

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

THE four Evangelists testify that Jesus, the reputed son of Joseph, was the Christ, promised in Eden, and along through the ages; expected to arise from the family of Abraham. Although that family, as time wore on, fell into the mistake, that the Christ was to be an Israelitic Christ; they were right in looking for a great and happy change in Israel, to occur at the time of his appearing. They, to be sure, were expecting great national prosperity of an earthly character; while the change that did occur was purely spiritual. Worldly maxims were denied; the glitter of the pomp and power of the world, denied; its selfish principles, condemned; a holy personal and social vitality inculcated; and the grand doctrines enunciated—life, growth, fruit, as the facts of humanity, including the Abrahamic family; were to supersede form, tyranny, oppression and ruin. The Christ was to demonstrate that “God had made man upright, but he had sought out many inventions,” to debase himself, and depress his allotted condition; and that Himself, the Christ, instead of being a king of Israel, to lead them to glory and power over the prostrate nations; was the Son of man, the Christ of man, the Way by which men were to return to the plan, protection and blessing of God.

It is clear, that the Christ came not to introduce a form, that would produce life; but a life that would supply itself with form. The life principle, in the number of its inscrutable mysteries holds the amazing power of organization of form; the concretion of the elements of form. The smooth, simple, minute seed enters the genial soil; and what a grand, symmetrical, showy form it organizes, if not interfered with by inimical force! The dew, the rain, the sunshine, the air of heaven come into its earthy basis; and it rises, expands, stretches out its boughs, waves its leaves in graceful recognition of the favors of heaven, while gratefully holding earth in its loving embrace. To heaven and earth it owes its existence and supplies; and acknowledges its obligations to both.

There is one God; the God of nature is the God of grace: and in grace, as in nature, his way is simple and efficient: life; then, life organizing its appropriate form, for fruit bearing, usefulness. Therefore, when the four Evangelists had testified that Jesus was the Christ, the Life; the Historian tells the wonderful story of the organizing of the Life, into its appropriate form for fruit bearing, usefulness, blessing. And the student sees not in The Acts, the Christians, making the same mistake of the Jews, expecting a worldly arrangement of power and pomp, by which themselves were to rule and oppress the nations; for they had been told, "It shall not be so among you." *Mark* x. 43; *Luke* xxii. 26. Therefore, the Apostles, trained and qualified to be "witnesses unto him both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of of the earth;" did bear witness that the very Jesus, whom they had followed several years, believing him to be the Christ spoken of by Moses and the prophets; and whom they knew too intimately to mistake any one else for; had vindicated their faith by actually rising

from the dead, and talking, eating with, and instructing them : and they declared further, that every one who would accept of Jesus as the Christ, relying upon his sacrifice of himself for the remission of sin, should have special aid from the Holy Ghost, to begin and continue an eternal life. The word had a happy effect ; Christ the Life entered with the word into the appropriate receptacle, human hearts ; and the Holy Ghost caused it to germinate and spring up into the form and beauty of life. So they began : preaching Jesus, as the Christ ; faith ; life ; association, loving association.

And a good, clear, instructive specimen of this work, for some thirty years, is given us in The Acts ; the only inspired Church History : a precious standard of divine authority, to which all Church controversies can be safely referred : not safely in behalf of error ; but with perfect safety in behalf of truth. Dr. Lardner quotes one of the fathers as saying " — the times from Christ to Constantine have a three-fold division : the first is from the nativity of Christ to his ascension ; the next is after his ascension, of which The Acts of the Apostles treats ; the third is from that period and the death of the Apostles, to the reign of Constantine ; the affairs of which have been related by several ecclesiastical historians, as Eusebius Pamphili, and Theodoret, whom we are not obliged to receive ; for, beside The Acts of the Apostles, no such writings are appointed to be received by us." *Leontius*. From this book alone, says Chrysostom, is to be known how the Christian religion was planted in the world. Jerome, calls it " nudam historiam," a naked (bare) history of the infancy of the Church, in the estimate of some ; but it was that and more to his thinking. Augustin declares it " — the only history of the apostles which has been received by the Church : all others having been rejected as not to be relied upon."

It is not to be supposed, that The Acts contains a complete record of Church facts, during those first thirty years after the ascension. No doubt there were very many occurrences omitted, as unnecessary, redundant, to the purpose of exhibiting the energy of Christ, as the Life of humanity, organizing a body for itself; a human, not an Abrahamic, body; called the Ecclesia, the Called Out, the Called Out by the Gospel, the dead who should hear "the voice of the Son of God, and come forth" to life; the associators as believers of the gospel; the Church. The unrecorded, were not contrary to the recorded facts; as in the case of a selection of facts to make up a theory; but they were similar, and so redundant, and left out because enough of the like facts had been selected, to make a clear, truthful, unassailable statement of the shooting forth of "the corn of wheat, that fell into the ground and died," (*John* xii. 24,) as the essential preliminary to its reappearance in its new and "own body;" the Church, of which Jesus is the only Head. This was why he died: his own lips tell us the secret, too profound for the learned in "the traditions of the Elders:" "except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it ABIDETH ALONE;" it does not expand, produce its like; does not show the amazing force of vitality within it, by growth and reproduction. He was ALONE in the great work of atonement, redemption, suffering; "I have trodden the wine press ALONE; and of the people there was none with me;" *Isai.* lxiii. 3: but he did not wish to be alone in the joy of victory: he wished his joy to be in others; *John* xv. 2. He purposed to surprise and delight the universe, with the wondrous apostrophe, "Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me, are for signs and wonders:" to fulfil the joyful prediction, "In the midst of the Church (*ecclesias*, of the called out) will I sing praise (*hymneeso*) unto thee." *Heb.* ii. 12, 13.

The gospels, the biographies of Jesus, do not contain all his words and acts. Not that any omitted work or word was contradictory to those recorded; but was of the same nature and character; and therefore would have been redundant, superfluous, unnecessary to exhibit the proof that Jesus was the Christ; so abundantly demonstrated by such of the whole mass of similar facts, selected by the Evangelists, in connection with his birth, life, death and resurrection. John so testifies, chap. xx. 30, 31; "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that JESUS is the CHRIST, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." The Evangelists recorded of the facts, enough to demonstrate the Christ in Jesus: and the one inspired Historian of the Church recorded sufficient of the facts, to show Christ Jesus as in the Church, the Ecclesia, its vitality, its power of association, its only organizing force; and all that "the seed" might not "abide alone," but, having "died," and "risen," bring forth "much fruit."

The Acts should be more thoroughly studied. A careful examination of its inspired narrative, would be more profitable than controversies between the sections of Christendom, concerning order and liturgy. To drink into the spirit of the first disciples, to be imbued with their simplicity of proceeding, to catch an inspiration from their loving assemblings, activity, zeal, self-sacrifice, etc.; would soon bring us to see eye to eye, and to labor hand to hand. There is nothing in that charming spectacle to excite unholy ambition; no sceptre to clutch with the covetous hand; no mitre for the proudly exalted head. Our Lord having taught them, that the way to be great in his blessed system, was not by exercising lordship, but ministry; the Apostles,

during the entire Acts, invent no office or honor, except a ministry of tables for the benefit of some neglected widows. *Acts* vi. 3. No primacy, for no primate is visible anywhere in the history. No Head acknowledged but Christ; no one claims the headship. Peter does not; he is found fault with; defends himself before the assembly; is despatched upon a mission in company with John to Samaria, etc.; but no where figures as a man in chief authority; especially, not as an infallible theologian, outside his specific branch, "the witness of the resurrection of Jesus." There he was indeed infallible.

A thorough acquaintance with this renowned book, would save us from the claims put forth in behalf of office and ceremonies in the church, defended upon the ground of antiquity. An office, a rite, might be very old; might plead centuries in its behalf; and be indignant at anything compared with it, and having the appearance of a novelty in the Church: yet the seemingly old might be really the innovation; and the seemingly new might point out its title, in the facts of the real antiquity of the Church, as recorded in The Acts. Every item of order dating this side of The Acts, is an innovation: like the moss on the tree, it may look soft and pretty; but, it is a parasite, a robber of the vital juices of the tree, tending to corruption and death. The mosses are beautiful; they spread themselves over the bark as offering a friendly protection; but under their velvety semblance, they thrust their roots into the vital juices of the tree, to maintain themselves at the tree's expense; and the prudent husbandman purgeth the tree from them, as a nuisance, that its fruitfulness be not hindered.

The study of this History, is a great promoter of a proper demand for Christian equality and liberty. The great doctrines of the Lord Jesus, as well as his great

promises all come out to the discerning eye of the careful student. His rejection of human lordship; his proposing the fact of Christians having but one Master, himself, the Christ; and the other fact that we ALL are BRETHREN; is quite sufficient, if well understood, to guard us against encroachments upon our Christian liberty. The doctrine of the coming of the Holy Ghost, the calling of the "other sheep" not of the Abrahamic fold, the Gentiles; the one fold, One Shepherd; the one Rabbi, the rest brethren; disciples all: distinguishes the History: the only history of those times given to the Church; because no other was inspired, no other could be relied upon. "Christ in us, the hope of glory," is the doctrine; Christ in every one that believeth; no clergy, no laity; but believers; every one that believeth; Christ only in believers, but in every believer; not to make a lord of him, nor yet a serf; not mere government material; but an heir, an heir of God, a joint heir with Christ; filled with the hope of eternal glory. Not in the whole book is a page, or paragraph given to description of rites, ceremonies, altars, candles, millinery: no processions: no gorgeous ceremonies of installation: no gorgeous anything; but all simple, plain, brotherly, spiritual, Christ-like. Believing, rejoicing, loving, self-sacrificing, suffering and still rejoicing, persecuted and still trying to save their persecutors, stoned to death, but praying that the sin be not laid to the charge of their murderers: it is a wonderful history where Apostles, presbyters, deacons, believers, are all brethren; preaching, spreading the grand truths that Jesus, the loving, gentle Jesus, who had not where to lay his head, is the Christ, the great offering for sin, and that every one believing in him, shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, be a recognized child of God, an heir of heaven. The children of God, are not the serfs of men. Having delivered us from bondage to Satan, it was not to give us into bondage, to popes, clergy, etc.

In organizing Israel, God took special care, to form a republic of which he was the head. The whole system was a grand type of that which was to be: a republic with God for its head. But the Israelites became weary of this, and desired a king. After the evils of the having a king had been explained to them, and they persisted in their demand, the kings came, in succession, reigning over them, distressing them, until the walls of the beautiful city were broken up, and king and kinged were led as slaves to Babylon. So with Christendom. It was organized into a brotherhood, with one Master, Christ: and thus continued through the model thirty years of its first development of the "Christ in you" principle. But, while the Apostles invented nothing but ministers of tables, ministers of charity; those who came in the after years, to judge from the uninspired and uninspiring histories, and present facts, invented the idea of an earthly head of the Church, as a necessity, so as to have two heads, one in heaven, one on earth, and the sequel in this case is similar to the sequel in that case. God is wiser than man, and the result of rebellion against his plan, always exhibits that truth. No Church arrangement should violate the simple, perfect plan, of "One is your Master, Christ; all ye are brethren."

We have been traversing a painful field of observation; but though our feet are torn and bleeding, we hope to aid in spreading the truth, which is the real secret of promoting true liberty. It is not a mistaken form of Church government that is very hurtful, but its real power for mischief is in the ignorance of the masses, who submit to the usurpation of a few of their brethren, in such manner as to invite continued and increased aggression. When the people of the Church or state become well informed, the fetters are soon broken. Darkness dreads nothing so much as light. The two

cannot exist except as twilight; and twilight will not long remain; it must deepen into darkness or brighten into light. The Acts should be studied, and the development of the Christ life be understood. Let no one claim antiquity, precedence, for any Church peculiarity unless he can prove its conformity to "the pattern shown us in the mount." If that cannot be done, nothing can save it from rejection, but a demonstration that it conforms to the spirit of the pattern; that it is the product of the life principle that exhibits itself in the formula, "one is your Master, Christ; all ye are brethren." In that case it has a mark of an omitted fact; "similarity to the facts recorded:" and if it be really similar, it will be safe to believe that it will have a similar result.

MATTHIAS.

ACTS i. 15-26.

THAT Matthias was properly constituted an apostle, is a question, on which we number ourselves in the negative. The transaction was at the instance of Peter; he alone, of the apostles and brethren, suggested the course: his proposition not being founded upon any command of the Lord Jesus; who, to the apostles, had "shewed himself alive after his passion (after he had suffered) * * * being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." Acts i. 3. It seems incredible, that our Lord should have designed the disciples, or apostles, to fill the vacant place of Judas, and yet have said nothing of

it, during those forty days' intercourse. Of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, Christianity, filling that vacancy by men, was an item so insignificant, as to need not a word of instruction; or, else, it was not to occur.

It was commanded, that they should remain at Jerusalem, and "wait for the promise of the Father," the baptism of the Holy Ghost: they were to "receive power after that the Holy Ghost came upon them: and should be witnesses unto Him * * *." Ch. i. 4-8. Instead of "waiting," Peter, founding his opinion upon passages in the Psalms, proposed choosing a successor to Judas. The Psalms cited, while referring to the fall of Judas, and another taking his office, give not even the least intimation, that the apostles, or any other men, should fill the vacancy: and, further, the Holy Ghost alone could have enabled Peter to so interpret that Scripture, as to decide that men were to choose a successor to a vacancy in the apostolate, and the Holy Ghost had not yet come in his miraculous power.

There is something indicating the absence of the divine Spirit, in the very manner of the election. They should have commenced with prayer, one might reasonably suppose; if they thought it necessary to take a very important step; but they began with Peter's argument on the Psalms, and then having chosen two men, as being qualified for the place, and unable to decide between them; then, at their wit's end, they pray for the divine guidance. Did they know, that no other than those two men, could have the divine approbation? Did they know that the divine choice ought to be limited to one of those two? And, when "the lot fell upon Matthias," did they know from that, that the Lord had directed the lot; when, too, he had commanded them to "wait for the promise"? The whole air of the incident, leads us to think that Peter led the brethren into

error. Up to that time they had "waited," according to the commandment; "all continued in prayer and supplication;" and everything was proceeding properly; until "Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples"—suspended the "waiting," and proposed active proceedings. How happened he to be better informed than the rest? There were ten others, his fellow apostles, present, who should have known this necessity, had it really existed. There is no reminding them of any neglected duty, any omission of obedience to a command of their Lord: but everything intimates, that but for those passages in the Psalms, Peter would not have moved in the case. They should have continued waiting in prayer and supplication, until the coming of the Holy Ghost: in which case there would have been no man made apostle; a species of which Paul, at least, had no very high opinion. Such seems to be the force of the opening of his epistle to the Galatians: "Paul, an apostle," (not from *apo*, men, nor by man, but by Jesus Christ, etc.) *Gal.* i. 1. What can he refer to, if not the case of Matthias, whose authority was from men (the disciples) by man (the mistaken officiousness of Peter); while his own apostolate was by Jesus Christ, who had not delegated his authority to the apostles, nor the disciples, to choose his "witnesses."

It is certain, that after Pentecost, there are no more elections of apostles: leaving Matthias the only man made apostle, of the thirty years history of the Church: a very significant fact. Some fifteen years later, when James the brother of John was slain by Herod, to please the Jews, there was no election of any one to fill the vacancy. Peter was still living, but appears to have been satisfied with his role of apostle-maker. After the angel had brought him out of the prison, and he had reached the house of "Mary the mother of John Mark," and he had beckoned to them with his hand

to hold their peace, instead of another proposition to fill the place of James, as he had done in the case of Judas, "he declared unto them, how the Lord had brought him out of the prison; and he said, Go shew these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went into another place." *Acts* xii. 1-17. Had the vacancy in the apostolate ceased to be of any importance; or was the report of "these things to James and the brethren," to have them attend to the filling of the vacancy; or had they learned under the teaching of the Holy Ghost, that this was not a human prerogative?

But there is a fourth hypothesis. Perhaps as Peter's life was in danger, compelling him to flee, so that he could not be present at the ordination of a successor to James, therefore they did not then go into the election. To this we answer, supposing Matthias to have been an apostle, they could have had eleven present; the same number as that in the election under discussion: and as there was no ordination in the other case, there was none needed in this. But was there no ordination? Does not Peter say, "— must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection?" The Greek words are *dei*** martura tees anastaseoos autou sun heemin genesthai hena*, which we translate in their own order; "must*** a witness of the resurrection of him with us be one." To render the verb in question, *ginomai*, ORDAIN, in the modern sense of ordination, would be absurd: perverting the sense of this, and every other passage of the N. T. in which that verb occurs. So, *John* i. 3, "All things were ordained (*egeneto*) by him; and without him was not anything ordained (*egeneto*) that was ordained (*gegonen*)." And, ver. 6, "There was ordained (*egeneto*) a man sent from God whose name was John." Also, *Heb.* ix. 15, "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that death being ordained (*thanatou*

genomenou), for the redemption of the transgressions under the first testament," etc. The reader will easily decide whether any one of these passages would be improved by changing the sense of *ginomai* into "to ordain," as used in Church controversies. A plan that would bring DEATH into *orders* had better not be adopted, even by High Church expositors. Peter, greatly as he erred, said nothing about "one being ordained a witness with us," for nor himself nor any other of the eleven had been ordained, in the Church sense of that word: he said merely "must one be, become, a witness with us:" he was profoundly ignorant of the mysteries of modern ordination: modern, because not found in The Acts, the inspired thirty years history of the outset of Christianity. Any one reminded of Mark iii. 14, "And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him," etc.; by examining will find the word rendered ordained, to be, *epoieese*, and properly rendered "ordained," in the sense of "appointed, or constituted." But, enough on this point: as we propose to notice it in a distinct exposition.

Some four years after "the lot fell upon Matthias," our Lord appeared to Paul, to enable him to be a witness of the resurrection, and appointed him to be an apostle. He knew when to choose, and whom to choose, without the aid of Peter with his lot. We have already given Paul's own testimony that he was an apostle "not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ:" but of Matthias the testimony is that, "he was numbered, calculated, cyphered, (*sugkatepsephisthee*) with the eleven apostles:" not that he was an apostle, was one of the twelve, but he was numbered with the eleven: and after all we see "Peter standing up with the eleven," on the day of Pentecost; though "the twelve" was the technical phrase: so John writes "Thomas one of the twelve," etc., in reference to an

incident that occurred, the evening of the resurrection day; and to which Paul appears to allude in *I Cor.* xv. 5, "— he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve." There is an immense difference between the man made and the Christ made apostle.

Paul constituted an apostle eleven years before the death of James, can with no propriety be supposed the latter's successor. Had it been our Lord's intention to hold Paul in readiness to succeed James, he would have held him in abeyance for that end: but Paul immediately enters upon the duties of the office; and, supposing Matthias to have been an apostle, then, for eleven years, the number was thirteen: in which case it is difficult to see the necessity of the precise number twelve; which necessity is held as the warrant for the election of Matthias. And, further, if the apostles were empowered to fill vacancies; they had done so, and why should our Lord have chosen Paul? The vacancy had been filled: nor was Paul one of those "men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us." Peter's practical good sense enabled him to see, that "a witness of his resurrection" must be able to identify the Lord Jesus, after the resurrection, when he "shewed himself alive," during the "forty days," between the resurrection and ascension: but he appears to have carried matters to extremes, in requiring the witness to "have companied with us all the time" from the baptism of John, until the ascension. It did not require that length of time. Our Lord demonstrates that, by choosing a man who had not companied with them one moment before the ascension; and who was only known as their hater and persecutor, until Jesus "appeared to him in the way," made him an eye witness of his resurrection, and sent him into Damascus to learn what he had for him to do. No one doubts the apostleship of Paul. He was

the equal of any in that office. But, having been put into office eleven years before the death of James ; conceding the apostolate of Matthias, we have thirteen apostles, demonstrating that the supposed necessity of the precise number, twelve, the only cause of the election of Matthias, was an error ; and so the election itself was an error ; being not only beyond the powers of the apostles, but unnecessary. The rational, Scriptural solution is, that the election of Matthias, was unauthorized ; and his having been cyphered into the apostolate was null and void : the number twelve having been completed by the choice of Paul, four years later, " by Jesus Christ : " of which choice we will have a word to say after a while.

The vacancy at the death of James, as we have stated, was not filled. The " promise " had been fulfilled, fifteen years then, and Peter was better informed as to the import of his " power to be a witness." *Acts* i. 8. To create apostles is not one of the qualifications of " a witness." The good James had given his testimony for fifteen years, and, with the honors of martyrdom, had gone to his reward : to this day, his place has not been filled, except after " the order of Matthias," the man-made apostle. Peter's fifteen years experience under the light of the Holy Ghost, had not confirmed him in his skill of Scripture quoting, and his fancied capacity for apostle making, by lot, or otherwise : for he had altogether renounced such pretensions : he never repeated that deed. Nor did any one or more of the apostles, propose or take part in such a transaction. After the death of James, the history runs on fifteen years without a trace of any apostle making : it seems to have died and made no sign ; as if anxious to hide away out of sight : the canon of Scripture was not closed for more than fifty years subsequent to this vacancy ; and when it did close, it was without the least

allusion to its having been filled; or, indeed, to any more apostle making, either human or divine. Something is said of deacon and elder making; and of their qualifications: but of apostle making, nothing. Certainly, this is very significant. What, then, does it signify?

At Mark iii. 14, we learn that he constituted (*epoieese*) TWELVE, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, etc. Luke says, vi. 13, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose TWELVE, whom also he named (*oonomase*) apostles; etc. Matth. x. 1, etc., narrates the calling unto him of his TWELVE disciples, to whom he gave power against unclean spirits, etc., and designates them as the TWELVE apostles. Not a word about any ceremony of ordination, or of any ordination at all, as we moderns ordain. For some reason, and doubtless an excellent one, our Lord was no favorer of ceremonies. Nor was the primitive Church. But we have the TWELVE: the specific, limited number: as we see, *Rev. xxi. 14*, "And the wall of the city (the new Jerusalem, *ver. 2*), had TWELVE foundations, and in them the names of the TWELVE apostles of the Lamb:" a limited number, as we see; the twelve apostles; not twelve of the apostles; twelve being the entire number of the foundations of the city, the Church, according to the plan of the Great Builder, Jesus, the Christ: and there is no succession of foundations to his Church, as the gates of hell will not prevail against it. Well, then, as to the twelve, what was their office?

It seems to have escaped the general perception, that, during the earthly sojourn of the Master, the twelve were pupils, ministers, in training for the grand purpose of testifying to the fact of his resurrection, which would attest, beyond all doubt, that "Jesus of Nazareth" was what he claimed to be, the Christ: they were to declare,

after his resurrection, "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we (*apostles*) all are witnesses." For this the twelve were in training, and this was to be their peculiar office. As to miracles and other spiritual gifts, they had them in common with other Christians. Mark's and Luke's gospels rank in authority with those of Matthew and John. Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people: *Acts* vi. 5, 8. Paul disavows, in plain terms, dominion over the faith of Christians. Eight years after the Pentecostal scene, and six after the conversion of Paul, we hear Peter, in consequence of a miraculous vision, declaring to Cornelius and his kinsmen and near friends "Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath showed me (by the miraculous vision) that I should not call any man common or unclean." *Acts* x. 28. This is very extraordinary language from the mouth of one, whom some have held to be the rock on which Christ built his Church: representing himself as "a man that is a Jew," and bound fast by the Mosaic ritual and pharisaic traditions; requiring a miraculous vision to teach him, that Jew and Gentile could only be defiled by sin; could only be cleansed by the blood of Jesus, "who tasted death for every man." *Heb.* ii. 9. And long after this, seventeen years, we find Peter "withstood to the face, because he was to be blamed," upon this very point; being charged and censured by Paul, for "compelling the Gentiles to live as do the Jews;" *i. e.* to conform to the traditions of the elders: *Gal.* ii. 11-16. This censure was administered, let it be mentioned, seven years after the convention of the apostles and brethren at Jerusalem, upon the subject of circumcision, even to that late day misunderstood by all the apostles except Paul. *Acts* xv.

The apostles, then, appear on the record as no high authority on faith and practice, save on this one point,

for which eleven of them had been trained, and the twelfth miraculously qualified, by the Master; the testifying to the fact that Jesus rose from the dead, and therefore was the promised Christ, so that there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved: *Acts* iv. 12. In this, their real and only peculiar office, they never faltered; they were thoroughly qualified, infallible.

It must not be overlooked, that the one single truth, that Jesus is the Christ, is the sole distinction of the New Testament. It is this that connects it with the Old Testament, as being its fulfilment: both Testaments having but one theology: and the ritual of the old being typical of the Christ to come, at his coming there was nothing left for ritual but to vanish from Christianity; leaving it a sublime simplicity, truth. Ritual came into Christianity as part of the Mosaic types; and when the typified came, the types were useless, they had answered their purpose, they were laid aside. Why should lambs be slaughtered as types of the true victim, when the blood of the true victim had been poured out for the sin of the world? *John* i. 29. Ritual is type; type has been superseded by memorial; Baptism to remind us of the first Adam, and The Supper to remind us of the second Adam, Jesus, the Christ: this is all: ritual with its day and necessity are only in the past.

Thus the twelve were not needed as theologians, where theology was old and settled; gospel preachers select their texts, even now, from the O. T. as readily and suitably as from the N. T.; Christ in both; Jesus as the Christ in the latter; nor as governors in a system where "it shall not be so among you," who are all brethren, equals, under the one Master, Christ: but they were needed to be witnesses of the resurrection, upon which fact rested the final proof of the Christship of Jesus. Here then is the Scriptural view of the

apostolate. And for this they were in training by the Master. They were, during that training, as is the case with students of law, or of medicine, intended for the apostolate, but no more apostles, than students of law or medicine are lawyers or doctors. The student must be specially empowered to practice, before he can enter upon his profession: no matter how extensive his acquirements, how complete his qualification in other respects; he must wait for the special power and authority, required. Thus we read, *Acts* i. 8, "But ye (apostles in preparation) shall receive POWER, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth (*tees gees*)." This is clear. They had not at the time of this utterance, power to act as apostles; but were to wait for it; wait for their diploma, which would be their warrant for their performance of the great trust to be confided to them. The coming of "the promise of the Father," the Holy Ghost, was to bring their power, commission, authority: and, therefore, up to that time, they had not been inducted into office; but were undergraduates; persons named for office, but not yet commissioned; not yet with power to act. And "not many days thence" the power came, on "the day of Pentecost;" and they immediately entered upon their official duty; proclaiming to the vast multitude, that had collected around them, "this Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we (apostles now) all are witnesses." And let it be observed that this Pentecostal sermon, is a fair specimen of the apostolic preaching; the chief point being to establish the claim of Jesus of Nazareth to be the Christ; the final, crowning proof being his resurrection, of which "we (apostles) all are witnesses," duly appointed and commissioned.

Another specimen, among many, is in the substance of Paul's discourse at Thessalonica, *Acts* xvii. 2, 3; "And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them (a synagogue of the Jews), and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ." Examining this statement with any care, we perceive that "the scriptures" here mentioned are the Old Testament writings of Moses, The Prophets, and The Hagiography, comprising the books of the Old Testament: from these Paul "reasoned with them," concerning Christ; not yet concerning Jesus; but Christ; the Christ predicted in those writings; and whom the Jews and their fathers, had so long been expecting: those scriptures contained much about the Christ; the Christ was their burden, their contents, their chief subject: they predicted, not the Christ of vain pomp and bloody victories in behalf of Israel; such as Paul, in common with his nation, had looked for by the false glare of the traditions of the elders; but a Christ suffering, dying, for the sins of MEN, and rising from the dead, for the justification of humanity: and when he had laid down these broad and deep foundations in "the scriptures;" then he proceeded to the grand point with him, as an apostle, to affirm, "that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ." Such is the analysis of his sermon: and such analysis would suit all the sermons of the TWELVE. Jesus did not exhibit the characteristics of the Christ of the traditions of the elders; therefore Paul with the Jewish leaders persecuted him, madly. But Jesus fulfilled the Scriptural characteristics of the Christ; and Paul, having discovered his own error, reasoned with the Jews "out of the scriptures," to demonstrate that JESUS was the Scriptural CHRIST. "And some of them believed;" renouncing the traditions which had made

the word of God of none effect; and returning to the "law and to the testimony:" while others "believed not," clinging to the traditions, and rejecting the Scriptural Christ, Jesus.

The preaching of the present day, has very different characteristics. Rarely is there man, woman, or child, in our congregations, who doubts that Jesus is the Christ; and therefore there is no need of an apostle to testify to us; we have accepted the fact; we have accepted the divine Scriptures of the New Testament writers; the need for apostles is unfelt; we never think of it; it ceased centuries ago, with what we call "the apostolic age." So, the great effort of the modern preacher, is to tell to the present generation of sinners, the way of salvation through the crucified, buried, risen, ascended, reigning Jesus, the Christ of God, the Saviour of sinners; to whose resurrection from the dead, the TWELVE bore witness. For many ages, there has been no need of apostles, and none have been; for God uses not needless, useless instruments. Our Lord chose and empowered the twelve, for an important, essential work; which they accomplished; went to their account; and there being no further need of such officers, no more such commissions have been issued, by the only authority in the universe competent to confer them.
Gal. i. 1.

So, Judas was not an apostle, except as a cadet; one in training; nominated, but never commissioned. He forfeited his commission by treachery and suicide; and did not "company" with the others, to whom the Lord Jesus appeared "alive, after his passion;" nor when the Holy Ghost came upon them, to qualify them officially for the apostolate. As, then, he never was an apostle, except as a nominee, the vacancy occasioned by his defection and death, was not a vacancy in the apostolate. There was no apostolate. A nominee had disappeared; but his fellow nominees had no authority to fill the

vacancy. The forty days continuance of the Lord with them, gave ample time for his own indisputable nomination, or for instructing them to do it, were such his pleasure. But, by the record, he did neither. Had he nominated, even Peter, rash as he was, would not have set it aside in silence : had he instructed them to nominate, Peter would not have alleged as the only motive for their act, a passage in the Psalms, which, as the Holy Ghost had not yet come upon him, he misinterpreted. Up to the day of Pentecost, there were no apostles : only nominees, awaiting power to enter into office.

When the time came for the TWELFTH apostle, the man was there, qualified, commissioned, empowered. Men would not have even dreamed of him to fill such position. They fled from him in terror. So far from his having "compained with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us ;" which was Peter's requisition ; the murderers of the gifted, eloquent, noble Stephen, had him an approving spectator of their inhuman deed. And when "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord," he was pursuing them to Damascus ; that merciful, loving Lord, who knew this seemingly fiendish, but really erring, conscientious adversary, appeared to him in the way ; blinded his bodily eye with his intolerable glory ; but opened the eye of his mind to see the mild radiance of the Christ, beaming forgivingly and lovingly from the face of Jesus ; and sent him for the healing of his blindness into Damascus. There even the good Ananias shrank back, when ordered to Paul's relief. "Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem : and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way : for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name (Jesus, as being the Christ, the testimony of Paul ever after) before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children

of Israel." *Acts* ix. Here was the TWELFTH apostle ; nominated "by Jesus Christ," *Ib.* ix. 15 ; commissioned by the Holy Ghost, *Ib.* ix. 17, 18 ; and accomplishing his duty in a manner, that makes the pages of the sacred history to glow with its lustre, through the continuance of its wondrous thirty years. The Lord was a far better apostle maker than cadet Peter ; a much better judge of what kind of a man was needed for the twelfth apostle ; the brightest star of that constellation ; the one whose grand intellect could grasp the fulfilment of the predicted coming in of the Gentiles, in accordance with the splendid promise to the three Patriarchs, that in "their seed ALL the nations of the earth should be blessed."

This occurred from nine to eleven years before the death of James, and by that time, the necessity for the employment of twelve witnesses had probably ceased. The original intention of having twelve had been consummated by the induction of Paul ; before whose accession, there had never been twelve apostles ; and, now, we have no record of any successor to James, or to any other apostle : the doctrine of "apostolic succession," having not one example in the Scripture : neither example nor precept : being nothing more than an invention of men, to the no little misleading of sincere Christians. Judas, to be sure, has had many successors in defection, in desertion and sale of the loving, patient Lord ; but could have none in the apostolate which he never occupied, and in which he could leave no vacancy. Paul's was an accession ; not a succession : there never was any succession to the apostolate.

We have much more to say on this subject ; yet, we would have ceased long since, but for the hope of contributing somewhat, to a clearer apprehension of the sublime functions of the good and great TWELVE, to whose momentous testimony the human race is so incalculably indebted. Not lords were they ; but faithful, indispensable WITNESSES.