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Voice of Baptists

"The Voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God."
Isaiah 40:3

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SPIRITUAL GIFTS

by W. T. Russell
Nashville, TN

What was the purpose of spiritual gifts?

Why did Jesus and the Apostles heal the sick miraculously, and cleanse the lepers, and turn water into wine, and still the storm at sea and raise the dead? The purpose of these wonderful miracles was to convince the people that the message brought by Jesus and the Apostles was from God. Miracles were their credentials. When Jesus healed the paralytic man (Mark 2:1-12) he said he did it, "That ye may know the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins." I feel sure Jesus knew what he was talking about and I am sure he told the truth as to why he wrought miracles. Nicodemus was convinced by the Lord's miracles that Jesus was sent from God because, he said, "No man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him" (John 3:1-16). Hebrews 2:3,4 says, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him, God bearing witness both with signs and wonders and divers miracles."

What was the purpose of miracles? These passages say they were to confirm the message of God. In Mark 16:20 we read: "And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, confirming the word with signs following." Thus we see that miracles were wrought for the purpose of confirming the word spoken by Christ and the Apostles. The purpose of miracles never was to accommodate the ones on whom the miracles were performed. In 2 Tim. 4:20 we read where Paul said: "Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick." Why did he leave him sick since Paul had the power to heal him? The answer is that Trophimus was already a believer and did

not heed the miracles to confirm the word. Paul told Timothy to "Take a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities" (1 Tim. 5:23). Why did not Paul heal Timothy? It was the same with Timothy as with Trophimus, he was a believer and did not need a miracle to confirm the word or his faith.

When John wrote the book of Revelation, the completion of the Bible, the Apostolic Age ended and the Bible being finished, the Word of God fully confirmed, miracles were no longer needed; and like the animal sacrifices of the Old Testament, and the Temple ceremonials which fulfilled their purpose and were done away, being no longer needed, so with miracles; when no longer needed they were done away. The Bible plainly tells us that miracles, these supernatural gifts, were done away when the New Testament was completed.

First Corinthians 12th, 13th and 14th chapters is on the subject of Spiritual Gifts. In the 12th chapter and first verse we are told that the subject is "Spiritual Gifts." In that 12th chapter at least nine gifts are mentioned, such as healing, gifts of tongues, prophecy, inspiration, called the gift of knowledge, and on through the list. In the 13th chapter we are told that all these gifts were done away "when that which is perfect is come." What is that perfect thing that would come and at which time the miraculous would be done away? Some strangely say that it means these gifts will pass away when Jesus comes again. A student of Grammar who has studied for a very short time knows that a personal pronoun is not used here. It does not say when HE WHO is perfect is come, then the supernatural gifts would pass away but it says when

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OF WHAT MANNER OF SPIRIT?

by Jerry A. Reynolds
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In the course of the events described in the Old Testament Scriptures God amply demonstrated what he declared to Nebuchadnezzar, "the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will." From Abraham to Nehemiah men of God took up the sword against wicked men with the approval of Jehovah. Often their victories were miraculous, proving beyond question the power of God and his approval of certain people. In those ages it was the purpose of God to demonstrate his power and majesty and his righteous recompense against evil-doers. In times when God's people became disobedient and worked wickedness God brought against them the sword of evil nations in order to chastise them. During these times God prophesied of a time to come when mercy and love would be demonstrated by himself and his people. The Son of God himself would begin this age of grace with a personal ministry upon the earth. The prophet declared, "many people . . . shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruninghooks: nations shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." (Isaiah 2:4)

As Jesus instructed his disciples he taught them, "love your enemies." No more would the weapons of God's warfare be carnal. When Peter would have defended Jesus with the sword Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." Jesus immediately healed the wicked man whose ear Peter had cut off.

When the Samaritans would not receive Jesus on his journey through their land, some

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Of What Manner Of Spirit

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of his disciples were offended, "And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But he turned, and rebuked them and said, Ye know not WHAT MANNER OF SPIRIT YE ARE OF, FOR THE SON OF MAN IS NOT COME TO DESTROY MEN'S LIVES, BUT TO SAVE THEM." (Luke 9:54,56) Jesus taught his disciples, "ye are not of the world" and he prayed to the Father saying, "they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." They were his church (Greek - ecclesia), a company of men "called out" from among the world. Jesus answered Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world: IF MY KINGDOM WERE OF THIS WORLD, THEN WOULD MY SERVANTS FIGHT, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence." (John 18:36) How clearly the New Testament Bible testifies that in the present age God's people are to possess a spirit of separation from the world, and a spirit of mercy and kindness toward their enemies. Yet disciples are to "render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's" (Matthew 22:21) and to "Submit . . . to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers . . ." (1 Peter 2:13,14). Paul explains, "the powers that be are ordained of God" and that the ruler "is the minister of God to thee for good . . . for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." (Romans 13:1-7) The Acts of the apostles make it clear that laws of rulers are not to be obeyed when they contradict the command of God (Acts

5:29 and 4:19); the Apostles answering the rulers, "We ought to obey God rather than man" and "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye." To this day many people are confused as to what the Bible teaches regarding these matters. Some would have the church to assume worldly power while others would have earthly governments to assume the passive nature of the church. These have not understood the order of Christ and the spirit that is to rule this age.

The spirit of the Catholic church has been from its beginnings the direct opposite of the spirit of the church Jesus established. Although it is evident that that great apostasy began before the time of the emperor Constantine (312-337 a.d.) it was that man that gave the movement its great strength. Constantine claimed that while he was attempting to subdue his rival for the sole right to rule the Roman empire he was praying for the aid of some deity when a vision of a luminous cross was seen by him and his army in the sky above the sun inscribed with the words, "BY THIS CONQUER." That night in a dream Christ appeared to him confirming the vision and directing him to make the symbol of the cross his military ensign. Although Constantine did not through baptism become a professor of the Christian religion until his dying days, he did make the Catholic Church the favored religion of the empire. Less than a thousand years later the armies of the Holy Roman Empire carrying Constantine's banner of the cross and being ordered forth by the Pope of Rome would be crusading to eliminate by fire and sword all who disagreed with them in religion including the remnants of the true churches of Christ. Church historians disagree on the validity of Constantine's Christianity depending on their personal point of view, but that which is known of him in the view of a Baptist suggests that he saw a benefit to himself and the empire in using Christianity. He exalted those supposed Christian leaders who would allow it to be so and these were the early Catholic Church. Before the end of Constantine's reign, during which the Christian religion was established by law, persecution had begun not only against Pagans but also against those sects of Christianity which had not favored his marriage of the Catholic Church to the empire of Rome. Hippolytus, who died in 239 a.d., wrote of the wickedness of the Roman bishops in his day. The Novatians broke fellowship with the Catholic Church party in Rome because of their worldliness and corruption in 251 a.d. The Donatists in North Africa broke with the Catholic party in 311 a.d. for similar reasons. The Montanists had appeared as a sect of Christianity a century before the Novatians with much the same notions. We can see that the so-called Christians who joined Constantine in uniting

church and state were far from the truth of Jesus Christ long before the days of his power. In writing of the Donatists the Baptist historian, Thomas Armitage, wrote (page 200), "Merivale says of the Donatists: 'They represented the broad principle of the Montanists and Novatians, that the true church of Christ is the assembly of really pious persons only, and admits to no mere nominal membership.' They dreaded any form of un-Christian membership which eats out the spiritual fellowship of a Gospel church. This is more strictly true of their later history, after they had entirely shaken off THE CATHOLIC NOTION THAT UNITY IS OF MORE CONSEQUENCE THAN PURITY, AND SO THAT SPIRITUAL REGENERATION WAS THE PRIME QUALIFICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST. They had come to charge the Catholic with being a fallen Church, because it had become lax in its morals, tolerating open and notorious sins, and REGARDING VISIBLE UNITY AS A HIGHER ATTRIBUTE OF CHURCH-LIFE THAN PERSONAL PURITY."

The spirit of meekness and of separation from the world is the spirit of Jesus and that which he taught his disciples. The spirit of unity with the world and of persecuting disposition toward dissenters is the spirit of the Antichrist of Rome. The Waldenses who were noticed by their persecutors in southern Europe in the twelfth century were clearly of this Christian spirit, as were their descendants throughout Europe in following centuries who became known as Anabaptists. The Waldenses claimed continuance from the days of the Apostles and separation from the Catholic Church since the days of Constantine, although many historians have questioned that claim for lack of historical documentation. G. H. Orchard gives the name of a Catholic archbishop in his history, Claudius Seyssel, who "traces the rise of the Waldensian heresy to a pastor named Leo, leaving Rome at this period (331 a.d. - after Constantine's edicts against non-Catholic Christian sects), for the Valleys (where the Waldenses later lived)." (Page 58 of Orchard's history) One of the Waldenses' bitterest enemies and persecutors, Reinerius Saccho, who once lived among them and knew them well, wrote against them in the thirteenth century calling them the "church of Leonists" and admitting to their antiquity and confessing that some in his day said that they had existed since the days of Constantine's reign (page 268 of Jarrell's history). As the Baptist sect sprang up in great numbers in England and Wales in the seventeenth century they were without question possessors of this same spirit of which Jesus spoke to James and John more than 1600 years before. The Baptists who came to America, where their numbers greatly increased, greatly influ-

enced the United States government to guarantee freedom of religion even as their brethren in Britain had ever pleaded for religious toleration. The Rhode Island Colony, which was founded by Baptists, was the first government in the world to make such a guarantee. The Baptists won their case in the state of Virginia, with the assistance of a number of able statesmen who were to dominate the United States government in coming years, and finally in the nation. Since that time the idea of religious toleration and freedom has become increasingly more popular in many places throughout the world. It may be protested that the Baptists should not have labored to influence the political realm, but it will be noticed that they never sought an advantage for themselves but only liberty for themselves as well as for their religious enemies. In the fight for religious freedom it was often argued by Protestant leaders that religion could not prevail without support from the state, but the Baptists had endured and grown for centuries without such support and against the animosity and persecuting edicts of state powers.

In the sixteenth century many refugees from continental Europe, particularly Holland, fled to the safety of England where the toleration of their religion was a little greater. Many of these were Anabaptists who never returned home but merged with English society. By the middle of the following century England was abounding with Baptists. Whence were these Baptists? In recent years many prejudiced writers have labored to prove that there are no historical connections between Anabaptists and Baptists, Waldenses and Anabaptists, or the Apostles and the Waldenses. Even some Baptist historians of an apparently accommodating spirit have conceded on this point, citing a lack of documented evidence to sufficiently prove a connection. Most modern religious historians would have the whole world to believe that the whole of non-Catholic Christianity is schismatic, having broken from the true and original Christian church. They would argue that Baptists are but a branch of Protestantism which was fathered by such reformed Catholics as Martin Luther, John Calvin, and the religious backers of King Henry the Eighth of England. History proves that there were Anabaptists all about these men before and after they made their breaks with Catholicism. No sooner had these Protestant reformers succeeded in their reform movements than they began to persecute and KILL the Anabaptists who were numerous all around them. OF WHAT MANNER OF SPIRIT WERE MARTIN LUTHER AND JOHN CALVIN WHO, AS SAUL OF TARSUS IN THE BOOK OF ACTS, GAVE THEIR CONSENT TO THE PUTTING TO DEATH OF ANABAPTIST SAINTS? Jesus rebuked James and John for even considering calling

upon God to send fire from heaven to consume those who rejected their fellowship. If the Protestant reformers were truly disciples of the lowly Jesus, why did their master not rebuke them when they exceeded the transgression of James and John in using the human methods of fire, water, and sword to destroy the Anabaptists? OF WHAT MANNER OF SPIRIT DID THEY PROVE THEMSELVES TO BE, that of Christ, or that of Constantine the Great? This spirit of unity with the world and persecution of dissenters remained in the Protestant sects which dominated colonial America until Providential happenings slowly subdued it. Persecution has been forbidden by law for two centuries, and it now appears that most Americans would not consider such a practice. However, there is room to wonder at all of the push among Catholics and Protestants alike to achieve "visible unity" at the expense of "personal purity," if accomplishment of this "Catholic" goal would not be followed by a revived spirit of persecution exactly as the sequence of events in the fourth century. Protestants are still in spirit "Catholic" or "community-church" minded for the most part. The spirit of the church of Jesus is still separation from the community and the world. No true Baptist church is a "community church" but is a separate community called out from among the worldly community. In this day when the Baptist name has been popularized, many churches by that name do not possess the spirit of separation, neither the faith of Christ. A word of warning is in order here pertaining to a radical stance on separation. Since the days of religious toleration and liberty began there have arisen many sects who are genuine schismatics. These have separated on issues of pride, ambition, and private interpretations of the Scriptures. Most of these, having been born under toleration and freedom, are formally dedicated to that stand as well. This writer wishes to avoid giving consolation or credence to any such sects. These are not of the doctrine or spirit of the meek and lowly Jesus.

It is not in the interest of the many differing sects of so-called Christianity existing in this world to admit that the true and pure churches of Jesus Christ were preserved in all ages to the very present. If so, they must be identifiable at the present. It is easier to think that all have been corrupted, and that what they have has somehow been reformed or restored to the point that it qualifies as the church of Jesus. To admit otherwise for most people would result in the necessity to begin a search for something better than they have. But to believe that the churches of Christ were through the ages so corrupted that they had to be reformed or restored by mortal men is to believe in contradiction to many New Testament prophecies of the Lord himself. This self-interest, however, accounts for the

determination of many to deny the obvious connections between Baptists and Anabaptists BASED ON THE COMMON SPIRIT THAT BOTH POSSESS, denying them on the grounds of lack of documented proof. When one considers the manner of both groups of accounting their obligation to justify their actions before the world of little worth, it is a wonder that there is as much evidence of such a connection as does exist. Add to this the rabid desire of many people to hide, destroy, or misinterpret the little documentation remaining regarding such connections and that wonder increases.

Some have tried to show that the Baptist movement originated out of the "reformed" movement of Europe. Fuel for this notion has to do with the main force of the Baptist movement coming from the Particular Baptists who were Calvinistic in their theory. Most of the Baptists today can trace their heritage back to the English Particular Baptists of the seventeenth century. Yet by the beginning of the nineteenth century the Calvinistic stand of the mainstream of the Baptist movement had been seriously and permanently modified through the able efforts of men like Andrew Fuller who "loved to see the churches shake off the shackles of hyper-Calvinism, for he said, in his strong language, that 'had matters gone on but a few years the Baptists would have become a perfect dunghill society.' " (Page 584 of Armistage's history) The reason for the Particular Baptists drifting into such a hyper-Calvinistic position has to do with the fact that they had their great increase in the middle of the seventeenth century when all England was Calvinistic. Unfortunately, many of the early Baptist writers were not without prejudice in regard to theology when they laid claim to their spiritual kindred. Some seemed more willing to claim kinship to the Calvinistic Protestants than to the more Arminian Anabaptists. The statements of some of these men have done much to muddy the waters of history, thus preventing a clearer look at the Baptist heritage. One thing that is clear to the understanding observer is, that while the English Particular Baptists were cloaked outwardly with Calvinism, they possessed the spirit of the Anabaptists, while that spirit that characterized the "reformed" churches was that of Constantine and the Catholics. From this nature of the churches of Jesus Christ the true heritage is evident.

Spiritual Gifts

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"THAT WHICH" is perfect is come. You can't correctly speak of Jesus as a "that which." What perfect thing has come?

The perfect thing which Paul was speaking of was the New Testament, which James calls "the Perfect Law of Liberty" (James

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Spiritual Gifts

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1:25). The New Testament, at the time Paul wrote Corinthians was only "in part," and Paul said in the 13th chapter that they knew "in part" and prophesied in part, but when that which is perfect is come then that which is in part shall be done away. The truth is, so long as the Bible was in the process of formation, up until the last word in the New Testament was completed, they only had the truth "in part"; but when the New Testament was completed they had the PERFECT THING, the PERFECT LAW OF LIBERTY, and INSPIRATION, prophecy, tongues, and all other miracles were done away. In Eph. 4:8-14, we read that the "Gifts," these miraculous gifts, were to last "Till we come into the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God." That unity of the faith is the New Testament. At the time Ephesians was written the faith, the knowledge of the Son of God, was in fragments, in part only, as Paul said in Corinthians; but when the New Testament was completed the KNOWLEDGE OF THE SON OF GOD WAS COMPLETE and then the Gifts ceased.

Then what have we left? Paul explains in 1 Cor. 13:13: "Now abideth, faith, hope and Love, these three." If we can spell three, then we know exactly how many of the gifts remain; one, two, three. If we still have the gift of healing that would make four. If we still have the gift of knowledge that would make five. If we still have the gift of tongues that would make six. If we still have the gift of prophesy that would make seven. But it does not say we have four, five or six or seven supernatural gifts left, but it positively says we have JUST THREE and names them, FAITH, HOPE, LOVE. God has not changed in His character at any time, but he has changed His methods many times in carrying out His Divine purpose. When the ceremonial law with such things as the Jewish sacrifices and the seventh day Sabbath, he sets them aside and starts something else. So when he used miracles for the purpose of confirming His Truth until the PERFECT RULE OF FAITH AND PRACTICE was completed (The New Testament), then he set aside miracles also. God is unchangeable but he changes his methods of carrying out his purpose as it pleases Him.

Why do we not need miracles now the same as they did before the Bible was completed? If there is need for them now, the Bible is not perfect, it needs supplementing, but 2 Tim. 3:16 says, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." If we are COMPLETELY, THOROUGHLY FURNISHED

FOR ALL GOOD WORKS in the Bible, then there is no need for miracles. Those who use miracles or expect miracles to be used show that they do not believe what God has said in his word, because they demand further confirmation.

How do we know that the Bible is God's word? We know it be fulfilled prophecy. Peter calls fulfilled prophecy the "more sure word of prophecy." The prophets foretold events that have come to pass in such wonderful exactness that we cannot doubt their inspiration. The scientific accuracy of the Bible proves it to be from God. It was written long before any scientific book was written and yet there is not an unscientific statement in the Bible. We can demonstrate the Bible to be God's word and hence we do not need miracles.

Since God withdrew His power to perform miracles from his people it follows that any miracles wrought now are wrought by the power of the devil and not by the power of God. Can the devil work miracles? He can. If you will read the 7th and 8th chapters of Exodus you will find that when Moses wrought miracles, "The magicians did so with their enchantments." In Rev. 13:13,14 we read that the beast deceived the people "By means of those miracles he had power to do in the presence of the people." In Rev. 16:14 we read that it is "The spirit of devils working miracles." Jesus foretold that just exactly this sort of thing would be in Mark 13:22, "For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall show signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect." In Acts 5:11 we read of Simon the sorcerer who bewitched the people by his sorcery until the people declared: "This man is the mighty power of God." Thus we see that Simon did such wonderful things that the people were convinced that he was the MIGHTY POWER OF GOD. We also read of Elymas the sorcerer in Acts 13:6-11, who wrought miracles and led off many people but Paul came along and called him a "Child of the devil."

The devil has the most attractive preachers in the world. Read 2 Cor. 11:13-15; "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore no great thing if his minister also be transformed as ministers of righteousness. The devil does not appear with cloven feet and horns and barbed tail as some have pictured him. He could not deceive people that way. A counterfeit is not dangerous if the difference between it and the real thing is glaring. But when the counterfeit looks almost exactly like the genuine, so much like it that very few people can detect the difference, then it becomes dangerous. That is why the devil comes to us as an angel of light; he comes in the most attractive form and even preaches

some truth. He even works miracles that benefit people to get them the more in his power. If the scriptures presented do not mean this, then they have no meaning.

Now let us add the words of Christ as to the fact of the existence of so-called miracle workers and their claim before Christ at the judgment in Matt. 7:22,23; "Many shall say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then shall I profess unto them I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Surely these miracle workers were sincere or they would not have talked like that at the Judgment. But sincerity will not justify actions not sanctioned by the scriptures.

Those who claim the power to perform miracles today claim such on the basis that they have received the baptism of the Holy Ghost. The baptism of the Holy Spirit was miraculous. All of God's children have the Spirit. The Bible says that we are born of the Spirit, that we are led by the Spirit, and that we have the comfort of the Spirit. But the baptism of the Spirit was miraculous and passed away when God had accomplished his purpose thereby. How do we know this? In Eph. 4th chapter we read, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism," Now if there was a baptism of the Holy Spirit today it would have to read, one Lord, one faith, and two baptisms. So that upon which they rest their case falls.

LETTERS

We at Liberty Baptist voted in conference to send a donation to the cause of "Voice of Baptists," and wish God's blessings on the possible mission work of the paper, as well as binding us together in His work. Please continue sending us the paper.

Liberty Baptist Church
Barberton, OH
B. G. Newberry, Treas.

We are sending a little gift toward the "Voice of Baptists." We appreciate the paper very much. Please send the paper to our granddaughter in Florida. Her address is attached.

Marlin & Ova Hargis
Bowling Green, KY

Greetings from Freedom Church. Enclosed find check to help you further the Cause of our Lord through the "Voice of Baptists." May God bless you and the entire staff with another wonderful year.

Freedom Baptist Church
Speedway, IN
Gilliam Johnson, Treas.