdo the Catholics in that respect. The church should provide for and oversee the education of all the children of its members. That education should include everything from elementary to advanced training in all “honest occupations.” If a man wants to be a doctor or an engineer the church ought to have a school where he can get the training he needs. He doesn’t enter into a discussion of how the details of such a huge program could be made to fit into the simplicity of the New Testament order and the obvious mission of the church. I think Brother Hall just had a brainstorm. If he had been a Methodist, he would doubtless have been made a bishop. Personally, I’m thankful that we have a tax-supported public school system which offers high-class educational advantages to our children and that the church is free to concentrate on its divinely appointed mission of preaching the gospel to the lost: and relieving the needs of the poor.

HERE LIES THE ISSUE
ROY E. COGDILL

In the current controversy over the matter of whether congregations of the Lords church can scripturally support schools in which the Bible is taught, there are a lot of people who think that perhaps the issue is not a great or important one, and therefore they do not need to give it much attention or concern. Still others are of the disposition to dismiss it with the wave of the hand, and say that it is only a lot of “personalities,” and if we all loved each other as we should there wouldn’t be any question raised. They forget that brotherly love cannot decide whether or not a man should be baptized for the remission of sins, whether the Lord is now King, or will become King when He comes again, and whether or not the Church has the right to go into the school business. Such things must be settled upon a scriptural basis for all those who regard the Word of God. Ambiguity, sophistry, downright dishonesty in dealing with the issue at hand, insincerity and a number of other things cannot be overlooked. Keep your mind on the issue and search for the truth on it that you might be well pleasing to God. Remember that the cause of truth and righteousness is more important than any man.

As far as men are concerned, there are some who will not know where they stand, nor will anybody else know, until the weight of sentiment is so pronounced that they cannot fail to sense it. It has always been that way. Sentiment has forced many a man to take a position on an issue vital to the Church, after the fight was largely over and won. There are those in certain quarters now who are shouting against “Premil-lenial” teaching who in the thick of the fight did not lift their voice against it. They have simply climbed on the bandwagon. Th-n there are those who “knuckle down” to the weight of the sentiment because they think it is the advisable or political thing to do. Give them confidence in their own “bigness,” and they will not even “knuckle” to the Lord. The time will not come when men who are interested in the truth and the right will not have to battle for it. We need to examine our own convictions and their foundation, struggle to know the truth and then with all the courage and strength of our souls, stand for only that which is right.

What Has Changed the Attitude of the Schools?
We have asked before and we ask again, what has changed the attitude of the school men toward the matter? What new truth have they discovered that men like Srygley, Lipscomb, and others did not know and could not find out? The schools are asking for millions where they were just asking for thousands. There is a race on to expand, and in their thirst for money and growth, it is altogether likely they are easily convinced that any way they can get it is justifiable. They seemed to be controlled by policy rather than principle. If the right of individuals to maintain a school where the Bible is taught was a principle with them in the early days of their existence, and they were sincere in such a contention, then it is still a principle that should be recognized for principles do not change.

Have They Changed?
This must be accepted as a fact, they have changed. Brother G. C. Brewer was among the first in my recollection to advance the idea that congregations have the right to contribute to human organizations such as schools. He championed the cause as far back as 1935. No one paid too much attention to him then because it was not a known fact that the schools were of the same sentiment, and had been practicing it to some extent for some years. The situation now indicates that they have converted each other on the matter for Brother Brewer and the schools have swapped positions. Whereas he now disavows that he favors putting the schools in the budgets of the churches, he formerly contended for it as witnessed in the Gospel Advocate of August 1, 1935. The schools that as recently as 1938 disavowed advocating their right to church support are now opening soliciting it, and there isn’t an exception perhaps to the fact that they are receiving such contributions when they are offered.
In response to a public question which I asked Brother N. B. Hardeman in a service at the Edgefield Church during the Dallas lectures just a few short years ago, he replied: “Freed Hardeman has never asked the congregations for contributions.” Of course, Brother Douthitt, who was for years the financial agent for the Freed-Hardeman College says for years both he and Brother Hardeman had asked the churches for support, and had actually taken notes from churches made out to the school. He still has several thousands of dollars of such notes as evidence. He is at least one who, “doing it did not deny it.” I guess Brother Hardeman just forgot what they had been doing for years when he replied to that public question.

Brother Hardeman thinks because we taught school here in Lufkin last winter with subjects directly related to the work of a preacher they have the right to put all they teach at Hardeman College says for years both he and Brother Hardeman had asked the churches for support, and had actually taken notes from churches made out to the school. He still has several thousands of dollars of such notes as evidence. He is at least one who, “doing it did not deny it.” I guess Brother Hardeman just forgot what they had been doing for years when he replied to that public question.

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Abilene Christian College has called a state wide rally for this next Sunday afternoon (October 5th). They invited brethren from all over the state, including one of the elders of the Lufkin congregation, to leave their work at home, and come to the school for a meeting on the Lord’s Day afternoon. What they intend to decide upon as a matter of policy I do not know. If such a meeting has anything to do with the present controversy, then they are no more justified in calling such a meeting trying to politic they way out of the situation they are in than the Bible Banner has to call such a meeting of the brethren to try to build up sentiment for the position that we occupy. Talk about “Dictatorship”—wouldn’t they howl about us trying to dictate to the brethren if we were to hold such a convention. There isn’t any question about the opposition we would get to such a move as that if we were to try it, which we won’t. Neither is there any question about their trying to control the churches and preachers through appealing to the brethren, and particularly the brethren who are men of considerable means financially. When any preacher raises his voice against Abilene Christian College, and most of the rest I presume to be of about the same disposition, he is put on the black list as far as any recognition by them is concerned, and there are instances of them using their influence in other ways, too. Rallies can not change principles and they will not find their way back into the good graces of the brethren who are opposed to the Church working through human institutions until they renounce such even as a matter of “policy” and correct their practice. I firmly believe they are in the process of finding this out.

Of course, as far as David Lipscomb College is concerned there is nothing astonishing about their softness in this matter. They have decided upon the course of judiciously keeping their peace until the matter blows over. They count themselves so big and strong now that they do not have to listen to the voice of any one in such matters. They have grown until they are making the pattern now instead of “knuckling” to the point of following one. They long ago gave their endorsement to the practice of raising money from any one who would give it for any reason. Two years ago last January, their official family gave their unqualified endorsement to the proposition of the schools being the work of the Church and the Church therefore having the right to support it as such. They have followed it as a matter of practice without openly advocating it for some time.

Brother Athens Clay Bullias, the recently selected president of the school, has not announced his attitude on the matter, and if he follows his usual course, he will not do so until the voice of the majority has been heard. Scarcely any one
knew where Brother Pullias stood on the pre-
millennial fight until the smoke of the battle had
about cleared away, and the victory was assured.
He made it then the vehicle upon which he rode
into control of affairs at David Lipscomb Col-
lege, and he has been shouting about “Premil-
ennialism” ever since. He has even been joined
in such shouting by S. H. Hall, who by many of
the brethren had almost been “quit claimed” to
the “Pre-mill” brethren until his voice was re-
cently raised on the matter. If we can win this
fight on the school issue, it may be that we will
get both Brother Hall and Brother Pullias on the
right side of it eventually. They may even be-
come as “strong” against church support for
schools as they have against the false doctrine
of Premillennialism. We can rejoice with Paul
even when brethren have to be persuaded to
preach the Gospel and stand for the truth: ‘Whether in pretense or truth, Christ is preach-
ed.”

The Issue in Demonstration

In the following quotations we are able to
see the matter in actual demonstration. Here is the picture of two congregations of considerable
size, and their convictions as well as their prac-
tice concerning the issue of the church contrib-
uting to human institutions.

From “The Visitor” published by the Char-
lotte Avenue Church of Christ, which reputedly
has 1300 members, where Brother Athens Clay
Pullias preachéd for twelve or thirteen years,
and where Brother Willard G. Collins, vice-pres-
ident of David Lipscomb College now preaches,
we clip the following:

“All the contribution last Sunday was given to
THE EXPANSION PROGRAM OF DAVID LIPSCOMB COLLEGE. This was in keeping
with our custom of giving the fifth Sunday’s
offering to one of our institutions. The amount
given was $558.79, which was considerably more
than the average contribution. Wouldn’t it be
interesting to watch the influence of this money
during the next hundred years?”

From another line in the same bulletin:

“The auditorium was well filled Sunday, Aug-
ust 31, when Brother Pullias taught an inspiring
lesson on ‘Christian Education,’ stressing the ob-
ligation of the church and the home in the train-
ing of our young people.”

Brother Pullias must have stressed the place of
David Lipscomb College in the obligation of the
church toward training the young people for
the whole contribution, which was more liberal
than ordinary, was given to the school: “In keep-
ing with our custom of giving the fifth Sunday’s
offering to one of our institutions.” There the
matter is in demonstration. David Lipscomb is
one of Our Institutions—that is, it belongs to
the church, and should be supported by the
church. That is the practice of this church, and
of course the fruit of the preaching they have had
through the years and are getting now. Wonder
what other institutions we have that they sup-
port? Do they support Brother Morehead’s one
man missionary society? If the benevolent work
of the church can be done scripturally through a
benevolent institution other than the church, and
if the educational work of the church can be done
through an institution other than the church,
why can’t the missionary work of the church be
done through some other institution than the
church? In that case the church could do all
of its work through something else, and all the
church would need to do would be raise the money
to support these other institutions. Isn’t that
a pretty picture? Let Brother Pullias break his
silence and tell us why that couldn’t be done just
as acceptably as what he is doing, if he can. If
he doesn’t want to undertake the job, then per-
haps his man Friday, Brother Willard Collins,
will.

Now in sharp contrast notice the following
statement from the Old Hickory, Tennessee,
church which is just a few miles outside the city
limits of Nashville:

“The elders of the Old Hickory Church of
Christ decided in a business meeting held the
night of September 5, 1947, that no representa-
tive of David Lipscomb College could raise money
from even individuals in the Old Hickory Church
with the approval of the elders of the Old Hick-
ory Church, until such time as the matter of col-
leges asking for and receiving from church treasur-
ies funds for the support of colleges is corrected.
Signed: Rufus R. Clifford.”

This is a picture of a congregation whose stand
for truth and right has never been called in
question. These elders who made such a decision
are men of deep conviction and a clear concep-
tion of New Testament teaching. They have
ever been interested in only what is truth and
right, and have always had the courage to stand
for it. Their influence is far reaching. Other
congregations in Tennessee have taken and are
taking the same stand. The time has come for
both churches and preachers to let their con-
victions be known about this matter.

What Is the Evidence Offered?

Just one glimpse through the contentions that
have been made by those who are in favor of
the churches supporting the schools is revealing.
They are almost an exact parallel to the argu-
ments that have been offered to justify instru-
mental music and the missionary societies all the
way through. They work no better in the sup-
port of the schools as church institutions than
they do in support of instrumental music and
missionary societies in the church of the Lord.

1. They have argued that if the congregations
want to contribute they have the right to do so,
and you are dictating when you teach them that
they ave no scriptural right to do it. This is the flimsiest kind of nonsense scripturally and otherwise. When did it get to be dictating to teach the church its duty? If that be true, any gospel preacher that does his duty is a dictator. You would be dictating when you preach that unless a man obeys the gospel he will be lost according to that kind of reasoning. The church has the right to decide nothing through its elders or otherwise when it comes to the truth of any proposition. Whether a thing is right or wrong cannot be decided by a popular vote of the congregation or in the council of the elders. God has decided that, and His Word is the law. Every Christian is bound by it, and no one has the right to decide it any other way. Can a congregation decide whether or not it is right to use instrumental music in its worship? Would it be dictating to the church when I condemn and teach against it? If not, then the contention fails. We are capable of better thinking than that. Such a rule would destroy the authority of the Bible, and would leave the standard of right and wrong to be determined by each congregation for its own locality.

2. Others have argued that if an individual can support the schools, then the church can do so. This is on a par with the digressives' argument that because you have music in the home, you should put it in the worship of the church. When you answer one you will answer the other. Whoever can not see that there are a multitude of things that an individual can do that the church has no business trying to do, doesn't have his eyes open. Because I am a member of the Church of the Lord, does not mean that the church can take over my responsibilities and position in all the other relationships of life. The church can not make a living for my family as long as I am able to do so. The church can not run my business—not even if I am in the school business. The church would have the right to underwrite the business of any individual Christian, and help direct its affairs on just the same basis that it would have the right to underwrite a school someone started, and a group of brethren are interested in maintaining.

3. Others have said, “Show us where the Lord condemns it?” They need to learn to respect the silence of the Bible. “That is what we have preached to the digressives on instrumental music and the societies. We have argued for the divine mission of the church, its all-sufficiency for its task, that its mission is scriptural, doing God's work in God's way, that the Bible is a perfect revelation and furnishes a man unto every good work, etc., until it appears we should have convinced ourselves on such matters. If the principle of the silence of the scriptures is conclusive on instrumental music, and if the principle of the all sufficiency of the church is conclusive on human missionary societies, then why wouldn't such principles forever determine that the church has no scriptural right to do any of its work through an organization that is no part of God's arrangement, and is human in its every part?

4. We are told further that there is no principle of law involved in the practice of the churches supporting the schools, but that it is altogether a matter of expediency. Here is about the weakest suggestion that has been made, and it comes from one of our school presidents. Brother Hardeman in a recent article even takes the position that in order for a thing to be expedient, it does not have to be lawful. Paul states exactly the opposite as the doctrine of expediency. Among the “some seem to think that in order for a thing to be expedient it must be lawful,” is the Holy Spirit and Paul. I rather think that they are right about it, and Brother Hardeman wrong. Certainly all should know that an unlawful thing can not be a matter of expediency. It is an unlawful thing for the Church of the Lord to do its work through a human institution, and all the twisting and squirming that can be done will not put that in the realm of expediency. Instrumental music is unlawful, and that is the reason it can not be expedient. Societies, to do the work of the church, are unlawful, and therefore do not belong in the realm of expediency, whether missionary or educational.

5. But we are told there is no comparison between the missionary society and the school, and any mention of the missionary society is only for the purpose of arousing prejudice. Of course, they wouldn't use the cry “Sommerite” to arouse prejudice at all. They are all above a thing like that. There is but one point of difference that any one of them can show between the missionary society and the schools as they are operating today. That point of difference is only a matter of plan for organization. To all practical intents and purposes they are both doing the same kind of work, and the work of both, so far as it pertains to religious matters is work that God has delegated to His Church.

Here is a matter for study: Could the congregations of the Church of the Lord support a missionary project in Germany or Japan if it were organized exactly after the pattern of our schools? If they couldn't support one in Germany or Japan, then tell us how they can support one in Henderson, Nashville, or Abilene?

This business of the church supporting the schools is nothing short of a new invasion of digression. The spirit of digression has simply chosen another vehicle to get into the churches. Nothing short of a fight to the finish will stem the tide again. We need to look to our defenses, and “stand fast in the faith.”