

THE SILENCE OF GOD

A. W. Dicus (1888-1978)

"These things hast thou done, and I kept silence" (Psalm 50:21)

Volumes have been written and numerous sermons preached about the words and commands of God, but in this age of religious controversy, it seems that little attention has been given to His silence. With slight reflection, we are aware that when God speaks, He speaks with power and authority. By His word, the things that now are, sprang into existence; the planets moved in their respective orbits and even man became a living soul.

Natural laws ceased to function as evidenced in the burning bush, the dividing of the waters of the Red Sea, the flowing streams from the smitten rock and the prolongation of the solar day which Joshua finished the battle. Thus the laws of nature apparently began instantaneously when He spake and as suddenly ceased by the same power.

By such came life and by such life ends. With equal sudden rapidity, we are assured that the dead will appear, the transformation will take place and eternity will be ushered in for it will be in the twinkling of an eye at the sound of the voice of God. However, it is not the commands of God that men fear but God himself and His divine presence.

When God speaks, man stands in awe. Israel, while waiting God's commands, pleaded that such be given indirectly through Moses for they feared His presence (Exodus 20:19). It was then that Moses rebuked the people and said, "Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not." It is not during the moments of God's presence that men are rebellious, contentious, neglectful, unthankful and fearless, but during the lapse of time between His appearings.

It is not during the uttering of God's divine commands that man questions, rejects or disobeys, but during the intervals of silence while the merciful God is longsuffering, waiting for man to repent. Here the psalmist visualizes, God as the Great Judge. *"He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge his people. Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice. And the heavens shall declare his righteousness: for God is judge himself"* (Psalm 50:4-6). Then in verses 1, 2, and 3: *"The mighty God even the Lord hath spoken and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof, out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined. Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence, a fire shall devour before him and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him."*

Thus the prophet summons the court, presents the judge, produces the witnesses, cites those who are to answer and, having seated the judge upon the

throne, he gives forth the charge. Then will be broken the deep silence that now penetrates the heart of every submissive child and disturbs the mind of every rebellious objector. Where will be the place? "Out of Zion." Who are to be cited? "It will be, those that have a covenant with Him" which dates from the offering of Abel. What will be the charge? "I and God," the only object or being of worship; "I am thy God," which demands complete subjection." "I will speak," which forestalls any argument or anticipated deliberation.

It is during the long period of silence between successive appearances of God, that men have always permitted their spark of faith to grow dim, thus permitting their religions to become corrupted and suffering themselves to drift into a form of godliness but denying the power thereof. It is during such periods that men have forgotten God. Man, with the greatest of his ability and theological reasoning, has searched the Bible, striving to understand and to teach the commands of God, but in sorrow he has neglected to reflect upon the eternal destiny of the soul.

I. The Silence of God is an expression of His infinite wisdom and a distinct proof of His divinity.

God spake and the worlds were formed. Natural laws were postulated, material things sprang into existence and then the voice of God became silent in nature. From that day until the present, the natural laws have remained fixed. Men have denied, rejected, tried to refute and have even claimed to set such laws aside but God remains silent.

It is this penetrating silence that alarms the Atheists, the Deists, and the Agnostics, until they demand aloud for an answer from God. They cry for supernatural evidence which, failing to get, they deceive their followers with religious superstitions. Their works are mysteries of deception. They profess to appear as mediums and even promise to return after death, but God remains silent.

Why should God speak? He spoke as one of authority. Such men of assumed intellect have never disproved this authority. This unbroken silence has forced the ablest of scientist to admit, "Matter cannot be created nor destroyed." *"The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth his handiwork,"* all of which came by the voice of God (Psalm 19:1).

Why should there be repeated manifestations of such power to prove God's divinity? Such power does not need to be verified, Scientists have not disproved evidence of such powers and until he is able to do so, God's silence is indicative of His infinite wisdom.

Wise men are men of few words and true science require but little or no justification. The more explanation that a theory requires the less the possibility of its being true. Denying another's statement does not prove one that we might make; neither does denying the infallibility of the Bible prove men's theories of

science. True scientists will not resort to such tactics. As men cannot disprove God's statements, it is wise and just that God remains silent. Such silence is indicative of divine proof.

II. God's silence is a proof of the Infallibility of the Bible and indicative of God's Infinite wisdom in religion.

In Hebrews 1:1 we read, *God who at sundry time and in divers manners spoke in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken to us by His Son.*" In the Mount of Transfiguration God spake, "*This is my beloved Son, hear ye him.*" Then the voice of God became silent.

Christ, before His ascension, spake the commandments of God by which Christians were to be directed and then after informing the disciples of the coming of the Holy Spirit to reveal these commandments, the voice of Christ became silent.

The Holy Spirit came as promised. The commands of Christ were revealed to the apostles as the Spirit gave them utterance. The Holy Spirit then became silent.

In the New Testament we have these commands, given by Christ and revealed by the Holy Spirit each in their respective turn. It is reflection on the infinite wisdom of the Godhead to request or to even contend for a direct revelation of guidance by either. Christ or the Holy Spirit.

Such revelation, should one be given, would cast doubt on the one already given. Some claim a special message from the Holy Spirit. Others contend that they are guided directly by the Lord. Others seem inclined to believe that God puts such directly in their hearts while many seem possessed with illusion that the guarding angel is ever near to direct them in right or wrong.

All such conceptions are certainly without faith. Neither of them would be accepted by a court of justice nor recognized as evidence in any discussion. One would not think of accepting such as authority in a material transaction.

To demand or even expect a direct revelation is to reject the one given in the New Testament. This intimates, as least, the incapacity of the New Testament to do what God, Christ and the Holy Spirit unitedly designed, advocated and fulfilled that it would do, hence, a reflection on the wisdom of the Godhead.

The Godhead is silent... Why...? Because He has spoken! Having spoken with authority, there is no need of repetition or explanation. A repetition would not add to the clearness, neither would additional information increase man's possibilities, for that already given is thorough (See Col. 2:9; 2 Tim. 3:17). The only reason left for such contention is to escape what is written. It is the unbroken silence that causes man's uneasiness.

It is this unbroken silence that causes man to become careless and indifferent toward that already spoken. The psalmist David foresaw this situation for we read in the sixteenth and seventeenth verses of this psalm (Psalm 50): *But unto the wicked, God saith, what hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldst take my*

covenant in my mouth, seeing thou hatest instruction and castest my words behind of me.” Then in verse twenty-one, we read, “These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself, but I will reprove thee and set them in order before thine eyes, now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces and there be none to deliver.”

God spake then, He is silent now. God warned, and even prophesied the situation as it now is; that man would take His words into his own mouth that they would hate His instructions, and cast it behind them, but through all this He would keep silent.

When men ask God to speak, are they asking Him to break this promise? Would it not be advisable to meditate beforehand to at least wonder what God might say, should He speak? Is it probable that He would say, “Well done.”? When we have not done what He commanded or probably done differently from what He commanded, when we have requested a special guidance and thus questioned His infinite wisdom to thoroughly do what He designed to do?

When men seriously reflect on what God might say, should He speak, they will pray for Him to remain silent until they can repent and accept what He said when He did speak, for this is the divine purpose of His silence.

III. God’s silence is indicative of His infinite compassion and divine mercy.

He is exceedingly merciful, slow to anger and omniscient. Although nothing escapes the divine eye, yet He remains silent and continues to bestow blessings upon men. “*The ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord and He pondereth on all his goings*” (Prov. 5:21). He endures the provocation of the ungodly and defers from day to day, from year to year, the deserved punishment.

God is longsuffering to us-ward and in silence He manifests His divine mercy, while He waits for repentance. This present life is a season of prohibition, a period for reforming. It is not a silence in which God will suffer His way to be altered but a silence of waiting for men to conform to His ways.

Why do men fear the judgment? Because they know that then the day of probation will be ended. Why do men not fear the calm of His silence before the judgment? This question is answered in Ecclesiastes 8:11, which reads, “*Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.*”

How long will God continue this compassionate silence is uncertain both to men and angels but it will terminate with incomprehensible speed? What shall He then say to those who have taken His covenant out of God’s mouth, who have discarded the New Testament because they hated instructions, and who have changed the Word of God into deception? Ezekiel says in the thirteenth chapter:

“*They have made others to hope that they would confirm the word. Have ye not seen a vain vision, and have ye not spoken a lying divination, whereas ye say,*

The LORD saith it; albeit I have not spoken? So will I break down the wall that ye have daubed with un-tempered mortar, and bring it down to the ground, so that the foundation thereof shall be discovered, and it shall fall, and ye shall be consumed in the midst thereof: and ye shall know that I am the LORD” (vs.6-7,14).

It is this silence that is indicative of His divine mercy, for when He speaks, as the psalmist says, “He will reprove the wicked and tear into pieces those that forget God and there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth? When humble servants of the Most High God and disciples of His obedient Son realize that heartfelt religion is not New Testament religion and that a Christian is a follower of Christ and not an advisor nor even a counselor, then men will pray for God to prolong his merciful silence until they repent rather than pray for some visible manifestation of His divine presence.

It is God’s desire to remain silent. Why should we wish it otherwise? If men will not heed that which He has spoken, what assurance does God have that he will heed a direct revelation should one be given? Did not the rich man plead that a direct messenger be sent to his erring brothers? Do we not remember the heavenly answer? *“If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, if one rose from the dead”* (Luke 16:31).

The decision has been made and the destiny sealed. Alterations are not to be accepted. Thus it was with Pilate when he said, *“What I have written I have written.”* Neither are alterations to be expected in the divine decisions. What God has written was written, He has written. What faith or hope could a believer have, if such were subject to alteration? With what certainty could one plan for eternity it was not for the fact that with *Him there is not variableness not shadow of turning?”*

There is no need for another revelation. It is then the silence of God that is indicative of His infinite compassion and divine mercy, which inspires our faith and hope in the eternal promises.

IV. The silence of God is a Judicial Inflection.

The wretched Saul, king of Israel, though leader of the people of God, rejected God’s warnings. In his misery and grief, he approached the prophet with the complaint, “God has departed from me answereth me no more.”

Herod was an eager listener of John. He had done many things but he had not surrendered his heart. The time came when rather than slay his lust with a repentant heart; he consented to slaying of the prophet. The blood of the saint was upon his hands and the guilt of the sin upon his conscience. The dreadful silence was eased by the thought of seeing Jesus, but Jesus answered him nothing, nothing to satisfy this curiosity, nothing to alarm his fears, nothing to enlighten this mind. *As a lamb he was led to the slaughter, as a sheep before the shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth”* (Isa. 53:7).

This dreaded silence added pain to torture. Christ was silent before the mob, silent before the Jewish council and silent before the Roman governor. The silence

increased the torture of a guilty conscience. Pilate, though he washed his hands in a pretense of innocence and denied the guilt, yet he marveled at his silence.

When our present days of probation are over, the unbelieving cry on agony and the contentious worshiper will plead, "Lord in thy name I have done many wonderful works," as he awakens to the dreadful realization that the merciful God "has departed and answereth no more." Sorrow will be added to grief and torture to misery as they suffer the infliction of the eternal silence. "There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

The silence of God is an expression of His infinite wisdom, a proof of His divinity. It is indicative of His infinite wisdom in religion, of His infinite compassion and mercy and will be evidence of His judicial infliction. It is during the present silence of our earthly silence, that we are subjects of this divine mercy. The eternal silence will be a rendering of justice.

God has spoken, all of which can be found in the New Testament. No further verification is necessary. If such were granted, it is reasonable to believe that He would speak to the uninformed heathen and not to people surrounded with innumerable copies of the Bible. His silence does not warrant man's introduction of creeds, doctrine or opinions. God said, "repent and be baptized everyone one of you" (Acts 2:38). Man says baptism is not essential.

Because God remains silent is no indication that He will warrant man's statement. Rather it is indicative of the fact that He will not alter the one that He has made. The same is true of every command in the New Testament.

From THE BIBLE BANNER Volum 5 No 2, pages 8-9, Sept.1942. Author of the song "Our God, He Is Alive"

NOTE by Bill Richardson:

This note is used in-lieu-of a preface to tell you that this wonderful writing was copied from a great Publication, "Seek The Old Paths", Vol. 16, No. 5, MAY 2005. Garland M. Robinson, Editor, of Seek The Old Paths does a great work with the publication and he worships and serves the Lord at the, East End Church of Christ, 102, Edison St. McMinnville, TN 37110-2216. Bro. Robinson tells us that "Seek The Old Paths" is free upon request, and Articles are also welcome. I highly recommend it! He tells us that the purpose and goal in the publication can be found in Jude 3; II Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:13; Titus 2:1; II Peter 1:12.

The scriptures and commentary that has been set forth in this study has been of great benefit to me. These wonderful scriptures and principles which we were blessed to study in this writing have been motivating to my conscience, and it is my prayer that you who read and study will accept it, and that it will be a conscience server to you also.

The well-trained conscience is equal to the knowledge, abiding faith, and love that we expose or submit our mind to. With confidence, I say that you are studying this lesson with faith and love, and that it will be of great benefit to you.

With confidence, I also say, that you desire to be blessed, to gain more knowledge, (true abiding biblical knowledge), which is associated with responsibilities, which creates a desire to seek, to search diligently, to accept when found, to associate with, and be an active part of, and that you will abide faithfully in the Lord's Church until death.

The church that I am speaking of cost the blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It is His Body, His Kingdom, which is His Church. Please be an obedient dedicated part of the church of the Bible—Christ's Church. The Church we read about in the Bible. You cannot pass through Heaven's gate if you are not in His Body, (His Church), and it is the church that we read about in the New Testament. That is the truth. That is what the Bible teaches.

If you are viewing this from my Website, www.geocities.com/dubbyt, please note other consecrated writings. There is a writing posted that I am sure you will want to view and copy. The writing title is, "The Church of the Bible, Christ's Church." It has a two-page enclosure, which has the title, "What Must I Do To Be Saved." Please study both biblical truth writings with an honest and receptive heart for truth and obedience. You will be blessed! God bless you now for studying this great lesson.

God loves you! And I do too!

Your servant,

Bill Richardson, Hartselle, AL