

Epistle to the Hebrews which I believe S. Paul wrote. And before I proceed to put these four things side by side, I must urge the importance of remembering how absolutely independent S. Paul's testimony is. What he did and what he taught, he learned 'neither from men nor by man,' but by *direct revelation from Our Lord himself*. So that he was 'no whit behind the chiefest Apostles' in his ability to say that he was teaching men 'to observe whatsoever Christ had commanded him.' And every witness of his, if I may so say, is there fore clear gain; so much extra light thrown on our Lord's plan of teaching and work.

When S. Peter, in Samaria, preached the first Christian sermon in answer to that great question of the interested multitude, it always seemed to me that he told them to do *three* things and not *two*; that is to say, when he said, '*Repent and be baptised, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost*,' I am quite sure he did not mean that the Holy Ghost was to come to them in Holy Baptism.

Because, in the first place, when the news came to him of the conversion of the Samaritans, and of their baptism by Philip the Deacon, he and S. John went down immediately to Samaria, and 'laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost;' and S. Luke adds, by way of emphasis and explanation, 'for as yet he was fallen upon none of them, *only* they were baptised.' It seems to me an irresistible conclusion, therefore, that we have doctrine and practice side by side in S. Peter's sermon, '*Ye shall receive the Holy Ghost*,' and in S. Peter's act in the confirmation of the baptised Samaritans. And that this was not local, isolated or temporary, one gathers from the fact that in speaking of the duty of receiving the Holy Ghost, S. Peter says, 'The promise to you *and* to your children, *and* to all that are far off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.' I do not go into any argument, because it is needless, and out of place here, to prove that this laying on of hands was not for the conveyance of miraculous gifts alone. There are three things to be noted in such a transaction,—the gift, the sign, and the result. And they are all different. The gift is the Holy Ghost; the sign is the laying on of hands; the result may be, or may not be, miraculous. Certainly, if one gathers anything from what S. Paul writes to the Corinthians [and nobody knew better than he the value of miraculous gifts], the manifestation of the Spirit is various: and the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge and faith, are put in the same catalogue with, and *put before*, healing and miracles and divers kinds of tongues.

Now take the other case. S. Paul, writing to the Hebrew Christians a description of what he calls the 'principles of the doctrine of Christ,' includes among the six, and as the fourth, the laying on of hands. What did he mean by it? Let him answer the question himself, and explain his teaching, as S. Peter explained his, by his practice. He went down to Ephesus, and finding twelve men there, believers so far as they had knowledge of the truth, he first taught them the doctrine of baptism by his practice; that is, he showed them the difference between the merely formal and external rite of S. John the Baptist, and the spiritual and interior baptism which he gave them. And then *also* by his practice he taught them the doctrine of the laying on of hands, for he proceeded to confirm them, as we would say, just as S. Peter did at Jerusalem, and 'they received the Holy Ghost.'

I go back now to the point from which I started. St. Paul calls this "a principle of the doctrine of Christ." He could only have known of it from Christ Himself. In like manner, St. Peter, as one of those who also 'had the mind of Christ,' acts in this matter, not *proprio motu*, but according to the teachings which he and the other Apostles had received during the years of intimate association before our Lord's

death, and during the great forty days which our Lord spent with the Apostles' principally 'teaching them the things concerning the Kingdom of God;' and then by the motion of the Holy Spirit, who was sent to 'call their remembrance' the things that Christ had taught them, in order that they might be guarded and guided to fulfil the great commission; to teach baptized people 'to observe all things whatsoever He had commanded them.' Who shall presume to say that 'this laying on of hands' was not one of the things which they were commanded to teach all baptized people to observe? If anybody objects to this it makes Confirmation a Sacrament, I have only to say that this is no objection. The only objection would be for us as Churchmen, if we put it on a level with the two great Sacraments. For it is mere carelessness of speech not to remember that the only thing which this Church teaches is that Christ has ordained *only* two Sacraments as 'generally necessary to salvation,' which proves, *not* that Confirmation is *not* a Sacrament, but only that it is *not* necessary to salvation.

Under this presentation of the case, it does not seem to me that any words of mine are needed to bring the argument to the focal point of its application. If Confirmation is 'a principle of the doctrine of Christ,' and if its administration, by historical evidence, was confined to the Apostles, it stands to reason that the office appointed to administer it must necessarily be continued in the Church of Christ; and this is why we should expect to find what for convenience sake is called the Historic Episcopate, perpetuated in the Church.—*Church Review, N. Y.*

#### CHRISTMAS DAY.

The Festival of the NATIVITY of CHRIST is more than worthy of all the devotion and honour we have it in our power to render to it. The Incarnation and Birth of the Divine Son is the greatest event in human history. Because it was contemplated from the beginning, all the religious institutions of mankind have reference to it. Until it should take place the religious training of the world was carried on by provisional and temporary systems; first that of the Patriarchs, and then that of the Mosaic Law. Types and sacrifices expressed the yearnings of mankind for a new point of departure in spiritual progress; for deliverance from that "body of death" which was the consequence of sin. As, therefore, the Fall was the first *datum* in the spiritual history of mankind, so the Incarnation of the Divine Son is the second. It is the new Creation; as the Incarnate Son is the Second Adam, (I Cor. xv 47), the source and ancestor of a purified and regenerated Human Nature.

It is most properly, therefore, the commencement of our Christian cycle of yearly observance. It is the *Christian Era*; and our years are in more than one sense counted from it. Advent is merely a season of preparation intercalated before it, in order to its better observance. — S. J. Eales.

#### "THY KINGDOM COME."

Of all portions of the Christian year none means more to the Christian man who has risen to the height of his calling than these four weeks of Advent and their consummation in Christmas Day. The coming of the Lord in the form of perfect Man is to the Christian the centre of history. The coming of His Kingdom on earth is the one event worth looking for, praying for, working for.

So when we pray, 'Thy Kingdom come,' we

mean it; and if we are faithful men, we show our sincerity by deed as well as by word. To make his own life a kingdom in itself, with undivided allegiance to the one King to bring others into the same allegiance; to transform and regenerate human life; to conquer the kingdoms of this world by entering into them and claiming them for Christ; to proclaim far and wide the good news of His coming—that is the calling of the Christian man and that is the state of active life into which it has pleased God to call him. Our efforts we know to be weak and imperfect; we may not hope to see their accomplishment ourselves; but we can labor on in faith and love, with trust in God and a growing hope that in every truth the Day of the Lord is at hand. For which indeed we pray each day, 'Thy Kingdom come.'—*Selected.*

#### HOW NOT TO DO.

If our clergy wish to have their vocation receive due honor, it becomes them to manifest a due appreciation of it themselves. To come into the chancel with a surplice soiled and out of repair, and then to attempt to read the services and lessons without previous preparation and without due care as respects clear and distinct articulation, pronunciation, etc., is quite certain to insure an unedifying result and to lower the standard of the dignity of worship in the parish. The dignity of worship in the average parish has also suffered diminution of late because of the increased tendency to vary from the established order of worship; for instead of having the result of the decision of the best minds as to that which is preferable in the order of the service (the consensus of the competent) there is substituted the opinion of each clergyman as to what is best to use or to omit, an evil which is none the less serious because the omissions are often made to give more time for the sermon, all of which tends to subordinate worship to preaching.

The responses by the average congregation are not satisfactory, because it is, in this matter, without a file-leader. Each person "goes as he pleases." A parish known to the writer is trying to remedy this difficulty by training its vested choir of forty persons to act as a file-leader in this matter for the laity. They read the Psalter *slowly and distinctly*, stopping at each punctuation mark, and thus encourage all the congregation to read with them. The improvement thus far secured is very marked, and the adoption of this plan is recommended to parishes troubled with inadequate responses by the laity.

The discouraging ignorance of the members of the average congregation as to the history of the Church and its distinctive characteristics, and as respects the history and advantages of liturgical worship, is not to be wondered at when one considers how little is done to ensure a different state of things. Each parish should have classes for instruction by the rector in such subjects. The young people of the parish should pass from the Sunday school grades into these classes exactly as children in the public schools pass from the grammar schools into the high school.

There should also be in each parish an opportunity furnished to each boy or girl for instruction in the elements of vocal music, so that the plain chants and hymn music of the Church could be sung by the young people without difficulty.

Let us now suppose a parish with a rector whose sense of the dignity of worship and of the nobility of his functions in connection therewith is such that he will carefully arrange and find the places in all of the chancel service books before the laity arrive; that he will carefully go over the entire service, including the Lessons, before entering the chancel; that