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Poetry.

LINES

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When on the verge of life I stand,
And view the awful flood,
Which rolls between me and the land
Where lies my chiefest good.

Tho' nature shrinking, fain would stop,
I must each billow brave,
Mortality I long to drop
Beneath its whelming wave.

I long to step upon that shore
Of everlasting rest,
Where storms of sorrow never more
Shall roll across my breast.

There joy eternal like a stream
Flows from the sacred throne,
Made bright by the refulgent beam,
Of Heaven's unsetting sun.

But lo! one object more sublime
Glows on my ravished sight,
On which inscribed by hand divine
In characters of light.

The name, the everlasting name
Of our redeeming God,
Who reared those trophies to His Fame
In his own precious blood.

Doctrine and Duty.

[FOR THE CHRISTIAN OBSERVER.]

THE APOSTLESHIP.

Our views of existing offices in the church of Christ are frequently misguided by a careless application of passages of scripture, rather than by an intentional misrepresentation of the truth. For example: we use some such general term as "the ministry," to designate the elder's office; and then without noticing the specific distinction, apply to that office all or any passages which speak of ministry or agency in the service of religion. We have heard what is called "an ordination sermon," preached from Numbers iii. 10: "And thou shalt appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall wait on their priest's office; and the stranger that cometh nigh

shall be put to death." But it is only a step more outrageous to go to the book of Numbers for the law of the eldership in the Christian church, than the more common error of applying to it, indiscriminately, texts in the New Testament which describe the functions of the apostleship.

John Ronge, in his celebrated letter to the Archbishop of Treves, remarks pointedly and truly on the proud assumption of the Popish bishops, "There was but one of the apostles who ever had a successor, and that one is Judas the traitor." Many who repudiate the Popish notion of succession in a direct line, hold the equally unscriptural notion of a succession in fact; and speak of themselves as the ambassadors of Christ; and claim for themselves apostolic functions. It is, therefore, a matter of some importance to determine precisely what is the office of an apostle, as exhibited in the New Testament scriptures.

The word, as all our readers know, signifies one who is sent as the representative of some body, or of some authority. In the New Testament we find apostles of some particular churches, in our version, styled "messengers." These were persons whom the churches sent to act on their behalf, or as their representatives in some particular service: as Epaproditus, the apostle or messenger of the church at Philippi, to minister to the wants of Paul during his imprisonment at Rome. But the designation, "Apostles of Jesus Christ," is limited to the little company of chosen witnesses and ambassadors who were sent clothed with supernatural power and authority to establish Christian churches, and communicate the will of the Lord to mankind. Originally, they were "the twelve." When Judas, by transgression fell, one was appointed in his room, not by election; but by a direct appeal to the Divine disposal of the lot; and subsequently Paul was added to the number, by a special revelation of Jesus Christ. These, and none others, were the apostles or ambassadors of Christ.

The vain assumption, or inconsiderate rashness which speaks of ordinary office-bearers in the church by these terms, which describe the functions and authority of the apostles, may be exposed by an examination of the qualifications and credentials of these chosen witnesses. And, happily we are not left to gather these from the history of those who filled the office in

general. The false teachers who infested the early churches, disputed the claims of Paul to apostolic authority; and his defence of his own claims, furnishes us with the most distinct views of what was absolutely essential to this office.

The essential qualifications of an apostle may be reduced to four particulars:—

1. *An express personal appointment to the office by the Lord himself.*—Not an election by a church, or by any man, or body of men under Christ, but a direct appointment by the Lord himself. Paul in the introduction of his epistles to the churches, when he designates himself an apostle, takes care to add "by the will of God;" and in his epistle to the Galatians, he still farther guards his claim by this precise language: "Paul, an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead." Luther, who will not be suspected of any leaning towards an extreme on this point, says in his commentary on the passage: "Therefore when Paul saith 'not of men, neither by men,' he beateth down the false apostles, as much as though he would say:—'Although these vipers bray never so much, what can they bray more than they are either come from men, that is to say of themselves, without any calling; or by man, that is to say, sent by others. I pass not upon any of these, neither should you regard them. As for me, I am called and sent neither of men, nor by man; but without means, that is to wit by Jesus Christ himself; and my calling is like in all points the calling of the apostles; and I am indeed an apostle.'" "So," he continues, "Matthias was called only of God; for when the other apostles had appointed two, they durst not choose the one or the other; but they cast lots, and prayed that God would shew which of them he would have; for, seeing he should be an apostle, it behoved that he should be called of God. In the Acts of the Apostles we have an explicit account of Paul's appointment by the Lord himself—first, at his appearance on the way to Damascus; and then, three years afterwards, when Paul was praying in the temple; and the Lord appeared to him, and said, "Depart; for I will send thee far hence to the Gentiles."

2. *A preparation to bear witness to the Lord, by having seen him in the body after his resurrection.*—The Lord said to the