



Type: Book Chapter

Spiritual Gifts

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Source: *Gospel Doctrine: Selections from the Sermons and Writings of Joseph F. Smith*

Published: Salt Lake City; The Deseret News, 1919

Pages: 251-262

Abstract: The Gift of Tongues—The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper—Order of Administering to the Sick—The Use of a Testimony—Purpose and Practice of Testimony Bearing—The Temporal and the Spiritual Not Separate—Spiritual and Temporal Salvation—The Gospel Designed for Temporal Benefits, Also—The Spirit Needs Food

CHAPTER X

Spiritual Gifts

THE GIFT OF TONGUES. The devil himself can appear like an angel of light. False prophets and false teachers have arisen in the world. There is perhaps no gift of the Spirit of God more easily imitated by the devil than the gift of tongues. Where two men or women exercise the gift of tongues by the inspiration of the Spirit of God, there are a dozen perhaps who do it by the inspiration of the devil. Bless your souls, apostates speak in tongues, apostates prophesy, apostates claim to have marvelous manifestations. And what is that to us? The trouble is, we know so little of the truth ourselves, and we live by it so poorly, that almost any little jackanapes in the country may rise up and claim he has had a vision or some marvelous dream, and however absurd or untrue it may be, he may find believers and followers among those who profess to be Latter-day Saints.

I believe in the gifts of the Holy Spirit unto men, but I do not want the gift of tongues, except when I need it. I needed the gift of tongues once, and the Lord gave it to me. I was in a foreign land, sent to preach the gospel to a people whose language I could not understand. Then I sought earnestly for the gift of tongues, and by this gift and by study, in a hundred days after landing upon those islands, I could talk to the people in their language as I now talk to you in my native tongue. This was a gift that was worthy of the gospel. There was a purpose in it. There was something in it to strengthen my faith, to encourage me and to help me in my ministry. If you have need of this gift of tongues, seek for it and God will help you in it. But I do not ask you to be very hungry for the gift of tongues,

for if you are not careful the devil will deceive you in it. He can talk by the gift of tongues as well as the Lord can. Paul did not seem to care much about the gift of tongues either. He said to the Corinthians :

“I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.”—1 Cor. 14:19.

So far as I am concerned, if the Lord will give me ability to teach the people in my native tongue, or in their own language to the understanding of those who hear me, that will be sufficient gift of tongues to me. Yet if the Lord gives you the gift of tongues, do not despise it, do not reject it. For if it comes from the Spirit of God, it will come to those who are worthy to receive it, and it is all right. But this idea of seeking it, desiring it, when you don't pay your tithing, when you don't pray in your families, when you don't pay your debts, when you desecrate the Sabbath day, and when you neglect other duties in the Church ; I tell you the devil will take advantage of you bye and bye, if he does not at first.—*Apr. C. R.*, 1900, p. 41.

THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is a very important and sacred ordinance ; however simple it may appear to our minds, it is one which will add to our acceptance before God, or to our condemnation.

It was instituted by the Savior in the place of the law of sacrifice which was given to Adam, and which continued with his children down to the days of Christ, but which was fulfilled in his death, he being the great sacrifice for sin, of which the sacrifices enjoined in the law given to Adam were a similitude.

The Lord designed in the beginning to place before man the knowledge of good and evil, and gave him a commandment to cleave to good and abstain from evil. But if he

should fail, he would give to him the law of sacrifice and provide a Savior for him, that he might be brought back again into the presence and favor of God and partake of eternal life with him. This was the plan of redemption chosen and instituted by the Almighty before man was placed on the earth. And when man did fall by transgressing the law which was given him, the Lord gave to him the law of sacrifice, and made it clear to his understanding, that it was for the purpose of reminding him of that great event that should transpire in the meridian of time, whereby he and all his posterity might be brought forth by the power of redemption and resurrection from the dead, and partake of eternal life with God in his kingdom. For this reason Adam and his posterity, from generation to generation, observed this law, and continually looked forward to a time when there should be provided for them a means of redemption from the fall and restoration from death to life, for death was the penalty of the law transgressed, which man was powerless to avert, the fiat of God being, "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die," and this penalty was to follow upon all flesh, all being as helpless and dependent as he was in this matter. Their only hope of redemption from the grave and the power of death was in the Savior whom God had promised, who should suffer death, but being without sin, having himself never transgressed any law, being without blemish, pure and holy, he should have power to break the bands of death and from the grave rise to immortal life, thereby opening the way for all who should follow him in the regeneration to come forth to life again, redeemed from the penalty of the law, and from the sin of transgression to eternal life. In anticipation, therefore, of this great sacrifice which was to be offered for Adam and his seed, they offered sacrifices more or less acceptable, and in conformity to the pattern given, in proportion to the knowledge of

God and of the gospel which they had, and their faithfulness from generation to generation, to the days of Jesus.

They would take the firstlings of their flocks, the best fruits of their fields, and those things which were emblematic of purity, innocence, and perfection symbolical of him who was without sin, and as "a lamb slain from the foundation of the world," and offer sacrifices unto God in memory of him, and the matchless and wonderful deliverance to be wrought out for them by him.

Undoubtedly the knowledge of this law and of other rites and ceremonies was carried by the posterity of Adam into all lands, and continued with them, more or less pure, to the flood, and through Noah, who was a "preacher of righteousness," to those who succeeded him, spreading out in all nations and countries, Adam and Noah being the first of their dispensations to receive them from God. What wonder then that we should find relics of Christianity so to speak, among the heathens, and nations who know not Christ, and whose histories date back beyond the days of Moses, and even beyond the flood, independent of and apart from the records of the Bible. The ground taken by infidels, that "Christianity" sprang from the heathen, it being found that they have many rites similar to those recorded in the Bible, etc., is only a vain and foolish attempt to blind the eyes of men and dissuade them from their faith in the Redeemer of the world, and from their belief in the Scriptures of divine truth, for if the heathen have doctrines and ceremonies resembling to some extent those which are recorded in the Scriptures, it only proves, what is plain to the Saints, that these are the traditions of the fathers handed down from generation to generation, from Adam, through Noah, and that they will cleave to the children to the latest generation, though they may wander into darkness and perversion, until but a slight resemblance to their origin, which was divine, can be seen. * * *

The ordinances of the gospel have been restored in their purity. We know why the law of sacrifice was given to Adam, and how it is that relics of the gospel are found among the heathen.

When Jesus came and suffered, "the just for the unjust," he that was without sin for him that had sinned, and was subject to the penalty of the law which the sinner had transgressed, the law of sacrifice was fulfilled, and instead thereof he gave another law, which we call the "Sacrament of the Lord's Supper," by which his life and mission, his death and resurrection, the great sacrifice he had offered for the redemption of man, should be kept in everlasting remembrance, for, said he, "this do in remembrance of me, for as often as ye eat this bread, and drink of this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." Therefore this law is to us what the law of sacrifice was to those who lived prior to the first coming of the Son of Man, until he shall come again. Therefore, we must honor and keep it sacredly, for there is a penalty attached to its violation, as we shall see by reading the words of Paul (1 Cor. 11:27-30):

"Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

"But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

"For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

"For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep."

And it is even more plainly given in the Book of Mormon, which I will read (III Nephi 18:26-29):

"And now it came to pass that when Jesus had spoken these words, he turned his eyes again upon the disciples whom he had chosen, and said unto them, behold verily,

verily I say unto you, I give unto you another commandment, and then I must go unto my Father, that I may fulfil other commandments which he hath given me. And now behold, this is the commandment which I give unto you, that ye shall not suffer any one knowingly, to partake of my flesh and blood unworthily, when ye shall minister it; for whoso eateth and drinketh my flesh and blood unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to his soul; therefore if ye know that a man is unworthy to eat and drink of my flesh and blood, ye shall forbid him."

These are some of the injunctions and commandments that are given in relation to the partaking of the Lord's Supper. Now let us be careful what we do, that we may not incur the penalty affixed to the transgression of this law, remembering that the ordinances which God has given are sacred and binding, that his laws are in force, especially upon all that have covenanted with him in baptism, and upon all unto whom they come, whether they embrace them or not, as Jesus said, "This is the condemnation of the world, that light has come into the world, but ye love darkness rather than light." Therefore all men will be held accountable for the use they make of the light which they possess. For this reason we are commanded to preach the gospel unto every creature, that those who obey and are baptized may be saved, and those who reject it may be condemned.

I bear my testimony to these things. I know that Joseph Smith was and is a Prophet of the living God, and President Young is also a prophet of God, and that by inspiration and revelation, and not of man. God bless you, and help us to be faithful, is my prayer in the name of Jesus. Amen.— Discourse delivered in the Thirteenth Ward Assembly Rooms, Salt Lake City, February 9, 1873. *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 15, pp. 324-328.

ORDER OF ADMINISTERING TO THE SICK. In the matter of administering to the sick, according to the order and prac-

tice established in the Church, care should be taken to avoid unwarranted repetitions. When an administration is made, and when the blessing pronounced upon the afflicted one has been received, the ordinance should not be repeated, rather let the time be given to prayer and thanksgiving for the manifestation of divine power already granted and realized. No limit should be or can be set to the offering of prayer and the rendering of praise to the Giver of Good, for we are specially told to pray without ceasing, and no special authority of the priesthood or standing in the Church is essential to the offering of prayer; but the actual administration by anointing with oil and by the imposition of hands by those who hold the proper office in the priesthood is an authoritative ordinance, too sacred in its nature to be performed lightly, or to be repeated loosely when the blessing has been gained.—*Juvenile Instructor*, Vol. 38, January, 1902, p. 18.

THE USE OF A TESTIMONY. The sanctity of a true testimony should inspire a thoughtful care as to its use. That testimony is not to be forced upon everybody, nor is it to be proclaimed at large from the housetop. It is not to be voiced merely to “fill up the time” in a public meeting; far less to excuse or disguise the speaker’s poverty of thought or ignorance of the truth he is called to expound.

The individual testimony is a personal possession. One cannot give his testimony to another, yet he is able to aid his earnest brother in gaining a true testimony for himself. The over-zealous missionary may be influenced by the misleading thought that the bearing of his testimony to those who have not before heard the gospel message, is to convince or condemn, as the hearers accept or reject. The elder is sent into the field to preach the gospel—the good news of its restoration to earth, showing by scriptural evidence the harmony of the new message with the predictions of earlier times; expounding the truths embodied in the first principles of the gospel; then if he bears his testimony under divine

inspiration, such a testimony is as a seal attesting the genuineness of the truths he has declared, and so appealing to the receptive soul whose ears have been saluted by the heaven-sent message.

But the voicing of one's testimony, however eloquently phrased or beautifully expressed, is no fit or acceptable substitute for the needed discourse of instruction and counsel expected in a general gathering of the people. The man who professes a testimony as herein described, and who assumes that his testimony embraces all the knowledge he needs, and who therefore lives in indolence and ignorance, shall surely discover his error to his own cost and loss. A gift from God, if neglected, or unworthily used, is in time withdrawn; the testimony of the truth will not remain with one who, having received, uses not the sacred gift in the cause of individual and general advancement.

Search out the truth of the written word; listen for and receive the truth declared by living prophets and teachers; enrich your minds with the best of knowledge and facts. Of those who speak in his name, the Lord requires humility, not ignorance. Intelligence is the glory of God; and no man can be saved in ignorance.

Study and strive to acquire the knowledge that leads toward, and the wisdom that shall reach, the goal of life eternal. Your testimony as to the truth of the restored gospel may operate toward salvation or condemnation as it is used or misused.—*Juvenile Instructor*, Vol. 41, August, 1906, p. 465.

PURPOSE AND PRACTICE OF TESTIMONY BEARING. The practice of bearing testimonies once a month in the Sabbath schools has become so general, and is of such far-reaching importance to the faith and happiness of our young people, that a word of caution and of encouragement may be helpful at this time. It is not the chief purpose of testimony bearing to accumulate physical evidences of the truth of the

gospel. It is not so much argument and physical demonstration that are wanted as it is the cultivation of the Spirit of God within the hearts of the children.

Many of the children live in homes where there is comparatively little or no sickness, and perhaps have no opportunity whatever to witness manifestations of divine power in the healing of the sick. At testimony meetings, these children would perhaps have little to say if the idea prevailed that the testimonies of the children were to consist chiefly, if not wholly, in recounting instances of healing through the administrations of the elders.

The healing of the sick is but one of those spiritual blessings that follow those who have faith, and the blessing belongs peculiarly to the Church, but is not confined exclusively to those who are members of the Church. In Christ's day, many were healed who were strangers to his great mission, simply through their faith in him, or that the glory of God might be made manifest.

Now, the healing of the sick is simply one of the evidences; but if it were the only evidence of the divinity of this work it would be insufficient, because in the organization of the Church, the existence of apostles, the gathering, the payment of tithes and offerings, the laying on of hands, baptism, and other laws and ordinances of the gospel are equally evidence of its divine origin, and the importance of one ought not to be emphasized at the neglect of any other. The fact that all these ordinances and principles are taught and practiced by the Saints constitutes a convincing argument that the Church is now the same as it was in the days of the Master.

Testimony-bearing should have a strong educational influence upon the feelings and lives of the children, and it is intended to cultivate within them feelings of thankfulness and appreciation for the blessings they enjoy. The Spirit of God may work within the life of a child and make the

child realize and know that this is the work of God. The child knows it rather because of the Spirit than because of some physical manifestation which he may have witnessed. Our testimony meetings, then, should have as one of their aims the cultivation of the children's feelings of gratitude not only toward God, but toward their parents, teachers and neighbors. It is advisable, therefore, to cultivate as far as possible their appreciation for the blessings that they enjoy.

Testimony bearing is chiefly for the benefit of those who bear the testimony in that their gratitude and appreciation are deepened. Testimony bearing is not the accumulation of arguments or evidences solely for the satisfaction and testimony of others. Let the testimonies, then, of the young people include the training of their feelings by way of making them more appreciative and more thankful for the blessings they enjoy, and the children should be made to understand what these blessings are and how they come to them. It is an excellent way to make people helpful and thankful to others, by first making them thankful to God.—*Juvenile Instructor*, Vol. 38, April, 1903, p. 246.

THE TEMPORAL AND THE SPIRITUAL NOT SEPARATE. You must continue to bear in mind that the temporal and the spiritual are blended. They are not separate. One cannot be carried on without the other, so long as we are here in mortality. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on the earth is a physical organization as well as a spiritual organization. We need practical faith—that is, we need to practice the principles of our faith. Without the practice of the principles of the gospel, we can never realize our hopes and expectations concerning the results of this great latter-day work.—*Oct. C. R.*, 1900, p. 46.

SPIRITUAL AND TEMPORAL SALVATION. The Latter-day Saints believe not only in the gospel of spiritual salvation, but also in the gospel of temporal salvation. We have to look after the cattle and the sheep and the horses, the gar-

dens and the farms, the irrigation canals and ditches, and other necessary things for the maintenance of ourselves and our families in the earth. In this respect this Church is different from many other denominations. We do not feel that it is possible for men to be really good and faithful Christian people unless they can also be good, faithful, honest and industrious people. Therefore, we preach the gospel of industry, the gospel of economy, the gospel of sobriety. We preach that the idler shall not eat the bread of the laborer, and that the idler is not entitled to an inheritance in Zion. We preach that those who are industrious, those who work, those who through their integrity and industry are good citizens of the kingdom of God, are better citizens of the country in which they live than those who are not so diligent in this regard.—*Apr. C. R.*, 1904, p. 74.

THE GOSPEL DESIGNED FOR TEMPORAL BENEFITS, ALSO. The work that we are engaged in is not designed to be limited by the spiritual necessities of the people alone. It is the purpose of God in restoring the gospel and the holy priesthood not only to benefit mankind spiritually, but also to benefit them temporally. The Lord has expressed this many times, in the word that he gave to his servant Joseph Smith, the prophet; he designed that his people should become the richest of all people. And this not only means the richest of all people in heavenly gifts—in spiritual blessings and riches, but it also means that the people of God shall be the richest of all people with regard to temporal matters. If faithful we have a right to claim the blessings of the Lord upon the labor of our hands, our temporal labors. The farmer has a right to ask the Lord for blessings upon his farm, upon the labor that he bestows upon it. He has a right to claim the blessings of the Lord upon the animals that are necessary to the cultivation of his farm. He has a right to ask God to bless the grain that he sows and the seeds of the fruit that he plants in the soil. It is his priv-

ilege, not only to ask and claim these blessings at the hand of the Lord, but it is his right and privilege to receive blessings from God upon his labor, upon his farm, and upon all that he puts his hand unto in righteousness. It is our privilege to ask God to remove the curse from the earth, and to make it fruitful. If we will live so that we shall be entitled to his favor, and so that we may justly and righteously claim the blessings and gifts that he has promised unto his Saints, then that which we ask will be given, and we shall receive and enjoy them more abundantly. It is our privilege to ask God to bless the elements that surround us and to temper them for our good, and we know he will hear and answer the prayers of his people, according to their faith.—*Apr. C. R.*, 1898, pp. 9-10.

THE SPIRIT NEEDS FOOD. Many people are inconsistent in that they study concerning the needs of the body, and observe strictly the laws of health, yet they disregard the equally urgent needs of the spirit. For the spirit, as well as the body, needs food. Some people are either ignorant or thoughtless concerning the great blessings promised to those who observe the Word of Wisdom.—*Improvement Era*, Vol. 21, December, 1917, p. 103.