HOLY GHOST & THE GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST

Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, p.60. Therefore, the presentation or “gift” of the Holy Ghost simply confers upon a man the right to receive at any time, when he is worthy of it and desires it, the power and light of truth of the Holy Ghost, although he may often be left to his own spirit and judgment.

Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, p.61. Every elder of the Church who has received the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, by one having authority, has power to confer that gift upon another; it does not follow that a man who has received the presentation or gift of the Holy Ghost shall always receive the recognition and witness and presence of the Holy Ghost himself, or he may receive all these, and yet the Holy Ghost not tarry with him, but visit him from time to time (Doc. and Cov., Sec. 130:23); and neither does it follow that a man must have the Holy Ghost present with him when he confers the Holy Ghost upon another, but he possesses the gift of the Holy Ghost, and it will depend upon the worthiness of him unto whom the gift is bestowed whether he receive the Holy Ghost or not.

Now I repeat—the Holy Ghost is a personage of spirit, he constitutes the third person in the Trinity, the Godhead. The gift or presentation of the Holy Ghost is the authoritative act of conferring him upon man. The Holy Ghost in person may visit men and will visit those who are worthy and bear witness to their spirit of God and Christ, but may not tarry with them. The Spirit of God which emanates from Deity may be likened to electricity, or the universal ether, as explained in our manual, which fills the earth and the air, and is everywhere present. It is the power of God, the influence that he exerts throughout all his works by which he can effect his purposes and execute his will, in consonance with the laws of free agency which he has conferred upon man. By means of this Spirit every man is enlightened, the wicked as well as the good, the intelligent and the ignorant, the high and the low, each in accordance with his capacity to receive the light; and this Spirit or influence which emanates from God may be said to constitute man’s consciousness, and will never cease to strive with man, until man is brought to the possession of the higher intelligence which can only come through faith, repentance, baptism for the remission of sins, and the gift or the presentation of the Holy Ghost by one having authority.—*Improvement Era*, Vol. 12, p. 389, March, 1909.

Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, p.67. But the Holy Ghost, who bears record of the Father and the Son, who takes of the things of the Father and shows them unto men, who testifies of Jesus Christ, and of the everliving God, the Father of Jesus Christ, and who bears witness of the truth — this Spirit, this Intelligence, is not given unto all men until they repent of their sins and come into a state of worthiness before the Lord. Then they receive the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands of those who are authorized of God to bestow his blessings upon the heads of the children of men. The Spirit spoken of in that which I have read is that Spirit which will not cease to strive with the children of men until they are brought to the possession of the greater light and intelligence.

Though a man may commit all manner of sin and blasphemy, if he has not received the testimony of the Holy Ghost, he may be forgiven by repenting of his sins, humbling himself before the Lord, and obeying in sincerity the commandments of God. As it is stated, “Every soul who forsaketh his sins and cometh unto me, and calleth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments shall see my face and know that I am.” He shall be forgiven, and receive of the greater light; he will enter into a solemn covenant with God, into a compact with the Almighty, through the Only Begotten Son, whereby he becomes a son of God, an heir of God, and a joint heir with Jesus Christ. Then if he shall sin against the light and knowledge he has received, the light that was within him shall become darkness, and oh, how great will be that darkness! Then, and not till then, will this Spirit of Christ that lighteth every man that cometh into the world cease to strive with him, and he shall be left to his own destruction.

Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, p.433. Saul, of Tarsus, possessing extraordinary intelligence and learning, brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the perfect manner of the law, persecuted the Saints unto death, binding and delivering unto prison both men and women; and when the blood of the Martyr Stephen was shed, Saul stood by keeping the raiment of those who slew him, and consented unto his death. And “he made havoc of the Church, entering into every house, and halting men and women committed them to prison. And when they were put to death, he gave his voice against them, and he “punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, persecuted them even unto strange cities,” and yet this man committed no unpardonable sin, because he knew not the Holy Ghost (Acts 8:5; 9:1; 22:4; 26:10, 11); while, for the crime of adultery with Bathsheba, and for ordering Uriah to be put in the front of battle in a time of war, where he was slain by the enemy, the Priesthood, and the kingdom were taken from David, the man after God’s own heart, and his soul was thrust into hell. Why? Because “the Holy Ghost spake by the mouth of David” — or, in other words, *David possessed the gift of the Holy Ghost*, and had power to speak by the light thereof. But even David, though guilty of adultery and murder of Uriah, obtained the promise that his soul should not be left in hell, which means, as I understand it, that even he shall escape the second death.

Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, p.434. No man can sin against light until he has it; nor against the Holy Ghost, until after he has received it by the gift of God through the appointed channel or way. To sin against the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Truth, the Comforter, the Witness of the Father and the Son, wilfully denying him and defying him, after having received him, constitutes this sin. Did Judas possess this light, this witness, this Comforter, this baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost, this endowment from on high? If he did, he received it before the betrayal, and therefore before the other eleven apostles. And if this be so, you may say, “he is a son of perdition without hope.” But if he was destitute of this glorious gift and outpouring of the Spirit, by which the witness came to the eleven, and their minds were opened to see and know the truth, and they were able to testify of him, then what constituted the unpardonable sin of this poor, erring creature, who rose no higher in the scale of intelligence than others, and who were able to testify of him, then what constituted the unpardonable sin of this poor, erring creature, who rose no higher in the scale of intelligence, honor or ambition than to betray the Lord of glory for thirty pieces of silver?

THE HOLY GHOST; INQUIRY AND REPLY.


The following inquiry has been received from an elder residing in Tooele County, with the request for a reply:

“There is a dispute here among the brethren as to when the Holy Ghost was received; was it at, or before the day of Pentecost?”

The answer to this question depends on what is meant by “receiving” the Holy Ghost. If reference is made to the promise of Jesus to His apostles about the endowment or gift of the Holy Ghost by the presence and ministration of the “personage of spirit,” called the Holy Ghost by revelation in Doctrine and Covenants, Sec. 132, verse 22, then the answer is, it was not until the day of Pentecost that the promise was fulfilled. But the Divine essence, called the Spirit of God, or Holy Spirit, or Holy Ghost by which God created or organized all things, and by which the prophets wrote and spoke, was bestowed in former ages and inspired the apostles in their ministry long before the days of Pentecost. The words “Ghost and Spirit” are often used synonymously, and this causes some confusion, when the difference between the “personage of spirit” and the spirit “poured out from on high” is not taken into consideration. There is a universally diffused essence which is the light and life of the world, which proceedeth forth from the presence of God.
We read that Jesus, after His resurrection, breathed upon His disciples and said, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost.” But we also read that He said, “Behold, I send the promise of my father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high” (John 20:22; Luke 24:49). We read further, “For the Holy Ghost was not yet given: because that Jesus was not yet glorified” (John 7:39). Thus the promise was made, but the fulfillment came after, so that the Holy Ghost sent by Jesus from the Father did not come in person until the day of Pentecost, and the cloven tongues of fire were the sign of His coming. This manifestation was repeated in this dispensation at the endowment in the Kirtland temple in the month of January, 1836. JOSEPH F. SMITH, ANTHON H. LUND, CHARLES W. PENROSE.

Joseph F. Smith, Conference Report, April 1912, p.5. Let me say, too, that I believe that the spirituality of the people of God, the people of this Church, is as great as it ever was. It has been charged, by public speakers abroad, and by men who might suppose occupied positions in the community enabling them to know better, that the “Mormon” Church is losing its spirituality, that the spiritual things of the Church are warning among them. This is as false as can be. Let me say for their instruction, if such individuals will receive instruction from me, that there is not a man, or woman, or child, who is in fellowship or in good standing in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, that has not received, by the laying on of hands, of those who have power and authority to confer blessings from the Lord to the children of men, the gift of the Holy Ghost—every man, every woman, and every child that has been baptized into the Church, where will you go, outside of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, to find a church or a religious community, no matter what its name or character may be, that has received an equal advantage with this? where will you go to find a people, in the world, on whom has been conferred the gift of the Holy Spirit, by the laying on of hands? So far, then, from the truth is this statement that the Church is losing its spirituality, it is receiving additional gifts of the Spirit of God in every member of the Church added to it. And the spirit of inspiration, the gift of revelation does not belong to one man solely; it is not a gift that pertains to the Presidency of the Church and the Twelve Apostles alone. It is not confined to the presiding authorities of the Church, it belongs to every individual member of the Church; and it is the right and privilege of every man, every woman, and every child who has reached the years of accountability to enjoy the spirit of revelation, and to be possessed of the spirit of inspiration in the discharge of their duties as members of the Church. It is the privilege of every individual member of the Church to have revelation for his own guidance, for the direction of his life and conduct; and therefore I aver—and I believe I may do so without any reasonable chance for it being gainsaid or opposed—that there is not another church in the world, or an organization of religious people, who are so universally spiritual in their lives, and who are so universally entitled to the gifts of the Spirit of God as are the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. You are all entitled to revelation. It is your privilege to have it revealed to you whether I am a servant of God or a servant of men, whether I am in the discharge of my duty or not; whether I, as a presiding officer in the Church, am acting in the discharge of my duty acceptably to you and the Lord. It is your privilege to have revelation in regard to this, and to know the truth yourselves. And it is my privilege to have revelation from God, as an individual, for my own temporal guidance, as well as for my spiritual guidance; and I repeat again that there never was a time in the earth, since the Church was organized, when the spirituality of the people of God was greater than it is today.

Parley P. Pratt, Key to the Science of Theology, Ch.5, pp.38–42. The Holy Ghost is the third member of the Godhead and is also a personage, but a personage of Spirit which does not have a body of flesh and bones. The mission of the Holy Ghost is to partake of the things of the Father and the Son and teach them unto those who have received the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands. He guides the true disciples in all truth, shows them things to come, reveals the past and makes known the hidden treasures of the kingdom of God. This Spirit is also called the Comforter which the world cannot receive and which the Savior promised to send to his disciples after he ascended into heaven.

This leads to the investigation of that substance called the Holy Spirit. As the mind passes the boundaries of the visible world, and enters upon the confines of the more refined and subtle elements, it finds itself associated with certain substances in themselves invisible to our gross organs, but clearly manifested to our intellect by their tangible operations and effects. The very air we breathe, although invisible to our sight, is clearly manifested to our sense of feeling. Its component parts may be analyzed. Nay more, the human system itself is an apparatus which performs a chemical process upon that element. It is received into the system by the act of respiration, and there immediately undergoes the separation of its component parts.

The one part, retained and incorporated in the animal system, diffuses life and animation, by supplying the necessary animal heat, &c., while the other part, not adapted to the system, is discharged from the lungs to mingle with its native element.

There are several of these subtle, invisible substances but little understood as yet by man, and their existence is only demonstrated by their effects. Some of them are recognized under several terms, electricity, galvanism, magnetism, animal magnetism, spiritual magnetism, essence, spirit, &c.

The purest, most refined and subtle of all these substances, and the one least understood, or even recognized, by the less informed among mankind, is that substance called the Holy Spirit.

This substance, like all others, is one of the elements of material or physical existence, and therefore subject to the necessary laws which govern all matter, as before enumerated.

Like the other elements, its whole is composed of individual particles. Like them, each particle occupies space, possesses the power of motion, requires time to move from one part of space to another, and can in no wise occupy two spaces at once. In all these respects it differs nothing from all other matter.

This substance is widely diffused among the elements of space. This Holy Spirit, under the control of the Great Eloheim, is the grand moving cause of all intelligences, and by which they act.

This is the great, positive, controlling element of all other elements. It is omnipresent by reason of its infinitude of its particles, and it comprehends all things.

It is the controlling agent or executive, which organizes and puts in motion all worlds, and which, by the mandate of the Almighty, or of any of His commissioned agents, performs all the mighty wonders, signs and miracles ever manifested in the name of the Lord -- the turning of the earth backward on its axis, the dividing of the sea, the removing of a mountain, the raising of the dead, or the healing of the sick.

It penetrates the pores of the most solid substances, pierces the human system to its most inward recesses, discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart. It has power to move through space with
inconceivable velocity, far exceeding the tardy motions of electricity, or of physical light.

It comprehends the past, present, and future, in all their fullness. Its inherent properties embrace all the attributes of intelligence and affection.

It is endowed with knowledge, wisdom, truth, love, charity, justice, and mercy, in all their ramifications.

In short, it is the attributes of the eternal power and Godhead. Those beings who receive of its fullness are called sons of God, because they are perfected in all its attributes and powers, and, being in communication with it, can, by its use, perform all things. Those beings who receive not a fullness, but a measure of it, can know and perform some things, but not all.

This is the true light, which in some measure illuminates all men. It is, in its less refined particles, the physical light which reflects from the sun, moon, and stars, and other substances; and by reflection on the eye, makes visible the truths of the outward world.

It is, also, in its higher degrees, the intellectual light of our inward and spiritual organs, by which we reason, discern, judge, compare, comprehend and remember the subjects within our reach.

Its inspiration constitutes instinct in animal life, reason in man, vision in the prophets, and is continually flowing from the Godhead throughout all His creations.

Such is the Godhead, as manifested in His words, and in His works. He dwells in His own eternal palaces of precious stones and gold, in the Royal City of the heavenly Jerusalem.

He sits enthroned in the midst of all His creations, and is filled and encircled with light unapproachable by those of the lower spheres.

He associates with myriads of His own begotten sons and daughters who, by translation or resurrection, have triumphed over death.

His ministers are sent forth from His presence to all parts of His dominions.

His Holy Spirit centers in His presence, and communicates with and extends to the utmost verge of His dominions, comprehending and controlling all things under the immediate direction of His own will, and the will of all those in communication with Him, in worlds without end!

Parley P. Pratt, *Key to the Science of Theology*, Ch.6, pp.44–46.

Spirit is intelligence, or the light of truth, which filleth all things. It contains the attributes of light, intelligence, wisdom, love, and power; also that not organized in bodily forms, but widely diffused among the other elements of space.

Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 199. There is a difference between the Holy Ghost and the gift of the Holy Ghost. Cornelius [Acts 10] received the Holy Ghost before he was baptized, which was the convincing power of God unto Blíom of the truth of the Gospel [Moroni 10:3–5], but he could not receive the gift of the Holy Ghost until after he was baptized. Had he not taken this sign or ordinance upon him, the Holy Ghost which convinced him of the truth of God, would have left him. Until he obeyed these ordinances and received the gift of the Holy Ghost, by the laying on of hands, according to the order of God, he could not have healed the sick or commanded an evil spirit to come out of a man, and it obey him; for the spirits might say unto him, as they did to the sons of Sevva: “Paul we know and Jesus we know, but who are ye?” [Acts 19]. It mattereth not whether we live long or short on the earth after we come to a knowledge of these principles and obey them unto the end. I know that all men will be damned if they do not come in the way which He hath opened, and this is the way marked out by the word of the Lord.

Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, pp. 242–244. Various and conflicting are the opinions of men in regard to the gift of the Holy Ghost. Some people have been in the habit of calling every supernatural manifestation the effects of the Spirit of God, whilst there are others that think there is no manifestation connected with it at all; and that it is nothing but a mere impulse of the mind, or an inward feeling, impression, or secret testimony or
evidence, which men possess, and that there is no such a thing as an outward manifestation.

It is not to be wondered at that men should be ignorant, in a great measure, of the principles of salvation, and more especially of the nature, office, power, influence, gifts, and blessings of the gift of the Holy Ghost; when we consider that the human family have been enveloped in gross darkness and ignorance for many centuries past, without revelation, or any just criterion [by which] [sic — in original] to arrive at a knowledge of the things of God, which can only be known by the Spirit of God. Hence it not infrequently occurs, that when the Elders of this Church preach to the inhabitants of the world, that if they obey the Gospel they shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, that the people expect to see some wonderful manifestation, some great display of power, or some extraordinary miracle performed; and it is often the case that young members of this Church for want of better information, carry along with them their old notions of things, and sometimes fall into egregious errors. We have lately had some information concerning a few members that are in this dilemma, and for their information make a few remarks upon the subject.

We believe in the gift of the Holy Ghost being enjoyed now, as much as it was in the Apostles’ days; we believe that if [the gift of the Holy Ghost] [sic — in original] is necessary to make and to organize the Priesthood, that no man can be called to fill any office in the ministry without it; we also believe in prophecy, in tongues, in visions, and in revelations, in gifts, and in healings; and that these things cannot be enjoyed without the gift of the Holy Ghost. We believe that the holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, and that holy men in these days speak by the same principle; we believe in its being a comforter and a witness bearer, that it brings things past to our remembrance, leads us into all truth, and shows us of things to come; we believe that “no man can know that Jesus is the Christ, but by the Holy Ghost.” [See Teachings, p. 223.] We believe in it [this gift of the Holy Ghost] [sic — in original] in all its fullness, and power, and greatness, and glory; but whilst we do this, we believe in it rationally, consistently, and scripturally, and not according to the wild vagaries, foolish notions and traditions of men.

We believe that the Holy Ghost is imparted by the laying on of hands of those in authority, and that the gift of tongues, and also the gift of prophecy are gifts of the Spirit, and are obtained through that medium; but then to say that men always prophesied and spoke in tongues when they had the imposition of hands, would be to state that which is untrue, contrary to the practice of the Apostles, and at variance with holy writ; for Paul says, “To one is given the gift of tongues, to another the gift of prophecy, and to another the gift of healing;” and again: “Do all prophecy? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?” [see 1 Cor 12] evidently showing that all did not possess these several gifts; but that one received one gift, and another received another gift — all did not prophecy, all did not speak in tongues, all did not work miracles; but all did receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; sometimes they spake in tongues and prophesied in the Apostles’ days, and sometimes they did not. The same is the case with us also in our administrations, while more frequently there is no manifestation at all, that is visible to the surrounding multitude; this will appear plain when we consult the writings of the Apostles, and notice their proceedings in relation to this matter. Paul, in 1st Cor 12 says, “Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant” in relation to these matters, or they would not need instruction. [1 Cor 12:1.]

Again in chapter xiv [14], he says, “Follow after charity and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophecy” [say what God wants said]. It is very evident from these Scriptures that many of them had not spiritual gifts, for if they had spiritual gifts where was the necessity of Paul telling them to follow after them, and it is as evident that they did not all receive those gifts by the imposition of hands; for they as a Church had been baptized and confirmed by the laying on of hands — and yet to a Church of this kind, under the immediate inspection and superintendency of the Apostles, it was necessary for Paul to say, “Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy,” evidently showing that those gifts were in the Church, but not enjoyed by all in their outward manifestations.

But suppose the gifts of the Spirit were immediately, upon the imposition of hands, enjoyed by all, in all their fulness and power, the skeptic would still be as far from receiving any testimony except upon a mere casualty as before, for all the gifts of the Spirit are not visible to the natural vision, or understanding of man; indeed very few of them are. We read that “Christ ascended into heaven and gave gifts unto men; and He gave some [to] Apostles, and some [to] Prophets, and some [to] Evangelists [patriarchs], and some [to] Pastors [such as bishops] and Teachers.” (Eph 4.)