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Some Introductory Verses

Proverbs 3:21–22

21 My son, let not them depart from thine eyes: keep sound wisdom and discretion:

22 So shall they be life unto thy soul, and grace to thy neck.

Proverbs 10:21

The lips of the righteous feed many: but fools die for want of wisdom.

Acts 17:11

These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

Titus 1:9

Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

Hebrews 6:1–2

1 Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,

2 Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

Introduction

“**Cessationism**” may broadly be understood as the school of thought that certain apostolic gifts have ceased. There are several branches of cessationism. Some believe that **all gifts have ceased**, others think that **only miraculous gifts have ceased**, and others still consider that gifts only manifest when evangelising **regions unreached** by the gospel. There are other cessationist currents.

Readers who want to learn more about the different forms of cessationism may consult the article here:

(link provided in original text)

Here we mainly examine three questions:

1. **Have spiritual gifts as a whole ceased?**
2. **Have miraculous gifts ceased?**
3. **Has prophecy ceased?**
4. **Can there no longer be prophets?**

Arguments in Favour of Cessationism

We shall list and examine the arguments in favour of cessationism.

Argument 1: Prophecies Shall Cease

One of the primary arguments of cessationism is the following Scripture:

1 Corinthians 13:8–10

8 Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.

9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.

10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

Those who invoke this verse believe that since the Bible has been completed, it constitutes “**the perfect**”, and therefore the “partial” (prophecies, tongues...) must have ceased.

This interpretation is problematic on at least two levels:

First, among the things said to cease is *knowledge*, which “shall vanish away.” Yet those who claim prophecy has ceased also believe knowledge remains, for when they speak they rely on their own knowledge. This is therefore a clear contradiction resulting from a partial and biased reading.

Second, the continuation of the passage appears to be ignored:

1 Corinthians 13:12

For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

The **timing** of the cessation is clearly defined:

- When we shall see **face to face**,
- When we shall **know even as we are known**.

Who among those claiming cessation can say they now see God face to face or know as they are known?

If the Bible were “the perfect,” then, according to this text, there would be **no more debates** about anything.

Argument 2: The Gift of Tongues Is Only for Unbelievers

1 Corinthians 14:21–22

21 ...With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people...

22 Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.

There are still many unbelievers in the world today. Therefore this verse cannot be used to assert the cessation of tongues, but rather suggests its **continuation** for as long as unbelievers remain.

Argument 3: If This Gift Still Existed, Missionaries Would Not Need Language Schools

This argument assumes mistakenly that **every Christian has every gift**. Even in the early Church, the gift of speaking human languages was recognised only in specific cases:

- Those present at Pentecost,
- Those present in Cornelius’ house.

Paul teaches clearly that **not every Christian automatically has every gift**, and that the tongues spoken in Corinth were often **not human languages**, but speech addressed to God:

1 Corinthians 14:1–3

1 Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.

2 For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God...

3 But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.

This text also clearly establishes an invitation to Christians to aspire to spiritual gifts. Why should Christians aspire to gifts if the gifts no longer exist? Was this word limited to the Corinthians? There is no reason to think so.

It is up to God to decide to whom He may give the gift of speaking in human tongues. If He has not systematically given it to missionaries, this does not mean He no longer gives it to anyone. Here too, there is a denial of probable reality, as people testify to having met missionaries or pastors manifesting the speaking in human tongues. Before asserting categorically that this comes from demons and not from the Spirit of God, remember that the Lord Jesus Christ said that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven men. When He said this, those He spoke of had not explicitly spoken against the Holy Spirit, but had said that it was by the prince of demons that He cast out demons. One must therefore be cautious, even if one may choose to have a legitimate doubt about the origin of this speaking in tongues.

Argument 4: The proof that miraculous healings have ceased is the fact that the apostle Paul could not heal several sick people

We have the cases of Epaphroditus (Philippians 2:25-27), Trophimus (2 Timothy 4:20), Timothy (1 Timothy 5:23), and Paul himself (2 Corinthians 12:7-9).

At least two elements must be taken into account here:

1. A visible priority of exercising miraculous gifts on non-believers within the framework of evangelisation to win new souls for Christ.
2. The sovereignty of God's will.

The spectacular gifts manifested by the apostles served to prove their apostleship and to win souls for Christ. These gifts were exercised even without the explicit will of the apostle who possessed the gift (Peter's shadow healed the sick – Acts 5:15; handkerchiefs or linens that touched Paul's body healed the sick – Acts 19:12). All the cases of sick people cited here, not healed by Paul, are Christians, people already part of the church.

The illnesses of Christians may have several origins, among which are God's punishment for sin, testing of faith, or a constraint to prevent pride (as in Paul's case), etc. The miraculous gift is not intended to automatically heal these illnesses. One element confirming this view is the case of John the Baptist's death. Jesus Christ had raised Lazarus, who had been dead for three days. However, He did not go to raise John the Baptist, whose death He learned of. Had He lost the gift of resurrection? Certainly not. It was not God's plan for John to be resurrected by Christ.

The exercise of miraculous gifts depends primarily on God's will and not on the holder of the gift, and is never in opposition to God's will. Even before raising Lazarus, Jesus thanked God for being heard, although He was not seen praying. The manifestation of the gift of healing was sometimes dependent on the faith of the sick, revealed by God. It is therefore not as systematic as one might think. Jesus Christ Himself faced this opposition of faith: Matthew 13:58: *"And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief."*

The non-systematic nature is not proof of non-existence or of the end of the gift.

In 2024, many still contest Christianity, and even the existence of Christ. There are villages dedicated to witchcraft, people turning to other deities... God can still use miraculous gifts, not to confirm the apostles of the Bible, but to confirm the Christian message, missionaries or apostles, and above all the reality and power of Jesus Christ. Numerous testimonies confirm the observation of such manifestations in evangelistic campaigns.

Argument 5: James instructs to pray for the sick

James 5:14-16: *"14 Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: 15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. 16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."*

Note that miraculous gifts were primarily the gifts of the apostles and not of all Christians.

Acts 2:43: *“And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.”*

Acts 5:12: *“And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people...”*

1 Corinthians 12:28: *“And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.”*

Some others chosen by God could also have them, but it is not said that every community must have them. We will also see why some communities do not have them at all. James gives a general recommendation, applicable everywhere. Moreover, as explained above regarding illness in Christians, it is not necessarily intended to be healed by a miraculous gift, even if someone has such a gift. This text of James therefore confirms that illnesses in Christians may originate from their sin, and healing in that case must pass through confession or repentance.

1 Corinthians 12:28 above confirms that God established in the Church people with the gift of miracles, as well as people with other gifts. However, the Church being the body of Christ, “in the Church” does not mean “in every assembly.”

Argument 6: No instructions are given to name or designate apostles and prophets

1 Corinthians 12:28 above simply refutes this argument. Apostles and prophets are established by God and not appointed by humans. Therefore, there can be no recommendation on how to name or designate them.

Some say that prophets, like kings, must be anointed with oil to be established, and that no one can claim to be a prophet if not thus anointed. But here they contradict Acts 2:17, where God promises that sons and daughters will prophesy. They also fail to understand the new covenant, in which the new anointing allowing the reception of the Spirit of God is no longer the anointing with oil, but water baptism following sincere and true repentance.

Argument 7: Divine revelation is complete

This statement has no real biblical basis. When the apostles were told that the

Holy Spirit would guide them into all truth, this does not mean that He revealed to them all things past, present, and future!!! What revelation did they have about missiles? About telephones? If the devil were to create today new objects specifically for bewitchment, what revelation did they have about them? Being guided into all truth means that they had all the knowledge necessary at that time to remain in the truth. And also that all subsequent knowledge cannot contradict the truth they received.

Why, according to 1 Corinthians 12:28, would God have given prophets to the early church if the revelation of the apostles was sufficient? Yet there are several people presented in the New Testament as prophets. Some prophesied about temporal events that would happen (Acts 11:28, Acts 21:10-11), and others about individual events.

Some cite the passage on the partial nature and the eventual end of prophecy (1 Corinthians 13:8-10), which we have already refuted. Others cite 2 Timothy 3:16, *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,”* to claim that this makes revelation complete and prophecy unnecessary. This is unacceptable, because at the time this verse was written, the Bible did not exist in its current form, but only the books of the Old Testament. So does this verse refute the entire New Testament? At what point does it say there will be no more revelation?

To speak of the completeness of divine revelation is to deny temporal or individual prophecies, such as those given by Agabus (Acts 11:28, Acts 21:10-11). Yet the Bible contains several other cases of individual or temporal prophecies, and many prophets mentioned in the New Testament (Acts 15:32, Acts 11:27, Acts 19:6, Acts 21:9, Acts 13:1). It is evident that all the prophets mentioned here and those who prophesied did not aim to establish a new doctrine or law. The law was given by Moses; giving the law again was not the prophets' purpose. Jesus Christ came with grace, and He established the apostles, teachers, and evangelists to bring and explain the message of the gospel. The role of prophets is not fundamentally to bring a new doctrine or modify existing doctrine.

Argument 8: If the gift of healing still existed, those who possess it would just go heal the sick in hospitals

Did Jesus Christ go to heal the sick in hospitals? Did the apostles? We have already explained that the gift of healing does not necessarily imply the ability

to heal all the sick. This is because some illnesses may be the result of God's punishment or testing. Furthermore, the gift is exercised according to divine guidance, not the independent will of the recipient. If God commands someone with the gift of healing to exercise it in a hospital, they will do so; otherwise, there is no need. Miraculous healings still occur today; I myself have witnessed some, and there are numerous testimonies online.

The problem in the minds of many is considering that the gift of healing exists only if it manifests as the capacity to instantly heal every sick person, regardless of their condition. Yet some sick are healed days after the action of someone with the gift of healing, due to that action itself. Some sick may not be healed at all, for the reasons mentioned above or others. The disciples Jesus sent out cast out demons, but they could not cast out a demon for which Jesus said, *"this kind cannot go out except by prayer and fasting."* Does this negate their gift? No.

If someone prays for the sick or commands their healing and achieves a healing rate significantly above placebo, one can say they have the gift of healing. If, however, their shadow heals people (Peter), or handkerchiefs that touched their body heal people (Paul), or they command instant healings, we would rather call it the gift of miracles. Even in the early Church, very few people demonstrated such documented gifts (in the Bible, apparently only Peter and Paul). Note that Peter, who experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, only experienced it again when he went to Cornelius to present the gospel officially to the Gentiles for the first time. This reminds us that today, people manifesting such gifts can also be rare, and God can provoke such manifestations selectively to confirm something.

Argument 9: There are many false prophets and many false healings

False prophets are not a new phenomenon. They existed before the Church and were predicted. They are often the majority. However, the existence of the false does not prove that the true does not exist. There is false currency and true currency.

1 Kings 22:6-8: *"6 And the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and said unto them, Shall I go to Ramothgilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they said, Go up; for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king. 7 And Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the Lord besides, that we might enquire of him? 8 And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we*

may enquire of the Lord: but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so.”

This passage shows 400 prophets prophesying falsehoods pleasing to the king. The prophet Micaiah, who spoke the truth, the king did not even want to hear! False prophets and false miracle-workers were announced by Jesus Christ (Matthew 7:19-23). This text is even more significant as it does not indicate that there will come a time when there will be no more prophets, or when prophecy will cease before the end of the world. It rather gives a criterion to distinguish true from false:

Matthew 7:15-20: “15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. 16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? 17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. 19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. 20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.”

The fruit here is not miracles, but obedience to God, love, righteousness:

Matthew 7:22-23: “22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”

Gifts are given for the edification of the Church and for preaching the gospel to non-believers. Today, many false prophets and false pastors lead people astray, establishing a new “gift” called the gift of causing people to fall, whose usefulness is not at all evident, as it is merely a spectacle. We have devoted an entire article on recognising the false prophet, which you can find here:

https://amourroyaumeetjusticededieu.org/comment-reconnaitre-le-faux-prophe-te-et-directives_reconnaitre_faux_prophete_version_simplifiee_v2-0/

The difficulty of defending cessationism

On the question of prophets and prophecies

Some cessationists claim there are no more prophets, but there are prophecies. Others say there are neither, as everything is already in the Bible.

Question 1: What verse of the Bible states that prophecy or prophets should have ceased at the present moment?

Acts 2:17: *“And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.”*

Who established the end of the last days?

Some claim there are prophecies without prophets because every prophet must have been announced in the Bible.

Question 2: Agabus, Silas, Jude, and the prophets of Antioch—by which Bible verse were they announced? Elijah, Balaam—by which verse? Which verse states that every prophet must have been announced?

Question 3: The prophets announced in Revelation, how can they exist if prophecy has ceased and there will be no more prophets (Revelation 11:3-6; 11:10)?

Revelation 11:10: *“And the rest of the men which were slain by these plagues lived not again until the thousand years were finished. And the inhabitants of the earth were glad over them, and they rejoiced, and sent gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.”*

Question 4: What about the verse that clearly states prophets will exist until the end of the world?

Amos 3:7: *“Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.”*

Ezekiel 33:2: *“Son of man, speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman:”*

Ezekiel 33:6: *“If the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman’s hand.”*

Ezekiel 33:7: *“So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me.”*

Here, the prophet Amos reveals that God does nothing without revealing His secret to the prophets. We understand the famine that Agabus had predicted. If there were no more prophets, this statement becomes false. God informs us

through Ezekiel that when He brings war upon a people, the watchman established over that people must warn them. Jesus Christ announced that there would be wars. The times and peoples were not specified. Today, why would God deny His word by not having prophets to alert about what He has planned?