

**THE SEAL OF APOSTLESHIP; AN
ORDINATION SERMON
PREACHED AT ST. ANDREW'S
CHURCH, RED RIVER, ON
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22, 1850**

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The seal of apostleship; an ordination sermon preached at St. Andrew's Church, Red River, on Sunday, December 22, 1850 by David Anderson

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DAVID ANDERSON

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ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22, 1850.

BY

DAVID ANDERSON, D.D.,

LORD BISHOP OF RUPERT'S LAND.

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1851.

A SERMON.

“The seal of mine Apostleship are ye in the Lord.”—
1 Cor. ix. 2.

ALLUSION is here made to the method in which any important covenant or agreement is usually ratified. The most solemn confirmation is the seal, which is universally accepted as the sure pledge of the validity and genuineness of the document, to which it is affixed. And this figure, borrowed from earthly transactions between man and man, is often employed in Scripture to illustrate spiritual and heavenly truth.

It is thus employed regarding God the Father, revealing a way of salvation to the creature, sending His only begotten Son, as the appointed Mediator, the accredited messenger of the covenant, with tokens of His divine authority, “Him

hath God the Father sealed." It is employed regarding the believer, accepting the message, resting on it, and declaring it to be the sure refuge of his soul; when thus believing and receiving the testimony, "he sets to his seal that God is true." It is applied beyond this to that inward token of his adopting love, which God bestows upon all his true children, as the pledge and earnest of the full inheritance prepared for them above: "In whom after ye believed ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of your inheritance." And, to quote but one other passage, it is used by the Apostle, when he would sum up the whole of religion in few words. When wishing to prove that religion is no vain and shadowy thing, as the world would have it—that the doubts of the sceptic, the life of the ungodly professor, do not affect the eternal truth of God; "nevertheless," the Apostle says—notwithstanding any such cavils—"the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." As in the foundation of an earthly building is often deposited a stone engraved with the name of the builder, and the purpose of the erection, so of the spiritual temple, the great Builder is God, and His design is to gather together "a chosen generation, a royal

priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people." * Or, to view it perhaps in a simpler light, as a seal often bears on its sides a twofold inscription, yet one only obvious to the eye, so of the divine foundation the broad seal is sure—hidden and concealed from the eye is the Lord's secret knowledge of His people, but evident to all, and clearly legible is that personal holiness, which is the reflected image of the Creator, the only authentic and indisputable proof of a genuine work of grace in the soul.

Such, then, is the figure used by the Apostle, in reference to the Corinthian converts. If any questioned or disparaged his authority, his answer was at hand and ready, he could invite them to look around, and behold sufficient proof and evidence that his commission was from heaven. He could appeal to many souls, as his work in the Lord, or, in other words, as the seals of his apostleship: "They were to him what the king's seal is to the ambassador; signs that he speaks not for himself, but for the king, his master." †

Now, in contemplating apostolic labour, we may surely view it under a twofold aspect. We may, on the one hand, consider St. Paul as sending forth others to preach the word, com-

* See Parkhurst, and Doddridge in loc.

† Abp. Sumner's Commentary.

mitting the good treasure into their hands, and beseeching them not to neglect the gift that is in them, but to make full proof of their ministry. He finds one at Lystra, another at Antioch, others at Philippi or at Rome, and when he sees the work of grace advancing within them, and that from energy, from zeal for souls and general ability, they seem fitted for the work, then he sets them apart as chosen instruments, and ordains them to the ministry of the word. Over such how unfeignedly would he rejoice,—his own sons in the faith, his fellow-workers and fellow-helpers,—and, as he heard of their success in winning souls, he would say, “The seal of mine Apostleship are ye.” But, on the other hand, we may contemplate him looking upon those, to whom he had himself preached the message of life, and to whose souls that message had been blessed, dwelling on such as the signs and tokens of his ministry. Of such he would say, “Though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel.”

In such a double application, I propose to consider the words. In reference to those about to be ordained this morning by the solemn imposition of hands, I would humbly say, “The seal of mine Apostleship are these,” and then, enlarging the field of view, summoning before the eye those