

## THE LAYING ON OF HANDS

C. Houston Hobart, pastor  
Reorg. CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST  
of Latter Day Saints  
Berkeley, California

August 13, 1944  
8:45 p.m. KRE, 1400 KC  
Berkeley, California

Ecclesiastes 3:14,15

"I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him. That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past."

There are many Bible lecturers who describe the events of Pentecost at great length and with much enthusiasm. They also tell of the wonderful gifts of the gospel which were products of the apostles ministry from Jerusalem to Rome. Such lecturers state that these unusual demonstrations of authority and power were common among the Christians of the New Testament era. It is agreed that the obedience of these early day 'saints' to the gospel of Jesus Christ made possible those peculiar manifestations. The "gifts of the Spirit" were considered necessary for the spiritual development of the 'saints' as individuals and as a group.

These lecturers tell us that all these things are a part of <sup>EAST</sup> history -- they ended with the writers of the New Testament. Furthermore, the gospel gifts are not needed today because anyone can turn to the scriptures for the confirmation of his faith in God and His goodness to men. This is the same reasoning that the Pharisees and Sadducees used while they listened to John the Baptist. They thought that because they were descendants of Abraham salvation was assured. For the scriptures told them of the covenant God made to Abraham and his seed. But John said (Matt. 3:8,9), "Therefore let your lives prove your change of heart; and do not imagine that you can say to yourselves, we have Abraham as our forefather, for I tell you that God can raise up descendants for Abraham from these stones."

No man of integrity desires to become a church member just to have his name enrolled on the record. He seeks communion with God and Christ, and the assistance of the Holy Spirit in present day living. It would be difficult for him to believe that his soul could grow and be "enriched upon what the saints received and utilized nineteen yrs. ago." It is physically impossible for a hungry man to be satisfied by reading a menu of what some one else had eaten the day before. It is just as difficult for one to satisfy his soul by reading in the Bible of the blessings to men of old. Peter described God as "no respecter of persons"; other accounts say that God is unchangeable. If God is unchangeable than his doctrine, which Christ taught, must be unchangeable. If it was necessary in Christ's day to fulfill the conditions of Faith, Repentance, and Baptism for closer communion with God, it is necessary today. God would be a respecter of persons if the same 'gifts' were no longer given as a result of submission to the gospel law.

Various teachings and ordinances once considered essential have been supplanted by councils, reformers, and churches. As a consequence, religion has been void of many of the powerful movements of Christ's Church. The gospel of the Restoration restored these movements in which the priesthood has been authorized to perform designated ordinances in Christ's name. The doctrine of the Laying on of Hands is as little understood as any in the Bible. Many churches reject it completely. Some practice it only limitedly. Yet the Laying on of Hands is a fundamental doctrine -- it is the fourth principle of the gospel listed by Paul in Hebrews 6:2.

There are four major purposes for this doctrine. It is used to Bless little children -- we spoke of this last Sunday night when we said that some churches had substituted infant baptism for this ordinance. In addition, the Laying on of hands is used in ordaining men to the ministry, in administering to the sick, and in confirming a candidate a member of the church after he has been baptized. If time permitted, we could give many scriptural references which verify the position we hold in relation to the doctrine of the Laying on of hands. Another time we will elaborate upon the ordination of men to the priesthood and the administration for the sick. However, these uses are as important as the one we wish to emphasize tonight.

"Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery." In my Bible, a marginal reference to this text from 1st Timothy, points the reader to Acts 6:6, from which verse it appears that the gift of the Holy Ghost was the gift which Paul intended to bring to Timothy's attention. What did Paul mean by counseling Timothy not to neglect the gift of the Holy Ghost, which had been conferred upon him by the laying on of Hands?

We Latter Day Saints practice this ordinance by those having authority, for the gift of the Holy Ghost. We believe that God's spirit is working in religious people the world over; that it has guided and is guiding the destinies of nations; that God has manifested himself in all ages through the operation of that spirit.

We believe that under that spirit Columbus was guided across the Atlantic to America, and that under the same spirit, America was freed from a foreign yoke, and established as a land of freedom and justice and equality. But if there is any truth in our theory of a latter day restoration of divine authority, we must also believe that only under the ministrations of that divinely appointed authority can man achieve the FULL MEASURE of the enjoyment of that Holy Spirit in his daily life. Hence the laying on of hands for the reception of the Holy Spirit has a particular and a much more significant meaning to us Latter Day Saints than to any other people.

To many people in the world today, this warning to "neglect not the gift that is in thee," should come with a particular and personal meaning. The Holy Ghost is a gift which must usually be earnestly sought for to be acquired; and once it is acquired, it must be constantly tended with care. If God is to dwell in you, your body and your soul must make a fit place for that Spirit to abide. The spirit of God dwells not in unholy temples. The Holy Spirit will not dwell in a body which is weakened by excesses, enervated by dissipation,

dulled by habitual over-stimulation. The Holy Spirit does not dwell in a mind which reflects constantly on thoughts of sin, for the thought is father to the deed.

There is still another significance to the admonition to neglect not the gift that is in thee. Paul tells us in the 12th chapter of 1st Corinthians that there are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit... and then he goes on to enumerate some of the gifts of the Spirit -- the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, gifts of tongues, and interpretation of tongues. In fact, we may conclude with James, that every good and perfect gift with which we are naturally endowed is the gift of God to us, and that its acquisition and development is made possible by the Holy Ghost. Yet how many of the people of the world are living far below their possibilities, not only physically, but mentally and spiritually as well? Many have been endowed with a natural gift of health, only to neglect or to abuse it by violation all the rules of healthful living until their bodies are sickly and diseased. Many of us whose minds should be keen and alert are so lazy mentally that we get a severe headache every time we get a new idea.

The Lord has need of people of all kinds, and of all degrees of ability. He has need of the gift that is within YOU, and has offered you his Spirit to help you in the cultivation and perfection of that gift. The people of God should be the most gifted, the most talented, and the most intelligent people on earth, for they have the advantage of the presence of God's spirit to lead them. Yet that outstanding ability has seldom been manifested among the people who called themselves the people of God. Too often they have flattered themselves with this title, and have neglected the gift that is in them.. The people of God, the members of his church, should be the finest, the most intelligent, the most cultured, the most progressive people on earth. With the help of the Holy Spirit, the people of God should produce the world's greatest scientists, scholars, teachers, artists, musicians, statesmen.

The spirit which guides into all truth, if cultivated as a gift, and followed, would enable all men to hasten progress, to delve into hitherto unfathomable mysteries, and to open up totally new fields of thought and endeavor. But too often Christian people have turned the gift of the Holy Spirit into an anchor to hold them fast to what they already know, fearing to follow its guidance out into the deeper uncharted oceans, which still await the exploring soul and mind of man.

Neglect not the gift that is in you. Stir up that gift; feed it; cultivate it; allow it to grow and to bear fruit in your lives. Not only will your gift, if properly cherished, contribute something to the world which you, and you alone are qualified to give, but the cultivation of that gift, to its fullest will give you a joy, a peace, a satisfaction beyond all measure, both now, and through eternity.