

WHEN IS A FINE PIECE OF EXEGESIS A VAGARY? WATER BAPTISM AND SIGN GIFTS

To the Editor of The Moody Monthly,

Dear Brother in the Lord:

This is a love letter to you concerning your message on page 460, this month's issue of our magazine, and it is written for the cause of Divine Truth. The article is "Water baptism and Sign Gifts", and under the heading "how the movement began" you refer to the message I wrote you in answer to your 1933 issues containing the message "Dispensationalism Running Wild," and the full message in my book, Bullingerism, Pentecostalism and the Plymouth Brethren". It is for this reason that I take the liberty of printing my reply to this present article. In addressing you I feel as though I should like to use some very strong adjectives to express my esteem and admiration for you; but in former communications I have expressed my very high regard and Christian love. I express again my personal appreciation of your faithfulness in the Christian ministry; and with many others I praise God for sparing your valuable life these many years. I can say from a sincere heart that you are one servant of the Lord whose Christian fellowship I have coveted. Rich will be your reward when the Lord's saints shall be gathered before him for His "well dones"

Mingled with my love and admiration for you there is much sympathy. Associated with an interdenominational Christian organization, as you are, your position is difficult and unenviable; and your problems are many. You and I are great admirers and lovers of the Apostle Paul. I have often wondered if he could have held such a position at the time he said, "all they which are in Asia have turned away from me." II Timothy 1:15. To retain the fellowship, patronage and support of Calvinistic Immersionists and Arminian Sprinklers, to please the Lord and at the same time to please Denominationalists, Antidenominationalists, and Undenominationalists, and to serve, without offense, those Christians who are zealous for Israel's law or religious program with signs, the Sabbaths, oil and second blessing, most assuredly a Christian leader must be more than an ordinary religious diplomat. In spite of your problems and many difficulties, you have apparently succeeded, and with whatever of that success the Lord has been pleased, no man praises the Lord more than I do.

I am sure you know well enough that interdenominational diplomacy forbids the full and free expression from the heart of some God-given convictions. And undoubtedly you agree with me, that in the case where the servant of the Lord is in the strait betwixt two desires or duties, the one to keep interdenominational peace and the other to obey Galatians 1:10, his duty is plain, from God's Word; and that is, to do the will of God by obeying Him rather than men. It is unscriptural to hold men's persons in admiration for advantage.

I must confess that I have neither your problem nor your temptation in the matter of seeking to please my denominational brethren. I have no desire to unnecessarily offend any child of God. Neither do I hesitate or refuse to speak forth plainly and dogmatically that which I believe God has taught me and wants others to know. One of the Institute's Radio preachers

recently quoted John Darby's answer to a brother who asked him the question; "Mr. Darby, what do you hold concerning water baptism?" His reply, according to the Radio preacher, was, "I hold my tongue." There are times when no servant of the Lord can please the Lord by holding his tongue concerning God's truth. I think it is in this that you and I find some disagreement, in practice whether or not in theory. We shall await the day of His presence to see who is right. However, I am willing to confess that the outspoken servant of the Lord, who is true to his convictions, must forego the joy and benefit of fellowship with many brethren in this present life.

May I add that I withdraw fellowship from no brother in the Lord, who believes in the fundamentals of the faith, who preaches the grace of God for saints and sinners, because of his personal views concerning water baptism or because, like you, he has some vague, indefinite ideas about the "sign gifts" but never tries to exercise any one of them. Some months ago I wrote to the new President of the Institute inviting him to preach for us some Sunday, explaining to him that I would be happy to adjust any misunderstandings with the Institute because of these differences. He promised to consider the matter and let me hear from him; but as yet, not a line. He is welcome, as you are; for you know you said to me very graciously and heartily, "You and I disagree very little doctrinally.

Concerning the gifts of I Corinthians 12:8 to 11, first let me state them, for the benefit of those who read this letter: "the word of wisdom," the "word of knowledge," "faith," "the gifts of healing," "prophecy," "discerning of spirits," "divers kinds of tongues," "interpretation of tongues."

One of the reasons why I know that these gifts are not for the present dispensation, that they are not intended by God for the Body of Christ, is because you have none of them, except as you forth tell God's words as a prophet; and surely a spiritual, faithful servant of the Lord such as you would have one or more of these gifts, if they were for Body-members of today. I think you will admit that you do not know any one who has any of these gifts. However you and I are agreed that these "sign gifts" and the signs of Mark 16:16 and 17 are not absent because of disuse or unbelief. You quote Church History for the explanation of their cessation; I quote the Scriptures, that they ceased when Israel was set aside with the close of the "Acts" period.

"HOW THE MOVEMENT BEGAN."

You have correctly stated some of the facts concerning the experience that caused me to begin the serious study of Water Baptism and Signs Gifts. I did this to satisfy my own soul and in an earnest effort to find an answer to the Pentecostal and Healing Movements which are playing havoc with Fundamentalism all over this country, and leaving in their trail deluded souls and religious fanatics.

Why do you very ungraciously add, "the seed fell into prepared soil?" That is not the manifestation of love. At the time I had the talk with the Pentecostalist preacher I was preaching and practicing immersion. I confess that I never could see what a tank of water had to do with the grace of God. I could not understand why water had to be heated and a servant of the Lord had to put on special clothes and put a believer under the water to add anything to the finished work of Christ. Grace preachers, who immerse, say it does not add anything; they say that the moment the sinner trusts in Christ he is eternally saved; he is immediately, by the baptism of the Holy Spirit, identified with Christ in death, burial, resurrection and is seated with Him in the heavenlies, without water. Then they begin with their "Buts". But their "Buts" do not agree. There are some twenty or more of them. As one dear saint

just wrote me, she wanted to teach water baptism, the International Sunday School lesson, the past Sunday. She took down her volumes and church papers and Bible monthlies for help; one from Dallas, another was Our Hope, another the Sunday School Times, another written by a leading Chicago Fundamentalist, the pastor of our leading Chicago Fundamentalist Church; and several others. And all of these teachers differed in their views. She was certainly able to teach her class to be exceedingly broadminded, flexible, and uncertain about the subject; for she also gave them my views.

WEAKNESS OF THE POSITION

In your article you referred to the weakness of our position, but, brother beloved, never in my life have I ever read any message coming from the mind and pen of a recognized, spiritual leader, as weak as your criticism and “Scripture-less” answer to our position, unless it was in the recent publication called “Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth,” containing several messages from the mind and pen of another Fundamentalist leader, who, judging from the carnal weapons employed and his unscriptural scheme of trying to identify spiritual orthodox brethren with men unsound in the faith, wrote under a state of excitement, anger and mental disturbance. I am sending you a copy of my answer to him, which I hope you will read, inasmuch as it is an answer to your article.

How clear you are in your defense of other fundamental doctrines and glorious Bible truths! How vague, illogical and unconvincing your arguments are in this article! Your message shows either lack of knowledge and preparation, or a desperate attempt to win the approval and support of a group of Christians already prejudiced against fellow-members of the Body of Christ who are satisfied with Christ without signs, religion and ceremonies.

With real Bereans your article will help to stimulate and confirm the fast growing conviction, that our message cannot be Scripturally answered, and in desperation those who are pushed forward to make the attempt, must turn away from II Timothy 2:15 to church history or abuse, sarcasm and misrepresentation.

We intend to hold a Berean Bible Conference at North Shore Church, Sheridan Road and Wilson Avenue, from June 17th to 21st, this year. Hereby we most respectfully invite you to come and show us the error of our way with the Bible, without appeal to church history, in accordance with II Timothy 3:16. You will be granted the most respectful hearing, the most gracious, prayerful consideration. We ask the privilege of questioning you after you deliver your message.

If you are unwilling to do this, will you give me one hour before the faculty and student body of the Institute and give outsiders the opportunity of attendance? Don't be afraid of the truth. Let's get at our differences with the Word of God, and away from the tactics used by so many who have no Scriptural answer to the claim that water baptism has no place in this “signless” dispensation of grace.

In column 2, page 460, concerning your paragraph beginning with these words, “And Mr. Bishop goes further still”, you thus conclude: “It leaves no basis whatever for the theory that water baptism and the sign gifts were only for the Jews, and that they ceased when the latter rejected the second offer of the kingdom.” It seems to me that you are trying to leave with your readers the impression that Mr. Bishop did not believe that the “sign gifts” ceased when Israel was set aside, at the close of Acts. He most assuredly did believe it as did Dr. Scofield. We give

the statement again from Mr. Bishop's book: "The sign gifts of I Corinthians 12 were operative only through the Book of the Acts period."

May I call your attention to a misrepresentation in your article which I believe to be unintentional on your part. I have never claimed, and I do not know any teacher of the Word of God who has ever claimed, that only Israelites received water baptism, or that the "sign gifts" were not found among the Gentiles. How could even a superficial student of the Word of God make such a statement, with the Book of Acts before him, and with the words found in I Corinthians 12:2, "ye know that ye were Gentiles?" This is the chapter in which the "sign gifts" are enumerated. And in the 13th verse the Word declares that both Jews and Gentiles were in the Body at Corinth. I trust that you will correct this misrepresentation in the next issue of the Moody Monthly. I do not understand why we cannot prove or disprove the "scripturalness" of our doctrines on the authority of the Word of God, without an appeal to church history and without resorting to any untrue accusations against a fellow-Christian. In practically every attempt to answer our position the critics have earnestly endeavored to prejudice and intimidate their followers rather than give light from the Word of God.

Another thing, you would leave the impression that those who teach that the kingdom was offered to Israel, in Acts 3:14 to 26, are teaching error; when this is your own teaching.

I want to again express my utter surprise that a spiritual man of God, a gifted Bible teacher, who has been a leader for nearly half a century, is willing to acknowledge that Pentecostalism is unscriptural, if not a satanic delusion, and yet you not only offer no Scriptural antidote, but you attack the one and only Scriptural answer to the delusion. Instead of offering the corrective for the heresy you make an appeal to church history to attack the Scriptural corrective of that heresy.

Can you not see the weakness of such a procedure when it is admitted by all students of the Word of God and of Church history that the apostacy came before the middle of the second century; and therefore those today contending for the "sign gifts" and the program of the Book of Acts would say, "of course the signs ceased in the middle of the second century, because of the low spiritual state in the churches of that period?" It seems to me that we should either answer the fallacies of Pentecostalism and similar movements with the Scriptures or acknowledge there is no God-given answer, and wish them Godspeed.

What you call the new movement is not new today. It was new with the close of Acts and has been buried beneath ecclesiastical rubbish for centuries. It is our duty to recover the glorious truth concerning the dispensation of the mystery, found in Paul's prison epistles, and there find the answer to every heresy that is troubling the Body of Christ today, and the antidote for every religious mixture that the enemy is using to frustrate the grace of God.

It is quite significant that among the carnal, divided Christians of Corinth all of the sign gifts were found, which is sufficient proof that the presence of signs is not the mark of spirituality or unusual faith. Many of them were babes and could take only milk. They were unspiritual in their dealings with one another; but all of the gifts were found there. And, furthermore, Paul declared that some of those sign gifts belonged to babyhood doctrine. I Corinthians 13:8 to 13.

In I Corinthians 14:18, Paul said, "I thank my God I speak with tongues more than ye all." In I Corinthians 1:17, Paul said, "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel." In verse 14, he said, "I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius." I wish you would give me an intelligent exegesis of Scriptures for the elimination from our present day church program of the sign gifts that will not eliminate the water baptism. Let's not go to Dr.

Warfield. Let's stay with the Book. Is it consistent to prove water baptism by the tenth chapter of I Corinthians, the Lord's Supper by the eleventh chapter, and prove nothing concerning the gifts by the twelfth chapter?

ISRAEL - SIGNS - WATER BAPTISM

You would lead your readers to believe that signs and water baptism are not associated with each other in the Word of God. Although your appeal is to church history, rather than to the Scriptures, you believe the signs disappeared in the second century and that the water baptism is for the Body of Christ in the twentieth century.

I have no appeal to church history except to show how churches departed from the Word of God. But I appeal to the Scriptures. Here are some simple, plain, significant Bible statements:

"The Jews require a sign." I Corinthians 1:22.

"Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know." Acts 2:22.

"And I knew Him not: but that He should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water." John 1:31.

"And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins." Mark 1:5.

"And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him." Mark 1:10.

"And He healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils; and suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew Him." Mark 1:34.

"But He answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Matthew 15:24.

"And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." "And these signs shall follow them that believe: In My Name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues." "They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." Mark 16:15 to 18.

"Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the Word to none but the Jews only." Acts 11:19.

"And when James, Peter, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship: that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision." Galatians 2:9.

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place." "And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting." "And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them." "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." "And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven." Acts 2:1 to 5.

"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." Acts 2:36.

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” Acts 2:38.

“And the people with one accord gave heed unto these things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.” “But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the Name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.” Acts 8:6 and 12.

“And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.” “And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.” Acts 8:26 and 38.

“For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.” “And he commanded them to be baptized in the Name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.” Acts 10:46 and 48.

“And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one’s bands were loosed.” “And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.” Acts 16:26 and 33.

“When they heard this, they were baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus.” “And when Paul had laid his hands upon them. The Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied.” Acts 19:5 and 6.

You should be willing to admit that it is rather significant that the Jewish words, “Israel”, “sabbath”, “synagogue”, “temple”, “Jew”, “law”, “Moses”, “fathers”, occur in the Acts 276 times, in the three Synoptic Gospels 252 times.

Is it not significant that we have the last Bible record of the practice of water baptism in Acts 19:5, with tongues and miracles following? And that in Acts 28:9 we have the last Bible record of miracles. Compare with Philippians 2:25 to 28; I Timothy 5:23; II Timothy 4:20. There is a Bible record of signs after the last record of water baptism; but the last record of water baptism is associated with signs. Acts 19:1 to 11.

Another record of signs is found in I Corinthians 12:8 to 11.

Wherever there is the record of water baptism there is in the context either a sign or some Israelitish religious ceremony or observance.

EVIDENCE THAT RECOILS

Referring to your remarks under “Evidence that Recoils” you express sorrow that the revered Dr. Scofield should have become coupled with this “vagary”, and added, “quite without warrant”. Perhaps you may live long enough to express your sorrow for referring to the teaching of another servant of the Lord as a “vagary”. Let us see if it was quite without warrant. Let the readers judge.

Surely you have not become doubleminded But I am wondering how to reconcile this statement with a statement in your letter to me, under date of March 21, 1933. This is the statement: “YES, I AM READING AND WITH MUCH INTEREST, YOUR BOOKLET, “MUCH, LITTLE, NO WATER?” AND ALTHOUGH I DO NOT GO ALL THE WAY WITH YOU, I REGARD IT AS A FINE PIECE OF EXEGESIS. YOUR FAULT IS, IF YOU WILL FORGIVE ME, THAT YOU ARE TOO INTENSE.”

Do you not think, brother, that there is quite a difference between a “vagary” and a fine piece of exegesis? In my printed message entitled “Much, Little, No Water” I have set forth that which I still believe to be the Scriptural antidote for Pentecostalism and the healing delusions among people who are trusting in the precious blood of Christ for their redemption. You will recall a very pleasant visit, which I enjoyed with you in your office, when we had rather a lengthy discussion concerning the message set forth in my booklet to which I have just referred. You had the message marked with your pencil all the way through, and remarked that you were then going through it for the third time. You said to me, “That is a good message, and if you will go slowly I think you will win your brethren.” That conversation was at the time that you very graciously agreed to broadcast over WMBI the services of the North Shore Church of which I am pastor. You were thoroughly familiar with my views concerning water baptism and the Transitional Acts period when you put me on the air.

Under date of March 27th, 1933, you said in your letter:

“COMING NOW TO THE QUESTION OF YOUR TEACHING ABOUT BAPTISM, YOU ARE NOT TO BE CONDEMNED BUT CONTRARIWISE COMMENDED, IF YOU BELIEVE IT IS THE TRUTH. BUT ON THE OTHER HAND, YOU SHOULD EXPECT OPPOSITION FROM THOSE WHO DO NOT AGREE WITH YOU AND YET WHOSE MOTIVE IS ENTITLED TO EQUAL RESPECT.”

Then you added that you were desirous that an open door among the fundamentalists should be granted for my message. It is rather difficult for me to understand why you stated in your letter that I ought to be commended for my stand and then in your oral ministry and written messages condemn me for my stand. Are you consistent? You know full well that your attempt to answer my position on water baptism was positively futile. Eliminating as you do, the Great Commission, you can not find where any one member of the Body of Christ is commanded to baptize a fellow believer also in that Body.

Coming now to your reference to Dr. C. I. Scofield, I can hardly understand why you should be more gracious in your attitude toward him than toward your other fellow-servants of the Lord.

In my booklet entitled “Bullingerism, Pentecostalism and the Plymouth Brethren”, I have stated facts. And inasmuch as the Moody Bible Institute has for years been responsible for the printing and distribution of the pamphlet written by A. E. Bishop, entitled “Tongues, Signs, and Visions Not God’s Order for Today”, I see no reason why I should keep quiet and receive condemnation and prosecution without offering my defense and producing all legitimate and valid evidence. Surely, there is nothing unjust about this. You admit that Dr. Scofield gives his unqualified endorsement to Mr. Bishop’s message. And in order to further the sales of the booklet the Colportage Association has printed his unreserved commendation on the first page. It has been because of Dr. Scofield’s endorsement that so many have been sold. Therefore, the teaching of Mr. A. E. Bishop concerning the sign gifts, tongues and healing, was the teaching of Dr. C. I. Scofield, in the year 1920. On page 17 is found this statement:

“THERE IS NO FOUNDATION IN THE WORD OF GOD FOR THE PREVAILING POPULAR DOCTRINE OF ‘DIVINE HEALING’.”

On page 19 is found this statement:

“A CAREFUL STUDY OF THE EPISTLES, ESPECIALLY OF THE LATEST EPISTLES OF PAUL, WHICH GIVE THE NORMAL COURSE OF THE CHURCH DURING THE PRESENT DISPENSATION, WOULD DISMOUNT ALL FROM THEIR HOBBIES, ELIMINATE THE LAST VESTIGE OF JUDAISM FROM THEIR LIVES.”

On page 5 is found this statement:

“AFTER REPEATED STUDY OF THE EPISTLES WRITTEN AFTER PAUL’S ARRIVAL AT ROME, I AM CONVINCED THAT IN THEM IS FOUND A CURATIVE TEACHING FOR ALL OF THE PRESENT-DAY DELUSIONS AND FANATICISMS FOUND AMONG MANY OF THE MOST SINCERE SAINTS IN THE CHURCH.”

On page 15 is found this statement:

“THE SIGN GIFTS OF I CORINTHIANS 12 WERE OPERATIVE ONLY DURING THE BOOK OF ACTS PERIOD.”

Now, my dear Editor, why do you express sorrow that Dr. Scofield’s name has been brought into this controversy? Who is responsible, if not the Moody Bible Institute? I believe it is of God for the advancement of truth. I can appreciate somewhat your problem, as you are teaching the Scofield Bible Course to your Institute classes. And you of course regret that Dr. Scofield has endorsed the teaching that you are condemning in your editorial. According to Dr. Scofield, the sign gifts of I Corinthians 12 were operative only during the Book of Acts period. Moreover, you will notice in the first part of this “Bishop” booklet that the writer declares that those who do not agree with his teaching have been deceived by Satan.

This places you in rather an embarrassing predicament, inasmuch as one department in the Moody Bible Institute, which is sending out the printed Bible messages, is showing plainly that Dr. Scofield taught as Divine truth what you teach, in this June edition of the Moody Institute Monthly, to be a vagary, concerning the sign gifts of the twelfth chapter of I Corinthians. How would it sound, dear brother, if you would write to the students of your Scofield Correspondence Course that Dr. Scofield taught a vagary concerning the “sign gifts”? Surely, one who is an uncompromising and honorable, consistent servant of the Lord should not discriminate by praising one Christian brother and condemning another one when they teach the same truth. This leads us to this question:

IS DR. WARFIELD’S BOOK THE ANTIDOTE?

According to your editorial, you do not deny that at least some forms of Pentecostalism can properly be termed Satanic delusions. And you suggest in your first paragraph that you could not object to any Scriptural remedy to deliver people from the delusion. You say the motive is commendable. After carefully reading your editorial from first to last I must come to this conclusion: you believe that Pentecostalism with its program of “tongues” and “counterfeit signs” is unscriptural, but that there is no Scriptural antidote, corrective or curative. However, you intimate that although this cannot be found in the Scriptures, it can be found in Dr. Warfield’s book. Thus you admit that the Christian in error must go to church history to learn truth to correct his error.

You are thoroughly familiar with the claim of the Roman Catholic Church, in the latter of the marvels and miracles that have been wrought in the holy pools that have been visited by the Virgin Mary, and with the holy things that have been blessed by their other saints. Surely, as a teacher of the Word of God for all these many years, you would not ask a student of the Word of God to turn to church history for doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness.

If we have nothing but church history by which to show Pentecostalists the error of their way, my opinion is that we should by all means leave them alone, for church history is entirely too untrustworthy to be considered the highest court of appeal in this matter. Moreover, it seems to me that it is an indictment against God in giving us such incomplete truth in His inspired

Word that we must have it supplemented by the traditions of elders and early church fathers. If some Christian who is troubled about “tongues”, “signs” and “miraculous healing” comes to me for light, is it possible that I cannot give it to him out of the Bible, but must refer to Dr. Warfield and the Christians of the second century?

You speak of those upon whom the hands of the apostles had been laid and miracles continuing while they were alive. In I Timothy 4:14 and II Timothy 1:6 Paul refers to the hands that were laid on Timothy; but he certainly did not tell Timothy to exercise the “healing” or “miracle” gift of I Corinthians 12:8 and 9. He told him to take wine for his sickness. I Timothy 5:23. My explanation of this is Dr. Scofield’s explanation. “The sign gifts of I Corinthians 12 were operative only during the Book of Acts period.” According to the teaching of Dr. Scofield and many other doctors.

SIR ROBERT ANDERSON AND THE SIGN GIFTS

You will recall the fact that when I visited you in your office and talked with you about this matter, you showed me a large portrait of Sir Robert Anderson on your office wall. I remember how you asked me this question. You asked, “Did you ever meet that dear man of God?” Then you added, “He was one of the greatest of them all.” We spoke of him as one of the outstanding Bible students of any age; one of God’s gifted teachers. And right here, I would like to say that among all the servants of the Lord I have never held any in higher esteem than you and Sir Robert Anderson. I here quote several statements from Sir Robert Anderson’s book, “The Silence of God”. In my judgment he has the only Scriptural explanation of the absence of signs in the Church of Christ today. And so far as a human author is concerned, I do not know of a greater service the Colportage Association could do than to place a copy of “The Silence of God” in the hands of every thinking Christian in the land.

MY CONTENTION IS THAT THE ACTS, AS A WHOLE, IS THE RECORD OF A TEMPORARY AND TRANSITIONAL DISPENSATION IN WHICH BLESSING WAS AGAIN OFFERED TO THE JEW AND AGAIN REJECTED.”

“AS INDICATED IN THESE PAGES, IT GIVES THE CLEW TO THE RIGHT UNDERSTANDING OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES—A BOOK WHICH IS PRIMARILY THE RECORD, NOT, AS COMMONLY SUPPOSED, OF THE FOUNDING OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH. BUT OF THE APOSTASY OF THE FAVOURED NATION.”

“IT HAS BEEN FURTHER ARGUED THAT, SO FAR AS THEIR EVIDENTIAL FORCE WAS CONCERNED, THE “CHRISTIAN MIRACLES” WERE FOR THAT FAVOURED PEOPLE ‘OF WHOM, AS CONCERNING THE FLESH, CHRIST CAME.’ AND IF THIS BE WELL FOUNDED WE SHALL BE PREPARED TO FIND THAT SO LONG AS THE KINGDOM WAS BEING PREACHED TO JEWS, MIRACLES ABOUNDED, BUT THAT WHEN THE GOSPEL APPEALED TO THE HEATHEN WORLD, MIRACLES LOST THEIR PROMINENCE, AND SOON ENTIRELY CEASED.”

“THERE WERE NO MIRACLES SEEN BY FELIX, OR FESTUS, OR AGRIPPA; AND AS ALREADY NOTICED, WHEN PAUL STOOD BEFORE NERO THE ERA OF MIRACLES HAD CLOSED. THE MIRACLES OF ACTS 28:8 AND 9 ARE CHRONOLOGICALLY THE LAST ON RECORD, AND THE LATE EPISTLES ARE WHOLLY SILENT RESPECTING THEM.”

“THE WORD OF GOD IS OUR GUIDE, AND NOT THE EXPERIENCE OF FELLOW-CHRISTIANS; AND WHEN THIS IS IGNORED THE PRACTICAL

CONSEQUENCES ARE DISASTROUS. THE ANNALS OF 'FAITH-HEALING', AS IT IS CALLED, ARE RICH IN CASES OF MIMETIC OR HYSTERICAL DISEASE, BUT ABOUT THE SPIRITUAL WRECKAGE DUE TO FAILURES INNUMERABLE THEY ARE SILENT."

"AN APPEAL TO 'THE CHRISTIAN MIRACLES', IT HAS BEEN URGED, SO FAR FROM SOLVING THE MYSTERY, SERVES ONLY TO INTENSIFY IT. THE PURPOSE OF THE MIRACLES, MOREOVER, WAS TO ACCREDIT THE MESSIAH TO ISRAEL, AND NOT, AS GENERALLY SUPPOSED, TO ACCREDIT CHRISTIANITY TO THE HEATHEN. AND THEREFORE, AS SCRIPTURE PLAINLY INDICATES, THEY CONTINUED SO LONG AS THE TESTIMONY WAS ADDRESSED TO THE JEW, BUT CEASED WHEN, THE JEW BEING SET ASIDE, THE GOSPEL WENT OUT TO THE GENTILE WORLD."

In your editorial you leave the impression that you disagree with those who teach that Israel the Nation was offered anew the Kingdom in Acts 3:14 to 26. I think in fairness to all you should have informed your readers that you hold this view yourself, for I quote from your Christian Workers' Commentary, page 347, your own words "LET THEM NOW REPENT THAT THE LORD MAY SEND THE MESSIAH WHO HATH BEEN APPOINTED FOR YOU. THE INFERENCE FROM ALL THIS TO THE END OF THE CHAPTER IS THAT, HAD THEY AS A NATION REPENTED THE MESSIAH WOULD HAVE RETURNED AT THAT TIME TO SET UP HIS KINGDOM IN ISRAEL."

And then I also quote from that same wonderful book of yours, page 313, your comment on the Great Commission:

"A THIRD MATTER OF IMPORTANCE IS THE 'GREAT COMMISSION' AS IT IS CALLED (MATTHEW 28:19 AND 20). NOTE THE WORD 'NAME' AS INDICATIVE OF THE TRINITY. IT IS NOT NAMES BUT 'NAME'. FATHER, SON AND HOLY SPIRIT IS THE FINAL NAME OF THE ONE TRUE GOD. THE CONJUNCTION IN ONE NAME OF THE THREE AFFIRMS EQUALITY AND ONENESS OF SUBSTANCE.' NOTE THE PECULIARITY OF THE TERMS. THIS IS THE KINGDOM COMMISSION, AS ANOTHER EXPRESSES IT, NOT THE CHRISTIAN COMMISSION. THE LATTER IS IN LUKE, DISTINCTIVELY THE GENTILE GOSPEL. BUT NOT HERE, WHICH IS DISTINCTIVELY THE JEWISH GOSPEL. AND THIS IS ALL THE MORE REMARKABLE BECAUSE IN LUKE, THE DISCIPLES ARE COMMANDED TO GO TO THE JEWS (LUKE 24:47), WHILE HERE THEY ARE COMMANDED TO GO TO "ALL NATIONS'. IT POINTS TO THE CLOSE OF THE AGE WHEN THE COMMISSION WILL BE CARRIED OUT BY THE FAITHFUL REMNANT OF THE JEWS SO OFTEN SPOKEN ABOUT. IT HAS NOT YET BEEN CARRIED OUT. THE STORY OF THE ACTS IS NOT ITS FULFILLMENT. ITS ACCOMPLISHMENT HAS BEEN INTERRUPTED, BUT WILL BE TAKEN UP BEFORE THE LORD COMES TO DELIVER ISRAEL AT THE LAST."

One reason why I refer to this, is because I believe in honesty, sincerity and consistency among Christians. And I think you ought to explain to your readers what your belief concerning the Great Commission is. You have written it as above stated in your Christian Workers' Commentary and yet you recently printed in the Moody Monthly the message of W. M. Robertson of Vancouver condemning those who teach what you have written in your Christian Workers' Commentary. And also explain why the very same week the Moody Monthly, containing Dr. Robertson's article, was mailed out, your Radio preacher advised the hearers to buy the book, "Expositions of the Gospel of Matthew" by Dr. W. L. Pettingill. Dr. Pettingill agrees with you concerning the Great Commission, that it is not for the Body of Christ. Now,

while I appreciate your impossible task and your unenviable position in trying to please the Baptists, Presbyterians, Lutherans, Covenant Christians and Interdenominational Fundamentalists, it none the less brings grief to my soul to witness such inconsistencies in the endeavor to get interdenominational peace at the expense of God's truth. This is where you and I disagree.

Surely it is useless to try to agree with a number of brethren who disagree among themselves concerning water baptism. Concerning the fundamentals, we have no difficulty in seeing alike. We all believe that Christ alone is sufficient and that God has some intelligent method of separating Christ from Judaism and religion.

You surely agree with me that no servant of the Lord has the Scriptural right to go from Matthew to II Timothy and capriciously, arbitrarily and promiscuously select such of the programs of those different books as will fit into his religious program or denominational creed and reject the rest.

The Holy Spirit surely intended that II Timothy 2:15 should be applied to rid the message of grace of all religion and leave the believer an all-sufficient Christ. I have tried to apply the principle in the messages we have sent out near and far. More than 300,000 booklets have gone out. You are correct; we are few but aggressive. How many stood with Paul when he stood for the mystery?

You must admit that our aggressive campaign for the truth has made believers study as never before, to see why they have not been taught in your Institute and in their churches to obey Ephesians 3:9.

Do you not believe that the controversy will fall out for the furtherance of the study of "Body" Truth? It is a good thing to provoke Christians to the Berean spirit of Bible study.

We must all admit that our present-day program differs so radically from the Church program of the "Acts" period that the present Church might as well be considered a different Church. Shall our slogan be "Back to Pentecost" or "On to Paul's Prison Epistles"?

With Christian love, yours for the Lord's Truth,

J. C. O'HAIR