

Correspondence of Daniel Sommer With Nathan H. Shepherd, J.B. Briney, J. H. Garrison, and J. A. Lord.

INTRODUCTORY.

"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that loveth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God." John 3:19-21.

FIRST LETTER

INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA, Feb. 24, 1900.

PREACHER SHEPHERD,

My Dear Sir: — I have been credibly informed that you discoursed last Lord's day night on the use of instrumental music in religious worship. I was also informed that you spent much of your time while thus discoursing, ridiculing the position of those who oppose the practice which you were then advocating. Such misconduct on your part suggests to me that I should, in behalf of truth and righteousness, propose that you and I publicly discuss the merits of this question of instrumental music in religious worship. I am

prepared to affirm and defend my position. Are you prepared to affirm and defend yours? If so, please inform me within a week from this date. Should you wish to select some one of your preaching brethren to represent your side of the question you may do so if the Seventh Christian Church will endorse him. I trust that you will consider my proposition favorably. In hope and prayer,

DANIEL SOMMER.

REPLY TO THE FOREGOING

INDIANAPOLIS, IND., March 2nd, 1900.

ELDER DANIEL SOMMER,

Indianapolis, Ind.

My Dear Sir and Brother:—Your kind favor of the 24th ultimo has been seriously considered for several days, and I now make answer to your suggestions in words and commands, which, to each of us, are indisputably from a Divine source of authority.

(1) "For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults." 2 Cor. 12:20,

(2) "And now I say unto you, Refrain from men, and let them alone; for if this counselor this work be of men, it will come to naught: But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it, lest haply ye be found even to fight against God." Acts 5: 38, 39.

Please put yourself and myself, alternately, in the above position on the side of truth and error and thence draw wise conclusions. Fraternaly, NATHAN H. SHEPPARD. SECOND LETTER. INDIANAPOLIS, Ind., Aug. 10, 1900 . NATHAN H. SHEPHERD: My Erring Brother:—When I received your letter of March 2nd, I concluded there from that you are one of

those preachers who will venture to set forth in the pulpit what they do not believe is defensible when examined by a well-informed respondent. As a result of reaching such conclusion I decided to leave you to the mercy of Him who will treat those aright who handle His word "deceitfully" and who for "filthy lucre's sake preach things that they ought not." But some time ago I heard a speech from you on the subject of moral reform, and was impressed that you can be bold when you think that you are right. As a result of receiving such impression I am disposed to write you another letter. In so doing I shall first consider your reasons for not accepting my proposition for public discussion of the instrumental music question, and then offer a few words of kind admonition.

1. Your quotation of 2 Cor. 12:20, in which Paul expressed himself as fearing that when he would come to the Corinthians he might find "debates" among them is wholly inapplicable to us and especially inappropriate for you to quote. The church at Corinth was divinely called "the church of God" for though in error yet it had ignorantly or innocently gone astray. This evident by the fact that it was willing to receive rebuke and reform (2 Cor. 7:8-11). But this is not true of the congregation called the "Seventh Christian Church" in this city. Its errors have been adopted in most, if not all instances, regardless of teaching offered and opportunities to learn the truth. It has refused reproof, and seems willing to receive your ridicule of those who would rebuke its errors. By reason of such misconduct the "Seventh Christian Church" in this city has separated itself widely from the position occupied by the church of God at Corinth. Then by such ridicule as you were guilty of when you preached in favor of instrumental music you further separated

yourself from the church of God in Christ meeting in North Indianapolis. This being true, the language of Paul against "debates" is not applicable to the condition of things in this city as implied in your letter. The church which you represent and the church which I represent are two *separate bodies of people*, and thus a debate between us would not be as a "debate" between those sincerely belonging to the same religious body. You would not be received into the pulpit of the church with which I am connected because you advocate certain practices not authorized in the New Testament, and I would not be received as a preacher for the church with which you are connected because I oppose such practices. With all this before your mind I trust that you will see and acknowledge your mistake in referring to what Paul says about "debates" in order to justify yourself in not accepting my proposition for debate.

2. Even if we were of the same religious body, yet you would represent those who have introduced the things which have occasioned "debates . . . wraths, strifes," etc., and thus it is with an ill-grace that any opposition to "debates" comes from you. You occupy a position with those who have introduced nearly all the occasions for "debates" between professed disciples of Christ and it illy becomes you to be opposed to debates among such, or in the disciple brotherhood.

3. Whoever is too pious to debate the instrumental music question should be too pious to ridicule and burlesque those who oppose such music in religious worship, when offered by disciples. It is very unfortunate for a preacher and for all who have confidence in him, if he be a mere pretender who will preach what he can not defend, and who will try to excuse himself in not debating by presenting reasons which are not just,

4. As for your quotation from Acts 5: 38, 39, which advises to let certain men alone, because if their counsel were of men it would come to nought, and if it were of God it could not be overthrown, I wish to say first of all that you should have thought of that advice before you preached, that sermon, of ridicule and burlesque against those who are satisfied without your instrumental music. Moreover you well know that your instrumental music is of men, and therefore both you and your people should have let it "alone." You are aware that the sixth chapter of Amos pronounces a "woe" upon those who "invent to themselves instruments of music like David." But this scripture you carefully avoid presenting to your people whom you are endeavoring to flatter into the confidence that they are right in having instrumental music in their worship simply because they enjoy it. The strongest argument ever presented in its favor is this: "We like it and don't see; any harm in it." The dance, the theater, and other forms of ungodliness are defended by the same sort of argument, which is but an expression of the flesh. Those who visit beer gardens and other places of ungodly resort use the same argument, and it is pitiable and unfortunate in the extreme for religious people to excuse themselves in practices unauthorized of Christ by such reasoning. An advocate of beer could stoop and squat and squint around a beer keg and say that some people thought that the devil was in a keg of beer but he "couldn't see it," even as you did in regard to the organ, when you preached in its favor. In so doing he could make as much fun for those favorable to beer as you made for those favorable to the organ. But is that method of procedure in harmony with the gospel? In conclusion I say to you, my erring brother, that from a gospel point of view the use of instrumental music

is an appeal to sensation and not to intellect. It is therefore an appeal to the flesh and is a deception, when measured by the gospel even as beer, or any other intoxicant, is an appeal to the flesh and is a deception when measured by principles of morality. If you doubt this it can be proved. The Old Testament says, "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken also." Habakkuk 2:15. The Old Testament also says, "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion that chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of music, like David." Amos 6:1, 5. Then the New Testament places "drunkenness" and "heresies" in the same list, and declares that they are "works of the flesh." Gal. 5:19-21. The word heresy means "choice or option" in religious matters as opposed to divine authority. Instrumental music in religious worship being a matter of choice and not a matter of divine authority, or even, of divine sanction under the gospel age, is a *heresy* and thus is a work of the flesh even as beer drinking is a work of the flesh. Both are used to gratify sensations of the flesh. The Old Testament pronounces a "woe" against both, and the New Testament says of both that "those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

Here I close my letter, trusting that you will seriously consider what I have presented. Do not preach what you feel unable to defend, and don't ridicule nor burlesque those who are satisfied with what Christ requires, and who by conviction oppose what he does not require, nor even sanction in his gospel. In hope and prayer,

DANIEL SOMMER

(No reply to the foregoing was ever received. D. S.)

THIRD LETTER.

INDIANAPOLIS, IND., March 29, 1900.

J. B. Briney:

Dear Sir and Brother:—I regard you as a man of conviction who has the confidence of his brethren, and I regard myself in the same light. You claim to understand the religious position which you hold, also the position held by myself, and I make the same claim for myself. But these positions positively differ in several important particulars, and I think that we are under obligation to the present generation of disciples, and to all who may live hereafter, likewise to mankind generally, to test the strength of our respective positions in joint discussion and set forth the results thereof in book form,

I am prepared to affirm that the churches with which I am connected, in name, doctrine, and practice exist by the authority of Jesus Christ. If you will affirm the same concerning the churches with which you are connected, I shall be glad to receive a communication, from you in writing with reference thereto.

Trusting that what I have proposed will meet your approval, I am, dear sir,
In hope and prayer,

DANIEL SOMMER

REPLY TO THE FOREGOING.

OWENSBORO, KY., April 2, 1900

DANIEL SOMMER,

Indianapolis, Ind.

Dear Sir and Brother:—I have read and carefully considered the document you placed in my hands in Indianapolis, and feel constrained to decline your proposition for the following reasons: 1. I do not recognize the state of things that your proposition implies. I am not aware that conditions exist such as would make you represent one set of churches and me another.

2. If such conditions do exist, I have no assurance that the churches that you would represent occupy a position before the public in point of numbers, intelligence, and influence, that would entitle them to the recognition you seek.

3. If such conditions do exist, I am obliged to regard you as a factionist, and your churches as factions, and therefore not entitled to recognition. In the body of Christ you would be entitled to your opinions, and might hold them and at the same time claim and receive the respect of the brethren. But when you create a schism with your opinions, and carry off a faction, you place yourself under the severest censure of Scripture, and forfeit all claims upon the consideration of the brethren. Truly, etc.,

J. B. BRINEY.

FOURTH LETTER

INDIANAPOLIS, IND., April 10, 1900.

ELDER J. B. BRINEY,

PARIS, MO.

My Dear Sir:—Your response of April 2nd is before me. Had such a document come to me from a college stripling burdened with conceit it would not have surprised me by its contents, but from you it is a matter of surprise. I give you my reasons for thus writing.

1. You say that you are "not aware that conditions exist such as would make" me "represent one set of churches" and you "another." In answer I state that this is your fault. You ought to know that there are thousands of churches which consist of Christ's disciples that would not receive you into their pulpits because of your sympathy with things; unauthorized of Christ, also that there are thousands of churches claiming to consist of Christ's disciples which would exclude me from their pulpits because of my opposition to such

things. You ought to be better informed.

2. You state that "if such conditions do exist" as I have represented you "have no assurance that the churches that" I "would represent occupy a position before the public in point of numbers, intelligence, and influence, that would entitle them to the recognition" I "seek," In answer to this I state that here again your information is at fault The missionary conventions which you favor and I oppose report that about three-fifths of the churches of the entire disciple brotherhood do not contribute to their support, notwithstanding all the apportioning and begging that are done. *I represent those three-fifths.* As for "intelligence" I briefly state that if you mean acquaintance with the Bible, the churches which I represent might each be divided into halves, and the less intelligent half would compare favorably with the churches which you would represent in the discussion which I have proposed. I attended six sessions of the recent religious congress in this city and not once did I see a Bible opened except when I opened my own. But I heard flashes of wit, clapping of hands, and laughing such as would better become apolitical gathering than a religious assembly. On the principle of what has just been stated I answer what your letter says about "influence." If you mean influence in the direction of a godly life we can again divide each church into halves, and the lower half will compare favorably with the churches which you represent. In conclusion on this point I mention that any other kind of "intelligence" and "influence" than that which is scriptural should have no place as an argument or objection in our correspondence.

3. I now come to deal with your statement that if I do represent one class of churches while you represent another, you will be "obliged to regard" me as "a

factionist" and the "churches" which I represent "as factions." To this you add that to "create a schism with" my "opinions, and carry off a faction," places me "under the severest censure of scripture," and that I thereby "forfeit all claims upon the consideration of the brethren" Such statements inform me that you have a just conception of the condemnable character of a "factionist, "and as Nathan said to David, "Thou art the man." Read the following from the first number of the *Christian Baptist* concerning the primitive saints: "Their churches were not fractured into missionary societies, Bible societies, education societies; nor did they dream of organizing such in the world. The head of a believing household was not in those days a president or manager of a board of foreign missions; his wife, the president of some female education society; his eldest son, the recording secretary of some domestic Bible society; his servant maid, the vice-president of a rag-society; and his little daughter, a tutoress of a Sunday school. They knew nothing of the hobbies of modern times. In their church capacity alone they moved. They neither transformed themselves into any other kind of association, nor did they fracture and sever themselves into divers societies." Thus Alexander Campbell expressed himself in the year 1823, and on the principles then set forth he established churches of Christ for a quarter of a century. What he then said concerning the primitive churches *you and I both admit to be correct*. Now, who has departed from that position—*you or I? If you say that I have, then I stand ready to convict you of falsehood. If you say that you have not departed therefrom, then. I again stand ready to convict you of falsehood. Moreover, if you affirm that the churches which I represent have departed from the position of the churches of*

Christ in the first century or their position for about twenty-five years of the present century, or if you *deny* that the churches which you represent have departed from that position—in either case I am prepared to convict you of falsehood. Thus when you define "factionist" as one who has departed from the faith, I say again, "Thou art the man." When you define a "faction" to consist of those who have departed from the original position, I say that the churches which you represent are the "factions." In this conclusion I am not alone. As evidence I refer you to the 528th page of the *Christian Baptist*. In the second column thereof Bro. Campbell wrote thus: "He makes no schism who does no more than the Lord commands. . . . It is he who makes a new institution . . . that makes the schism. It was not he that obeyed the first commandment, but he that made the golden calf, that made confusion in Israel."

Did Alexander Campbell tell the truth in the above declarations? If so, did you tell the truth in charging me with being guilty of creating "a schism" in the body of disciples?

From the above-stated three-fold dilemma you will never extricate yourself, and for reasons which I need not here state I shall send you this letter by registered mail. In hope and prayer,

DANIEL SOMMER.

(No reply to the foregoing was ever received.)

FIFTH LETTER.

INDIANAPOLIS, IND., June 21, 1900.

J. H. GARRISON,

Dear Sir and Brother—Having become acquainted with you personally in course of the "Congress" held in this city several months ago I now write you on a subject which I trust will receive your prompt and serious attention. . . .

In view of the difference in the position of churches which you represent from that held by the churches which I represent I think that we are under obligation to these two classes of churches, and all other classes of mankind to test by the Sacred Text who is right. I claim that you and the churches which receive you are defections from the original apostolic position, and you seem to make a similar claim with reference to myself and the churches which receive me. I therefore propose that propositions be framed covering our respective positions in name, doctrine, and practices at the earliest convenient time, so that the proposed discussion may be held before the close of this year. Trusting that what I have set before you on this subject will receive your favorable attention, I am, dear sir, in hope and prayer,

DANIEL SOMMER.

REPLY TO THE FOREGOING.

MACATAWA, MICH.,

June 26, 1900.

MR. DANIEL SOMMER,

Publisher Octographic Review, Indianapolis, Ind. Dear Brother:—Yours of the 21st has reached me here at this place. In answer to same I beg leave to say, in the first place, that I have no taste nor talent for the kind of discussion which you propose. In the second place there are no well-defined issues that I know of that could be discussed. I suppose we both believe in the restoration of the Christianity taught by Christ and his apostles! The only difference is you have some cranky notions about organs and missionary societies in which you differ from the great body of your brethren and the number with you is decreasing constantly. These are obsolete questions. They will settle themselves in so far as they are not completely settled, by time, increase of knowledge and of true re-

ligion. In the third place, any discussion between us would tend to widen the chasm rather than to close it up. And finally, I have no time for that sort of business. I am engaged in trying to build up the readers of the Christian Evangelist in the things which abide— faith, hope and love—and in helping them to cultivate and embody a higher type of Christian life.

Hoping you may outgrow the crotchets which have done so much to injure the cause and divide your brethren, I remain, Yours fraternally,

J. H. GARRISON.

SIXTH LETTER.

INDIANAPOLIS, IND.,

Aug. 10, 1900.

J. H. GARRISON,

My Erring Brother:—Your letter of June 26th reached me by due course of mail. In answer thereto I notice your several statements in their order.

1. You say that you have "no taste nor talent for the kind of discussion" which I "propose." To this I would readily assent should I judge by that low and scurrilous series of articles which you printed over the signature "Hezekiah Hobson" several years ago, and which I strongly suspect were written by yourself. But I have seen more dignified documents from your pen in which you manifested both "taste" and "talent" for a respectable discussion of important subjects.

2. You say that "there are no well-defined issues that" you "know of that could be discussed." This is your misfortune, or, more correctly, *your fault*. There are several "well-defined issues" which may be variously stated in general or specific propositions. For instance, I believe that the gospel is as perfect a guide for the saint in regard to *worship and work* as it is for the sinner to *bring him to Christ*, but you *do not thus believe*. As an outgrowth of this general difference there are, probably, a dozen special points of difference. Thus

you see that your information is seriously at fault, and that you have wrapped yourself in a security that is certainly false.

3. You also say that you "suppose that we both believe in the restoration of the Christianity taught by Christ and his apostles." I am sure that I thus believe, and judging by your words and works in certain directions I am equally certain that *you do not* thus believe, except perhaps in regard to a few first principles. No man who has not given evidence of repenting of publishing such a document as "The Beanville Church, by Hezekiah Hobson," can cause me to believe that he is ever seriously religious, except, perhaps, on special occasions. Such ridicule of Christ's humble disciples is nothing less than ridiculing Christ. (See Matt. 23: 27, 28.)

4. You further say that "the only difference" between us "is that" I "have some cranky notions about organs and missionary societies." If to be satisfied with divine authority and to oppose practices not divinely authorized in connection with religious worship and work not divinely authorized be a mark of "cranky notions" then Alexander Campbell had such during the strength of his manhood, and the apostles had such "notions" throughout their official work as apostles.

5. You further say of me, "And the number with you is decreasing constantly." Here you are wrong again, and you come as near being *altogether wrong* in what you have written me as any one who has ever addressed me by letter. The churches of Christ are increasing more rapidly than you and all other innovators are able to pervert them. Moreover we are beginning to reoccupy fields which innovators had largely taken. In addition to this I mention that eight-page weekly journals are being established among churches of Christ at

a rate that is surprising.

6. You say of "organs and missionary societies" that these are obsolete questions." This is an exhibition of recklessness on your part, my dear erring brother. It is not only *not true*, but is the very reverse of truth for you thus to write. Even where those questions were supposed to be settled, they are, in some instances, coming up as living themes because of the evil results that have followed the introduction of "organs and missionary societies."

7. You also say that so far as those questions "are not completely settled, by increase of knowledge and true religion" "they will settle themselves." If by "true religion" you mean the religion which is "pure and undefiled" you must know that it requires of Christians that they keep themselves "unspotted from the world." Those who do this will try to keep themselves from such devices in religion as are suggested and sustained by a worldly spirit. As a result "organs" and man-made "missionary societies" will be ruled out. You are well aware that the organ was introduced among professed Christians by the Roman Catholic church, while "missionary societies" as distinct organizations were introduced by churches which sprang from Roman Catholics and which are not mentioned in the word of God. Therefore those institutions have, to say the least, had an unscriptural origin, and they are yielding unscriptural results in dividing churches.

8. In regard to what you say about "trying to build up the readers of the Christian Evangelist in the things which abide—faith, hope, and love," I simply state that if you mean the "faith, hope, and love" required by the "gospel there must first be a reformation in its editor before much success will be made in that direction.

Does the gospel teach you to charge those with having "cranky notions," and "crotchets" which "injure the cause and divide the brethren," simply because they are satisfied with what is divinely authorized and oppose human devices in religious worship and work? I may further ask, Does the gospel teach you to write or even print such low-grade literature as the previously mentioned tract, titled, "The Beanville Church," or to speak of such literature as is found in the journal called *Octographic Review* "as "mad ravings?" I fear *for* you, my erring brother, lest your piety be of the kind which clamored for the life's blood of Jesus Christ and persecuted the apostles of Christ unto death. You have placed on record unmistakable marks of self-deception and you are in danger. Your decline to discuss the differences between us is an additional mark of self-deception. Your reasons for declining maybe satisfactory to you, but the Searcher of hearts knows your degree of responsibility. To my mind you give evidence of conscious weakness concerning your cause, and for that reason show unwillingness for it to be examined before those whom you regard as under your influence. In hope and prayer,

DANIEL SOMMER.

(No reply to the foregoing was ever received.—D. S):

SEVENTH LETTER.

INDIANAPOLIS, IND.,

June 21, 1900.

J. A. LORD,

Dear Sir and Brother:—Your aggressive writings as published in the *Standard* lead me to regard you as numbered with men of conviction. I claim to be of the same class. On this basis I address you and suggest that you and I are under obligation to the body of people known as "Disciples," and to mankind beyond this body, to test this question in a public discussion to be

afterwards printed in book form: *Are the churches with which you, are identified, or the churches with which I am identified defections from the original apostolic position?*

In order to test this question I propose that propositions fully covering our respective positions in name, doctrine and practices be framed, and other arrangements be made soon, so that the discussion may be held before the close of this year.

Trusting that what I have set forth on this subject will receive your serious and prompt attention, I am, dear sir, In hope and prayer,

DANIEL SOMMER.

REPLY TO THE FOREGOING.

CINCINNATI, OHIO,
June 29, 1900.

DANIEL SOMMER,
Indianapolis, Ind.

Dear Brother:—Your letter, with its proposition, received. I write this note to say that the matter will be duly considered, and I will write you at length later.

Faithfully your brother,
J. A. LORD.

EIGHTH LETTER.

INDIANAPOLIS, IND.,
July 16, 1900.

J. A. LORD,

Dear Sir and Brother:—Yours of June 29th is before me. It promises a letter of "length" for which I have been waiting. Others to whom I wrote on the same subject responded promptly. They seemed to find no difficulty in stating their "views." Why should you? In hope and prayer.

DANIEL SOMMER.

THE PROMISED REPLY.

CINCINNATI, Ohio, July 31, 1900. DANIEL SOMMER, Indianapolis, Indiana. Dear Brother:—You proposed the following as a subject of discussion between us: "Are the churches with

which you are identified, or the churches with which I am identified, defections from the original apostolic position?" Before answering, I took the time to inquire into your church relationships, so that I might know what you exactly represented. From your own sworn testimony—which I took the trouble to secure—I learn, first, that you admit that you were excluded from the church at Richwood, O., and that you afterward identified yourself with the congregation established in a hall at that place. Again, the natural inference is that you had trouble with the hall people, for you say that when you went to Indianapolis you took a letter from the church at Union Chapel, in Delaware Co., O. It seems that you did not take a letter of commendation from even the faction which met in the hall, and with which you identified yourself after your exclusion from the Richwood church. I learn further that after you went to Indianapolis you identified yourself with a congregation that had gone off from the 7th congregation, and that you had difficulties with even this factious congregation. I learn that the two other elders read a paper against you declaring non-fellowship with you because of insubordination. More than this, I learn from your testimony that while you are opposed to a majority rule in the churches, you appealed from a decision of the elders to secure a majority in your favor. You distinctly say in your testimony, "the majority do not rule," and yet you appeal from the authority of the elders to the majority of the congregation!

Now, if it were seen wise on general principles to enter upon a discussion with you, I would be very much perplexed to know what churches you are identified with, and whether or not you really represented any considerable number of churches of Christ or Christian congregations. Life is too short to waste time in

discussion with a factionist, especially when said factionist is not in harmony with the faction or factions which he presumes to represent. With your own statements, it seems to me that even you will see that it would be a waste of time for "men of conviction" to meet you in debate as the representative of any significant number of congregations or churches, for whatever might be the merits of any discussion held with you, its effect would be to give a stamp of respectability to a reputation which, so far as church relationships are concerned, is anything but creditable to its possessor.

But, if your personal church relationships were entirely regular and unobjectionable, there would still be a serious question of the wisdom of the discussion you propose, for in your proposition a most important fact is assumed, which I would be compelled to challenge. You assume that there is a body or group of churches committed to certain views and practices which separate them from another group of churches committed to other views and practices, and this assumption of yours would be challenged and would need discussion before we could come to your main proposition, would deny that there are any respectable number of churches that as churches are identified with certain peculiarities which you advocate. There are all too many congregations under the dominance of a few despotic elders and chief men, who, with a mistaken patience and longsuffering, and for the sake of peace, submit to the dictation of ignorant and egotistic leaders. But, so far as my observation goes, it is a rare thing to find a congregation of disciples of Christ heartily committed as a congregation, to the negations and peculiarities which you represent. It often happens that a whole church is dragooned into submission by

one head strong man, and the church gains a reputation of being anti-missionary. But, let this man die or move away, and better counsels at once prevail. The spiritual impulses of the brethren find natural expression and they fall in line with the majority in favor of every good and aggressive work. When the history of the movement that is sometimes denominated anti-ism is accurately written, it will be discovered that all the way through these much-maligned churches have been bullied and misrepresented by a coterie of agitators and spiritual despots with whom you have allied yourself. I totally disagree with you in your statement that you and I "are under obligation to the body of people known as 'disciples,' and to mankind beyond this body" to test the question as to what churches are defections from the original apostolic position. The course of events is doing this much better than it could be done in a public debate, even if the selected champions were thoroughly representative of the churches by which they might be selected. Purely intellectual and theological questions may be made, under proper conditions, subjects of debate, but questions of life and character and spiritual fruitage find their test in the activities of the people concerned. Jesus said, "Ye shall bear much fruit so shall ye be my disciples." By this measurement, a debate on the situation under consideration would be entirely a work of supererogation. The original apostolic position means preaching the gospel, declaring the whole counsel of God, telling sinners what they must do to be saved, edifying believers, bending our endeavors to reach the multitude and send the divine message to the whole creation, emphasizing the true church order where self-constituted leaders may not lord it over God's heritage, cultivating the spirit of brotherliness, being patient with one another-

er's shortcoming, and, in short, endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.

Taking our religious journals as in some sense representative of their respective constituencies, no debate is needed to settle the question of apostolicity, and by apostolicity here is meant preaching the plain, simple gospel—first principles, if you please—pleading for the union, of the people on the divine creed, proclaiming the proper scriptural independence of the Christian congregation, the liberty of believers to preach the word, without regard to societies or associations, and the utter condemnation of everything that exalts itself against the supreme and exclusive authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. Diatribes of doubt, distrust, and wholesale denunciation are not apostolic. The spirit of negation, seems to be the chief motive of all the journals representing the discordant phases of the movement which is built upon opposition to voluntary associations for preaching the gospel and on questions of congregational expediency. As a rule precious little room is taken in any of them to the preaching of an affirmative and simple gospel to show sinners and saints the way of life.

In view of all the facts stated, it would not be presumptive to answer all such modern. Sanballats as yourself in the manner of the prophet, "I am engaged in a great work, and cannot come down " "While this is a personal and private letter, in answer to one of the same character, I would have no objection to its being printed for public use, provided it were given as a whole.

Faithfully your brother,

J. A. LORD.

NINTH LETTER.

INDIANAPOLIS, IND.,

Aug. 10, 1900.

J. A. LORD,

My Erring Brother:—I supposed that your long de-

lay in answering my letter meant some kind of scheme to evade the discussion which I proposed, but I am not look for an attack up on my personal standing as a member of the body of Christ. Yet such an attack you make in the first paragraph of your letter, and continue it in your second paragraph, and I must say that such attack is strangely out of harmony with the fact that you address me as "Dear Brother." Then in your second paragraph you call me "a factionist" by implication and in the conclusion of your letter you speak of yourself as being "faithfully" my "brother." Such inconsistency is a slight index to the erroneousness of your entire letter which I shall now examine in detail.

1. In the first paragraph of your letter you pretend to state something of what you call my "sworn testimony." In strictness of speech this is an error. I don't *swear* when I give testimony before a court, but obey the scripture injunction to "swear not at all." I mark this as Error No. 1.

2. You say, "the natural inference is that "I" had trouble with the hall people" in Richwood, O.). You are wrong again. That is simply an uncharitable "inference" drawn by one who is in distress for objections to a man that he does not wish to meet in public discussion. But such an "inference" may be "natural" for you. I had no trouble with the "hall people" in Richwood where I held membership, and your statement on that subject is *uncharitable* when viewed in the light of the gospel, and *illogical* when viewed in the light of sound reasoning. I mark it down as Error No. 2.

3. In what you erroneously call my "sworn testimony" you say that I "admit that" I "was excluded from the church at Richwood." Here is another error, I admitted in my testimony before the court in Salem, Ind., that an attempt to exclude me was made

by a few persons in Richwood because of my opposition to certain Innovations. My testimony as given and explained on that occasion will convict you of Error .No. 3 in saying that I "admit" that I "was excluded from the church in Richwood."

4. You seem to be incapable of learning from the erroneously called "sworn testimony," which you say that you "took the trouble to secure," that after the farcical effort to take from me my membership in Richwood, that I established a congregation in a hall in that same town, also that at a later date by general consent of the members we disbanded and those who wished to do so took membership at Union Chapel about four miles distant If you have that testimony as I gave it, then you have all that to my credit which I have mentioned and more that bears in the same direction. If you have secured a garbled account thereof, then you have taken "the trouble to secure" something that is not correct. In either case you deserve to be charged with Error No. 4.

5. In regard to what you say about my testimony in relation to the difficulty in North Indianapolis I simply mention that when elders were selected here the question was, "What saith the scripture?" and by unanimous assent three men were chosen for the eldership. When it was ascertained that two of those men were, or had become, unscriptural characters, the same question was urged, and by unanimous assent those men were deposed from the eldership. If this does not appear in my testimony at Salem in this very form it was simply because an unscrupulous attorney so shaped his questions as to prevent it from thus appearing, or it was incorrectly reported. In either case you are wrong in trying to convict me of even an inconsistency in regard to that matter and justly deserve to be

charged with Error No. 5.

6. I now mention what you might know "to be my standing among the churches that are satisfied with what is given by divine authority for their guidance. *First*) I own and control the oldest religious journal published by the disciple brotherhood, and am not serving as a hireling on a paper owned by some one else. *Second*, this paper circulates in near or about every state in the Union, in near or about all the territories, in British America and beyond the Atlantic. *Third*, I am received and acknowledged as in good standing by all disciple churches that do not use musical instruments in worship, nor have other human devices in their worship or work. *Fourth* these churches, according to statistics of the A. C. M. S., are in number over one-half of the churches of the entire disciple brotherhood. *Fifth* the mentioned churches support about one dozen weekly papers of respectable size, and in devotion to the Bible would be able to put to shame the churches which you could represent, whether a comparison be made in theory or in practice. All this and more in the same direction you might have learned had you taken "the trouble to secure" the evidence. But instead of securing such evidence, and thereby saving yourself from the shame of writing me a series of errors, you have remained in willful ignorance of all that I have mentioned on this subject, or you have wilfully ignored it all, and have placed yourself on record in a pitiable and shameful attempt to evade an honorable discussion. This is a strained effort at sophistry on your part, and I mildly mark it against you as Error No. 6.

7. I next notice that you say in your letter, "If it were seen wise on general principles to enter upon a discussion with you I would be very much perplexed

to know what churches you are identified with," Such a statement, based on such evidence as you had mentioned before making it, partakes of the nature of a willful falsehood. You certainly admit that there are thousands of disciple churches which would not receive you nor the paper you edit because of your advocacy of instrumental music and other humanisms in worship and religious work. You also admit that such churches receive me and the paper I control. In the light of these facts for you to say that you "would be much perplexed to know what churches" I am "identified with" I again say partakes of the nature of a *willful falsehood*. But I shall simply mark it down against you as Error No. 7.

8. You say that "whatever might be the merits of any discussion held with me," its effect would be to give a stamp of respectability to a reputation which, so far as church relationships are concerned, is anything but creditable to its possessor." Such a statement indicates that you do not wish to impart to me any of your dignity. This I regard as the height of presumption in an employee who would in law be regarded as simply *a hireling* or a *clerk*, and who in his entire life has, probably, never breathed one breath of full freedom such as the gospel gives. From such presumption concerning your dignity and importance I pass to your reflection upon my reputation in regard to church relationship. Be it known unto you, my erring brother, that the man who attempted to exclude me at Richwood, Ohio, had the established reputation of a double criminal, and that the church which permitted such an attempt to be made on me without notice while I was over five hundred miles from home has never from that day had an hour of solid prosperity. Be it known unto you also that a pastor of the Christian

church in Centralia, Mo., who, a few years ago, was sufficiently unscrupulous to peddle the slander against me that you now repeat was soon thereafter charged with arson and criminal conduct with a woman, and who, rather than meet the charges, committed suicide. To have such men oppose me I count *an honor* when considered even from a moral point of view. I now say the same concerning yourself in view of your reckless disregard of truth. Taking your letters as a sample of your unscrupulousness it would be a damage for me to debate with you, as you are a man who would persistently besmirch truth in order to make a showing in behalf of his unscriptural position. In conclusion on this feature of your false assumptions I group your fallacies and mark them against your letter as Error No. 8.

9. I next notice that you say of yourself, "I would deny that there are any respectable number of churches that as churches are identified with certain peculiarities which you advocate." That would be just like you, to deny the truth, and even deny it in a cumbrous, ungrammatical sentence. What you are pleased to call my "peculiarities" consist in what I *do not advocate*, and not in what I advocate—in what I *oppose*, rather than in what I *affirm*. I sincerely affirm all that is in the Bible just as it is there recorded, and in this I do not differ from you except wherein your erroneous position prevents you from going that far. Then you affirm much that is not in the Bible, and which I deny because it is not in the Bible. The charge of advocating "peculiarities" therefore is certainly against yourself. As Nathan said to David, Thou art the man, and you certainly err in making such a charge against me. "The Cretans are always liars" said Paul to Titus, and it seems that innovators are always falsi-

fiers in trying to defend their innovations, or trying to avoid .honorable discussion thereof. Here I record Error No. 9.

10. Passing over such unhandsome expressions as "despotic elders and chief men," "dictation of ignorant and egotistic leaders," "dragooned into submission by one headstrong man," I come to this statement: "When the history of the movement which is sometimes called anti-ism is accurately written, it will be discovered that all the way through these much-maligned churches have been bullied and misrepresented by a coterie of agitators and spiritual despots with whom you have allied yourself."

In response to this I ask, Who has "maligned" those churches? The answer is, *No one* but those who have pronounced them "anti-missionary" because they opposed human societies to do missionary work, and generally have called them "anti-everything" simply because they have opposed all things in religion that are unauthorized of Christ. With such maligners, my deeply erring brother, you have allied yourself. As for the "agitators and spiritual despots" who have "bullied and misrepresented" those churches that have opposed unauthorized things in religious work and worship they are certainly on *your* side of the question, and with them "you have allied yourself." Thus you and your company are the *maligners*, the *bullies* and the *misrepresenters*, and therefore constitute "a coterie of agitators and spiritual despots" who disturb and agitate churches by urging untaught things and endeavor, in many instances, by assumptions of authority to browbeat them into submission. Thus you now stand convicted of a self-condemnation which I shall charge as Error No. 10.

11. I next notice that you state this: "Surely intel-

lectual and theological questions may be made, under proper conditions, subjects of debate, but questions of life and character and spiritual fruitage, find their test in the activities of the people concerned." It this close and unguarded sentence means anything it conveys the idea that only theoretical questions are properly subjects of religious debate, and not practical questions, or such as may be brought to a practical bearing. This would mean that the unity of the Godhead, and the state of the dead between death and the resurrection are proper subjects of debate, but not faith nor repentance, confession nor baptism, the Lord's supper nor the contribution, prayer nor thanksgiving, as all these "find their test in the activities of the people concerned." *What kind of "activities?"* Those that are *divinely authorized*, or those that are *humanly devised*? You do not state, but simply say "activities." No wonder you do not wish to debate. Your looseness of thought and expression would strand you within a day before the public. To avoid debating with me you will take a position which will rule out all practical questions from the proper domain of debate, and thus condemn nearly all the debating which has been done by your people for the last quarter of a century or more, and you thereby condemn even yourself for discussing the liquor traffic. Here is another self-stultification, and I mark it down as Error No. 11.

12. Near the conclusion of your letter I find that you commend "the utter condemnation of everything that exalts itself against the supreme and exclusive authority of the Lord Jesus Christ" Then what will become of yourself and of your company as you have from one to a dozen unauthorized societies in connection with each congregation and from one to a dozen unauthorized musical instruments in connection with each

church, and from one to a dozen methods of raising money in near or about each church, of which methods Christ never made mention except in condemnation by implication? Paul wrote of certain characters, "They profess that they know God, but in works they deny him," and of you it may be safely said, You profess that you respect the "supreme authority" of Christ, but in works you deny that authority. Here is more self-stultification, and I mark it down as Error No. 12. 13. Having thus convicted you of a dozen evident errors, and passing over several rhetorical flourishes, which are sufficiently erroneous to be justly called bombastic, I come to this statement: "In view of the facts stated, it would not be presumptive to answer all such modern Sanballats as yourself in the manner of the prophet, "I am, engaged in a great work and cannot come down.'" In answer to this I mention that if you had said, "In view of *the falsehoods* stated" you would have come much nearer the truth. But the blunder of calling falsehoods by the dignified name of "facts" Is nearly equaled by speaking of Nehemiah as "the prophet." Then when your belittling of myself, my work, and that of the people with whom I am connected be considered in connection with the character of our work, it is evident *that you* occupy the position of Sanballat whereas my refusal to be intimidated or discouraged or turned aside to adopt your Samaritan devices, or receive Samaritan help places me with Nehemiah. You seem to have a genius for blunders, and here I separate from you and your letter. In the one I part from a misguided man and in the other from an erroneous thing.

In hope and prayer,

DANIEL SOMMER

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

No response to the foregoing was ever received by me, and, in view of the excellent postal service which the U. S. government gives, I feel reasonably certain that none was ever sent. I am also reasonably certain that whoever has read the foregoing correspondence with care will have no difficulty in hereafter deciding that Christian church preachers are afraid of investigation with one who understands their position. The Savior describes them in John 3:19, 20, and he will know how to deal with them in the last great day.

The editors whom we have challenged and proved to be lacking in the moral courage to attempt a defense of their innovations on equal terms with a respectful respondent who understands them are all in favor of debating when they think that they hold the vantage ground. J. B. Briney on the 71st and 72nd pages of his monthly magazine for March, 1902, ridicules those who are not favorable to such as regard it "their duty to defend and advocate the truth in debate." He calls them "striplings" who fire paper-wads from their pop-guns", also "young birds" who "make mouths" at their "ancestors who did the work and made the sacrifices." He also calls them "sprouts who imagine that the world is on its knees at their feet." Thus Mr. Briney ridicules in what may be called a ridiculous manner those who oppose defending and advocating truth in debate. Yet when he is confronted by one whom he has no reason to fear nor disregard, except by reason of the weakness of his own position and the strength of that which confronts him, he resorts to apologies which we have shown to be untrue and thus unmanly, to say nothing of being unchristian. J. A. Lord and J. H. Garrison, are likewise in favor of debate, and have even engaged in what may be called *debating with each other*. Yet with discreet inconsistency they refuse to debate with an apostolic disciple and in his presence try to defend their human devices in religious worship and work. But all this is explained by the Savior when he said, "Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light lest his deeds should be reprov'd." John 3; 20.

CONCERNING CLARK BRADEN AS A DEBATER.

As an appendix to the foregoing correspondence I wish, to make a few statements in regard to Clark Braden as a debater.

1. It is known to many of both schools of disciples—apostolics and popular?—that Clark Braden has, for thirty-five years or more, been a defender of the Bibb and an exposé of error in public debate.

2. He claims to have been the champion of truth in a hundred or more debates, and to have backed down numerous errorists whom he could not induce to meet him in debate.

3. For several years Clark Braden has been proposing to debate with certain apostolic disciples on certain questions of difference between the churches of Christ and the Christian churches of the disciple brotherhood. When asked whom he represented, and who would endorse him to debate in favor of instrumental music in religious worship, and in favor of societies, festivals, etc., in religious work, he pretended to become indignant.

4. Passing over two debates that he held, while not endorsed, with two young men who championed the cause of New Testament simplicity in southern Illinois, I mention that in February of 1903 Clark Braden was endorsed, by twenty-eight preachers, as "the champion" of so-called "progressive disciples." Then with such endorsement he signed a contract to meet E. G. Denney, of the Church of Christ, in Sullivan, Ind., to debate propositions of his own proposing and according to rules of his own arranging and selecting. The time named for the debate to begin was March 21, 1903, as agreed upon in writing by Braden and Denney.

5. But, before the time came for the debate to begin, a man named L. D. Hill, who was authorized to write in Braden's behalf, proposed a change in both propositions, though Braden himself had written them, had proposed them, had agreed to debate them, and had declared that they set forth "the real issues"! The same L. D. Hill, of Cairo, Ill., declared that one of the propositions proposed involved a contradiction, and that it did not state the real position of those whom Braden represented!! He also proposed several new rules to govern the debate, one of which required that Clark Braden's former religious

record should not be brought up against him in the proposed debate!! But the proposed changes and new rules were not accepted by E. G. Denney. Then L. D. Hill declared that there would be no debate at Sullivan nor elsewhere between Clark Braden and E.G. Denney. In harmony with this declaration Clark Braden did not show himself in Sullivan, Ind., on Mar. 24, 1903. Neither was any one there to represent him. Bro. Denney was there, but he had no opponent. Thus the only man who has arisen, and has been endorsed, to represent the errors of the Christian Church in public debate *backed down* from debating propositions which he had written, signed, and delivered! *A more shameful exhibition of moral cowardice has never, perhaps, been placed on record* Let this fact be considered, in connection with what is set forth in the foregoing correspondence, and what is the unavoidable conclusion? Certainly if Clark Braden and the others mentioned in this pamphlet are fair specimens of the leaders in the Compromise Christian Church, then the conclusion is unavoidable that they *know* that their humanisms in religious worship and work are *utterly indefensible* WHO THEN CAN HAVE CONFIDENCE IN THEM?" Reader, beware!

"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved." John 3:19,20.,

DANIEL SOMMER.