

The construction put upon the phrase, "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry," is probably correct; and yet it is hardly supposable that there could be in it any allusion to the qualification of the apostles for their work, though they were prominent among the gifts named. For apostles were not given to qualify apostles to be apostles, but to convert men to Christ and to teach the "all things" which their Lord commanded them. It was undoubtedly their business to teach evangelists, pastors, and teachers. Read Paul's two letters to Timothy and the one to Titus, written to teach the duties of evangelists. See also Acts xx. 17 to 33; also 1 Pet. v. 1 to 5, and understand how they taught pastors their duty. And it would be instituting a cause without regard to the effect, to qualify men with so much care for a specific work or ministry when the ministry itself was to be abandoned as soon as they were qualified for it.

It often turns out in the common concerns of life, in the department of causation, that there is a considerable chain, in which the effect of one cause becomes in turn the cause of a new effect; and thus link after link is added to the chain. Indeed it is only now and then that the first link brings us to the ultimatum of our wishes. Precisely so in the case under consideration. The ministry of evangelists, pastors, and teachers was instituted, and means ordained to qualify men for such ministry, "for the edifying of the body of Christ." The apostle did stop when he had spoken of the gifts in the 11th verse, as being "for the adapting of these saints to the work of the ministry," [see New Translation]—but clearly makes this ministry the Lord's means ordained "for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man (people)," &c.—"that we henceforth should be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine;" but that all "may grow up into him in all things, which is the Head," and thus "the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

It strikes me that it is pretty evident, that this organization was instituted as a means of, and was to last until the body of Christ attains its greatest magnitude and its highest perfection:—then what becomes of the third objection?

[To be continued.]

THOMAS LAING.

[Our good brother will excuse us for serving up his essay in two portions, as we are crowded for space; besides, the common reader will thus be likely to examine the whole more thoroughly.—D. O.]