

CONTINUING THE “GREEN LETTERS”

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CHAPTER 67, pgs. 300-304

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67 – PSYCHIC HEALING; PRESUMING UPON GOD

The position of the senior pastor of Edgemont Bible Church and likely that of the church leadership is dispensational and cessationist.

Dispensational means that we understand and teach the Scriptures in a normal, historical, grammatical, contextual, literal manner for the type of biblical literature we are examining. God’s revelation of Himself, His Word and His will has been progressive from one generation to the next. We see that the general principle of Scriptural justification of man to God has always been solely by grace, through faith, and that not of ourselves, but as the gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast. We see from Scripture that man, in regard to his responsibility to his fellow man and accountable to God has had several dispensations or rules of how behavior was to be conducted over the history of earth. When conditions and situations have changed, due to man’s failure to keep God’s revealed will, God has issued new applications of His law to meet those challenges. These are dispensations. We see this has revealed a distinction between His chosen people, Israel, His Son’s bride, the church, and the rest of the unbelieving world, the Gentiles.

By cessationist we believe that the apostolic supernatural, spiritual gifts given to the apostles for the authentication of the church as a work of God ceased with the death of the apostles.

Miracles, healings, signs and wonders did not completely cease as they were demonstrated before the apostolic age as well. God has healed when He wanted to before and since the apostles came and went. He is still doing it to this day. But there are not apostles with those gifts still hanging around. Miracles may be done through the prayers of individuals and the church’s body of elders but individuals with miraculous gifts are no longer here. Continuationism holds that all those gifts and people with them still continue today.

Here is a portion of an article from Wikipedia about it:

Although the original formulation of cessationism arose in response to claims of healing and miracles in the Catholic Church, cessationists now divide into four viewpoints based on their views about the possibility of miracles among Christians today.^[12] These are:

- Full cessationists believe that all miracles have ceased, along with any miraculous gifts.^[13]
- Classical cessationists assert that the miraculous gifts such as prophecy, healing, and speaking in tongues ceased with the apostles. However, they do believe that God occasionally works in supernatural ways today.^[13]
- Consistent cessationists believe that not only were the miraculous gifts only for the establishment of the first-century church, but the need for apostles and prophets also ceased.^[13]
- Concentric cessationists believe that the miraculous gifts have indeed ceased in the mainstream church and evangelised areas, but may appear in unreached areas as an aid to spreading the Gospel. [Daniel B. Wallace](#) describes himself as a concentric cessationist and describes the other cessationist viewpoints as "linear".*

*This block of information was copied from
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cessationism_versus_continuationism

The author of this book held the same view as we do and his book reflects this manner of thinking. His supposition for the chapter is

“The modern “gifts” of tongues and healing have a common source. They are not of the Spirit, but of the flesh, and function primarily in the realm of the nervous system.

...None but the psychosomatic condition is affected by healers. Now and then some sufferers may be relieved of their neuro-induced symptoms, but actual healing of organic sickness never occurs by such means.” TCGL, p. 300

DOCTRINAL ERROR

“...healing is included in the Atonement, that it is not God’s will for Christians to be sick, but that all should be in perfect health.”

TCGL, p. 300. This is alleged to be based in Isaiah 53:4-6

This passage is about the complete redemption of all believing mankind. This obviously has not happened yet and will not until the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. The healing that comes with this atonement is the complete healing of our body and soul in the resurrection.

“God can, and does, heal today by not always. He is not committed to a covenant promise today (to heal in every circumstance), but is perfectly free to exercise a proper discrimination regarding the spiritual advisability of doing so where His people are concerned. No believer

who has a history with the Lord will deny that He has used physical weakness and sickness as a means to develop the graces of the Holy Spirit and a spiritual dependence upon the power of God.” TCGL p. 301

“The Holy Spirit’s ministry to the Christian (whether in sickness or in health) is to conform him to the image of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that upon the foundation of his eternal security.” TCGL, p. 300

It should also be pointed out that the world of the spirits and daimons are capable of performing signs and miracles that confuse mankind.

Such healers in doctrinal error are presuming upon God and alleging to speak for Him, when they are not. This is a dangerous, deadly and deceptive way of life. They speak as if they know what God wants done and that they have the position with Him to get it done! Such presumption will lead to a deadly judgment for misleading people and presuming to speak for God, even if the alleged miraculous deed seems to have happened. Matt 7:21-23

DIAGNOSIS

The author, with this position, is doubtful that those coming for healing have been properly diagnosed. This seems anecdotal and without good support but it may be the case.

PSYCHOSOMATIC ILLNESS

The Bible in several places points out that many sicknesses are brought on by sin or distrust in the person’s life. Such emotional states as bitterness, guilt, rebellion and anger have long been associated with physical maladies. When a doctor attempts a diagnosis and cannot find an ailment or cause for the patient’s complaint of symptoms, these may be more related to diet or psychological conditions that the patient does not know should be acknowledged and the doctor may not be trained well enough to consider them. When nothing can be found to be wrong, no treatment follows and the symptoms remain. When such a person can come into the presence of one skilled in generating confidence (called faith) or in using spiritual powers given by spiritual entities such a person may

find relief from the symptoms. He is said to be healed. But it is not certainly known he had an organic malady.

GOD'S WILL

It is not always God's will to heal an individual. God's purpose for the believer is to conform him to the image of His Son the Lord Jesus Christ. Suffering is often one of the vehicles to get this accomplished. Paul was suffering some malady and sought from the Lord 3 times to be delivered and the Lord told him flatly that He would not remove it! (2 Cor 12:7-10) Paul, known for his apostolic gift of healing, left one of his coworkers sick in Miletus. (2 Tim 4:20)

"As in the apostolic days so now the desire exists for the manifestation of the Spirit in marvelous ways; but a life sober, righteous, holy, lived in the hope of the glory to come, is the more excellent way of the Spirit's manifestation and undeniable proof of His indwelling. The prayer should not be so much for this or that gift, or this or that result, as for Christ Himself to be made manifest to us and through us. The Apostle who was most filled with the Spirit sums all up in the one great word, 'For me to live is Christ.'"

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT ON PRESUMING UPON GOD

This is being written two days after one of the most ballyhooed and hyped cosmic events of the decade has taken place. On April 08, 2024, a total solar eclipse passed over the center of the United States, just 7 years after an earlier total solar eclipse had passed over the same area from a different direction. The path of the two eclipses crossed each other in southern Illinois. Self-appointed prophets presumed upon God and spoke phenomenal and sometimes outrageous and ignorant comments about the "true" meaning of this sign in the heavens. They garnered all kinds of circumstantial, forced and sometimes grossly inaccurate data that they identified as signs from God of impending judgments and disasters. The information gathered had no biblical authority from God to be read in the manner they did. They spoke like Ahab's false prophets and indeed they are false prophets. They got their 15 minutes of fame! They did not mention that this same phenomenon had occurred 15 times previous to this since the

1500's when western civilization encountered the "new world" and recorded the events of it. One has to wonder if they will be remembered for the false prophets they were with the total loss of credibility and public shame equal to the positive press and notoriety they received from sources anxious to garner good ratings from their frequently watched presentations.

These prophets looked to be sincere men who love Jesus and are diligent workers for Him. Some of them may not be; they may be charlatans looking for fame and money. We cannot know their heart. But it is not difficult to understand the kind of thing a sign like the eclipse can do to the imagination if a person gives themselves wholeheartedly to believing the hype of the media on the one hand, the mound of "evidence" that seemed to be so full of "biblical meaning" and belief that one has been given a special anointing from God to be His spokesman, His prophet.

This is an error of the continuation position. For the older traditional churches it means apostolic authority given to men selected to be the leader, apostolic authority of past church leaders, divinely-inspired authority of church tradition and divine authority of the church when it speaks. For the newer charismatic and Pentecostal churches it means that whoever speaks and says it is from God IS a prophet of God with a status equal to the apostles ordained personally and directly by the Lord Jesus Christ.