



Apostle Carlyle's Thoughts on the Work of Apostles for Christendom

In 1843 Apostle Carlyle published a book which was intended to introduce the general public to some important ideas from the "Great Testimony".¹ This was done before sealing was introduced (1847) and before Carlyle really started his apostolic activity in North Germany. In this article we present some ideas which the apostle originally published in German in 1850 and 1851.

The German version of *Apostles, Given, Lost, and Restored* was published in Berlin in 1850 by the church publisher C.G. Brandis. It was printed in larger letters than the English version published in 1853 and contained 91 pages. In the year after, a little booklet of only 16 pages appeared at the same publisher's, later published in English as *A Short History of the Apostolic Work*. This booklet contained the text of a lecture the apostle had held at Buchwaeldchen, a little place in Silesia.² Both publications were intended for distribution among members of the apostolic churches only. The first publication was to explain "the nature of the work done and to be done by apostles,"³ the second was to show what had already happened and what was still expected to happen through apostles before Christ's return.

Interruption and Continuation of the Apostolic Work

"It is the Church ... which is Apostolic" we read in the Great Testimony,⁴ but the reader cannot feel quite sure if this only applies to a church led by apostles. If all ministries continued to exist in Christ as the head of the church, one may conclude that the church was apostolic even when there were no apostles active in the church. Apostle Carlyle's view was that the church, being apostolic, should have had living apostles at all times. He admitted that God "follows his children, in their error and ignorance, with his blessing, in so far as consists with his wisdom",⁵ but he warns that "we dare not use that operation as an argument against his legitimate mode of working, by demanding that the exception shall be the rule."⁶ He holds that "the past 18 centuries form a gap in the legitimate divine leadership" in which the church passed through the wilderness⁷ and "has not progressed a step".⁸ If there are apostles in the church there must be progress towards the heavenly goal: "Their work is a continual travail in birth"⁹

¹ Cf. Walter Drave and Manfred Henke, „Die Kirche in unserer Zeit“. Zum Kirchenverständnis des Apostels Carlyle“, *Unsere Familie*, 2/2007 of 20 Januar 2007, pp. 32-34. There is no English version of this article.

² The present Polish name is Buczynka in Silesia.

³ Carlyle, *Apostles Given, Lost, and Restored*, London 1853, p. 33. We quote (where possible) from this English version. The text is published on this website together with this article. References to the page numbers of the German edition are included. For the text of the German edition, cf. the German version of this article.

⁴ "Great Testimony", paragraph 43, cf. the synopsis published by the Work Group "History of the NAC on 19 September 2006 at <http://www.nak.org/en/news/publications/article/14439/>.

⁵ Carlyle, *Apostles Given, Lost, and Restored*, p. 12.

⁶ Ibid., p. 12, cf. ibid., p. 32.

⁷ Carlyle, *Das apostolische Amt*, Berlin 1850, p. 40. Text quoted as translated by us and inserted into our edition of Carlyle, *Apostles Given*, as an addition to p. 23.

⁸ Carlyle, *Apostles Given, Lost, and Restored*, p. 23.

⁹ Ibid., p. 23



The church cannot do without apostles, for “Apostles are called to present the church as a chaste spouse to the Lord”¹⁰ “The work of apostles . was expressly appointed to continue till a certain end should be attained. They were given, to work, till we all come unto the unity of the faith and of the recognition of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”¹¹ After a time when God’s work had come to a standstill it was now every Christian’s duty to submit to the apostles. So long as nothing better appeared, these efforts of piety were blessed. But so soon as God gives the better thing, if men do not accept. it, He withdraws His blessing from that which they have. For blessing stands in connexion with obedience. Whosoever will not receive that which Christ presents to him, will find no blessing in that which he retains in preference thereto.”¹²

How Apostles can once again become active

Carlyle gives a vivid description of the difficulties that were due to arise when apostles were once again sent. A person who announced new apostles sent to Christendom “would be denounced as a heretic or confined as a madman” by those who were in places of authority in the church and “he who should speak by the Spirit of prophecy would be silenced as a brawler”..¹³ In spite of these difficulties, God had found a way to restore apostles – “not by theoretical instruction, but by the actual exercise of his power. ... His arm hath awaked as in the days of old. He hath arisen to lead the blind by a way that they knew not.”¹⁴

They were blind because “no one rightly knew what an Apostle was, what duties and functions appertained to the apostolic ministry.”¹⁵ “First, Apostles were called by God through prophecy ... And although this was not done in a secret chamber, it was done in a manner known only to a small number of believers and, so to speak, in their homely circle.”¹⁶ Being ignorant of their privileges and duties as apostles, but also “because we had little apprehended the reality of our ministry, and believed little as to that which God would accomplish by us, and the preparation of men’s hearts to receive us”, Carlyle and his fellow apostles had, for some time, only acted on express prophetic instructions. “Our actings as Apostles were limited to definite objects and temporary missions.”¹⁷

All this changed after they had been separated for their work by the Angels (bishops) of the Seven Churches in London on 14 July 1835. Those Seven churches constituted “the symbol of the Church Catholic”.¹⁸ By this separation, the Angels acknowledged “the apostolic rule as the perfect manner of ruling” and from then on the apostles “have taken upon themselves the more complete apostolic functions to exercise them towards all those who receive them.”¹⁹ At their separation, their “rule” “was acknowledged by the faithful of the tribe of Judah”, which meant England.²⁰ Carlyle instructs his German public about the various testimonies, the dis-

¹⁰Ibid., p. 17.

¹¹Ibid., p. 38

¹² Thomas Carlyle, *A Short History of the Apostolic Work*, London 1851, p. 5. Our edition of this booklet is appended to this article.

¹³ Carlyle, *Apostles Given*, p. 33.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 33.

¹⁵ Carlyle, *Short History*, p. 11.

¹⁶ Carlyle, *Das apostolische Amt*, Berlin 1850, p. 76. Text quoted as translated by us and inserted into our edition of Carlyle, *Apostles Given*, as an addition to p. 41.

¹⁷ Carlyle, *Short History*, p. 12.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 13.

¹⁹ Carlyle, *Das apostolische Amt*, Berlin 1850, p. 75. Text quoted as translated by us and inserted into our edition of Carlyle, *Apostles Given*, as an addition to p. 41.

²⁰ Carlyle, *Geschichte des apostolischen Werkes*, p. 15 as translated in our synopsis added to Carlyle, *Short History*, p.15 (pagination at the bottom of page).



tribution of the “tribes” as the apostles’ spheres of action and their efforts to compile a liturgy which was to enable all Christians to worship God in uniform manner. He does not refer to the introduction of the rite of sealing in 1847, but he defines this rite as the apostles’ essential task and emphasizes its importance for the perfection of the Church: Sealed by apostles, the church is, at the first, sent into the world, to fight the fight of faith. Sealed by apostles, the church, long vanquished and captive, at length overcomes; and is, at the last, taken out of the world from the great tribulation, and so prepared to come with Christ.”²¹

The Work to be done by Apostles before the Return of Christ

In the time of the end, apostles are needed to perfect the church and lead her as a chaste bride unto Christ. To achieve this, the apostles must begin by re-establishing the divine ordinances within the church. The ignorance, uncleanness, and rebellion of man may obscure, impede or resist the development of the body of Christ; but the divine scheme of the church cannot be changed.²² This “divine Scheme” of the church, Carlyle teaches, is typified in the tabernacle of Old Testament times, and the apostles had to restore such a church immediately before Christ’s return. As Eliezer “neither tarried by the way nor devolved his errand upon another, so should apostles be zealous and finish their work themselves.”²³

As Carlyle sees it, the rule of King David typifies what the apostle of New Testament times as well as the apostles of his day experienced. When Samuel anointed him, “the spirit of the Lord came upon him .., but none but some men who were banned and in distress gathered around him”, then “he permitted the men of Judah to anoint him king over them”, and finally, “after all the tribes of Israel had come to him at Hebron, he was by them anointed king of all Israel.”²⁴ Similarly, the first apostles “were secretly chosen by the Lord after he had spent a night in prayer ... Then they were sent to the lost sheep of Israel, and to nobody else ... Finally they were sent to all nations.”²⁵ In the time of the end, God had pursued the same course. Their call and separation were the antitype of the first and the second anointing David had received.²⁶

They still were to be sent out as typified by the third anointing David received, and “then the Apostles will receive power and commission as they have not yet.”²⁷ Then men would have to take sides for or against Christ. The apostles are waiting “for a time when all Christendom shall be tried, they are waiting for the day when from every tribe the faithful ones, those whose hearts strive for perfection, shall acknowledge the commission given to the Apostles to bring about perfection and when they shall ask them to take up their due position as heads of the Catholic church – the time when the apostate shall chose and prefer to follow Antichrist”. Apart from the followers of Antichrist there will be those “who do not wish to be perfect”, and as a consequence they “shall end up in the terrible hour of temptation” while

²¹ Carlyle, *Apostles Given*, p. 37.

²² Ibid., p. 18.

²³ Ibid., p. 17.

²⁴ Carlyle, *Das apostolische Amt*, Berlin 1850, p. 75. Text quoted as translated by us and inserted into our edition of Carlyle, *Apostles Given*, as an addition to p. 41. Carlyle refers to 1 Sam. 16.13; 2 Sam.22.,2; 2 Sam. 2.4; 2. Sam. 5.3.

²⁵ Carlyle, *Das apostolische Amt*, Berlin 1850, p. 75. Text quoted as translated by us and inserted into our edition of Carlyle, *Apostles Given*, as an addition to p. 41. Carlyle refers to Luke 6.12; Matth. 10.5,6; Matth. 28.19.

²⁶ Carlyle, *Das apostolische Amt*, Berlin 1850, p. 75f. Text quoted as translated by us and inserted into our edition of Carlyle, *Apostles Given*, as an addition to p. 41, and Carlyle, *Short History*, p. 16.

²⁷ Carlyle, *Geschichte des apostolischen Werkes*, p. 15 as translated in our synopsis added to Carlyle, *Short History*, p.15 (pagination at the bottom of page).



"those who are perfect shall be kept safe from this hour in the Lord's pavilion". Alluding to Revelations 12, the apostle describes those he calls perfect as "the son of the woman" who "shall be translated to the throne of God" when "the devil shall make war on the remnant of her seed."²⁸

"Pray incessantly that their number may be completed"

Apostle Carlyle's lecture at Buchwaeldchen was almost instantly printed and distributed in the churches to call upon the faithful in North Germany that they should pray for a good success of the apostles' council that had been convened for Pentecost 1851.²⁹ Carlyle apparently expected the apostles to take steps "that their number may be completed – for one of the Apostles has become unfaithful".³⁰ In the year before, Carlyle had explained why he considered a full complement of twelve apostles important. In principle, he explained, the apostolic office ... , as we know from all Scripture, ought to be fulfilled by 12, although it can stand in fewer." – "And, if an apostle prove faithless, the corporate power remains with the faithful, however their action may be crippled by his absence.".³¹ It was God's will that these twelve should not exercise "12 separate governments, more or less alike and united; but the exercise of one government through 12."³² In reality, however, the apostles had ceased to act as a united college. Two apostles had applied for them to meet in council to take steps towards putting an end to this unsatisfactory state of the apostolic work. We will shed light on this in the next article of our series.

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²⁸ Carlyle, *Das apostolische Amt*, Berlin 1850, p. 76. Text quoted as translated by us and inserted into our edition of Carlyle, *Apostles Given*, as an addition to p. 41.

²⁹ Carlyle, *Geschichte des apostolischen Werkes*, p. 15 as translated in our synopsis added to Carlyle, *Short History*, p.15 (pagination at the bottom of page) and Thiersch's preface (as translated by the editors, ibid., p. 2).

³⁰ Carlyle, *Geschichte des apostolischen Werkes*, p. 16 as translated in our synopsis added to Carlyle, *Short History*, p.15 (pagination at the bottom of page).

³¹ Carlyle, *Apostles Given*, p.37.

³² Ibid., S. 68 f.