

## II.

### THE APOSTOLATE.

The term Apostle signifies a messenger or a person sent, and like the term Deacon, may be variously applied. The obvious primary use of the term is to serve as the distinctive appellation of an extraordinary class of ecclesiastical officers. When St. Paul speaks of himself as being "born out of due time," and as being "the least of the Apostles," it is evident he has reference to the peculiarity and limitation of the apostolate. As a man, as a Christian, and as a Christian Minister, he was "not a whit behind the very chief of the Apostles," but as an Apostle he was "the least," and was "born out of due time." What is said of the Apostles sitting with Christ on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, and of "the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb" being in the "twelve foundations" of "the holy Jerusalem," clearly shows that the apostolate was peculiar and not ordinary—temporary and not permanent, and limited to a specific number of persons. It would be absurd to assert that every messenger in the Church, or every person called an Apostle, is an Apostle in the proper sense of the word; and yet this is the way in which some attempt to disprove the peculiarity and temporary duration of the Apostolate. Paul calls Epaphroditus an Apostle or messenger, in his epistle to the Philippians, ch. iii. v. 25, and he is therefore elevated by the advocates of the succession scheme to the rank of a proper Apostle. But Paul's own words refute the error, for he calls Epaphroditus "*your* (the Philippians') messenger," not the messenger of Jesus Christ, "and he that ministered to my wants." Because the Church at Philippi despatched this person, as their messenger, to St. Paul, with a contribution, he is therefore a proper Apostle! Shame on the cause that needs such support, and shame on the men who employ it! Although each of the twelve was a messenger, yet every messenger is not a proper Apostle. By attending to this distinction we may easily refute those successionists who delight in multiplying the Apostles mentioned in the New Testament to the number of seventeen or twenty, for the purpose of establishing a contracted, an exclusive and unchristian scheme, and who are, in effect, perpetually crying—"The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are we;" while their language and actions sufficiently indicate the absence of the Proprietor and Occupier of the Christian temple, from their paltry and inelegant edifice.