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# APOSTLES

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GIVEN, LOST, AND RESTORED.

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# APOSTLES

## GIVEN, LOST, AND RESTORED.

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THE Lord Jesus Christ is the head of the Church, not only as the ruler of her actions, but as the source of her being; and that, not as he was on earth, but as he now is, on the right hand of power. As the apostle, he ministers to her the Holy Ghost. As the prophet, he reveals to her the things hidden in God. As the evangelist, he preaches to her the kingdom of heaven. As the pastor and teacher, he builds her up in holiness. And as Lord, he governs her.

How does he perform all this? Mediate or immediately? And, if the former, by what mediation? He does not descend from heaven; neither do we hear his voice or see his action from heaven. He operates mediate; and the mediation is that of the Holy Ghost, sent by him from the Father, sent by the Father in his name, who is on earth, who personally dwells in the church.

But how does the Holy Ghost thus mediate? He is now not merely the Spirit of God, but the Spirit of the man Christ Jesus. Yet, while the Son is incarnate for ever, the Holy Ghost has not become incarnate. He has not assumed any created nature, although he is subordinated to the Son who has. And if he is to exhibit an operation conformed to creature conditions, it must be by dwelling in creatures, and acting by them, in a mode accordant with their creature constitution. This he does in and through those baptized into Christ. As Christ's action is mediated through Him, so is his action exhibited in theirs. This exhibition is twofold, because the relation of the baptized to Christ is twofold. We are subject to Christ; and we have also fellowship with him. In the one relation, yielding to Christ, we are impelled by the Holy Ghost. In the other, as those who have fellowship with Christ, we are entrusted with the ministry of the Holy Ghost as a divine and sacred gift.

All admit, on the one hand, that we are called to serve Christ; on the other, that none save he can bless his church. But the question is, whether any are called to serve him, in imparting his blessing to others, or whether he reserves that office to himself; in other words, whether the Christian ministry, in its origin and operation, is divine or human? If Christ fulfils no ministry to the church by men, then the Christian ministry has no divine basis, and exercises no divine power, but is a mere pious fraud. But if it is admitted that in any

one way Christ does minister, or at any one time has ministered, to men by men, such an admission takes for granted that a ministry from Christ by men is possible and is according to the will of God. And if it is possible and has occurred, then its lawfulness at least, at all times and in all ways, is conceded. There is then a Christian ministry in the church, divine in origin and operation; and it is lawful to expect through it the blessing of Christ, in all its completeness, in every one of its forms, and at all times.

Every body of Christians claiming to be a branch of the church has acknowledged expressly or tacitly the office of the preacher and pastor. And, instead of denying its divine character, men have been rather disposed too hastily to admit that character. But why they should limit the character to that office, and deny even its possibility to any other, is not easy to explain, unless by the mere fact that, generally speaking, no other exists. Such a limitation is utterly destitute of warrant from Holy Scripture. And it can only rest on one or other of the following grounds: either that Christ has no other office—or that he communicates no other—or that he did so only for a temporary object—or that he has substituted new and innominate offices for those once designated and communicated—or that he has adopted offices invented and instituted by men. But the burden of proof lies on those who frame these theories. And that proof cannot be legitimately drawn from existing circumstances. The very question at issue is, whether these circumstances are according to the will of God or not. It must, if valid, be drawn from Holy Scripture and the analogy of God's counsels and dealings towards men.

That all the offices by which Christ blesses his church are communicable to men, we know from the fact that they have been communicated. That, when communicated, they were intended to abide, is clear from the facts, that Christ still exercises them, and that their object is not yet attained. That their place cannot be supplied by other *divine* offices, is plain, because they are His offices. His offices alone are divine; and they cannot change, unless both he and the church change; which is impossible, in fact, and nowhere hinted at in holy Scripture. That he cannot adopt offices invented by men is equally plain, unless he is to execute the counsels of man. And not less plain is it, that none of his offices are now needless; for, if so, either he would never have had them, or we must be in a different dispensation from that of primitive Christianity.

Taking for granted, then, that the offices of Christ are abiding and communicable, we find that one of these offices is the Apostolic. We use the word in its strictest sense. We mean neither apostles of the churches, men sent out by religious bodies on special missions, as

in 2 Cor. viii. 23, and perhaps Phil. ii. 25; nor mighty preachers of the word, either among the heathen or in Christendom, whose labors have been crowned with signal success; nor wise dignitaries, whose schemes and labors have signally benefitted the Catholic church; nor men distinguished by primitive simplicity, sanctity, or miraculous powers. We mean apostles such as Paul, neither of men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised him from the dead. As the Holy Ghost himself, although quenched, grieved, and blasphemed, still remains in the church—so have all the ministries of Christ, although forgotten, unknown, despised, abridged, exaggerated, and perverted, still exhibited themselves as they could. Every age and region of the church has had and exhibited the remnants or the buddings of apostleship; yet it is undeniable that for nearly 1800 years, no men have appeared with just, still less with admitted pretensions to the name of apostle, as indicating a distinct office. Such is the fact. But the question remains—should it have been so, and should it be so now? That which is permitted of God is not therefore his will. The measure of Christ's blessing corresponds to the behaviour of his church. If the Jews always resisted the Holy Ghost, how much more does the whole history of the church convict her of the same sin in its most aggravated form? Wherein has she not frustrated the grace of God? And if such be the case, how can the condition into which she has been brought and in which she is found, by hindering God to work, be taken as the expression of his will? As well might we say that baptized men should commit sin, because they do so; or that, because Judas was a devil, the Lord intended to choose one.

God now puts theories to silence by his own mighty acts. He has arisen. The arm of the Lord has awaked. He would send his Son from heaven. He would prepare the church for his return; and to that end he is giving again apostles and all other ministries which flow from theirs. In order then to understand his will, to recognise his work, and to receive his salvation, let us reverently investigate—

1. The nature of apostleship.
2. Its permanency.
3. Its constitution.
4. Its decay.
5. Its restoration.
6. Its credentials.

#### I. NATURE OF OFFICE.

- I. When we speak of apostleship, we do not speak of all that men

called to be apostles have done, but of that special work which the Lord Jesus Christ committed to apostles after his ascension, after he himself had entered on his apostolic functions in the heavenly Jerusalem. Although the Lord was while on earth the chosen of the Father, and had in him the rudiments of every office which he should afterwards fulfil, he *then* did no more than the work *then* entrusted to him, by which the way was prepared for his being made perfect through resurrection and ascension—Hebr. v. 9; in other words, for his full qualification as our Saviour. Part of that preparatory work, of which his atoning death on the cross formed the centre and climax, was the choice and education of his apostles, both before his death and after his resurrection. But they could not enter on their office as apostles until the great Apostle in heaven should send them. Their previous life, after being chosen by the Lord, was their training for office. The true nature of that office must be sought for after our Lord's ascension, and, even then, not in the things which they did in common with others, but in those which they alone could do.

1. They are the beginning of the church; not in point of time, for some believed before them, and 120 were together at Pentecost; nor merely by being the first to gather the members of the body through preaching; but in point of constitution. As God saw them in Christ, so did Christ see the church in them. And that fellowship with the Father and the Son, in which all Christians stand, is one in which apostles take precedence, and which they admit the church to share with them, 1 John i. No doubt the whole church is apostolic; sent into the world by Christ, as he by the Father. Save for this, the office of apostle would have neither meaning nor end. But the question is, not whether the whole church is apostolic or not, but how she becomes so. The apostleship of the church is no more prior in order to that of apostles than their's is to that of the Lord. As they derive their's from him, so does the church her's from them. It was the 12 who received the commandment not to depart from Jerusalem—the assurance that the ascended Lord should come again—and the commission to be witnesses unto him. And although all the disciples waited and prayed and received the Holy Ghost, it was the prayer and waiting of the 12, the descent of the Spirit upon them, and their testimony to Christ, which fulfilled the command, the promise, and the mission.

2. Apostles are the witnesses to Christ's resurrection and ascension. This is not the attestation of a barren fact that he is no longer to be found on earth, or that he disappeared in the sky. Nor is it a proof submitted to the judgment of man's intellect. It is the testimony to Christ's session at the right hand of the Majesty on high. And that testimony apostles give by receiving power from on high, by a practical

answer to the question, where Jesus now is. Because this testimony was to be given by the 12, Peter said to the disciples that one must be chosen from among those who had known the Lord during all his public ministry on earth, to be a witness with the 11 to his resurrection. Many others had known the Lord. Many others could attest the fact. Many others received power from on high in the apostles' fellowship. But the testimony required was that of the 12. And that testimony was given by their receiving power from on high.

3. Apostles are the dispensers of the Holy Ghost to the baptized. On the day of Pentecost, before God had turned to the Gentiles, Peter in his first sermon promised the Holy Ghost to every one who should repent and be baptized—*i. e.* to every one who should become a member of that mystical body, the glorified head of which was anointed not only above but for his fellows. The preparation for this gift was not left to arbitrary grace. It was to be obtained according to a fixed order, whether by Jew or by Gentile, whether by those near or those afar off, namely, through holy baptism. We may not doubt that they who received the word of Peter and were baptized, did thereupon receive the Holy Ghost. If they stood in the apostle's *fellowship*, they surely did so in regard to the best thing which the apostles possessed as a thing common to the church, namely, the gift of the Holy Ghost, as the seal of that doctrine, and as the strength of that worship, in which they continued with the apostles. And they are clearly to be reckoned with those of whom we read shortly after, that they were filled with the Holy Ghost—Acts ii. iv.

But if baptism was the appointed introduction to the gift of the Holy Ghost, was there no further divine appointment as to the mode of its bestowal? Was the rest left to arbitrary grace, to invisible divine agency? Had God begun and was he to proceed with the ordering of his house and the appointment of distinct channels of grace; and was the greatest act of his grace to be performed in total disregard of all order and ministry? Was the church, in regard to the reception of the Holy Ghost, to be a mere unorganised commonwealth? Were all the joints and bands, by which the Spirit should act, to be fixed by God; and was the bestowal of that Spirit himself to be left without all regulation? It could not be. When we enquire how the baptized were to receive the gift promised to them, the answer is evident, that if God gives baptism by men's hands, he will give the Holy Ghost also by men's hands. Both are divine acts—acts of Almighty power. If the Holy Ghost hath condescended to be sent by a man, and that man, as man, is like unto us, why may not that man minister him to men by men? If we must receive the Spirit without intervention of man, why not also baptism? But baptism is appointed to come



through man. And if so—if we are to be brought through man's hands into that position in which alone we can receive the Holy Ghost, are we to receive the gift itself without intervention of man? If so—why wait for baptism? Why make an *immediate* act of God to depend on a *mediate* act, on the will of man? Why control the will of God who gives the Spirit, by the will of the minister who baptizes? To all this the Scriptures furnish a plain answer; and that in three ways—by historical narrative—by implication—and by doctrinal statement.

The very next occasion on which we read of the gift of the Holy Ghost, occurred at the time when the gospel, although not yet taken from the Jews, had been forced by persecution from Jerusalem into Samaria. Philip the deacon preached there and baptized those who believed. On hearing of this, the apostles sent from Jerusalem two of their number, Peter and John. And for what purpose? Not merely to mark the progress of the faith, or farther to instruct the believers, but to pray that they might receive the Holy Ghost. What made them immediately think of this? Because they remembered the promise given by God through Peter, on the day of Pentecost—because they knew that that promise had been fulfilled—because they saw its application to the Samaritans—and because they desired to see its fulfilment among them also. And how did they proceed in obtaining its fulfilment? Is it likely that they would without any divine direction adopt a new way, or that they would adopt a way contrary to the Divine will? They would certainly follow the course which had been already followed. The reception of the Spirit by those who heard Peter at Pentecost, was not His original descent, which was an act necessarily immediate. It was a subsequent and consequent event. They would not wait for the descent of the Spirit, as at Pentecost. But they would expect a repetition of that which afterwards occurred. And how did they act. They prayed, no doubt; for what grace can come without prayer? But did they do no more? Did they wait for the descent of the Spirit, no one knows how or where? No. They laid their hands on the baptized believers, and thereupon these believers received the Holy Ghost. Thus the Pentecostal promise was fulfilled by the instrumentality of man's will to go and pray, and of man's act in the laying on of hands. But why should any one go? And why should apostles go? Could not the baptized themselves have prayed? Could not Philip have prayed with and for them? Could not Philip have laid his hands on them? The apostles went, because more than prayer was needed. Prayer by one standing in an ordinance was needed. And more than such prayer was needed. The laying on of hands was needed. And more than the laying of hands was needed. The laying on of *those* hands was needed, by which alone God had appointed to give

the Holy Ghost. Peter and John went down; and there they prayed that, while they should fulfil the ordinance by laying on their hands, the grace of God might accompany, and the gift of God might follow their voluntary act as his ministers. *Then* they laid their hands on them; and the disciples received the Holy Ghost—Acts viii. 17. And this is spoken of as tantamount to the Holy Ghost falling upon the baptized believers.

In like manner, when Paul came to Ephesus—Acts xix., he dealt with the Gentiles as Peter and John had done with the Jews and the Samaritans. By baptism he brought them into that position in which the promise of God through Peter applied to them. By the laying on of his hands with prayer he fulfilled that promise, as God's minister, as Christ's hand. The Holy Ghost fell upon them. They received the gift of the Holy Ghost—not by chance—not as divine favorites—not by arbitrary grace—but in the faithfulness of God to the voluntary act of an authorized man fulfilling a divine ordinance.

Hence we see then, that the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the baptized, since the day of Pentecost, so far from dispensing with or excluding the intervention of man, implies not only the laying on of man's hands, but the limitation thereof to the hands of apostles, as distinct from those who preach or baptize. At Pentecost the Holy Ghost came indeed on the apostles immediately from Christ, but not immediately from God. He was ministered by the risen man. The apostles received him immediately from Christ, because there was no minister between Christ and them. But thereupon they became the permanent and exclusive ministers of the Spirit to the church. By the one act, testimony was borne to the truth that the Holy Ghost is God and proceeds from God; by the other, to the truth that he is the Spirit of the man Christ Jesus, and imparted by Christ through man. By the one, to his being the Spirit of the Father and the Son; by the other, to his bestowal from the Father through the Son. Like as the church, although enjoying the same fellowship with the Father and the Son which apostles have, is yet admitted into it as into their fellowship and by their doctrine; so, although she has the same gift of the Holy Ghost as apostles have, yet she is admitted to partake of it as Christ's gift to them, and therefore through the laying on of their hands. And as the Holy Ghost has the whole church for his temple, and is himself undivided, he is rightly ministered solely by those who are set over the whole church as a unity. He who ministereth the Spirit to the saints, Gal. iii. 5, must be an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. To receive the Spirit by the hearing of faith, does not mean that the Spirit descends arbitrarily or immediately on those who believe the preaching of Christ; but implies that those who have believed the

gospel generally, and received baptism, do also believe the special truth that Jesus is the baptizer with the Holy Ghost, and that they do therefore, in faith of that fact, come to him as such, that they may receive that baptism with the Holy Ghost through the appointed ordinance of apostles' hands. In other words, the ministration of the Spirit—the Christian dispensation—pre-eminently—that which distinguishes the church from all previous and from all other present believers—that which is more glorious than the law—is not an arbitrary grace or immediate descent, but a ministry—a permanent ordinance and way of God, fulfilled, like those of the law, and like all others now, through the mediation of man. The act of God at Pentecost was not a conveyance then finished, but the opening of a continual stream—not the first of a series of fortuitous endowments, but the institution of a fixed dispensation—not a transitory wonder, to astonish men and leave them where they were, but the investment of man with certain new and permanent privileges peculiar to the Christian dispensation.

But there are two passages in the Acts of the Apostles which seem to conflict with this view. The one, where we are told that the Holy Ghost fell upon the centurion and his company, yet unbaptized, without any ministerial act, but merely during the preaching of Peter. The other, where, as is generally supposed, we read that the Holy Ghost was given to Paul while yet a mere Jew, through the hands of Ananias, a layman, at least no apostle—Acts x. 44; ix. 17.

As to the first, it must be remembered that the question is, not whether the Holy Ghost can fall on *any* man without the laying on of hands, but whether it is the will of God that he should do so on the baptized—on members of the church? The centurion and his house were unbaptized. They were afterwards baptized, on the ground, not merely that they were believers, but also that by an extraordinary grace of God they were already possessed of that which is the prerogative of the body of Christ. The dealings of God towards those without the church cannot be quoted to subvert the order of his dealings in the church. As the centurion and his house had not access to the ordinance for ministering the Spirit, they could not receive the Spirit through an ordinance. They must have either remained without the gift or received it in an extraordinary manner. It pleased God that they should receive it. Therefore it came as it did. Moreover, if we look at the circumstances of the gift, the difficulty disappears. This was the first visitation of the Gentiles by God—before the rejection of the Jews. It was an act hard enough to acknowledge after that rejection—doubly hard before it—the breaking down of the wall of partition in Him in whom there is neither Jew nor Gentile—the exhibition of that mystery, which had been hid from ages and from generations, that the Gen-

tiles should be fellow-heirs and of the same body—Eph. iii. 5, of that mystery of which Paul was the proper steward. It was an act for which Peter himself, in his ignorance, needed to be prepared by an express vision. In order then to show, not only that the Gentiles were to share in the privileges of the Jews, but that they were to do so on an independent footing and not as subsidiary to the Jews, God repeated, as far as it could be repeated, the act done at Pentecost, and gave to the Gentiles the Holy Ghost, not through the Jews, but direct. This, however, did not prove that *baptized* Gentiles should receive the Spirit without apostles. It might as well be used to prove that Gentiles need not be baptized, in order to receive the Spirit, and thus to contradict the promise through Peter. It merely proved that they were to receive the Spirit from Christ, and not from the Jewish polity.

The second passage is the precise counterpart of the first. Paul was unbaptized. He was not a member of Christ. He could not receive the Spirit through apostles, who were sent to give the Spirit to the church alone. If he was to receive the Spirit, he behoved to do so in another and extraordinary manner; for his position was abnormal. It pleased God, that, like the centurion, Paul should so receive the gift, and be subsequently baptized—and so it was. Moreover, even granting that he received the Holy Ghost through the hands of Ananias, we can see reasons for his receiving the gift through the hands of a man which did not apply to the case of Cornelius. Paul, though the predestined apostle to the Gentiles, was himself a Jew. God showed otherwise that his *apostleship* was not derived from the Jews. But there was no necessary call to assert his independent reception of the Spirit as a man. There was, therefore, no bar to his receiving the gift through a man; although, being not in the church, he could not receive it through an apostle. A man may have been used extraordinarily as the instrument to establish and illustrate the order of God in blessing man by man. Indeed, had the impossible case occurred that Paul had received the Spirit through the other apostles, it would have been difficult to vindicate his apostleship from subordination to that of the 12, in the then condition of their minds. But the text does not really oblige, if it even allows us, to conclude that Paul received the Holy Ghost through the hands of Ananias. The presumption is always against the employment of a man to do that to which he has not been sent. Ananias was sent expressly to restore the sight of Paul by the laying on of hands. But he had no express commission to bestow on him the gift of the Holy Ghost through the same means. Paul was baptized after receiving his sight; and the probability is that the Holy Ghost fell on him after his baptism.

These two instances, therefore, rather confirm than overthrow our

statement as to the right way of God. And the same may be said of those cases in which, in all ages and parts of the church, the gifts of the Holy Ghost have, ever since the disappearance of apostles, manifested themselves. As Christ, though hindered in doing his Father's will among us, is still on high, and does it as far as our perverseness and ignorance will allow; as the Holy Ghost, though grieved and quenched, is still in the church, and manifests himself as far as he can; as the ministries of Christ, though crippled and perverted, are still the basis and essence of all divine ministry which survives among us; so do the gifts of the Holy Ghost, although not in their proper channel, still appear to our comfort. God does not wholly withdraw himself from a condition of things which he disapproves. He never says, like rash and reckless man, "Either the perfect thing or nothing." He follows his children, in their error and ignorance, with his blessing, in so far as consists with his wisdom. He still regards us as the temple of the Holy Ghost; and without approving of the usurpation of apostleship by bishops, or of the rejection of apostleship *in toto*, he has acknowledged the Episcopal hand stretched out for want of a better; and has, through the laying on of bishops' hands, answered the faith of his children in their Pentecostal standing, even while they were rejecting his Pentecostal ministry. He shows us that while he requires us to seek him in his ordinances under the penalty of grievous loss, he is above, and independent of them all. We must ever thankfully acknowledge and accept the abnormal operation of his sovereign grace. But we dare not use that operation as an argument against his legitimate mode of working, by demanding that the exception shall be the rule. It is hardly necessary to add, that apostles cannot, from the nature of the case, receive the Spirit through one another or through any other ordinance. The equal cannot be blessed of the equal, or the greater of the less. Those who minister from Christ to the church cannot be mediately blessed. The Pentecostal act is continued to the present day.

4. Apostles are Christ's ministers for the constitution of all other ministers in the church. Every minister of Christ stands, as every member does, in a direct relation to him. He is not the minister of apostles, but the minister of the Lord. He ministers not from apostles, but from the Lord. The question, however, is—not whether his ministrations are immediate, but whether his constitution as a minister is so. And the answer is clear in the negative. No man can call himself to office. He must be called by the Holy Ghost; either, as a priest, through prophecy or its temporary equivalents; or, as a deacon, by the choice of the flock. In like manner, none can appoint himself to office; he must be appointed by another in the stead of Christ;—and that other

must be over him in the Lord: the less is blessed of the greater. There is a parity in ministration, but a gradation in place and office. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors, minister alike from the Lord and to the whole church. But apostles alone are over the whole. They are the sole visible authority over all in Christ. They dare not constitute whom they please. They must select from those called of the Holy Ghost. They dare not constitute how they please. They must be helped by their counsellors. But they alone can constitute and ordain. As the call is the work of the Holy Ghost through the prophet, or the flock; so is ordination the work of Christ the Lord, through apostles. They may in certain special cases delegate their ordination to others—Tit. i. 5; but the power is theirs alone, and returns to them when the delegation expires. And that power is exercised, not in the mere giving of mission—nor in the mere blessing of those sent—nor in the mere conferring of grace on those called; but also in the constitution of the minister—in the creation of the ministry. The Holy Ghost indicates whom they shall create; but Christ creates in the spiritual world through them. The Holy Ghost, given by their hands, fills those created with the requisite grace—but Christ fashions through them the vessel which is thus filled. So it was in the beginning with the deacons—with the elders—with the angels. So also with Timothy, who was probably called through Silas—Acts vi. 6; xiv. 23; Rev. iii. 3; 1 Tim. iv. 14; 2 Tim. i. 6. And we know from history that John followed this course in Asia, ordaining those whom the Holy Ghost had called or indicated.

5. Apostles are the sole rulers over the whole church in all things, whether pertaining to doctrine, discipline, or life. In other words they represent Christ, not only as the baptizer of the whole church with one Spirit, but also as the ruler of the whole church according to one law. They not only minister to the whole that Spirit who inclines their hearts as one to keep God's law, but they have the sole prerogative of writing one code of laws in the heart of one body—by which the whole, having one will, may learn from Christ's authority what to believe and what to do. The gift of the Spirit and that of the law are co-extensive, and come by one ordinance. For as Moses was faithful in all his house, so is Christ in his. He supplies us not only with God's presence, but with his government; and he does both through men. But what men? If the body is one, then assuredly not by men set only each over his own part; but by men set conjointly over the whole. Not by men who usurp or are voted, whether tacitly or expressly, into universal rule, but by men whose commission is originally divine and universal—both in fact and in the purpose of God. And who are these—who can these be—but apostles? They alone can minister the one

Spirit. They alone can publish and maintain the common faith, however helped to the knowledge and diffusion of the same by the counsel and ministry of the body, and however incapable of doing it without such aid. They alone can institute that one worship which is rendered to God by the whole through one head. They alone can furnish the church with one rule of life, which each in his place has to apply. They alone can put into the mouth of every minister and member one testimony. It is indeed a spiritual rule—a rule not over ignorant slaves—but over the enlightened and the willing. Its sanctions, too, are all spiritual. Yet both the rule and the sanctions are real and cogent. The rule is no *sham*—the sanctions no empty promises or threats. He that yields to it, yields to Christ; he that resists it, resists Christ. It varies in its application, and is carried out by the help of many. But its essence is one, and it is vested in one ordinance. It is not a concord of many powers—but the embrace of one. It proceeds from One who is essentially over all, entitled to demand the joint obedience of all; and therefore it makes all one. It alone can fulfil the mystery of God. It alone can lead in the way of life. It alone can do those works which shall stand the fire, throughout the whole church, as the one body under one living unchangeable head. Apostles guide all ministries—direct the right use of all gifts—preside in all councils. Of their ministry, Peter thus speaks: “Be mindful of the commandment of the apostles, *being that* of the Lord and Saviour”—2 Pet. iii. 2. Of it Paul speaks: “Let him acknowledge that the things which I write unto you are the commandments of Christ”—1 Cor. xiv. 37. Of it the Lord speaks: “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth—*therefore* make disciples of all nations—baptize them, and *teach* them all that I have commanded you—and behold *I am with you always, even to the end of the world*”—Matth. xxviii. 18.

But what is implied under this universal rule?

*First*, that apostles have a peculiar fellowship with Christ in his counsels as ruler, and responsibility to fulfil his rule, with the counsel and help of their fellow-labourers in the universal church. Our Lord, while on earth, made known to them all things which he had heard from his Father—John xv. 15. Much he then revealed to them which he kept hid, not only from the world and the Jews, but from all other disciples. After his resurrection he taught his apostles alone the things of the kingdom—he instructed them to teach others what he had commanded them. He promised to be with them to the end of the world. And Paul says, Let a man so account of us as stewards of the mysteries of God—1 Cor. iv. 1. They alone are admitted to share in the multiform unity of Christ’s counsels. To them is intrusted the judgment and application of all revelations made to others, that the

whole may stand in one analogy of faith. They are bound to tell all ministers what to minister, and how, and to fix all their borders. And as the angel of each church is bound to carry out among all under him the traditions of apostles—1 Cor. xi. 2,—so are they bound to see that the commandments of the Lord are delivered to and obeyed by all the angels of the churches in the unity of one government.

*Second.* Apostles govern the use of all gifts of the Spirit. The gift does not rule the man, but is a gift to him. To use that gift aright, he must be a holy man, and know the counsel and order of the Lord. Apostles have to see to it, not only that men are holy, but that they use their gifts in unity and wisdom—as responsible persons, not mere machines. And in every church apostles do this by angels—the high priests on whose garment hang both the bells and the pomegranates, the ministries and the gifts.

*Third.* Apostles lead the church into one way of worship. God accepts the devotion of every heart. But as the offerers must be sanctified by the Holy Ghost, so must their offering be ordered by Christ, as that of one body, on one basis, in one way. To the apostles the Lord said, After this manner pray ye. The church continued in the fellowship of apostles' prayers as well as of their spiritual endowment and doctrine. The apostles directed the order of her prayers—1 Tim. 2,—and Paul promised to set all things in order when he should come—1 Cor. xi. 34; xiv. 40. The prayers of the church are offered in many places and circumstances; but they distinguish themselves from all private prayer in this, that they are the prayers of one body, of which the parts are all members one of another: and no prayers can rightly be those of the whole body but those which it receives from them who are at the foundation of the church and preside over the whole. As the basis of all approach to God is the accepted sacrifice of Christ, so is the basis of all public worship the memorial of that sacrifice in the Holy Eucharist. To the apostles alone did the Lord say, Do this in remembrance of me. In the fellowship of their breaking of bread did the church continue. Paul gave to the church in this matter that which he had received of the Lord. And as the basis—so the superstructure. If we cannot force our own way to God, as little can we force upon him the offering or the manner thereof which our own selfwill or fancy dictates. Our boldness of access into the holiest does not give us license to do there what we list in our piety. On the contrary, there do we learn what the offerings and order are which God appoints, and, because by him appointed, accepts. He whom we approach must tell us how. He who gives us the will to serve him must tell us how. And by apostles, as the stewards of his mysteries, does he not only reveal his present will but realize the shadows of the tabernacle and the law,



bringing forth the very image of that pattern which Moses saw in the mount, and after which alone he wrought in making the shadow.

*Fourth.* Apostles are the sole presidents in general councils. They are not separate from the church. They act with the help of counsel and light in every form. But they are the agents. They are not the mouth-piece of an assembly. That assembly is only their help in judging how to act. They preside in councils, not as voted into the chair, but as rulers who ask for help. And as they preside in the councils of the universal church, so do the angels in those of the particular.—Acts xv.

*Fifth.* Apostles furnish the church for her testimony to the world. This consists of three parts—the life of her members—the word of her messengers—and the signs following. As to the first: The commission of the apostles to teach the disciples all which they had heard from Jesus, was not confined to doctrine and mysteries, but extended itself to conduct also. Jesus not only left us an example that we should walk in his steps, but delivered the sermon on the mount as the great rule of our conduct. So also Paul wrote: Be ye followers of me as I am of Christ—1 Cor. xi. 1. Again: Ye have received from us how ye ought to walk—1 Th. iv. 1. And again: As ye have us for examples—Phil. vi. 17. And yet again: Ye became followers of us and of the Lord—1 Th. i. 6. Without the example of apostles, each section of the church can do no better than frame a moral code for itself from texts of Scripture, or mould its conduct in any one-sided or morbid form presented by that of influential individuals; and its conduct will never be the true counterpart of its testimony. As to the second:—If the wicked lives of Christians have neutralized the testimony of the church, their divisions have no less confounded it; every sort of gospel is preached; rival sects counterwork each other among the heathen; and those to whom the gospel is brought are either directed to no ark of safety whatever, and learn nothing of God's presence in his church, or are torn in pieces by the pretensions of rival churches. Instead of being a steady beacon of hope, and the salt of the earth, the church is the minister of perplexity and the source of corruption. The testimony of the church as a holy unity to the world can never be given without apostles. The Lord, in his great intercessory prayer, prayed, first for them, and next for all who should believe through them, that, during the period when he should be with the Father, *i. e.* in the present dispensation, they might be one, as he and the Father were one. This he sought, as the appointed means of bringing the world to believe that the Father had sent him. And if his prayer cannot go unanswered, this shall yet be seen during the present dispensation. But if the gospel cannot be rightly preached and believed without this unity, this unity

can never come save through apostles. It cannot be the junction of things separate. It must be the developement of an existing unity in Christ, and the endowment of the church as a corporate body. Thus, in like manner, although the sin of the church has separated the signs following from the preaching of the word—although generally God no longer thus bears witness to his word—and it has sunk to be a mere proposition proved by the reason and submitted to the judgment of man, yet the Scriptures sanction no such separation. On the contrary, if there is now no longer any present promise of the signs following, there is, by parity of reason, now no longer any present commission to preach. But how can the church preach with signs following, if she herself be destitute of the Holy Ghost? How can the Spirit manifest his power without, if he do not manifest himself within? If his gifts to the church must come through the hands of apostles, must not his wonders among the heathen flow from the same source? The apostles with great power bore witness to the resurrection of Jesus—God witnessed with them by signs and wonders. But this was the very testimony concerning which Jesus said, “Tarry till ye be endowed with power from on high, and ye shall be witnesses unto me.” A church with apostles *may* fail to fulfil her calling—for all men may fail: but a church without apostles *must*. It can neither perfect holiness, nor with one heart and mouth preach the gospel, nor show those mighty deeds by which the word is proved to be that of God indeed.

6. *Lastly.* Apostles are called to present the church as a chaste spouse to the Lord. The bride is one, holy, and adorned. As the commission to preach, to baptize, to teach, to endow with the Holy Ghost, and to supply with holy ordinances, is the commission to seek the bride—so is the nourishing, cleansing, furnishing, and perfecting of the church, the bringing of the bride thus found unto the Bridegroom. Both commissions apostles have received, as Eliezer did from Abraham of old. One they have executed—the other they have yet to fulfil. And as the faithful servant of Abraham neither tarried by the way nor devolved his errand upon another, so should apostles be zealous and finish their work themselves. We read that Christ loved the church and gave himself for her, that he might sanctify her, washing her with water through the word, and present her unto himself, glorious—the church (*i. e.* diverse from every previous body called out by God) which has neither spot nor wrinkle nor any such thing, but holy and without blemish—Eph. v. 25. This indeed he alone can do. But we nowhere read that he is to do it without instrumentality. On the contrary, we read that apostles are his instruments for that very end. Paul writes that he had espoused the church unto one husband, to be presented unto him as a chaste virgin—2 Cor. xi. 2. He with his

companions labored to present every man perfect in Christ—Col. i. 28. He travailed again in birth that Christ might be formed in his children—Gal. iv. 19. And apostles first—then all other ministers as their fellow-laborers—were given, until the whole church should reach the perfect man, the stature of that fulness of Christ which the church is called to be—Eph. iv. 13.

## II.—PERMANENCY.

II. Such is the nature of the apostolic office. Was this office, then, intended to be permanent? The answer is clear in the affirmative: and that for the following among many reasons.

1. The dispensations of God to man may change. We know that they have done so. Each one since the beginning has been a fresh step in the developement of his purpose, and towards its complete developement in the Christian church—the last and fullest dispensation—that in which man occupies the highest place to which he is destined, and in which he shall be brought to perfection—that dispensation which began with the perfecting of Christ at his ascension, and shall be fulfilled by the perfecting of his members at his return. But during the course of each dispensation the way of God is unchangeable. Especially, then, during the last—in which man is seen, not preparing for promotion, but occupying in Christ his eternal place. God is now manifest in the flesh: man is now a partaker of the divine nature. The unchangeable Christ is the revelation of the unchangeable God. As the Father was, and is, and is to come, so is now the Son, invested with the Father's glory in flesh. And, though we may deny him, he cannot deny himself. He can as little deny his constitution as his attributes. He is one as God is one. The church is his body—though not corporeally, yet as really as if corporeally. The fashion of this his body, and the functions of its parts, are the impression of his character and the instrument of his operation who filleth all in all. Therefore they are in God's purpose as unchangeable as himself—as his character and operation. The ignorance, uncleanness, and rebellion of man may obscure, impede or resist the developement of the body of Christ; but the divine scheme of the church cannot be changed. If we have not passed out of the Pentecostal dispensation into another, we ought to be, to possess, and to do, all that God made us, gave to us, and enjoined on us at the first. And supposing even that we had, the change must have been an advance, not a retrogression. But is it so? It is surely no progress, to have exchanged the ways of God for those of man, or, to say the best, to have exchanged divine ordinances, expressly named in Scripture, for others at best merely providential, on which Scripture is wholly silent.

2. God has nowhere in Scripture indicated his intention to retract any of his ordinances as temporary. Many words of Scripture point to the havoc which man should work in the house of God. Others even indicate the gracious provision which God in his wonderful condescension would make, not for supplanting a better order of things by a worse, but for shielding us from the full penalty of our perverseness, until the better order should come,—in like manner as Saul was made a channel of blessing to those who had sinned in desiring a king, and Babylon a place of blessing to those who were led captive into it. And those very Scriptures which promise the return of God to his people, clearly imply that he should have left them for a time. But there is not one which declares that any ordinance of God was intended to cease during the Christian dispensation, or that our destitute condition is the proper exponent of his purpose. Such an idea is a pure invention of man, has its origin in his desire to justify himself, and is in fact an accusation of God. Men find the church at variance with God's description, departed from his constitution; and instead of measuring their sin thereby, and returning to him with weeping, they fabricate and palm upon him a theory of the church which shall suit and justify the facts. The 12 had a far greater show of reason for resisting the accession of Paul than we have for asserting that apostleship should have ceased with John. The Lord knew nothing of this novel theory when he said, Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world—not with dead apostles, or the children of apostles, but with living apostles teaching the church. The commendation of the church at Ephesus for detecting false apostles (probably men who could say that they had seen the Lord, and who professed far more disinterested love than the true ones—2 Cor. xi. 13), would have been a most undeserved one, if the primitive church had been as certain as we that Paul and John should be the last. The simple answer would have been, "We know you are deceivers, because there are to be no more apostles, and John alone survives. We know that this coin is a forgery, because there is and can be no such true coin." On the contrary, the gifts and calling of God are without repentance—Rom. xi. 29. If God can repent of having given apostles, why may he not also repent of having called us in one body to his kingdom? If apostles are set in the body, and set first, then wherever the body is seen, there should apostles be seen—1 Cor. xii. 28. If dead apostles suffice, why not dead preachers and pastors too? Nay; why not dead saints? If apostles themselves are now unnecessary, their writings are much more so; for their writings were but a substitute for their presence; and apostles are not with us by their writings as Jesus is with us by the Holy Ghost. Lastly, if apostles were God's greatest blessing to the church, God is

partial in granting to one generation of the church that which he purposely denies to all the rest—in feeding the former with the feast—and in leaving the latter to gather the crumbs.

3. The work assigned to apostles has always been and now is, as necessary as at the beginning. The only part of the work which can with any propriety be alleged as no longer necessary is, the gathering of the church out of the world. But this is the very part which those who will have no apostles insist on as most necessary now. With them the preaching to the heathen, a work which, though of constant obligation, the present condition of the church makes false and fruitless—is at present our prime duty; and the perfecting of the church herself a mere secondary object. If they will hear of apostles at all, they would send them to the heathen, and leave the bride to prepare herself as she best can. We admit, nay we assert, that apostles have not now to gather the church. But we do not admit that on that account their work has changed; for the gathering and the perfecting are parts of one work, though done at different times. We see in the beginning, that, on the appointment of deacons at Jerusalem, on the ordination of ministers for each particular flock, and on the sending out of others as evangelists, the apostles were gradually enabled to divest themselves of the accidents of their office, in order the better to devote themselves to its essence, according as the progress of God's work should call it forth. The gathering of the church out of the world, and the appointment of other ministries, was not the signal for the disappearance of apostles, but the signal for the commencement of their proper work,—to build up and arrange the body—to prepare the bride—to sanctify the church—to make her Christ's fulness—to exhibit, in all the baptized, not merely in the preachers, those signs which follow faith—to finish the mystery of God. All this lies yet before apostles; and unless we are prepared to substitute the name of the church for the name of Christ—the covetousness of rival sects for the testimony of one holy body—systems of truth for its power—the authority of man for that of God—and his schemes and craft for God's counsels and mighty works—we need apostles as much as ever.

When has the church ceased to need the speaking of Jesus from heaven—the testimony that he is on the right hand of power? When has she ceased to need the living waters—not waters which once were in the fountain and are now cut off from it—but waters ever flowing from it? Is Christ no longer to fill all in all? Is a forsaken temple now his glory? Are the mysteries of God now antiquated and exhausted? Are they no longer mysteries? Is each man the steward of them for himself; or are they the booty of a democracy? Is it enough that God's law was written in the hearts of our forefathers?

Have we now got it all snug on paper? Are they not dead also? Is there a separate law for every province—a separate spirit for every section—a separate order of worship for every congregation of the church? Can the church now rule herself? Shall she be a congress of independent governments? Shall kings, councils, majorities, or religious idols, rule her? When came the auspicious moment at which the church could say, Hitherto I have drawn from Christ—now from myself? Hitherto his hand has built me—I shall now build myself? Shall she be left to construct her faith and practice from the fragments of distorted tradition, or to believe and do what she lists? Is it left to every pious club to constitute itself the salt of the earth—and send out its messengers? May every arrogant individual stir up his zeal, while the Lord of Hosts slumbers, to take on his puny shoulders the burden of the world, and to catch what he can in his private net? May Christian wickedness now deter the heathen with impunity? May we invite them into a forsaken temple, or name them with the rival names of men? Must the church now yield to the routine of misery, and bow to the eternal necessity of death? May she now cease to wait for the Son of Man from heaven? May she present herself to him without any to bring her? May she appear before him disintegrated, impure, and unadorned? May she consent to stand among a host of claimants to his hand and throne? Quite otherwise speak the Scriptures, when they say, that apostles were given for the perfecting of the saints—for the work of the ministry—for the edifying of the body of Christ.

Let us also look at the negative side of the picture. Apostles were given that we might be no longer children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine. Is this work of preservation no longer needed? Is the church now capable of strong meat? Are not orthodoxy and the pap of babes identical in her eyes? Is not her only idea of strong meat that of scientific arrangement and critical research? Does she ever desire such meat as the knowledge of those things which Christ, her Apostle and High Priest, now transacts in the Jerusalem which is above? Does she understand what it is to be of the perfect in Christ, to whom the strong meat belongs? Are not God's children tossed on the waves of the world—forgetful of the ship and its only steersman? Do they not share the fate as well as the character of the heathen? Are they not carried away by every spiritual novelty—uncertain in every article of faith—taking refuge in ignorance instead of knowledge—wandering in twilight—the prey of every deceiver—in danger of receiving Antichrist for Christ? And why? Because the Holy Ghost, the Comforter in the stead of Jesus, is quenched: because the guides whom Jesus sends are lost. Because there are

none who can say with authority to the whole body, "This is the way." And this applies with peculiar force to the present time of the end, in which we see not only error permitted of God, but strong delusion *sent by him* in judgment; that those who would not believe the truth may believe the lie. Delusion sent by God can be exposed by none but men sent by him. The apostasy pervades the whole body; and none but apostles sent to the whole can pluck men out of the fire, and in the name of the Lion of the tribe of Judah divide the prey with the mighty.

4. The work of apostles is not merely necessary still—but was expressly appointed to continue till a certain end should be attained. They were given, to work, till we all come unto the unity of the faith and of the recognition of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. Their work does not cease till we have not only one object of faith, but one faith in regard to that object—until we not only all recognise the Son of God, but all recognise him in one way, and recognise him in all his offices—until Christ the Second Adam, out of whom the church is taken, for whom she is prepared, and of whom she is the fulness, shall really have made her partaker of his own perfection—until we shall all have reached the full measure of that spiritual stature which belongs to those who are really his fulness, and which constitutes the head and body into one complete Christ—complete in holiness, number, and endowment. Is this end attained? If not, the work of apostles still continues. Let us learn from earthly things. The building of an edifice for an end known to the builder may be interrupted. The workmen may be dismissed. The materials may be scattered. The tokens of ruin may abound. The wild beasts may lodge in the chambers. The plan be violated. The use may be perverted. But there is the edifice still—the plan—the workmen—the materials—above all, the builder himself. The cessation of the work is not the attainment of the end. And if the end is to be attained, the work must be revived by the same builder with the same workmen and materials. Apostles must subsist till the end, or return before it.

But we must remember that apostles were given to finish the work of God, not to help men with man's make-shifts while God's work is at a stand. They were not given to continue with the church throughout 1800 years, and help her to endure the curse which their own absence itself has entailed upon her. Their continuance with the church throughout such a life as she has dragged out, is inconceivable. It would have been a contradiction in terms. Although apostles, like other men, may be unfaithful to their calling; yet standing still is at variance with the essence of their office and the fact of their presence.

Their work is a continual travail in birth. The church has undergone many a change and experienced much since they disappeared ; but she has not progressed a step. And as progress is impossible without them, so does their presence assure us that God will lead us unto perfection.

5. The abiding symbols of the tabernacle, such as the 4 pillars, the 6 boards, and the commission of Moses not only to build and order the tabernacle, but to direct its worship, &c. till the Jews should reach the land of promise, typically instruct us as to the intended duration of the apostolic office.

### III. CONSTITUTION.

III. The constitution of the apostolic office is to be regarded in two lights. The first question is—What is not necessary to apostleship? The second—What is necessary to it? We now address ourselves to the first.

1. It was not necessary to apostleship that one should have been personally chosen by the Lord, as the 12 were in the days of his flesh. Matthias and Barnabas never were. Of Matthias we know that he was an apostle. And, although his case is sufficient to prove the exception, and although the fact of the apostleship of Barnabas affects as little the subsequent argument as it does this, yet there are strong grounds for believing that Barnabas also was an apostle, standing in a relation to Paul in some respects similar to that of Benjamin to Judah. Barnabas has indeed been reckoned with the 70, all of whom the oriental church styles apostles, partly on the ground of their work, and partly on that of their having been "*sent out*" after, but in like manner as, the 12, although the Lord called the 12 *alone* APOSTLES. But, on the other hand, in Acts xiv. 12-14, Barnabas is expressly called an apostle and ranked even prior to Paul. Lest we should regard them both on that occasion as merely apostles from the churches, and not as apostles of the Lord, we find in Acts xiv. 23, that they both performed acts of ordination to which apostles alone were competent. And when Paul and Barnabas quarrelled, we find Barnabas pursuing the same independent course as Paul. Moreover, in 1 Cor. ix. 6, where Paul treats expressly of the office, credentials, and privileges of an apostle, he couples Barnabas with himself. And lastly, when the apostles at Jerusalem recognized not only the apostleship of Paul, as one with their's, but his mission to the Gentiles, as divine, they recognized Barnabas, who had before introduced Paul to the apostles, as having the same common office and distinct mission which Paul had. Yet they gave no such recognition to Titus, although he was also a companion of Paul—Gal. ii. 1, 2, 7-9; Acts ix. 26: and although he afterwards, like Timothy, became an apostolic delegate,



invested with temporary and limited commission to do certain apostolic works in the name and during the lifetime of Paul.—1 Tim. i. 3; iii. 14; v. 22. 1 Tim. i. 14; ii. 2; iv. 2, 5, 9. Titus i. 5; ii. 15; iii. 12. Whether Epaphroditus, Andronicus, and Junius, were all apostles we need not here enquire. It would seem that Epaphroditus was merely an apostle of the churches, from the contrast of the Greek pronouns in Phil. ii. 25. As to the others, although there is more for it, yet the words may merely mean that they were distinguished members of the apostolic company.—Rom. xvi. 7.

2. It was not necessary for an apostle to have companied with the Lord from the beginning, although that was made a requisite at the choice of Matthias. Paul never did so. And, if Barnabas did, it was not as a chosen apostle.

3. It was not necessary to have seen the Lord after his resurrection and before his ascension—Acts x. 41; nor to have been commissioned by him, before the latter, to bear witness of the former; nor to have received the 40 days' instruction from him. Paul never saw him so, nor received such a commission or such instruction—1 Cor. xv. 8. If Barnabas and Matthias did, they did it not as apostles; but there is no proof that they did it at all. The false apostles—2 Cor. xi. 13, had probably seen the Lord as men, and made such a use of the fact in their pretensions, that Paul not only determined to rival them in their pretended disinterestedness, but asserted that he had seen the Lord as well as they. Of the vision of the ascended Lord, which Paul alone out of all the apostles had, and of its true import, we shall afterwards speak; and we shall afterwards give the true exposition of 1 Cor. ix. 1. But this is clear, that when Paul says, Have I not seen the Lord? he not only makes no pretension to have seen him when the 12 did, but does not adduce that event as that which made him an apostle. It was merely the manner of or preparation for his call; and his mere assertion, that he had seen the Lord, could not and ought not to have proved his apostleship to any.

4. It was not necessary to have been with the 120 at Pentecost, or to have received the Holy Ghost at his first descent. Paul was not there.

5. It was not necessary to have been personally constituted and sent by the Lord at all—*i. e.* to be able to say, I as an apostle have seen the Lord, or I have been personally called by the Lord to be an apostle, and personally sent as such by him. We need not here enquire as to the nature and effect of Paul's vision, either on the way, or subsequently in the temple. Neither Matthias nor Barnabas fulfilled any such condition. They may have been among the witnesses chosen of God, amounting in one instance to 500, who saw Christ after his

resurrection—Acts x. 41; 1 Cor. xv. 6. But if they saw him, he did not then and there make them apostles.

The next question is, What is necessary to apostleship?

1. It is necessary that one should be an apostle, not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised him from the dead. That is to say, his commission must be from God, not from man. His authority must flow, neither from the churches, nor from any other ministry, nor from another apostle. He may be separated to his office by the church, and thus lawfully liberated from obedience to inferior ordinances, that he may learn to rule. But that gives him no right to rule. His right must come from the Lord. Moreover he must not be an apostle through men. A divine ministry is not always immediate; and a mediate ministry is not on that account merely human. But in all cases save that of apostleship, the ministry, although equally divine with that of the apostle, is constituted through the instrumentality of another. The less is blessed of the greater. Here no such instrumentality is employed. The very nature of the case excludes it. The Father is the fountain of the apostolic office, because he became the fountain of Christ's apostleship, when he raised him from the dead. And through none save Jesus Christ the Apostle of the Father is the apostolic office constituted in the church. The apostolic is the greater office, which constitutes and blesses all other offices, as the lesser. It is constituted and blessed by none in the church, not even by apostles—by none but the Father through Jesus Christ. The commission of apostles is immediate. It comes, as the Holy Ghost comes, from the Father by the Son.

2. Nevertheless, it is necessary to be chosen of God, before being constituted an apostle; and that choice must not be secret or known only to him who is called. It must be declared in a manner palpable to the senses and apprehensible by the intellect of the church. The essential thing is that the choice be that of God. That it shall be immediate in its form or declaration is not necessary. The choice of God is his gracious will to use a man in a certain way. How that will shall be expressed, to that person or to others, circumstances must determine. The mode in which God openly signifies his will varies with his dispensations, that is with the relations in which men by his appointment stand to him at the time. Before the incarnation, God showed his will by a voice from heaven—or by the prophets in whom the Holy Ghost, although not yet given, spoke as the spirit of Christ—or by his disposal of the lot to those who sought him thereby. After the incarnation and before the resurrection, God showed his will by the lips of Jesus Christ, who said, I speak that which I have heard from my Father—John xiv. 24; xv. 15. While Jesus was on earth, God never spoke

from heaven, save to attest his Son as the person by whom he would speak. When Jesus had ascended, God did not again speak audibly from heaven as before;—nor did Jesus speak in person in the church. And why? The incarnation had taken place: the Holy Ghost was to come. Jesus had promised, that, when he should go to the Father, he would send from the Father, and the Father would send in his name, the Holy Ghost, as another Comforter in his stead. Jesus, risen from the dead, the prophet like unto Moses, was appointed to speak from heaven. That he was to do by the Holy Ghost, who should not speak of himself, but only that which he should hear—Acts iii. 22; Hebr. xii. 25; John xii. 16; xvi. 13-15. And what was the way of God, after Christ's ascension, and before the coming of the Holy Ghost? The Son, as the revealer of the Father, was incarnate; but he had gone to heaven. The Holy Ghost was not yet given. Therefore during that interval the lot was the way in which God expressed his will. But with the day of Pentecost that method ceased. Then the Holy Ghost came. He was not only omniscient as God, but was given as the Spirit of the Man Christ Jesus. He has ever since been as a divine person on earth, commissioned to speak as he hears from Christ. Whoever, therefore, would know the choice of God, should expect to hear it through the Holy Ghost on earth. And the Holy Ghost speaks by prophets, not incidentally, as in the former dispensation, but as through God's standing ordinance to that end. The Spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus—Rev. xix. 10.

If then we inquire concerning the way in which God's choice of apostles is made known, in other words, concerning their call to office, we find, that a *personal* call by the Lord, so far from being the only legitimate one, is only one of many modes, and was a mode in itself temporary, intended to give place to another more applicable to our present circumstances. The departure of Christ did not close the door against the call of apostles, but opened the door for another and a permanent mode of call, similar to that of any other minister, and in strict analogy with the essence of the Christian dispensation. While the Lord was on earth, he called apostles by his own lips. After his ascension, by lot. After the day of Pentecost, by the word of prophecy. This takes for granted that the Spirit is present in the church. But if it be asked, How know we that it is the word of the Holy Ghost, and not that of man or devil, by which the call comes; the answer is: "My sheep hear my voice. The voice of a stranger will they not follow." Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God—1 John iv. 1. And he, to whom God entrusts his sheep, is sure of God's help, to try the spirits who speak in the midst of them.

It may be objected, however, that, after the day of Pentecost, Paul was called, not by prophecy, but by the Lord in person. To this our first answer is, that the time and mode of Paul's call are not so easily fixed. There is no proof that either of the visions of the Lord which he had constituted his call—Acts ix. 2; xxii. 18. On the contrary, the first was primarily the mode of his conversion, whatever indication of his future work may have accompanied it. The second was the expression of his mission, when already an apostle. And if we must point to any event as his call, it should rather be that which took place at Antioch, where, in the midst of the church, the Holy Ghost expressly spake, saying that he had called Paul and Barnabas; although the work on which they went was not purely apostolic, and apostolic functions were only gradually developed in the course of the same. In the next place, the peculiar dealing with Paul—1 Cor. xv. 8, in the visions of the Lord granted to him, may be explained like that with Cornelius. Paul was not then in the church. Granting that it was the will of the Lord to call him before he came into the church, he would not be then called by prophecy. But it does not follow from this, that he was not called of the Holy Ghost, or that he was called by the Lord in person. A sign was given that his apostleship was not to be derived from that of the 12. Of them he says, that, although they were apostles before him—Gal. i. 17, yet he was not subject to them, and they added nothing to him—Gal. ii. 5, 6; for he did not come short of the chiefest among them—2 Cor. xi. 5; xii. 11—even of those who seemed to be pillars—Gal. ii. 9. They were called as Jewish believers, he as a Jewish persecutor, in whom Christ showed, as Paul himself styles it—1 Tim. i. 16—the full extent of his long suffering. To show this, Paul required to be their equal. In the last place, we nowhere read that Barnabas (supposing him to have been an apostle) received either a personal call of any kind from the Lord or a call by vision, to the apostleship. But we do read that these two men, associated in apostolic works, were also associated in their call at Antioch by the voice of prophecy.

3. It is also necessary that an apostle shall be in the communion of and educated in the church. If he is not, he is not in the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, and the spirit which he ministers is not the Holy Ghost. Although the 12, called by the Lord in person, did not need to be also called by prophecy, and although, as being themselves the rudiments of the church, they would not be so called, yet, when they were constituted apostles at Pentecost, they were found bound up in the communion of the disciples, praying with one accord in one place. None are constituted apostles who are not standing in the body; and none can minister the Spirit who do not partake of the same; for the church is

the temple of the Holy Ghost. And although apostles receive the Spirit, like their office, through no ordinance, they must share in the common gift to the church. In like manner must apostles be trained in the church. The 12 were trained by the Lord for 3½ years. And he continues, by the ordinances of the church, that education which he began while on earth. Apostles must have first obeyed, that they may learn to rule. They must have first been taught, if they would teach. Every claim to apostolic authority made by one standing apart from and not nursed in, the church, as in his mother's bosom, is to be rejected. But this nursing church is the whole company of the baptized, not any one religious body, Romish, Greek, or Protestant.

Nor does the case of Paul here form any exception. He received the Holy Ghost, and was baptized, before he fulfilled any office in the church. He did, indeed, receive his gospel by revelation—Gal. i. 11, 16, for a testimony that the Gentile apostleship was not derived from the Jewish. Yet when that end had been served, not only was he attested by Barnabas to the apostles at Jerusalem—Acts, xi. 26, but he afterwards went up thither by revelation—Gal. ii. 2, for the express purpose of having his gospel proved, lest he should have run in vain. From that time, not only were the two gospels acknowledged as one faith, and those who preached them as in one communion, but James, Cephas, and John, pillars among the apostles to the circumcision, at the very time when Paul says that he was neither subject to them nor required anything of them—Gal. ii. 5, 9, nevertheless gave to both Paul and Barnabas, as apostles to the heathen, the right hand of fellowship, as to members of one apostleship—Gal. ii. 7-9. Nor is this all. After Paul had seen the Lord, received the Holy Ghost, and been baptized, he was in the communion of the church at Antioch, which was composed of Jews, and founded by Peter. There, as a witness for the whole extent of Christ's long suffering—1 Tim. i. 16—he rose by gradual promotion to his apostolic standing. First, as a disciple who had testified for the Lord—Acts ix. 20; then, as a deacon sent with Barnabas from Antioch to Jerusalem—Acts xi. 30; then as a prophet or teacher—Acts xiii. 1; occasionally rising into his future apostleship—Acts xiv. 23; xv. 36—then, as a delegate to the apostles—Acts xv. 2; and lastly, in the fulness of his apostleship, bestowing the Holy Ghost—Acts xix. 6, and charging the elders of the churches—Acts xx. 17, 28.

4. It is also necessary that an apostle shall be recognised by the church. Not that the apostolic office is constituted by the recognition of man. Like all divine offices and acts, it is what it is, though all should deny it. Neither do we mean merely that it cannot be fulfilled among those who do not acknowledge it. As it claims the intelligent obedience of man, that were a truism. But we mean that, as

the church is the temple of the Holy Ghost, the voice of the church, in so far as she walks in the Spirit, is the voice of God as truly as the voice of Christ is so. And the reception of apostles by the church is as much an act of the Holy Ghost as their call is. The voice of God is not always that of authority. The voice of the obedient Son and of the subservient Spirit is as truly that of God, as the voice of the Father or the command of the Lord. To the right constitution of apostles the testimony of God is required in every form which the constitution of the church allows. An obedient reception is as necessary, and as divine, as an authoritative appointment. Paul says, The seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord. The church, consenting to let God write his law on her heart and to receive the ministration of his Spirit, ready to become Christ's epistle, written and ministered by apostles, is God's testimony to them—2 Cor. iii. ; 1 Cor. ix. Where the baptized do not receive apostles, there apostles cannot act, till they act in judgment. The church may reject them and the blessing which they bring. They cannot impart it by force. But God will never be without those who shall receive them, when they are given. And such alone will be found to constitute the perfect church at the end; because such alone shall not only be saved from apostasy, but be in that condition in which alone the church can adequately perform her functions.

5. And what else is essential to apostleship? Nothing, but that the Lord shall really act, as apostle, through those whom he has called and educated, among those who receive them. Their office is not to shake the world by preaching and astonish it by miracles. That is the work of others whom they appoint. Their place is, to be unseen, like Him who is the foundation. Their work is to minister the Holy Ghost, as the seal of salvation, and to see that the will of God be done in the church on earth as it is done in the Jerusalem above. They need to give no signs to unbelievers; for they do not ask unbelievers to receive them. If they work signs in the midst of the church, such signs do not make them apostles or give faith in their office, but are the seal of existing faith that they are already such. And if God show them signs, yea if Jesus appear to them, it is not to make them apostles, but to sustain their frailty. What visions the Lord may grant to them individually or collectively—how he may take them into the third heavens, as Paul—2 Cor. xii. 1—and show them that of which John prophesied—how he may make his glory to pass before them—how he may reveal himself to them apart from the rest, or anterior to his appearing unto all; these are questions of the deepest interest, in so far as the illustration of his goodness and mercy are concerned; but questions which man cannot answer, and which have nothing whatever to do with the call and constitution of apostles.

## IV.—DECAY.

IV. Let us now contemplate the decay of apostleship.

Although the ordinances of Christ derive their being and authority from him, and do at all times, even when not developed, subsist implicitly in the gift of the Holy Ghost, yet not only their efficiency but their visible continuance depends upon the faith and obedience of the church. To this rule the apostolic office forms no exception. The disappearance of that office is an admitted fact. And we must also admit that the event has been permitted of God. But the question at issue regards the cause of this fact. All that we see does not come from God. All that he permits is not therefore his will. Whatever is is not therefore right. The grace of God, though almighty, may be resisted. Is the cause of this fact then to be sought for in the purpose of God, or in the unfaithfulness of the church? We assert the latter. The burden of proof lies on those who assert the former. And we may easily trace the causes of this sad phenomenon.

The New Testament, especially the Epistles, clearly show how, from the first, the grace of Christ in all his ministries and gifts was more and more disesteemed or perverted—and in particular, how the apostolic office was resisted, questioned, and ultimately forfeited. The picture of spiritual prosperity drawn in some places,—for instance, in the Epistle to the Thessalonians—1 Thes. iv. 17—too soon lost its truth. Paul, the most outwardly efficient, and John, the most loving, of the apostles, were both forced to vindicate their apostleship against those very churches which ought to have been its seal—1 Cor. ix. 2; 2 Cor. xiii. 3; John iii. 9. And Paul complains to Timothy of being forsaken on every hand—2 Tim. i. 15; iv. 16. The hope of perfection—the hope of passing direct into that promised land, to the border of which the church had been brought, soon became visionary. The apostles, who should have brought in the kingdom, and received the Lord at his return—Acts i. 11; 1 Thes. i. 10; iv. 17, were soon overborne by the sloth and perverseness of the church. They spake of their death instead. They made provision for it—2 Pet. i. 4; 2 Tim. iv. 6; Acts xx. 25; and a glance at church history may convince us that, as the Jews provoked God in the wilderness and paid the penalty, so has it been with us. Our chief provocations are those which we have committed as one body; and they regard especially those things wherein the office of apostle most appears. The church forgot her espousals, loving the world; and was no more a stranger and pilgrim. She lost that hope of being like Jesus when he cometh, which should have kept her pure as he is pure. She became so defiled, that one is grieved by the notices we find of the wickedness which prevailed

in the very first centuries of the church, and of the heresies which threatened to obliterate the truth. She rested on her apostolic traditions and attainments, and sought neither continual progress nor the mighty power of Immanuel. Even during her period of martyrdom, and still more when that ceased, she looked to other comfort than that of the Holy Ghost. The light of prophecy, in which the church should walk and apostles should rule, gradually went out. The gifts, which apostles should bestow, cherish, and guide, disappeared. The truth of God became embalmed into a system—molten into an idol—graven into an image—gathered up into a fixed capital. There was no room and no heart left for fresh communications from Christ. These would have burst men's narrow systems and offended their self-conceit. The intellect of man, thrusting itself into the holiest, was smitten with blindness and folly. Men ceased to draw from a common source, or to contribute to a common fund. The whole church was puffed up for parties. In such a condition she could not keep the ways of the Lord. She claimed the favor of God in vain, when she had quenched the power, and broken the unity, of the Spirit. She sought unity in vain by the devices of man. Apostles could not perpetuate their kind. Even though they could have done so, their proper sphere of operation was gone. God did no more than give the church the double of her sin, when he withheld apostles. Instead of apostles, she got ambitious prelates; instead of prophets, isolated theosophs; instead of evangelists, sectarian agents; instead of pastors and teachers, snug parsons and learned critics. Like Israel of Old, she has ever since wandered in the desert, a year for a day of her sin; judged, but not forsaken. Yet, although God thus punished the church by the absence of apostles, their presence would have been a sorer judgment still. He withheld them in mercy. What blessing would there have been in the mere office, if the grace of the office were gone? What the use of apostles, if they were to be mere sharers of helplessness and misery for 1800 years? How aggravated would have been our sin, if apostles had remained, only to be constantly and advisedly set at nought! How severe our chastisement, if the fulness of apostolic power had continued in such a church as we have been, only to be prostituted to worldly ends, or to smite the disobedient with continual judgments from the Lord!

#### V.—RESTORATION.

V. But if the church, though judged, is not forsaken, how is she to be holpen? how shall we have apostolic times again? Only by having apostolic men. And if these men are not really apostles—the times will not be really apostolic. The office must create the condition. The ordinance for unity, power, and holiness, must constitute these things.



The government must fashion the kingdom, and not be fashioned by it. The primitive estate of the church—so lauded by idolators of the past—so longed for by lamenters of the present—owed its being to living apostles—and its only value to their then recent traditions. That period of history cannot be recalled. It is gone—and here we are. The purpose of God points forward—not backward. The problem is not, how shall we retreat into the womb of the 2nd century!; but how shall we now act, being born? Not, how shall we ape our fathers, or reach the measure in which they fulfilled the purpose which God appointed them to fulfil; but how shall we now fulfil the purpose which God appoints us to fulfil? For the solution of this problem we must indeed go back—for Christianity cannot change—there can be no new religion—or new God. But we must go back, not in the order of *centuries*, but in the order of *grace*. We must ascend, not to any favorite point in ecclesiastical history, be it the 16th, the 4th, or the 1st century, but to our ascended Lord himself; to draw both the pattern and the power from him. We must not despise any past token of his presence or expression of his truth, during those ages in which he has continued with us, though his face had been hidden. We must reverently acknowledge them all, and scrupulously steer our course by them. But we must subordinate them all to Himself; and believe that he is with us now for our work, as he was with our fathers for their's. Immanuel must be our watchword—God with us.

It is no contradiction to say, that it has been the will of God (who sees the end from the beginning) both to *continue* and to *restore* the apostolic office—the one in his wisdom, the other in his pity—the one, if the church would allow him to preserve her from ruin, the other in answer to her cry, when ruined. Of the one, the dogmatic and historic Scriptures inform us—of the other, the prophetic. The laws of God presuppose that we are a faithful people. But his promises, although fulfilled to the faithful alone, are addressed to his people in all the conditions in which he beholds them; and are not merely for the establishment, but for the awakening, of faith, and for the help of the returning sinner. While the church is content without apostles, and is conscious of no sin in regard to them, they would be useless to her. Did God thus give them again, he would only minister to the continuance of her sin and self-satisfaction. But whenever with penitence she again seeks her perfection, God will give them again. Their proper work is once more presented to their hands.

Yet how shall they be given? Apostles cannot spiritually propagate apostles. While alive, they can temporarily delegate certain of their powers; as we see in regard to Timothy and Titus. They can also make provision for the event of their death. But they cannot bequeath their apostolic office. Successors of apostles are indeed their

successors in point of fact; and, through God's great and abnormal mercy, they may be able to impart a limited measure of apostolic blessing. But apostles they neither are nor can be. Apostles are neither of men nor by man. They alone are set over the whole church. They cannot appoint one another. And, if so, how can inferior ministers appoint them; or the whole church create them? How can the church set them over herself? So much for her right. But what of her capacity? Her ignorance of that office which lies at her foundation—Eph. ii. 20, is such, that, were she to ask for it, she would not know for what she had asked. Its restoration, though no marvel in the eyes of the Lord—Zech. viii. 6, would be incredible in her's. The bearer of the tidings, instead of being hailed as a messenger of mercy, would be denounced as a heretic or confined as a madman. Apostles themselves would probably be put down by the usurpers of their place, and rejected by the rejecters of their power. And how shall the testimony of Jesus come, to indicate whom he will use as apostles, when he who should speak by the Spirit of prophecy would be silenced as a brawler? Jesus is in the midst of his people as a mighty man that cannot save. Shall apostles arise in the bosom of a sect, to justify *it* against all others, and be called *its* apostles? Shall they erect themselves, in disobedience, against the divine ordinances that are? How are gifts and ordinances to come without previous apostles; or apostles without previous gifts and ordinances? These, and many such questions, practically incapable of solution by man, are necessary conditions of the great problem. None but God can solve the questions and meet the conditions. And this he has begun to do—not by theoretical instruction, but by the actual exercise of his power. He has come among us and with great might succoured us. His arm hath awaked as in the days of old. He hath arisen to lead the blind by a way that they knew not.

The narrative of this wonderful dealing is elsewhere to be found. We have here to do with the nature of the work done and to be done by apostles. And, instead of asking what they have to do, one may rather ask, what have they not to do? As in the beginning the earth was without form and void, so is it now with the church, as foreseen by Jeremiah—Jer. iv. 23. The only difference is this—that the former was seen in the natural, the latter in the spiritual—and that, while the former state was the precursor of blessing and order, the latter is the result of their banishment and forfeiture. But shall there not be blessing and order again? Shall not new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, wherein Jerusalem shall be a rejoicing and her people a joy, be seen—first in the mystery and then in revelation?—2 Pet. iii. 13. Is. lxxv. 17; lxxvi. 22. Who shall

create these but God? Saith he not, "which I create?" And how shall he create them, but by the unchangeable ordinances of his unchangeable Christ? The 12 apostles in the beginning, while they themselves were alive and in active operation, and when Peter had already opened the door to the Gentiles, had a much more plausible ground for saying, that there was no proper work for Paul, at all adequate to justify so strange and unscriptural an addition to their sacred number, than we can have for saying, that the work of departed apostles, and the present state of Christendom, leave nothing now for apostles to do. There is every thing to do—every thing to restore—and then, perfection as the goal.

Two facts are clear—1st. The first apostles did not finish their own proper work; and, though they had, they did not finish the whole work of apostles. 2nd. The work done by the first apostles has been all but totally destroyed.

Let us take up the work at the death of the 12 and of Paul. God had closed the destiny of the Jews, not for rejecting Christ in person, but for rejecting the Holy Ghost and the ministry of Christ—Acts iii. 26; xiii. 46. Matth. xii. 32. He had turned to the Gentiles, not to convert the whole, but to take out of them a people for his name, Acts xv. 14, called the fulness of the Gentiles—that part of the body and fulness of Christ which was to be composed of Gentile converts in the room of the recusant Jews—Rom. xi. 25. That was the work in hand. But the apostles to the circumcision did not finish the work of filling up the body of Christ from the Gentiles. Peter spake of his own death, not of the completion of the church—2 Pet. i. 14. John had much to say to the church, but said it not—3 John 13. And those apostles could not possibly have finished that work; for they had expressly devolved it on Paul and Barnabas—Gal. ii. 9. But Paul and Barnabas did not finish it. Paul was bound at Jerusalem, and, being delivered captive to the Gentiles, was both actually stopped in his work, and set as a sign of a quenched apostleship—Acts xxi. 11. He called himself the Lord's prisoner for the Gentiles—Eph. iii. 1; iv. i; vi. 29. 2 Tim. i. 8; ii. 9. Philem. i. He beseeched the Colossians to remember his bonds—Col. iv. 18. He had failed with the Galatians—Gal. iii., and no less with the Corinthians, enriched though the latter had been in all knowledge and utterance—1 Cor. xi. 34. 2 Cor. xiii. 3, 10. In writing to the Hebrews, he was obliged to keep back the very things by which alone the church could be brought to perfection—Hebr. v. 11; ix. 5; xiii. 19. Who has since revealed them? Who have since heard them? His directions to Timothy and Titus, which many regard as the perfect type of church government under an episcopal apostolate, are in part indeed directions for the delegates of living apostles. But when these directions regard the

future, they are, like Acts xx., only the scheme of such a provisional guidance as was possible in the absence of apostles. They even point to the restoration of apostles, as the only right scheme—the only hope of perfection—1 Tim. iv. 14. In speaking of his own office, Paul calls himself one born out of due time—not *behind* the time, but *before* it—1 Cor. xv. 8. He speaks of himself, not as an appendage or supplement of the apostles to the circumcision, but as the embryo of apostleship to the Gentiles, as one whose office was yet in part undeveloped, whose chief work was future. He alone saw the Lord, after, by his ascension, he had actually entered into that glory which he now has with the Father—that glory in which he prophetically appeared on the mount of transfiguration, to strengthen the apostles in temptation—that glory in which he shall come again to receive his bride from apostles. Peter, James, and John, were the chosen 3, who witnessed the raising of Jairus's daughter—the transfiguration and the agony—the pillars, who received Paul at Jerusalem. John received the Revelation of Jesus Christ. But Paul alone was caught up into the third heavens. Peter, James, and John, saw the Lord in his future glory. But Paul saw him in his present glory. He then saw the things unutterable, which are reserved for those who love God and wait for his Son from heaven. Till these things come, the work of apostles is not done. And the invincible reason for believing that their work is unfinished, is this—that the finishing of that work and the coming of Christ's kingdom are one and the same thing. There will be no waiting for the kingdom after the church is prepared for it. The Bridegroom waits till the bride be ready—Rev. xix. 7. The converse is not true. And if the work of apostles is to prepare the bride, and that work has been long since finished; either the fanatics are right, who say that the kingdom is come—that the resurrection and translation are past; or else the blasphemers, who say that the Lord has forgotten his people.

The special work, then, which Paul so mightily began, is now to be completed, by a twelvefold apostleship, of which he was but the first fruits and embryo, and with which the restoration of all other divine ministries, in their proper form and measure, is inseparably connected. But if this is clear, from an examination of the scriptural nature of the apostolic office, and the history of its operation, we find the same no less clearly indicated, in every various form of doctrine, action, type and promise, throughout the whole Scriptures. Some of these indications we shall now select—first from the New Testament, then from the Old.

1. Our Lord, when about to go to the Father, leaving his disciples in the world, prayed that, during his absence, they and all who believed their word might be one, as he and the Father were—John xvii, 13, 21. That prayer is yet unanswered. Yet it cannot go un-

answered, and it must be answered in this dispensation. How can it be answered, save by restoring that ordinance for unity, for which he prayed, not "Take it away," but "Keep it from evil."

2. Our blessed Lord, although ever perfect in holiness, did not become perfect in office, till his resurrection and ascension—Hebr. v. 9. That is, he did not, as the man Christ Jesus, attain to that immortality, victory, glory, unction and power by which he was to become the perfectly saved One and the perfect Saviour, until he ascended to God. On the cross he ransomed us from death. But the church, like the Holy Ghost who dwells in her, has her mission from him, not on the cross, but on the right hand of power. From that his perfection, as the *personal* Christ, she starts, in order that she may attain the same, and so perfect the *mystical* Christ. She does not earn that position as the reward of her own efforts. It is her birthright. In going on to perfection, she only obtains her birthright—Hebr. vi. 1. All those who believe in and assume the place, privilege, victory and power into which we are introduced by being in him who is risen—these are the perfect in Christ. These are of full age—1 Cor. ii. 6. Col. i. 28. Hebr. v. 14. But those who linger among the beginnings of the doctrine of Christ, fail of that perfection—being blind to their true calling and position. The church as a body has become so. Yet we have the promise of God that she shall attain perfection; and that must be through the sending of apostles from him who is perfected.

3. Our Lord in the days of his flesh was the sacrificial Lamb—the *amnos*—John i. 29. But in his glorified state he is the *arnion*—the Son of Man—the perfected Saviour—the future Judge—Rev. vi. 16; vii. 17; xiv. 1. When, after his resurrection—John xxi. 15, he gave Peter his charge, he prophesied therein the gradual declension of the church. He said first, feed, boske those that are perfect—not probata but *arnia*—who stand fast in their head—who are seated with him in heavenly places, and need only feeding. Then, *poi mane ta probata mou*, rule my sheep or flock—the highest standing gone—the mere government of those in the lower position remaining. Lastly—feed my sheep—the mere preservation of life—both standing and government gone. Compare this with Rev. xiv. 1, 4—the vision of 144,000 standing with the Lamb on Mount Zion and following him whithersoever he goeth. And we see that at the end we shall again know Christ as the *arnion*—the perfect one,—and shall thus ourselves be perfect in him. But this can only be through apostles—the appointed witnesses to Christ as the *arnion* or perfect one—witnesses not in word only, but in deed.

4. The church was at the first sealed with the Holy Ghost—2 Cor. i. 22. Eph. i. 13; iv. 30—as the earnest of our inheritance, by the laying on of apostles' hands. But we hear nothing more of this

sealing till the end of the dispensation. The angel comes up from the east with the seal of the living God, to seal his servants in their foreheads—Rev. vii. 2. Till this is done, the judgment is stayed. The number sealed is the same as that of the 144,000 who stand on Mount Zion. And of the latter it is said, that they have the name of the Father of the Lamb written on their foreheads. This is the seal of their adoption in the Son—Rev. xiv. 1. This is the antitype of that mark, set upon the foreheads of the mourners, which saved them from the slaughter, mentioned in Ezek. ix., even as the blood of the paschal Lamb saved the houses of Israel in Egypt. This seal therefore is a name. The seal of the living God is a living seal. The living seal is the Holy Ghost, by whom the Father and the Son make their abode with us. And the Holy Ghost is given by the hands of apostles. Sealed by apostles, the church is, at the first, sent into the world, to fight the fight of faith. Sealed by apostles, the church, long vanquished and captive, at length overcomes; and is, at the last, taken out of the world from the great tribulation, and so prepared to come with Christ. Thus shall Zion bring forth *before* she travails.

5. Although our Lord did not say that John should tarry till he came, he did say, "If I will," &c. John was the last of the apostles, and received that Revelation which closed the canon. The tradition concerning his reappearance has taken many forms, and points to the faith lurking in the church, that apostleship is not extinct—that we have the remnants of the first and the embryo of the last—that a John shall be present when Jesus comes—that apostles, as they who saw him depart, shall also receive him again—and that the church, which had apostles when he left her, shall have them when he returns—Acts i. John xxi. 21.

6. In Rev. iv. 4, we have a vision of the church and its ministries in their perfect form. There the government of Christ is shared, not by 12, but by 24; by which is meant, not 24 men by name, but a duplicate of the apostolic office, which, as we know from all Scripture, ought to be fulfilled by 12, although it can stand in fewer. Jesus chose 12. The patriarchs, the princes, the spies, were all 12. The tribes were 12. The foundations of the city are 12. The fruits of the tree of life, 12. And the hours of the day, the months of the year, the signs of the zodiac, bearing reference to Christ, as the light of the world and the sun of righteousness, are all 12. Yet Jesus expounded to 2 apostles. He prophesied to 7. He spoke of 11 when 11 were not present; and of 12 when there existed only 11. And, if an apostle prove faithless, the corporate power remains with the faithful, however their action may be crippled by his absence. Still 12 is the ordinance of God: not 12 separate governments, more or less alike and united; but the exercise of one government through 12. The apostolic office shall be

seen, as at the beginning, so at the end, expressing Christ as Alpha and Omega, shutting up the whole dispensation as a unity. On the other hand we see but 12 stars, not 24, on the head of the woman—Rev. xii. 1; because the truth there expressed is not the constitution of the apostolic office as a whole, but its recovery at the time of the end, as the means of strengthening the woman to bring forth—the restoration, not of Urim and Thummim, as under the law, but of Thummim and Urim; apostles first, prophets second, to God's holy one.

7. In Rev. xviii. 20, the holy apostles and prophets are called on to rejoice over Babylon, because God hath avenged them upon her, or executed their sentence against her. This Babylon is spiritual, for the literal did not then exist. It is Christendom, become the city of confusion and captivity. The apostles and prophets are not to be disjoined. They are not prophets and apostles--Old Testament prophets and New Testament apostles--but apostles and prophets who unite in one denunciation. Neither are they the apostles and prophets at the beginning, to whom Eph. ii. 20 is usually confined, because those apostles and prophets did not denounce Babylon, are not assailed by her, and are not present to rejoice over her. If there shall be a real, though spiritual Babylon, there must be real apostles and prophets to rejoice over her fall. And why? because apostles and prophets build the church according to the will and way of God, as contrasted with the will and way of man. This building of the church in the midst of confusion will be the practical test by which the apostasy of Babylon will be disclosed. Of this Zechariah informs us in the vision of the flying roll which had the measures of the holy place in the tabernacle. Zech. v. This work of God will both call forth the anger of Babylon and justify her judgment, because she rejects the true foundation which apostles and prophets afford. Moreover, their re-appearance at the end is the proof that the commendation of the angel of Ephesus was not undeserved. It shall be the signal for the appearance of Satan's counterfeit. 2 Thess. ii. 9. Rev. xiii. 14.

8. The folly of the 5 virgins in the parable--Matt. xxv. was seen in their want, not of lamps but of oil. Such has been the position of the most faithful in the church for 1800 years, endeavouring to maintain the testimony for the truth without the supply of the Spirit. This oil is not to be found by chance. There are those whose business is to sell it. And they are apostles.

9. Isaiah promises to Zion that God will make her a city of righteousness, the faithful city, by giving her her judges as at the first and her counsellors as at the beginning--Is. i. 26. The restoration of the original ordinances are the means of perfecting the church. And in Is. xl. we have the development of the same promise, the gift of the

Comforter by apostles, v. 1--the voice of the prophet, v. 6--the message of the evangelist, v. 9--the care of the shepherd, v. 11.

10. In Zech. i. the horns of the Gentiles are those corrupted and fleshly forms of God's ministries, by which the church has been destroyed. The 4 carpenters are those ministries purified, and fulfilled in the Spirit, by which this destruction shall be repaired, and the tabernacle of God, which shall be with men, shall be built. The prophecies of Joel as to the locust, palmer worm, &c. are to the same effect.

11. In Zech. x. the early and latter rains are promised, the same as those of which James speaks at chap. 5. The husbandman is Christ. The soil, the church. The year's tillage, the Christian dispensation. The early rain, the outpouring of the Spirit at the beginning, which caused the seed to spring. The latter rain, that at the end (no new Pentecost but the fulfilment of the first) by which the ear is filled for harvest, and the tares which will not be filled are detected. Now is the harvest at hand. If the early rain came by apostles, so must the latter.

12. The same prophet, after giving the vision of the perfect church, as of a candlestick with the 2 golden pipes, apostles and prophets, tell us at chap. iv., first, that God's work is performed not by might nor by power, but by the Spirit; second, that this work is, to bring forth the head-stone; third, that he who laid the foundation shall finish; and, fourth, that the work shall be despised. Joshua, as we see at ch. iiii, represents the priesthood which receives change of raiment: Zerubbabel, the ruler. The apostolic work in perfecting the church shall be despised, now by Gentiles, as formerly by Jews. Its power shall be in the Holy Ghost. Its object is to proclaim the session of Christ at God's right hand, and to prepare his return. It constituted the church at the first, and it shall perfect her at the last.

13. The prophet Amos, ix. 13, promises that the ploughman shall overtake the reaper. As we read in the Psalms, that those who sow in tears shall reap with joy--Ps. cxxvi.; so does our Lord tell us that he that reapeth receiveth wages and gathereth fruit unto eternal life, that both the sower and reaper may rejoice together. He also tells us that we enter into the labor of others--John 'iv. 36, 38. The year--the crop--the culture--the husbandman, are one. But the labor varies with the season. The sowing and reaping, although parts of one culture, are yet diverse. The reaper enters into the labors of the sower, So did the first apostles into those of the patriarchs--so do we into the labors of the first apostles. The sower begins the culture. The reaper receives the reward; yet he shares it with the sower. The apostles at the first and those at the last shall not strive for pre-eminence. The former shall not boast of their labour, nor the latter of their reward--for one Lord has wrought by both. The 24 elders shall sit together.



14. Joel prophesied that in the last days God would pour out his Spirit. This came to pass at Pentecost--Acts ii. 17 ; but it was not then finished. The last days are the whole Christian dispensation, as distinguished from its predecessors--Hebr. i. 2. John even calls it the last hour--1 John ii. 18. If we were forced to choose between the beginning and the end thereof, we should call the end the last days of Joel ; for so do the Scriptures, contrasting it with the beginning--2 Tim. iii. 1 ; James, v. 3 ; Jude, 18 ; 1 Pet. i. 5. 20 ; 2 Pet. iii. 3. We admit, however, that the term applies to the whole dispensation. Yet we maintain that, as Pentecost was only the beginning of the dispensation, the pouring out of the Spirit then was not the completion, but the introduction, of a work ; and that the constant pouring out of the Spirit through apostles is the fulfilment of Joel's words. Now, if the conflict at the end is to be the sharpest, the armour must be the best. We must expect the largest effusion of the Spirit, and that must come by apostles.

15. In the wilderness the manna was found, as the consequence of the dew. The dew typifies the descent of the Spirit, the manna the presence of Christ by the Spirit. On the 6th day, preceding the 7th, twice as much fell as usual. This typifies an extraordinary presence of Christ before the end, by the pouring out of the Spirit through apostles.

16. When the Jews returned from captivity, and the question of genealogies was mooted, it was decided that certain claims should be postponed until a priest should arise with Urim and Thummim. Now is the time when God will bring everything to light ; and although episcopal ordination and apostolic succession, as mere historical deductions or external forms, have, like the genealogies in 1 Tim. i. 4, occupied and partly satisfied the minds of men, God will now enquire for a true and present genealogy. He will judge between the fit and the unfit. He will determine who shall be held worthy to serve him at his restored altar. The former imperfect modes of call and ordination shall give place to the perfect.

17. In the history of Eli and Samuel, Eli represents the ancient institutions of the church, venerable and true, but worn out, and unable to correct the wickedness of her present administration, represented by Hophi and Phinehas--1 Kings, i. &c. God resolves to change the priesthood. He raises up Samuel, born in answer to faith, the son of a barren but sorrowful mother, trained in the house of the Lord, obedient to and recognised by Eli. Eli shares the fate of his progeny, while Samuel takes the rule. Samuel is the apostleship of the last days--purposed by God, yet unwillingly supplanting the existing order of things.

18. Saul was the king, given in wrath, because the Jews desired to be

ruled like the nations, and yet appointed as God's channel of blessing to those under his rule---a type of the hierarchy in Christendom, fashioned in imitation of and claiming a place among the powers of the world, yet recognised of God in the absence of a better. David---by birth unknown, yet of royal extraction, without ambition, fearing and honoring Saul, persecuted by him, hidden among his foes, yet sparing and rescuing the life of his persecutor, and mourning his death, punishing his destroyers, and cherishing his seed--is the type of the true hierarchy, according to God's heart, which shall do all his pleasure---the saviour from ruin---not the cause of it.

19. Elias represents the testimony for God and his coming kingdom in the midst of apostasy, preserved from famine, and shielded from the rage of wicked authority in Jezebel and Ahab. The question, whether he or the prophets were of God, was tried by the acceptance or rejection of their offerings, as in the case of Aaron's rod; and the divine recognition of Elias by that acceptance was the warrant for judgment. His work was, to prove, 1. That there was a living God; 2. That he served that God; 3. That he served him aright. And his object in so doing was, not to justify himself or injure others, but to turn the hearts of his people to their God. And what course did he pursue? He built no new altar after a new fashion, but repaired the fallen altar of the Lord with 12 stones, according to the names of the children of Israel; and on that altar, surrounded with water, he offered a bullock to the Lord---1 K. xviii. 30, 36. This offering God accepted by fire; and on their want of acceptance Elias judged his rivals. So is it now. The poor widow has kept alive the truth. The power of the unfaithful church, Jezebel, and of her husband, the state, has not succeeded in destroying it. Although secretly acknowledged by Obadiah, the faithful remnant of the priests yet existing, it stands in irreconcilable contradiction to the whole system of things. The decision must come, whether God's word or man's word be true; and that, by proving whether God's work or man's shall stand. The restoration of God's true worship by a faithful priesthood, in a church filled with the Holy Ghost, and blessed through a fourfold ministry, founded on the apostles of the risen Lord, keeping the faith delivered to the saints and the ordinances given at the first, this will, like the flying roll of Zechariah, cut off on the right and on the left everything that is not of God. God will prove that he liveth. He will acknowledge his servants. They shall be seen keeping all his charge. The heart of his people shall be turned unto him once more. He will be proved the righteous judge on Babylon.

20. But the work of Elias does not end here. Malachi declares that God will send the prophet Elijah before the great and terrible day of the Lord, to turn the heart of the fathers to the children and of the children to their fathers, lest he smite the earth with a curse--Mal. iv.

Elijah is the witness, not only for the existing truth, but for the coming salvation. That salvation began in the person of Jesus Christ, and shall be completed in his perfected body. He was indeed Immanuel. But the full mystery of Immanuel is not seen till he is seen with his perfected body, the church--one Christ. As, therefore, the personal Jesus did not exhaust the promise of Immanuel, so did his personal forerunner, John, not exhaust the promise of Elijah. Elias shall yet come to restore all things, bringing God's order out of man's confusion. The great and dreadful day is yet future. The curse which would devour the earth is yet future. Its prevention is indeed certain (for the earth is Christ's inheritance), but it is future, and conditioned on this work of Elias. Apostles (the fathers) must yet appear, loving the children of God in the bowels of Christ, calling them beloved and longed for in truth. A people must yet be seen loving and obeying apostles for Jesus's sake--bound like a sacrifice to the horns of the altar--walking with God, and ready to be taken by Christ to himself.

21. But, in the last place, the history of Moses and Joshua affords light on this subject, in three different aspects. In one, confining our view to the acts of Moses, his first reception of the tables from the hand of God typifies the giving of God's law to the church at the first; their destruction, the subsequent corruption of the church in whose heart the law was written; and the restoration of the tables, the restoration of the church, as the depository of God's law, by the same hands which wrote that law in her at the first, when the church shall repent of and confess her sins. In another, confining our view to the wilderness time, Moses is the type of Christ's apostleship, by which, being delivered from the Egyptian bondage of the flesh, we are to be brought through the wilderness of this world into the land of promise, the kingdom to come--Ps. lxxviii. 54. The march through the desert is the Christian dispensation. The people provoked God. Moses failed to bring them in. They wandered about and died. But when they were without help, eating the bitter fruit of their ways, God raised up Joshua to execute the unfulfilled commission of Moses. He published no new law. He exercised no new power. He sought no new inheritance. But he circumcised the people afresh. He gave that charge to the people which he had received from Moses. He was received as their deliverer divinely commissioned in Moses's stead; and he did deliver them. He brought them into the land which God had sworn to their fathers, to give it them. The sun and the moon stood still on their behalf. Jordan could not stop them. And so with apostles now. The church has provoked God. The work of the first apostles has been interrupted; the people of God wander and perish in the uncircumcision of their heart. But God raises up apostles again, and binds them up with the former in one office. They shall again bring the church to walk

in the Spirit. But they bring no novelties. They go back upon the ancient commission and power, upon the ancient faith; and they lead into the kingdom promised of old. They revive the apostolic rule, and the ministration of the Spirit. They are received as deliverers. The providence of God favors their labors. The wheels move with the cherubim. And at length they obtain the victory over death, in the resurrection of those that sleep and the translation of those that are alive and remain. In the third aspect, extending our view from the appearance of Moses to that of Christ, the entrance into the promised land is the type, not of the attainment of the kingdom, but of the constitution of the church as she has been hitherto in the world. And Joshua, the successor of Moses, who received the charge of the people on the death of the true lawgiver, is to be regarded as the type of apostolical episcopacy, the memory or remnants of which fail to keep the people in the right way, until Christ, the true Moses, appears again to fulfil the law and the prophets, to establish his kingdom.

#### VI.—CREDENTIALS.

VI. It now only remains to inquire into the credentials of apostles at the end of the Christian dispensation.

According to the way of man, those are held to be the best judges of divine credentials who are most impartial. In one sense this is true, in another false. Those are, indeed, most likely to acknowledge the truth of God, whose only desire is to know it, whose eye is single. But the question is, What is the best attitude in which to recognise the truth? The answer is, Not the neutral position of an unconcerned or ignorant observer, but the position of one trained to know truth. We cannot accept or reject God's truth as we please. We must be educated in the truth; else we have no power to acknowledge it. Jesus showed himself after his resurrection to chosen witnesses. He selected those men to bear testimony to his resurrection whom men would call the most partial witnesses. And why? because they had been with him from the beginning. Those, therefore, can best judge of the credentials of apostles, who have marked their progress--who have grown with them--who have shared their education. The church, as a whole, has been found by God in utter ignorance, weakness, and error. Apostles, who should betray in themselves no trace of these, would be a monstrous birth. That very fact would be probf against them. If they are to save the church, they must be saved *with* the church. They must grow from ignorance and weakness into knowledge and power. The righteous falleth seven times and riseth again. It must be seen--not that they are infallible--but that the infallible God is their guide to that infallibility, which is the prerogative of the whole church, abiding in Christ, and in which alone it can be said of apostles that what they

bind and loose on earth is bound and loosed in heaven. And unless the church help them, by her counsel, faith, and obedience, this point they never can attain.

The way of faith is to believe a witness. The way of unbelief is to demand a proof; to believe no man, unless one has other evidence than his. "Blessed are they which have not seen, and yet have believed." Yet in a matter of such momentous importance—when either the greatest salvation or the greatest delusion is presented to us--and at a time when we are to expect false apostles, in every form, political, social and religious, it is not unreasonable to demand credentials of the true.

But what credentials? Credentials to faith, not to unbelief. Paul expressly distinguishes between his offices as preacher and as apostle, 1 Tim. ii. 7; 2 Tim. i. 11. He does indeed say, 2 Cor. xii. 12, that in his case the signs of an apostle were wrought among the Corinthians with signs and wonders and mighty deeds. But if we compare this with Rom. xv. 19, we see that it was for their conversion as heathen. Where apostles acted as evangelists, the signs followed the word. But the present question regards the church. What are credentials to the church? Apostles in this respect are like every other ordinance of God, and their restoration is like every other work of God. God sends them to the faithful. He never will send them to unbelievers. He does not ask the obedience of unbelief. He has no apostolic credentials for it. Therefore are apostles a sign to this generation, proving its unbelief by their rejection at the hands of those who count themselves, and should be, spiritual and able to judge. As long as the church is in her present condition, it is worse than idle to expect her recognition of apostles. Human ordinances the flesh can acknowledge; but it cannot recognise divine. Apostles, whom most Christians in their present state would recognise, must be false. Ecclesiastical heads set up by man, or setting up themselves—shepherds that are dumb dogs, who clothe themselves with the wool and love not the sheep—a people destitute of divine ordinances or corrupted by their abuse—Christians who neither know their standing, nor honor their privileges, nor use their power, but disown, contemn and abuse them—men baptized into Christ, who only exceed the heathen in power to devise and do iniquity—professed worshippers of God, who worship every idol, yea the works of their own hands instead, who make religion a science to be taught and learned by those that keep not the commandments of God, who, as gods, guide themselves and judge Almighty God himself—a people whose heart is not right with God, who hunger and thirst not for righteousness, who wait not for the Son of man from heaven, who satisfy their cravings in their own way, who do his work by their own devices, who, instead of realizing the

mystery of godliness, fashion godliness, but deny its power, and turn it into gain—a people lost in darkness, steeped in heresy, proud of schism, who have forgotten the first principles of Christ, emptied his sacraments, and broken all his bands, who trample on the faith of their fathers, and are puffed up for new gods—a people which knows not how to try the spirits, whether they be of God, yea, believes no longer in spirits at all—a people which neither knows what apostles are, nor believes that they should be, nor seeks them again, which has lost all faith that Christ liveth to act by men and to fill all in all, and has lost all power to know his voice and his hand—an adulterous generation which seeketh a sign, though lack of faith and of fellowship with God—such can never believe the credentials of apostles. To such no credentials shall be offered, save in judgment. They shall have no sign but that of the prophet Jonas—a body, dead with Christ and alive unto God, which they cannot see—a spiritual work for which they have no spiritual sense. When they seek David, they shall find but the pillow, 2 Sam. xix. 13. They shall grope in vain for the messengers whom, like the men of Sodom, they seek to know, Gen. xix. 11. If they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither will they believe though one rose from the dead. To a people which neither knows God's will nor hears his word, all the proofs of apostleship are in vain. But to those who love God himself and all who bear his holy name in baptism—who keep his commandments and wait for his salvation—who honor the faith and works, but do not, like the Pharisees, boast, of their fathers—who believe that Christ liveth and that his grace faileth not, and that his ways do not change—whose tears are registered in heaven—whose prayers and alms come up in remembrance before God—to them are the credentials given, to them they suffice. These God visits; their hearts he prepares. My sheep hear my voice. He that believeth hath the witness in himself, 1 John v. 10. We have received the Spirit which is of God, that we may know the things that are freely given to us of God. Spiritual persons know spiritual things, 1 Cor. ii. 12, 14. When God gave a sign to Moses, it was to strengthen faith, Exod. iii. 12. When Christ appeared to Paul, it was for his conviction, that he might obey the call of God, Acts ix. 5. 1 Cor. ix. 1. But as, of old, the Jews did not know what the manna was, so is it now with that presence of Christ in his church—Immanuel—the spiritual sign given through apostles—which God's people do not know, which the flesh cannot apprehend, 2 Cor. iii. 3.

But who shall try the credentials of apostles? If we are isolated persons, each can hear and judge and act for himself. But if we are one body—not as a figure, but as a fact—the body must hear and fulfil the words of Christ by its appointed organs. Herein lies the true communion of saints. That which the appointed organ does is done by

all and for all, and can be done by none else. Although every one of us shall give an account of himself to God, neither his own conscience nor his own judgment is his God. That each individual shall arrogate to himself, to try apostles, to try the spirits, or to fulfil any other command given in the Bible to the whole church, is out of the question. As apostles dispense one Spirit and one law to the whole church, so are angels or bishops, in short the heads of all particular bodies, bound to receive this apostolic dispensation. Therefore are they bound and empowered to see that no forgery is practised by the devil. It is the angel at Ephesus who is commended for trying false apostles—probably men who could show the credential, usually sought for, of having seen the Lord, as they say. He was helped by the faith of his church. He stood as the head of a faithful body. But he alone had the charge of the trial. Now, in order to make such a trial, the head of a church must be such as the angel of Ephesus. And what was his first qualification? That he received and obeyed a true apostle. A church which either rejected John, or stood without him, or was deprived of his support, could never have tried false apostles. The apostle is the right hand of Christ. The angel is the star which it holds fast in its place. Let the star fall out of the hand, and its light is gone—yea, it turns to darkness. But where is the church now like Ephesus, or the bishop like its angel? The parallel cannot hold. What God in his great and wonderful pity has done, in standing by the poorest remnant of his ordinances, and honoring the least fidelity to him, the least care for his poor sheep, is another matter. We dare not take it as the rule of his procedure. We speak of his appointed way. And we maintain that a church or minister, neither in obedience to and upheld by living and true apostles, nor at least recognising the value and desiring the restoration of true apostles, has neither full right nor full power to try the false; and that any who reject true apostleship, and yet make the trial, will fail and be deceived.

The apostles whom the Lord giveth, have shared the sin and sorrow of the church. They have been bred in her bosom. They have appeared there, where truth and liberty are most combined—not truth without liberty, nor liberty without truth. They have not raised themselves up. They have been called of God, not by fanatical internal persuasion, but by an external act of the Holy Ghost, not in a secret chamber, but in the midst of those who believed that apostles should be. They have not rushed into their functions in ignorant haste and self-will; but have been gradually, often unwillingly, introduced to them. They have been publicly recognised, by a corporate act of the churches, as the men whom God would use. They have been liberated from all inferior authority, and separated to their work by a solemn transaction. In that position, they have been continually presented by the church as

a wave sheaf to the Lord, that he may accept, empower, and use them. They have started with no perfect system of their own. They have learned together out of his word, and received the light of his prophets and the help of all his other ministers—yea, of all his people. In their untried circumstances, they have waited for the sanction of his word, and the signs of his providence. In the midst of weakness—through errors manifold—in spite of increasing temptations—they have gone forward. By nothing less than a constant miracle have they been preserved. They boast not themselves—they preach not themselves. They make common cause with the weakest. They are accredited by others. They are empowered to govern and bless, as far as God's children can bear it. They astonish none by miracles—entice none, by flatteries, to follow them—covet not numbers of men or masses of flesh—pander to no lusts—use no stratagems or strokes of policy—seek not to regain for the church the favor of the world. As the foundations, they are unseen and despised; and are content to be so, provided the building be reared, leaving it to the day to declare their work—1 Cor. iv. 9. They are as the weakness of God, which is stronger than man. John did no miracle—John x. 41; but he labored to reform his people. He pointed to the Saviour; and all that he said of Christ was true.

Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are ye not my work in the Lord? 1 Cor. ix. 1. This was his apology. He asserted the fact of his apostleship. He maintained that he had received neither commission nor direction from man—that he was free from all inferior authority, in order to rule in the fear of the Lord and the unity of apostleship. He narrated the mode of Christ's dealing with him. He stated what he had done. The same are the credentials of apostles now. They can assert their office. They have been called by prophecy—but they are apostles by the Lord. They do not merely refer to a past event—they state a fact. They can narrate the mode of their preparation for office. They are in their office. And they can show their work.

To what work shall they point? To the churches which they build, order, and bless; to the catholicity of the same, whether seen in ten or in a thousand; to the holiness of their lives; to the loyalty of their politics; to the order of their houses and affairs; to their deep knowledge and right use of the Scriptures; to the pregnant fulness, dignity, sincerity, and joy of their worship; to the developement of their ministries; to the abundance and comfort of their gifts; to the wisdom, power, and mercy of their discipline; to the mutual help of their members; to the constancy of their hope; to the truth, the power, the zeal, the patience, the charity of their testimony; to the heavenly temper of their armour, offensive and defensive; to the Satanic wiles which they detect; to the evils they mitigate and remove, and to the



blessings they dispense ; to their detection and resistance of Antichrist and preparation for Christ. This is the work—not a miracle or a make-believe—but a steady progress of cleansing, ordering, and blessing, through the energy of Christ, the purging of the floor by Him whose fan is in his hand, the discovery and abolition of sin, the true bearing of the cross in the hope of the crown. Every part of the work is a confession that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh—1 John iv. 1. At all this the secure will smile, and the yet undetected Pharisee will point the finger, as they did, who said, “ He saved others—himself he cannot save ;” or, “ What will these feeble Jews ?” But we must bear the shame of having our state revealed, our provocations, inconsistencies, and falls. It is the yoke of the Lord ; and he will justify those who bear it. In so far as God prevails to purify and guide us, in so far are we the seal of apostleship. And he will perfect the seal. Apostles shall yet have their full credentials ; for they shall have done their work.

The set time is come for God to remember Zion and to build Jerusalem. The cry of the widow is heard by the righteous judge. The fig-tree buddeth. Aaron’s rod blossometh. Now is the ark a building. For behold the defences have fallen. There is no man more. The Lord’s house is a den of thieves—Babylon inhabited of devils. The wicked gather ; the name of the Lord is blasphemed ; the religion of the man of sin prevails. Therefore does God send again apostles, with prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. He has called, trained, separated, and sent them ; allotted their labors ; assigned their fellow laborers ; taught them their work ; given them a pattern of his, and endowed them with his power. He sends them, not to innovate, but to restore ; not to sow, but to reap ; not to found, but to finish ; not to gather, but to perfect ; not to form the woman, but to be her crown ; not to find the bride, but to bring her ; not to wait for the Spirit, but to minister him ; to show both the Alpha and the Omega ; to go forth from the risen Lord, and to receive him again. They may not have gone over the cities of Israel, before the Son of Man be come. But now they labor to save who will be saved—to present the remnant perfect unto Christ.

THE END.