

the work of the ministry is needed now. Well, recollect that, according to the words of the apostle Paul, these gifts were given for the work of the ministry. You take away these gifts, and how can there be a ministry? There can only be a false ministry—only those who have no power of God with them—a ministry that God has nothing to do with. They may go and preach, but their preaching is as powerless as the preaching of the heathen priests.

Another purpose for which these gifts were given was for the perfecting of the Saints. Can Saints be perfected now, any more than in the days of Paul, without the gifts of prophecy, revelation, visions, the ministrations of angels, tongues, the interpretation of tongues, healing, wisdom and knowledge by the power and spirit of God? If they can be perfected without these gifts then we have a new Gospel, and not the everlasting Gospel spoken of by the ancient apostle. But it seems that mankind, at the present day, have so fallen into tradition, and have preached a Gospel without its gifts so long, that I have no doubt there are thousands of them who really believe it, and believe that God will acknowledge their Gospels to be divine, and acknowledge their Churches to be his Church. It is the greatest piece of foolishness that could possibly be conjured up in the minds of men to suppose that the Church of the living God could be here without inspired prophets and apostles in it! How could Saints be perfected? Has God altered the Gospel or changed the pattern of things that is recorded in the New Testament? Has he predicted that the time should come when the Saints should no longer need the gifts to perfect them, or that they should be perfected by the learning and wisdom of man? If he has in-

troduced, or designs to introduce, any such order of things he has not told us anything about it, but has left us entirely in ignorance on the subject. If his people are to be perfected by learning, or by men studying years and years, pouring over the theology of the day, if anything of this kind is intended to perfect the children of men, then I don't read the Scriptures aright; for I am told in the Scriptures that God gave these gifts specially, because we cannot be perfected without them. They were given, says Paul, for the edifying of the body of Christ. O, how much the Christian world seem to be edified at the present day! If they can hear a minister use very flowery language, a great deal of oratory, and bring into his subject, as it were, all the various parts and points of logic and rhetoric, their ears are tickled, and they feel that they are wonderfully edified, but it is a false edification. The edification the Scriptures speak of are those miraculous gifts that Jesus gave when he ascended up on high. Without them the world is liable to be deceived and carried away by every wind of doctrine that is incorrect; and Paul tells us that they were given for the edifying of the body of Christ until we all come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. That is, they were never to cease, they were never to be done away until the Church arrived at that period when they should no longer look through a glass darkly, but see face to face, and become immortal and be exalted to his presence; then these gifts would no longer be necessary. The gift of healing will no longer be needed when we are all immortal; there will be no need of the gift of tongues or interpretation when all have one language.