

constitutes the body of Christ, or in other words his Church. First, those principles that I have named—faith, repentance and baptism for the remission of sins; then the laying on of hands for the reception of the Holy Ghost; then, when the spirit falls upon the Church, it diversifies all these gifts that are named throughout the whole body of the Church. This agrees with the promise that Jesus made when he gave the great, last commission to his apostles to preach the Gospel in all the world to every creature. On that occasion he made certain promises to every creature that should dwell on the earth. Said he, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name they shall cast out devils.” Now, notice, this promise was not exclusively made to the apostles, they were the ones who received the commission to go and preach the Gospel; but the promises that I am now repeating were made to all persons in the world that should believe that Gospel they preached. They who believed should not only have the gift of salvation conferred upon them, but, “these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name they shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; and if they take up serpents, or drink any deadly thing, they shall not hurt them: and they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.”

These are the gifts of that ancient Gospel—the powers that pertain to the baptism of the Holy Spirit, promised to every believer in the world. These were the powers that were remarkable in the Church of the living God, and which constituted that Church the body of Christ.

Now, we will inquire where has this body of Christ been during the last

seventeen hundred years? Has it existed among the Greeks or Roman Catholics? Or has it existed among the Protestant denominations for the past two or three centuries? No; these gifts have been banished from the earth for several centuries and the universal cry in the religious world of Christendom is, that “These gifts were only intended for the first age of Christianity.” But if these gifts are part of the Gospel, you do them away and you do away with the Gospel. Let me quote a passage to prove that these gifts were to remain among the true believers so long as true believers should be on the earth. We have already quoted one passage to prove this, which is to be found in the last chapter of Mark, where all believers in the four quarters of the earth are promised that certain signs should follow them. Another passage you will find in the epistle of Paul to the Ephesians, which says that when Jesus ascended up on high he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. He gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, pastors and teachers. All these various gifts that I have quoted were given unto men when Jesus ascended up on high.

What was the purpose for which they were given? Were they given, as the Christian world say, merely for the sake of establishing the Gospel, and when that was thoroughly established they were no longer necessary? Is this the language of the ancient apostle? Hear what he says—They were given for “the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ”—the Church. Now, if they were given for these three special purposes, let us inquire whether they are needed for these purposes at the present day? Is the work of the ministry needed now? “O, yes,” all denominations will tell you that