

received the Holy Ghost," \* \* \*. "Through laying of the apostles' hands, the Holy Ghost was given." If confirmation had not been an important rite, the apostles probably would not have taken the trouble to send two of their most prominent bishops, SS. Peter and John, to administer the rite to the baptized converts of St. Philip. In Heb. vi, 2 the laying of hands, or confirmation, is called one of "the principles of the doctrine of Christ," one of the "foundations" of the Christian life. From the time of the apostles, all down through the centuries, the Church has held to the doctrine and practice of the laying on of hands. This is shown by Tertullian, St. Cyprian, St. Jerome, by the Venerable Bede and numerous others. Confirmation is, therefore, apostolic and universal, a mark of the true church. Said a learned Presbyterian, while groping for the true Church: "I could not find in antiquity any beginning to 'this laying on of hands,' but at the hands of the apostles." The prayer in the confirmation office of the prayer book beginning, "Almighty and everlasting God who has vouchsafed to regenerate these Thy servants," has come down to us by constant use of the church from a far distant antiquity, probably from the times of the apostles. St. Ambrose, in the old cathedral of Milan, in the year 375, more than 1500 years ago, used this venerable office. This same prayer is found in the confirmation office of the Greek church. Confirmation being thus rooted in apostolic times, practiced by the apostles and by the primitive church, supported by the scriptures and strongly held to by the Eastern church the Roman church and by nearly all Christendom, nothing but the rankest sectarianism could object to it. Even the Lutherans have retained the outward form of confirmation, though they have no ministry properly authorized to "lay on hands." Our Baptist and Presbyterian friends, in this country, have recognized the authority and usefulness of confirmation. It is the rite that ratifies baptismal vows and gives strength to keep them, and should not be put off by any one who is over 12 years of age and is properly prepared.—*The Church, Michigan.*

#### THE RESURRECTION A PLEDGE OF OUR IMMORTALITY.

It is impossible for us to comprehend what the gospel has done to dissipate the terrible darkness which otherwise would shroud the grave and the future. The great fact of a future life is now as familiar to us as the existence of India or China. We no more fear when our friends pass out of our sight through the doorway of death, that they have become extinct, and are never more to be seen by us, than we do when they pass below the horizon on a voyage to Europe. And as we think of our own departure from these familiar scenes and the loved associates of our present life, we are not compelled to look with inexpressible recoil into the dread abyss of annihilation, or even into an impenetrable darkness as one peers down into a midnight chasm to which he can see no bottom. But this is the terrible aspect which death and the future wore to the ancients, and which they would still wear to us, but for the light which the gospel has shed upon them.

The great majority, even among the Greeks and Romans, seem to have disbelieved in any life beyond the present. Socrates tells us that in his day "men in general were highly incredulous as to the soul's future existence. They thought that at the moment of death it was dispersed like smoke in the air and ceased entirely to exist." And the belief of the common people was largely shared by the philosophers. Cicero attempted to prove that we still live after death,

but acknowledged that "the contrary opinion was the prevailing one, and that even in his own mind his doubts often outweighed his belief." Aristotle almost contemptuously dismisses the question of a future life, as if the doctrine was only a poetic fable unworthy of his serious consideration. Julius Cæsar, at the time Pontifex Maximus, or supreme head of the Roman priesthood, publicly objected in the senate chamber to inflicting capital punishment upon Catiline "because death was the end of all things. There was no existence for the soul after it left the body, nothing either of good or evil beyond the present life." And no one expressed any surprise at such a sentiment from such a source.

Such declarations as these by such men show us how generally the dismal doctrine of annihilation was accepted. Death was indeed the "King of terrors." He robbed men of all the hopes and enjoyments of this life, and gave them nothing whatever beyond. When parents were called to surrender to the Great Destroyer the children of their love, they were sustained by no ray of hope that they might ever meet them again. When husband and wife were torn apart by the inexorable tyrant whom none could resist, the best thing left for the survivor was to obliterate, as speedily as possible, every harrowing remembrance of the departed, who had simply evaporated into nothingness. Who can imagine what our life would be if such an appalling gloom enshrouded the grave?

That our whole life is not thus darkened by the projected gloom of the future is due entirely to the religion of Jesus. This has "brought life and immortality to light." This has told us, as nothing else ever did or ever could, of an endless life to come. This has pointed our exultant gaze to the New Jerusalem, with its gates of pearl and streets of gold. This has told us of the reunion there, where "there is no more death," of the loved and loving ones who have been separated here below. This has taught us that Death is not, as heathenism said, the "King of terrors," but an angel from heaven, whom our Father sends to unbar our prison-door, and let us go home to him and the dear ones who have gone before us. And this Easter day is the commemoration of that sublime fact which more than any other, proclaimed and proved to the world the immortality of man. Christ's resurrection was the God-given pledge of ours. He rose from the dead not merely for himself, but as "the first fruits of them that slept," as the forerunner and herald to the world of the resurrection of his people.

Not that he was the first to return from the spirit-world to this. More than once, before his own resurrection, he showed his power over death by calling back the departed. But Lazarus and Jairus' daughter were raised to life here upon earth. In a little time they were again to pass through the gateway of death into the life that never ends. But Christ arose nevermore to die. And so is he the first fruits of his people. We are to rise, as he did, to a life that will never end. And of this resurrection of ours his was the promise and the proof. Easter day then, is not merely the anniversary of his resurrection. It commemorates also the pledge which God has given us of our own. It points us to the future, as well as to the past. It speaks to us of heaven, as well as of that rocky tomb from which Jesus rose. It tells us to be glad and grateful in believing anticipation of an endless holiness and bliss to come; as well as in believing recognition of the grandest and most luminous fact in the past.—*The Advance; Congregational.*

To grow old gracefully, one must live temperately, calmly, methodically; be interested in all that is going on in the world; be cheerful, happy and contented.

#### THE EUCHARIST.

The following written by the Bishop of Fond du Lac contains the account of an interview between himself and Dr. Alex. Vinton, which has attracted commendatory comments in some of our Church papers.

Happily our different theological schools are coming to a better understanding of each other, and doctrinal statements which were once occasions of controversy and party strife are gradually ceasing to be so. Divines are recognizing the reconciling principles which underlie their superficial differences, and are growing into better accord.

How much the controversy respecting the Real Presence of our Lord in the Eucharist has of late been mitigated, and persons differing in the use of terms have found themselves in a practical agreement? The writer well remembers a long and deeply interesting conversation he once had with the late Dr. Alexander Vinton, on the subject of the differences between the old Evangelical school, as it was called, and the Catholic one, especially on the subject of the Holy Eucharist. Was there any antagonism in essentials between us?

We began with trying to see how far we could agree with one another, and then how the remaining discords could, if possible, be resolved. We agreed that for a valid Eucharist there must be a regularly and properly ordained clergyman, at least of the second order of the ministry, for the Celebrant; that the elements must be the two ordained by Christ, namely, bread and wine in their integrity; and that the bread need not be leavened, nor necessarily the wine mixed with water; that the words of Institution must be used, not by way of prayer or of scripture reading, but as a definite act of consecration. Moreover, we were perfectly at one in our respective statements regarding the dispositions of faith and charity, and the state of grace with which, in order to receive any benefit from the sacrament the communicants must approach it. Lastly, as to what was received, we were agreed; and I can never forget the warmth and devotion with which that great evangelical leader expressed himself, declaring that we received verily and indeed Jesus Christ. Christ's Body and Blood, I asked? Certainly, he said; I believe it with all my heart. We received Christ wholly, and must receive all that is His; all that He is.

What then, was the difference between us? We agreed respecting the conditions of a valid Eucharist, the dispositions with which it was to be received and the gift we carried away. Our difference began when, with our imperfect human knowledge we endeavored to explain the unexplainable mystery of how Christ was present. Yet it was most worthy help to the writer to realize, as perhaps not before, that the whole transaction was one which took place not in this natural world and by some physical law, but in that spiritual organism which is Christ's Body, the Church, and by the action of the Holy Ghost. In the midst of this spiritual sphere, embracing the living and the dead. Christ stands in the midst; the Ever-Near-One to each and all, and by the effectual agency of the Holy Spirit and the instrumental one of His Priest, He does now just what He did when He stood in the midst of His Disciples in the upper chamber. He separates the elements from ordinary uses and gathering them into union with Himself, in some way not understood by us, makes them what His Word declares them to be. And as persons grow in their realization of Christ's presence in the Eucharist, so with increasing devotion will they honor Him by acts of bodily worship as well as those of the soul.—*Diocese of Fond du Lac.*