



THE
QUALIFICATIONS ESSENTIAL FOR
THE APOSTLESHIP.

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THESE appear to have been three.

1. *It was necessary to have seen Christ alive after his death and resurrection*, in order that the twelve might be able to discharge the one special function of their apostleship, and, as eye-witnesses, testify to the world the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

Here we see the meaning of St. Paul's appeal to the Corinthians: "Am I not an apostle?"

have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord?" 1 Cor. ix, 1.

All those who were called to the apostolate possessed this indispensable qualification. The eleven were associated with the risen Saviour intimately after he arose from the dead as they had been before. He was not seen of them alone: for Paul tells us how "He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once." But the eleven, in view of the duty which they were delegated to perform as Christ's apostles, were favored with peculiar and abundant opportunities of seeing and conversing with him. At Jerusalem, and on the shores of the Sea of Tiberias, he stood in the midst of them; he walked with them, and reasoned with them out of the Scriptures. To show that he was no phantom or disembodied spirit, he ate and drank with them; and to satisfy them that he was the same Jesus who had died upon the cross, they were permitted to see, and feel with their hands, the wounds inflicted at his death.

Paul, who was called to the apostolate as

one born out of due time, was in different circumstances; yet he also saw the Saviour after his resurrection, so as to leave no possibility of doubting that he was indeed raised from the dead. First of all, he saw him on his way to Damascus. Some have disputed this, because Paul arose from the earth blind, and continued three days without sight. But Christ himself said to Paul on this occasion, "I have *appeared* to thee to make thee a witness of what thou hast seen;" and was it not the dazzling glory of the Saviour's resurrection body appearing to him that deprived him of sight? At Corinth, the Lord spake to Paul in the night by a vision: "Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace." Acts xviii, 9. Again, at Jerusalem, it is said, "The night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome." Acts xxiii, 11. Paul had testified at Jerusalem that he had seen Christ. He told them, "It came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed

in the temple, I was in a trance; and *saw him* saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me." Acts xxii, 17, 18. Thus was Paul equally with his fellow-apostles qualified, by seeing again and again the risen and now glorified Saviour, to bear witness with them that he was alive from the dead. Paul also relates how he was caught up into the third heaven, but whether in or out of the body he could not tell, where he saw and heard unspeakable things.

2. *It was a necessary qualification for those who were in the apostleship that they should be chosen and appointed by Christ himself.* "Paul an apostle, not of man, neither by men, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead."

In this the great Head of the Church has asserted his sovereignty in a very significant manner, as we have seen, disallowing the exercise of all human wisdom and all human authority in the matter whatsoever. "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you."

“He is a chosen vessel unto me,” he said concerning Saul of Tarsus, “to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel.” In every instance the real apostles of Christ were chosen by him, and received their appointment from “the voice of his mouth.” How significant is the language of Ananias to Paul: “The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.” Acts xxii, 14, 15.

Matthias is appointed by the best possible *human* authority, and in the most solemn manner, with much prayer and earnest appeals to God; but all this is not sufficient. The appointment to this office by any authority less than his own is an unwarrantable invasion of the prerogative of the Sovereign Head of the Church, and therefore the act is distinctly disallowed and annulled by him.

There is something instructive in this. The Romanists profess to derive the authority of

the pope, as the vicegerent of Christ upon earth, and the successor of the apostles, from Peter. Now it is the act of Peter especially, with the other apostles and many disciples associated with him, which is here set aside by the Lord Jesus Christ. Peter had no more power to appoint a successor to his own apostleship than he had to nominate a successor to Judas; and the proud pretensions of Rome are mere assumptions, "baseless as the fabric of a vision." The right of choosing Christ's apostles was never delegated. The Saviour kept it in his own hands, until the only purpose for which the office was instituted had been fully accomplished, when it passed away to be known no more in the Church to the end of time.

3. *The third requisite essential for the apostleship was the power of working miracles.* This was the seal of their apostleship, God bearing witness by the signs and wonders they wrought that these men were Divine messengers and witnesses for the truth, receiving their commission from God. This

was necessary to give a fullness and completeness to the testimony of the apostles which should overwhelm all gainsayers, and either carry irresistible conviction to their hearts, or leave them altogether without excuse. And with this power all the apostles were richly gifted. Jerusalem and Judea were filled, after the day of Pentecost, with the fame of those wonders which were wrought by the apostles of the crucified Jesus, and in his name; and thus God himself spoke through them to testify the resurrection of the Saviour. So with Paul after his conversion and call to the apostleship: "God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul. So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them." Acts xix, 11, 12. The effects produced by the exercise of these miraculous powers were strikingly displayed on the day of Pentecost, in convincing the multitudes of strangers assembled at Jerusalem from all surrounding countries, and in the silencing of the priestly authorities and perse

cutors after the healing of the impotent man at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple.

These, according to the teaching and analogy of God's word, were the essential qualifications of an apostle. All these are found in the twelve; but they are not, and never have been, found to meet in any other human being.

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