

### Timeline

- **1801-1840**—Second Great Awakening (dates differ within a year or two)
- **1805-1827**—Joseph Smith saw his parents experience divine healings, sacred dreams, and he had visions
- **Sept 1830**—Three-day church conference convened in Fayette. Missionaries to the Lamanites called (D&C 32)
- **Oct 28, 1830**—Four missionaries teach in the Kirtland OH area (D&C 28:8; 32:1-3), converts experienced “the gift and power of the Holy Ghost”
- **Nov 1830**—Missionaries leave and a counterfeit spirit from the adversary affected a few of the converts
- **Feb 1, 1831**—Joseph arrived in Kirtland (D&C 37:1; 38:32)
- **Feb 9, 1831**—The Lord revealed the Law of Consecration (D&C 42)
- **Feb 1831**—Mrs. Hubble claims to be a prophetess, and wanted to be the teacher over the new church (D&C 43)
- **Mar 8, 1831**—The Lord revealed the purposes and boundaries of the Gifts of the Spirit (D&C 46)

### Second Great Awakening thoughts on Spiritual Manifestations

Hasty historians and attackers of the Prophet Joseph Smith often tag his ideas as simply stemming from the Second Great Awakening. Yet in reality, they drastically diverged on most Christian subjects, including his understanding of the Spirit (or pneumatology). A careful comparison of how others interpreted NT verses on the Spirit shows a dramatic difference (For more on this, see my dissertation published at Marquette University). Their differences are one reason why Joseph’s contemporaries attacked his Restoration movement so arduously. Let’s take a brief view across a spectrum of Christian beliefs, at how contemporaries who shaped the Second Great Awakening, understood the workings of the Spirit.

#### **Presbyterian: Charles Hodge** (1797-1878)

“Modern prelates . . . claim no immediate commission; no independent knowledge derived from immediate revelation; no personal infallibility; no vision of Christ; and no gift of miracles. . . . A man cannot be a prophet without the gift of prophecy; or a miracle-worker without the gift of miracles; or have the gift of tongues without the ability to speak other languages than his own; no man can rightfully claim to be an apostle without possessing the gifts which made the original Apostles what they were” (Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 1:140).

Ironically, Hodge refused to see that Joseph Smith filled his requirements.

#### **Return to Original Christianity: Alexander Campbell** (1788-1866)

“The Holy Spirit was communicated by the apostle’s hands; consequently, when the apostles all died, these gifts were no longer conferred . . . those gifts have ceased, the Holy Spirit now operates upon the minds of men only by the word . . . Since the Millennium and the evils of sectarianism have been the subjects of much speaking and writing, impostures have been numerous. In the memory of the present generation, many delusions have been propagated and received. . . .The Barkers, Jumpers, and Mutterers of the present age, need not be mentioned here. . . But we shall proceed to notice the most recent and the most impudent delusion which has appeared in our time. The people that have received this imposture are called, THE MORMONITES. I have just examined their bible . . . it is called the ‘Book of Mormon’” (Alexander Campbell, “Delusions” *Millennial Harbinger*, II.2 (Feb 7, 1831): 86).

#### **Methodist: Peter Cartwright** (1785-1872)

“Yield to the *Spirit* . . . submit to be an humble, shouting, *happy* Christian. . . . We had prayers, and the most of us got shouting happy; and one of his interesting sons, while we were all engaged in prayer, was solemnly convicted, and after praying in mighty agony for several hours, the Lord blessed him with a powerful sense of the forgiveness of his sins. For hours we sung, prayed, and shouted together. . . . I look back on them my heart grows warm, and swells with gratitude to my heavenly Father for the sanction he has given to my poor little ministry amid all the sacrifices and sufferings” (*Autobiography*, 206, 261).

He also “proclaimed open war against these [Satanic] delusions” (ibid., 159). Cartwright spoke much on God’s love and influence, but rarely used the biblical words “Spirit” or “Holy Ghost.” It appears he deliberately avoided it in order to separate himself from those “fanatical” people who claimed the gifts of the Spirit—such as, in his opinion, the “diabolical Mormons” (ibid., 207).

#### **Reformed Baptist: Barton Stone** (1772-1844)

Stone was a major proponent of seeking the Spirit, but still cautioned that the Holy Spirit should not supersede the power of the written Word, or Bible. He advised young “candidates for the Gospel ministry henceforth study the Holy Scriptures with fervent prayer, and obtain license from God to preach the simple Gospel, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, without any mixture of philosophy, vain deceit, traditions of men, or the rudiments of the world. . . Christ, the great teacher of the world, never preached the Gospel till he was full of the Holy Ghost—his apostles were forbidden to leave Jerusalem and preach the Gospel till they had received the Holy Spirit of promise, endued with power from on high. Even deacons, who were to attend solely to the temporalities of the Church, must be full of the Holy Ghost, as a qualification of their office. The Lord will have no servants in his Church without this qualification. Without we have the Spirit, how can we

minister it to others” (Thomas H. Olbricht (2004) "Barton W. Stone and Walter Scott on the Holy Spirit and Ministry," *Leaven*: Vol. 12: Iss. 3, Article 9. Available at: <http://digitalcommons.pepperdine.edu/leaven/vol12/iss3/9>)

Stone regularly preached at camp-meetings and encouraged spiritual manifestation: “On the subject of the jerks . . . I have seen the person stand in one place and jerk backward and forward in quick succession. . . . I have inquired of those thus affected. They could not account for it; but some have told me that those were among the happiest seasons of their lives” (Finke and Stark, *Churching America*, 95)

**Congregationalist: Charles G. Finney** (1792-1875)

“We need the light of the Holy Spirit to teach us the character of God, the nature of His government, the purity of His law, the necessity and fact of atonement—to teach us our need of Christ in all His offices and relations, governmental, spiritual, and mixed. We need the revelation of Christ to our souls, in such power as to induce in us that appropriating faith, without which Christ is not, and cannot be, our salvation.” (Finney, *Systematic Theology*, 413). “I am not quite sure that I have laid as much stress as I intended upon the manifest agency of the Holy Spirit, in those revivals. I wish it to be distinctly understood, in all that I shall say, in my narrative of the revivals that I have witnessed, that I always in my own mind, and practically, laid the utmost stress upon this fact, underlying, directing, and giving efficiency to the means, without which nothing would be accomplished” (Finney, *Autobiography*, 138).

**Transcendentalist: Ralph Waldo Emerson** (1803-1882)

“Show us that God is, not was; that He speaketh, not spake”

### **Spiritual Manifestations among Early Converts in Colesville, NY (1830)**

With many people experimenting with spirituality during the Second Great Awakening, unhealthy spiritual activity plagued parts of the new nation, some of which infiltrated into the early saints. I will look at a few counterfeit examples that even entered into the church in the first decade.

When the Prophet Joseph lived in Harmony, PA, he had several meetings with the Knight family and their friends who lived just north over the New York boarder in Colesville. Shortly after the church was organized, in April 1830, the prophet again visited Colesville and the first miracle of the church occurred there. Before Newel Knight was baptized, Joseph asked him to pray vocally. Newel felt uncomfortable, but finally told Joseph that he would at their next prayer meeting. When the meeting arrived, fear overcame Newel and he declined again, promising to pray later in private. The next morning Newel went to the forest to pray alone, but couldn't because of the guilt he felt. He grew ill and went home. Joseph (through his scribes) record what happened next:

His appearance was such as to alarm his wife very much. He requested her to go and bring me to him. I went and found him suffering very much in his mind, and his body acted upon in a very strange manner. His visage and limbs distorted and twisted in every shape and appearance possible to imagine, and finally, he was caught up off the floor of the apartment and tossed about most fearfully.

His situation was soon made known to his neighbors and relatives, and in a short time as many as eight or nine grown persons had got together to witness the scene. After he had thus suffered for a time I succeeded in getting hold of him by the hand, when almost immediately he spoke to me, and with very great earnestness requested of me that I should cast the devil out of him, saying that he knew that he was in him, and that he also knew that I could cast him out. I replied, “If you know that I can, it shall be done,” and then almost unconsciously I rebuked the devil, and commanded him in the name of Jesus Christ to depart from him, when immediately Newel spoke out and said that he saw the devil leave him and vanish from his sight.

This was the first miracle which was done in this Church or by any member of it, and it was done not by man nor by the power of man but it was done by God, and by the power of godliness: therefore let the honor and the praise, the dominion and the glory, be ascribed to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen (Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 1:82).

Joseph describes that as soon as the devil departed Newel's countenance and body became natural, “and almost immediately the Spirit of the Lord descended upon him, and the visions of eternity were opened to his view. So soon as consciousness returned, his bodily weakness was such that we were obliged to lay him upon his bed, and wait upon him for some time. He afterwards related his experience as follows:

I now began to feel a most pleasing sensation resting on me, and immediately the visions of heaven were opened to my view. I felt myself attracted upward, and remained for some time enwrapt in contemplation, insomuch that I knew not what was going on in the room pressing upon my shoulder and the side of my head, which served to recall me to a sense of my situation, and I found that the Spirit of the Lord had actually caught me up off the floor, and that my shoulder and head were pressing against the beams (ibid., 1:83).

This account sounds unusual to most 21st-century saints, but in that culture, these manifestations were more common.

### Spiritual Manifestations among Early Converts in Kirtland, Ohio

When the four missionaries “to the Lamanites” taught the larger Kirtland Ohio community for just a few weeks (somewhere over two weeks and less than four), they had 127 converts (fifty of whom lived in Kirtland proper). The majority of those early converts had previously been affiliated with the Campbellites, or Disciples of Christ, who were all seeking to establish a church like the one described in the Bible (including: Orson Hyde, Lyman White, Edward Partridge, Fredrick G. Williams, Parley and Orson Pratt). Alexander Campbell had limited all “enthusiastic” manifestations of the gifts of the Spirit to the Bible. Campbell believed that any signs of healings, tongues, visions, were only from God in the Bible. So groups like Sidney Rigdon and his over one-hundred followers left the Campbellites in early 1830—in part, seeking more influence of the Spirit, and a communal lifestyle. Their thirst opened a wide doorway for spiritual manifestations.

After a just a little over two weeks of teaching the restored Gospel of Jesus Christ, the four missionaries (plus one new convert, Fredrick G. Williams), left the new group of converts to continue their mission to “the Lamanites” (Smith, *History of the Church*, 1:120-125). During that time a small portion of the converts confused counterfeit strange spiritual experiences for those of God. For example, they held nightly prayer meetings where some made “the most ridiculous grimaces, creeping upon their hands and feet, rolling upon the frozen ground.” One member, Levi Hancock, described one man, “behave[ing] like a baboon” (Bushman, *Rough Stone Rolling*, 150). A local Ohio newspaper, *The Painesville Telegraph*, described “the most wild frantic and horrible fanaticism . . . Indian modes of warfare, such as knocking down, scalping . . .” (ibid.).

Even though these examples were limited, any satanic evidence was a problem. By opening the door to spiritual manifestations, discernment was necessary. The devil tried to stop the work. But the brand-new converts had no one with experience to teach them for a few months until the missionaries returned and Joseph arrived on Feb. 1, 1831. During those first early weeks without a teacher, the earliest Kirtland saints had to learn by experience what was from God and what was a counterfeit. Here is an example from an early Kirtland convert, John Corrill, remembering back to those early prayer meetings when he investigated the church:

I attended several meetings, one of which was the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, which, I thought, would give me a good opportunity to detect their hypocrisy. The meeting lasted all night, and such a meeting I never attended before. They administered the sacrament, and laid on hands, after which I heard them prophecy and speak in tongues unknown to me. . . . I watched closely and examined carefully, every movement of the meeting, and after exhausting all my powers to find the deception, I was obliged to acknowledge, in my own mind, that the meeting had been inspired by some supernatural agency. The next day I returned home, satisfied that the evil reports were not true, and spent about six weeks more in the further investigation of the subject. [p. 9]

(<https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/john-corrill-a-brief-history-of-the-church-of-christ-of-latter-day-saints-1839/14>)

Many improprieties and visionary notions crept into the church, which tried the feelings of the more sound minded. Many young persons became very visionary, and had divers operations of the spirit, as they supposed. They saw wonderful lights in the air and on the ground, and would relate many great and marvellous [*sic*] things which they saw in their visions. They conducted themselves in a strange manner, sometimes imitating Indians in their manoeuvres, [*sic*] sometimes running out into the fields, getting on stumps of trees and there preaching as though surrounded by a congregation,—all the while so completely absorbed in visions as to be apparently insensible to all that was passing around them. I would here remark, however, that it was but a very few of the Church who were exercised in that way [ibid. 16]

It was a delicate balance for the early saints to learn what the Spirit was and what it was not. No one had the background as Joseph did in revelation.

#### The Lord’s Correction through the Prophet Joseph (D&C 46)

The Prophet Joseph Smith later recorded that when he arrived in Kirtland (Feb 1, 1831), he noticed “some strange notions and false spirits crept in among them.” The Lord taught Joseph an important distinction needed to be made. After a mob disrupted a service in Cleveland, the Lord gave a revelation on worship services and the gifts of the Spirit (D&C 46). The gifts are to be done in the name of Christ, and He taught them how to discern and by way of warning:

That ye may not be seduced by evil spirits, or doctrines of devils, or the commandments of men . . . Beware lest ye are deceived; and that ye may not be deceived seek ye earnestly the best gifts, always remembering for what they are given . . . they are given for the benefit of those who love me and keep all my commandments, and him that seeketh so to do; that all may be benefited . . . that ask and not for a sign” (D&C 46:8-9).

The revelation repeated the important message—that the gifts of the Spirit are for the benefit or profit of *others*—five times (46:9, 12, 16, 26, 29).

Outsiders saw the Prophet as a fanatic in his claims of practicing the gifts of the Spirit. While Joseph believed that he had the gift to discern Spirits, many like Hodge, Cartwright and Campbell were doubtful. Their fear of rampant forgeries drove them from acknowledging anything extraordinary. Joseph too, warned against extremist behaviors and insisted that the gifts of the Spirit were sacred and given from God to bless His kingdom. He carefully avoided

irreverent displays to safeguard a reverent setting where the Spirit could dwell. Only when proper authority and divine purposes mandated their use did he believe that spiritual gifts were from God.

Unlike his contemporaries, Joseph did not balk at charismatic gifts but insisted, he taught that they required another gift—the gift of discernment—to judge between God’s gifts and Satan’s deceptions. As often as he spoke on this favorite topic of the gifts, he also warned that the devil deceived those unfamiliar with the Spirit of God with counterfeit gifts. One of Smith’s closest companions and cousin observed, “There was no point upon which the Prophet Joseph dwelt more than the discerning of Spirits” (Ehat and Cook, *Words of Smith*, 21).

### **Spiritual Manifestations among Early Converts in Nauvoo (1839-1844)**

#### **—July 22, 1839**

The first summer following the Missouri expulsion, 17,881 refugee saints gathered in tents and old army barracks on either side of the Mississippi River where they hoped to build a new “city beautiful,” Nauvoo. The swampy low-lands bred mosquitoes carrying malaria, which left Joseph and the majority of the saints, already destitute and immune-compromised, deathly ill that first summer. On July 22, 1839, Joseph, “after being confined to his house several days, and while meditating upon his situation . . . had a great desire to attend to the duties of his office.” He rose from his sick-bed and received the power to heal hundreds. Wilford Woodruff recounted that day of miraculous healings:

Joseph . . . commenced to administer to the sick in his own house and door-yard, and he commanded them in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to arise and be made whole; and the sick were healed upon every side of him. Many lay sick along the bank of the river; Joseph walked along up to the lower stone house, occupied by Sidney Rigdon, and he healed all the sick that lay in his path. . . . After healing all that lay sick upon the bank of the river as far as the stone house, he called upon Elder Kimball and some others to accompany him across the river to visit the sick at Montrose (Smith, *History*, 4.18).

Across the river in Iowa more miraculous healings occurred, beginning with Brigham Young and other leaders who joined to heal others. Wilford Woodruff’s account adds his own contribution:

After healing the sick in Montrose, all the company followed Joseph to the bank of the river, where he was going to take the boat to return home. While waiting for the boat, a man from the West, who had seen that the sick and dying were healed, asked Joseph if he would not go to his house and heal two of his children who were very sick. They were twins and were three months old. Joseph told the man he could not go, but he would send some one to heal them. He told Elder Woodruff to go with the man and heal his children. At the same time he took from his pocket a silk bandanna handkerchief, and gave to Brother Woodruff, telling him to wipe the faces of the children with it, and they should be healed . . . Elder Woodruff did as he was commanded, and the children were healed (*ibid.*).

This miraculous day of healing reached all within Joseph’s path that day. His gift of healing, however, was not available to heal his own infant twins who died eight years before, nor his three other children who also died in infancy (Lucy Smith, *History of Joseph Smith*, 208). He did not feel that he controlled the power, only exercised the gift when directed by the Spirit of God.

#### **—Nov 29, 1839**

Shortly after the saints arrived in Commerce IL (soon named Nauvoo), the Prophet Joseph Smith singled out “the gift of the Holy Ghost” as the key difference between the restoration of our church and other Christian denominations in his conversation with U.S. President Martin Van Buren. As he wrote in a letter to his brother Hyrum just a few days after the experience, when Van Buren asked what was different about his religion, Joseph answered: “We differed in mode of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands. . . . We considered that all other considerations were contained in the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Smith, *History*, 4.42).

#### **—1842**

Joseph often infuriated his fellow Christian neighbors by claiming to cast out devils, heal the sick, speak in tongues, discern spirits, and prophesy (let alone reveal new scripture and redefine the Godhead). To counter their attacks and defend his gifts, Joseph quoted Mark 16:17, “these signs shall follow them that believe.” In 1842, a critic, Mr. Sollars, confronted him about the need to practice the gifts of the Spirit: “May I not repent and be baptized, and not pay any attention to dreams, visions, and other gifts of the Spirit?” Joseph passionately responded:

Suppose I am traveling and am hungry and meet with a man and tell him I am hungry, and he tells me to go yonder. . . . I go and knock, and ask for food, and sit down to the table, but do not eat, shall I satisfy my hunger? No. I must eat. The gifts are the food; and the graces of the Spirit are the gifts of the Spirit (Smith, *History of the Church*, 5:219).

Joseph hungered after the gifts of the Spirit, preached on them, and exercised them often.

#### **—Jan-April 1846**

Days of Pentecost in conjunction with the dedication of the Kirtland Temple (next week!)