

FAITH AND HEALING

Christians are often completely bewildered as to why God heals some and not others. We need to come to grips with the Biblical fact that what is done for man is not done by his faith but by God through His faith which He imparts to us. Faith is the verb that points us to the noun that does the action. That noun is Jesus. Thus, it is not faith...but faith in Christ and His Word...and that faith was a received gift from God to begin with. We are merely to take that which was given to us and place it back in Him.

If healing is in the Atonement and God wills total health for His children, why are not all healed? We try to box God in with our syllogisms and God refuses to dance to our tune. If anything has become apparent in the ministry of healing, it is that it offers a golden opportunity for any minister to proclaim the "Godness" of God. We must rest easy in the sovereignty of a God whose "ways are not our ways; whose thoughts are not our thoughts".

God simply will not bow to our little syllogisms. Here is one favorite thesis in charismatic circles.

Major premise: Healing is in the Atonement.

Minor premise: Faith is the only key to healing.

Conclusion: Therefore, those who are prayed for in faith will be healed. (ergo...if they are not healed, there was no faith)

It just isn't that simple. There is always an X factor in healing, an unknown quantity. Often the problem is that of God's timing.

ROM 8:18 KJV FOR I RECKON THAT THE SUFFERINGS OF THIS PRESENT TIME ARE NOT WORTHY TO BE COMPARED WITH THE GLORY WHICH SHALL BE REVEALED IN US.

19 FOR THE EARNEST EXPECTATION OF THE CREATURE WAITETH FOR THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD.

20 FOR THE CREATURE WAS MADE SUBJECT TO VANITY, NOT WILLINGLY, BUT BY REASON OF HIM WHO HATH SUBJECTED THE SAME IN HOPE,

21 BECAUSE THE CREATURE ITSELF ALSO SHALL BE DELIVERED FROM THE BONDAGE OF CORRUPTION INTO THE GLORIOUS LIBERTY OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD.

22 FOR WE KNOW THAT THE WHOLE CREATION GROANETH AND TRAVAILETH IN PAIN TOGETHER UNTIL NOW.

23 AND NOT ONLY THEY, BUT OURSELVES ALSO, WHICH HAVE THE FIRSTFRUITS OF THE SPIRIT, EVEN WE OURSELVES GROAN WITHIN OURSELVES, WAITING FOR THE ADOPTION, TO WIT, THE REDEMPTION OF OUR BODY.

The key in the above Scriptures is found in verses 18 and 21..."shall be" which is future tense. No amount of positive confession can alter the fact that Paul penned these passages after the cross and after the resurrection, the Holy Spirit bearing witness that their fulfillment would not be until "the adoption"...that is, when we are caught up to meet Him in the air (1 Thes. 4:14-18) and receive our new bodies (vs 23 above, cp. Phil. 3:21, 1 Cor. 15:49-56).

Nothing is more rigid or more opposed to the Holy Spirit's blessed moving in our age than bad theology. That is why most theologians don't care much for the book of Acts. The Holy Spirit keeps upsetting their theological applecart. Just when they have everything figured out, the Holy Spirit does things in a different way and then records it in the book of Acts.

Bad theology says that miracles cannot occur in our century. Bad theology says Christians can be controlled or possessed by a demon, whereas true theology is that the child of God has the indwelling Holy Spirit who would have to first be bound by that demon before he could "spoil the house of the strong man". The Christian may be OPPRESSED by an evil spirit but he can not be CONTROLLED by the demon and is thus responsible for all of his acts. The Devil didn't MAKE them "do it". He may have tempted, but he did not "make" them.

Bad theology says only lack of faith prevents healing. In fact, bad theology is like the cruel giant Procrustes, the highwayman from Attica. When visitors arrived at his castle, he stretched them out on a carefully prepared iron bed. If they were too long, he cut off their legs. If they were too short, he stretched them to fit. That is what bad theology does. If it doesn't fit the facts, cut off the facts. If the facts are contrary to the Scriptures, bad theology says, "That's easy enough, just stretch the facts to fit."

Usually bad theology is 180 degrees out of phase with the truth. When a doctrine is only a little wrong, more often than not we can sense that something just does not fit. However, when the truth is exactly turned backward, it always seems to be correct, wise, and even spiritual. The theory of evolution is an example of this principle. The "Big Bang" is another - many more could be cited.

An example of this with regard to the "Faith" theology is that we are being taught that we are already healed if only we can move it DOWN from our head into our inner man, to our heart, or that the miracle which we desire will manifest itself if we can just get it down from the head to the spirit. This may sound right, but it is the exact opposite of the truth. This is no more than the mind over matter teaching found in the Christian Science cult, in shamanism, humanism, or even sorcery. The Scriptures teach that truth from God originates in the regenerated spirit and that from there, it must be worked UP into the mind which is in the ongoing process of being renewed (Rom.12:2).

Others believe all theology is unnecessary. Some say, "I don't have any theology; I just believe in Jesus." But "just believing in Jesus" is already the most profound theological statement one can make. If you haven't got a good theology, it is very likely you will have a bad one.

The problem for the convert arises after salvation. "Faith" theology runs as follows:

Since all Christians have faith, and since faith is THE SOLE FACTOR (now here is the root of the error) in healing, it is an exercise of what I already have that heals me. The conclusion is obvious: if I am not healed, it is my fault. I have simply not exercised my faith.

Just as there are physical exercises that will develop the body, and mental exercises to develop the mind, the same must be true in the spiritual realm. I am saved by grace, but I am healed by working my

faith. It is entirely up to me. If I need money, I must exercise faith. If I need prosperity, I must exercise faith. And eventually that faith will work, not sometimes - they tell us - not 50 percent of the time, but all the time.

It is clear then that prosperity and health are the new signs of the committed Christian. One's righteousness now is evidenced by his works of faith. At last we have an infallible gage by which we may evaluate our own spirituality...and that of everyone else as well!

One obvious observation arises from a perusal of the above "statement of faith" of the "Faith" theology. Namely, if we are going to liken healing to salvation (which they do), then we are healed by GRACE, ALWAYS GRACE, through faith IN Jesus...not, healed by faith - and NOT through "faith in faith". Faith is not the object of our trust, Jesus is - and He alone. Jesus is greater than any God given attribute or than any of His spiritual gifts.

The "Faith Doctrine" may also be stated:

God entered into a contract with us and just as Christ has forgiven us our sins so He now heals us of our diseases. The logic (erroneous as its' basic premise is flawed) continues that since faith is the means by which our salvation is secured, faith is also the means whereby we are healed. Healing is simply an execution of faith according to the Word of God. Since the failure cannot be on God's part, when people are not healed, it must be our fault. There is only one answer then, to a failure to receive healing - lack of faith.

This position, with its Scripture and its logic, is extremely attractive to people who are searching. It appears to answer all questions of unexplained and unwanted deaths with one pat answer -lack of faith.

CHRISTIAN DUALISM

By the term, dualism, we simply mean, in the practical sense – opposing principles locked in struggle.

For many charismatics a kind of practical Christian dualism exists; that is, God and the devil are about even with a slight edge being given to God. Though it is never said like this, the practical outworking of the doctrine may be clearly seen as carrying such an inference. God is a good God who provides all the beautiful things of life: music, flowers, health, wealth, and all "the blessings of Abraham." Everything good comes from God; everything bad comes from the devil. Whenever a trial or a tribulation comes, the devil put it on us.

The believer, then, is sovereign on earth and controls his world by right thinking, right conduct, right confession, and the exercise of faith (mystery religions have always taught this). We may be ask, "But how does this work? How can this be possible while we are still under the Adamic curse? Where is the theological basis for this belief?"

This teaching says the curse of Adam can be nullified by the "alert believer" who knows how to apply the "blessings of Abraham" and that there is no middle ground.

RESULTS OF "FAITH" THEOLOGY

Hence, there is an emphasis on the study and memorization of God's Word. Now this is a very desirable byproduct, unfortunately, the passages used are highly selective and are nearly always taken out of context...both the immediate context and the remote context. For example, I Peter 2:24 says, "By whose stripes ye were healed" (KJV). Therefore, since healing occurred at Calvary and God has already done His part, all that is left for us to do is to exercise faith in the promise. Many teachers assure us that healing is a gift; all we have to do is appropriate it...just receive the gift.

And so the promise is said to be unqualified. Thus, healing is equated with believing and acting upon the Word, they tell us. When I act upon the Word, the consequence is healing.

However, It simply is not true that I always receive what I confess. If this were true I would now be the country's greatest Bible teacher, a millionaire, a spiritual ruler over a city - a state - a nation or even more, a man of faith and power, a miracle worker, and a peerless leader among leaders. As a matter of fact, I am none of these things.

But more than any of these, world peace, the unity of the faith in Christ Jesus, the removal of all doubt in God and His Word, salvation to all, no more demonic nor satanic attacks, no more hunger in the world, no sick-ness, no dying etc. etc...all of these and much, much more would be at our finger tips and would in fact have already occurred as many have previously so confessed these.

Nor is the reverse true. That is, that I never get anything from God when I make a negative confession.

A few years ago in Lubbock, Texas, the wife of an elder in one of the local churches fell ill. This church was thoroughly committed to the "faith message." When the wife became ill, they threw the elder out. The logic of their theology carried them to that conclusion. If the man's wife was ill, it is obvious he was not exercising sufficient faith. If he was not exercising faith, he was not worthy to be an elder. If he was not worthy to be an elder, he should not be among them, for after all the logical conclusion is "we don't want to fellowship with unbelievers". Other such stories could be cited. What a cruel taskmaster bad theology is! The point is that this bondage resulted from a non-truth...the truth always sets us free (John 8:31- 32, 36).

In the early Church, the Church leaders called on God to heal as ac-crediting proofs of the Word they preached (Acts 4:27-30), healing was a confirming sign to their message of a risen savior and soon to return king. Paul's understanding is the same as that of the early Church. In fact, as one of the evidences of a true apostle, Paul enumerates the "signs and wonders and mighty works" (2 Cor. 12:12). Why then was Paul not more disturbed that he had to leave his companion, Trophimus, sick at Miletus (2 Tim. 4:20) or that Epaphroditus became sick and nearly died while helping Paul in the ministry during his imprisonment in Rome (Phil. 3:25-30)?

One of the most intriguing questions the faith teachers need to address is the particularity of their doctrine. The gospel of prosperity must be limited indeed to a few countries of western Europe and the United States. Can you imagine the absurdity of preaching to the underground church in Russia that if they would only elevate the sights of their faith, they could all be driving Cadillacs?

Thus, the faith message is a local message; it can only be attractive in the most privileged parts of the world; it is a local message only applicable to 10 percent of the world at best; only the richest nations could furnish an audience for its teachings.

But for theology to be any good at all, it must be universal. It must be applicable within terms of sound Biblical "in context" exegesis any time, any place in the world. Thus faith theology is bad theology; it is not universally applicable.

BUT WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURES...? ALL OF THEM...AND IN THEIR
CONTEXT - THAT IS THE ONLY TRUE TEST.

The New Testament writers clearly spoke in unison, "All who repent and believe are saved." But they never said, "All who repent and believe are healed."

To the point, their own experience was to the contrary. Not only was Trophimus left sick, but Paul enjoins Timothy to take a little wine for his stomach's sake (1 Tim. 5:23). Furthermore, there remains before us the difficult problem of Paul's thorn in the flesh. What was it? How did it operate? Why did it come?

The passage reads: "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2 Cor. 12:7-9).

Yet we must take comfort that the problem is NOT NEW! Paul could have been writing directly to twentieth-century charismatics when he said,

1CO 4:8 KJV NOW YE ARE FULL, NOW YE ARE RICH, YE HAVE REIGNED
AS KINGS WITHOUT US: AND I WOULD TO GOD YE DID REIGN, THAT WE
ALSO MIGHT REIGN WITH YOU.
9 FOR I THINK THAT GOD HATH SET FORTH US THE APOSTLES LAST,
AS IT WERE APPOINTED TO DEATH: FOR WE ARE MADE A SPECTACLE UNTO
THE WORLD, AND TO ANGELS, AND TO MEN.
10 WE ARE FOOLS FOR CHRIST'S SAKE, BUT YE ARE WISE IN CHRIST;
WE ARE WEAK, BUT YE ARE STRONG; YE ARE HONOURABLE, BUT WE ARE
DESPISED.
11 EVEN UNTO THIS PRESENT HOUR WE BOTH HUNGER, AND THIRST,
AND ARE NAKED, AND ARE BUFFETED, AND HAVE NO CERTAIN
DWELLINGPLACE;
12 AND LABOUR, WORKING WITH OUR OWN HANDS: BEING REVILED, WE
BLESS; BEING PERSECUTED, WE SUFFER IT:
13 BEING DEFAMED, WE INTREAT: WE ARE MADE AS THE FILTH OF THE
WORLD, AND ARE THE OFFSCOURING OF ALL THINGS UNTO THIS DAY.

Is it not possible that all the facts are not being considered? After all, even in the New Testament, not all sicknesses were healed. Paul, the great miracle worker, left Trophimus at Miletus sick

(2 Tim. 4:20). He could not heal him. Undoubtedly they had prayed fervently, but for some reason God did not heal Trophimus. Paul himself suffered from a disease so loathsome that it could well have turned off his hearers just to see him (Gal. 4:13-15). He prayed long and hard for this infirmity in his flesh to disappear, but it did not. God gave him grace to bear it, and his illness became the occasion for the Galatians hearing the gospel.

Again, a messenger from Satan troubled him so excessively he besought the Lord at least three times to take it away (2 Cor. 12:7-8), and we remember that Paul enjoined Timothy to take a little wine for his stomach's sake. ... and for his "often infirmities" (1 Tim. 5:23)!

The apostle Paul, who boasted of his weakness, who claimed that God had made the apostles laughingstock, like men condemned to die in the circus, who boasted in his humiliation, who confessed to being the scum of the earth, could only be judged by this theology as a foolish, unsuccessful Christian: he had failed to exercise his faith.

THE TEST OF A DOCTRINE IS - WHERE IN THE SCRIPTURES IS A
"THIS IS THAT..." (Acts 2:16)

Paul had learned the secret, not of total health but of total contentment. He writes in Philippians 4:11, "I have learned, in whatever state I am, to be content." Conversely, the distinguishing mark of those charismatics who have embraced the "faith message" is that of discontentedness.

My concern is for the thousands of people for whom the faith message has not worked, who are now far from God...their faith and confidence in God and in the Scriptures now shipwrecked, themselves disillusioned, bewildered, discouraged, and often in despair...not knowing what to believe anymore.

PAUL'S ILLNESS

GAL 4:13 KJV YE KNOW HOW THROUGH INFIRMITY OF THE FLESH I
PREACHED THE GOSPEL UNTO YOU AT THE FIRST.
14 AND MY TEMPTATION WHICH WAS IN MY FLESH YE DESPISED NOT,
NOR REJECTED; BUT RECEIVED ME AS AN ANGEL OF GOD, EVEN AS CHRIST
JESUS.
15 WHERE IS THEN THE BLESSEDNESS YE SPAKE OF? FOR I BEAR YOU
RECORD, THAT, IF IT HAD BEEN POSSIBLE, YE WOULD HAVE PLUCKED OUT
YOUR OWN EYES, AND HAVE GIVEN THEM TO ME.

Whatever the infirmity was, it became so visible that it was a trial to the audience at Galatia.

Some of the Hyper-faith teachers actually impiously teach that Paul simply did not have their spiritual insight and revelation and hence he needlessly suffered. These impudent miserable judges fully deserve Paul's sobering reminder:

GAL 6:17 KJV FROM HENCEFORTH LET NO MAN TROUBLE ME: FOR I
BEAR IN MY BODY THE MARKS OF THE LORD JESUS.

which after deeply reflecting upon all that Paul had gone through (2 Cor. 16-28) and did go through afterward, should silence forever any would be, self-professed, self-styled modern day apostle.

The question to be answered, however, is which gospel more approximates the actual life and deeds of Jesus of Nazareth (or James & John the Baptist who were both beheaded for the cause of Christ). For those who want to live like King's kids, why settle for second best? Why not live like the King himself in the days of His flesh? Why not follow that walking, weary man of sorrows throughout His dusty homeland and sleep under the stars at night for the simple reason that not only at His birth, but for His whole life long, there continued to be "no room in the inn."

It is not a question of being saved by works; on that question all the "faith" writers stand in a solid reformation stream. They all agree we are saved by grace through faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus. Salvation is a grace gift from the Lord.

Kings kids, no one denies this; the question is, what kind of King? If it is true that the servant is not above his master, then we cannot complain if we have no more than Jesus, who had no place to lay His head.

Under this teaching, the follower no longer has to suffer privation, endure persecution, be thrown in jail, go hungry or thirsty, or suffer shipwreck for the gospel's sake. Jesus did it all for us. He became poor so we could become rich; He suffered so we wouldn't have to suffer; He was persecuted such that we need not be persecuted; He had no place to sleep at night so we could demand to live in the Hilton; He had to walk so that we could drive an air-conditioned luxury car; He went hungry so that we could be full; He was hot and dusty so that we could enjoy clean showers and temperature-acclimated swimming pools. All this Jesus did for us. He died to make us comfortable...is this "the full gospel"? I wot not (King James for - I think not)! Eventually, yes and much more but not in this world (John 16:33).

The book of Job deals devastatingly with a persistent theme in all religious thinking, the act-consequence principle (Karma). Namely, if I do certain acts, certain consequences inevitably follow. The converse also holds true. If certain consequences appear, I must, in the nature of the case, be guilty of certain errant deeds. Job's comforters represent this kind of thinking, par excellence. Job had suffered calamitous consequences; therefore, he must have sinned. God clearly disavowed this type of theological reasoning - "You have not spoken of me what is right" (Job 42:7). But this type of thinking still exists today and is part and parcel of the "faith" theology.

DEATH AND THE "FAITH THEOLOGY"...THE ULTIMATE TEST, THE LAST ENEMY

The harsh realities of death are still very much with us. Barring the Lord's return, while we are in these mortal bodies there is no escape from the last enemy. When people are conditioned to expect only health, there is little preparation for death. The apostle reminds us that we still groan in these mortal bodies awaiting redemption, but when the expectancy for life is too high, the dimension of death is unthinkable. Death is an unforgivable CONTRADICTION for anyone expecting perfect health, because between perfect health and death there is usually sickness, and "sickness can never be of God". When death does come, the question is, "Who let them die?" The question is logical enough. Since health is in our hands through faith, when someone dies, the

question calls for an answer. Someone is at fault. But where do we find men of God so teaching either by living example or by doctrine in the Holy Writ?

No matter how well-intentioned it may be, no theology without an adequate view of death is complete. Apart from the charges of crypto-Christian Scientism, such a theology simply does not prepare its people adequately for the final exit. Normally, sickness of some kind is the passageway to that exit, as even Elisha experienced. The problem of dying is difficult enough as it is without complicating it further by heaping unjust condemnation on those who haven't "exercised faith" during the terminal stages God uses to bring most saints home. At the time when people need the greatest comfort and the most compassionate understanding, well-intentioned friends can be the agents of Satan to bring doubt and gloom and condemnation to the dying person.

Actually, the Lord uses this crises as a great witness to others who are observing the dying saint, whose testimony stands as a Gibraltar to the last on behalf of a God who furnishes hope, peace of heart and mind even under such stressful conditions. The reader is encouraged to examine the death bed scenes of David, Jacob, Elisha, etc. and observe the glory that the Lord received.

PSA 116:15 KJV PRECIOUS IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD IS THE DEATH OF HIS SAINTS.

DEU 32:39 KJV SEE NOW THAT I, EVEN I, AM HE, AND THERE IS NO god WITH ME: I KILL, AND I MAKE ALIVE; I WOUND, AND I HEAL: NEITHER IS THERE ANY THAT CAN DELIVER OUT OF MY HAND.

The Bible brings the most comprehensive view of any philosophy or religion in the world to the question of death. Jesus acknowledged that death was real (John 11:14) but not final (John 11:25). He holds the keys of hell and death (Rev. 1:18). He has tasted death for every man (Heb. 2:9), and He delivers men from the second death in the here and now (John 5:24). For the Christian, death is the necessary enemy that must be faced before eternal felicity comes with his resurrected Lord. To focus on this life only and health in the here and now forfeits a balanced view of the whole counsel of the Word of God that recognizes death for the distasteful enemy it is, while setting its sights beyond to the great and really real world where "Eyes have not seen, nor ears beheld the glory God has prepared for those that love Him."

Today, rising from out of the ashes of past charismatic errors from within "The Manifestation of the Sons of God" sect and others of similar doctrines, "Kingdom Now" aberrations again declare that "we need never experience physical death"...the positive mind set and positive confession can overcome this enemy.

Earl Paulk, their champion, has stated "We who are alive and remain are left here for one ultimate purpose: to conquer the last enemy which is death. God has left us here to take dominion over death" (Satan Unmasked p.265). "Until the mature body of Christ challenges death as a group of people, the end cannot come. History will continue millennium after millennium until we do what God has said to do" (Life in the Eternal Kingdom p. 255). This does not sound at all like the "Great Commission" to this writer, who finds himself restraining the scream...Scripture please! Of course...this is the ultimate positive

confession..."I will never die". It was always only a matter of time until this doctrine came around again...especially when we are now being told in many of the more spiritually elite circles that the reason that what we say is what we get is because...we are gods!? That moves the issue beyond that of error into that of heresy...it is the same lie that Satan spoke to our direct ancestor and "mother" Eve.

GEN 3:4 KJV AND THE SERPENT SAID UNTO THE WOMAN, YE SHALL NOT SURELY DIE:

5 FOR GOD DOTHTH KNOW THAT IN THE DAY YE EAT THEREOF, THEN YOUR EYES SHALL BE OPENED, AND YE SHALL BE AS gods...

We do not say that the men foisting such wicked teachings on the Church are themselves heretics, some are merely deceived, others are gainsayers - that is - for gain, be it money or personal glory and renown...and others are merely poor students of Scripture and hence fall into every wind of doctrine. Nevertheless, the teaching that we are gods hence we have the power to speak things into being is a heresy and reveals a complete lack of understanding of John 10:34-35 and represents a perversion of Romans 4:17 viz.:

ROM 4:17 KJV (AS IT IS WRITTEN, I HAVE MADE THEE (Abraham) A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS,) BEFORE HIM WHOM HE (Abraham) BELIEVED, EVEN GOD, WHO QUICKENETH THE DEAD, AND CALLETH THOSE THINGS WHICH BE NOT AS THOUGH THEY WERE.

This verse simply does not promise the child of God that he can also "call those things which be not as though they were".

Finally, our faith is not in whether a person lives or dies nor in healing, but it is in a PERSON and that person is the Lord Jesus Christ and Him alone."

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