

in the Church of Christ, went down to Samaria and preached Christ unto them, and there was great joy in that city. "But when they believed Philip, preaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." "Now when the Apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (for as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost." Now I consider that this case, if there were no other, settles the whole question. Here we have a Deacon preaching and baptizing. This was all he could do. He had no authority to lay on hands, or he would have done it. And we have two Apostles sent, by the others who were at Jerusalem, down to Samaria;—for what purpose? To lay on hands upon those who had been baptized by the Deacon. They possessed a power which he did not. There was then a difference in the Christian ministry, as there is now. The Bishop from that period holding the same authority as held by the Apostles; and they, ever since, as we shall show, continuing the same rite and practice in the Church. Here, then, is what we mean by Confirmation—the laying on hands of the Chief Pastor of the Church, upon those who have been baptized—that they may receive the renewing and purifying influence of the Holy Ghost. And here is our authority—the Word of God. But it may be said this was only to confer the extraordinary influences of the Spirit; to enable them to prophecy and speak in different languages, &c. We fully and cheerfully admit that in the Apostolic age of the Church, such results frequently followed after the laying on of hands. But we have no evidence that all, both men and women, who were baptized by Philip, and received the laying on of hands by the Apostles, prophesied and spake with tongues. Even if they did it would make no difference, nor in the least degree weaken our argument. They needed, as all Christians do, the ordinary influences of the Spirit, to strengthen them in their profession of faith in Christ, to purify their hearts, and enable them to persevere unto the end. Without this, they would have fallen away from the faith. Now this they received at their Confirmation, and if miraculous gifts were also given, it could make no difference. For we find the latter ceased after the Apostolic age; but the ordinary gifts of the Spirit are always necessary, and without which no man could ever become a sincere and humble follower of Christ, and be purified in heart. We might rest the whole question on the case before us. But I proceed to add to the argument, and show that there are

other cases, and that Confirmation, or laying on of hands, is considered by St. Paul as among the very first principles of the doctrine of Christ. The case to which I refer is contained in the 19th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. On a certain occasion St. Paul visited Ephesus and found certain disciples there, when he said unto them, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied." Here then we have, first, Christian baptism, and immediately following, Confirmation, or the laying on of hands. They were not baptized by St. Paul, but by some other minister, one who had not the power to lay on hands, or he would no doubt have done so. But St. Paul laid on his hands, and they received the Holy Ghost. They received the ordinary influences of the Spirit, for these were necessary to make them true Christians; and the extraordinary gifts, to enable them to bear testimony to the truth of the claims of Christ as the promised Messiah. These latter gifts were necessary, in many cases, to convince the Jew as well as attract the Gentile; but this necessity having passed away, and the days of miracles ceased, only the ordinary influences of the Spirit are now received by the laying on of hands. If they only had received miraculous gifts, they would not of necessity be Christians; but the desire of the Apostles was to make them decided followers of Christ. Such a practice is as binding upon us as it was upon the early Christians. We need, as much as they, the renewing influences of the Holy Ghost. And we certainly can follow no safer guides than those who were instructed by the Lord himself. But St. Paul puts his own interpretation upon his own acts, and clearly teaches us that this rite was to be continued in the Church of Christ—that it was not simply to convey miraculous gifts, but was necessary for all Christians who wished to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. He classes it with the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, and therefore it is necessary for all. A principle of the religion of Christ cannot be set aside, for it must lie at the very foundation of Christian character. And, if it formed such a basis, on which the early disciples were to build their spiritual edifice, it cannot be rejected by us. In addressing the Hebrews, he says, in his 6th chapter, in urging them to make greater and more rapid