

Church; which says: "Those five commonly called sacraments (in the Romish Church,) confirmation, penance, orders, matrimony, and extreme unction, are not to be counted sacraments of the Gospel; being such as have grown *partly of the corrupt following of the Apostles*; partly are states of life allowed in the Scriptures, but yet have not like nature of Sacraments with Baptism and the Lord's Supper; for that they are not any visible sign or ceremony ordained by God." That this rite was not ordained by Christ, is a position which will not, then, be questioned; but do you suppose that if it really possessed the importance ascribed to it by the English Church, which teaches us that it conveys the Holy Ghost, and that its observance is essential to the proper participation of the Lord's Supper, the Saviour would have passed it by in silence? Such a supposition would be contrary to his usual practice, for he gave explicit directions respecting the profession of his name, and the qualification for admission to his Church.

Perhaps you will say, though there may be no evidence of this ceremony being instituted by Jesus Christ, yet it is clear that the word confirm is often used in the New Testament, especially in the Acts of the Apostles. This I admit, and answer, that it is found as frequently in the Old. Isaiah employs it, saying, "Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees; say to them that are of a fearful heart, be strong, fear not." Notwithstanding this, I suppose you will agree with me that confirmation formed no part of the Jewish Ritual. Judging, therefore, from the whole tenor of Scripture, there can be nothing adduced in favor of this rite from the frequent use of the word confirm, for we every where find that its meaning as given by Cruden (no mean authority) is correct, namely, "to strengthen, settle, or establish, to give an assurance of the truth or certainty of any thing." Confirmation is the work of the Holy Spirit; hence said Peter, "The God of all grace confirm and strengthen you." He confirmeth as the author and efficient cause of strength; the word, ordinances, and ministers, confirm as instruments or helps. To enumerate passages is unnecessary; if you will examine fully, you will, I believe, perceive that there is nothing in the frequent use of the word confirm, to favor the ceremony under consideration.

I will now proceed to the examination of those passages which are usually adduced in proof of the scriptural authority for the performance of this ceremony, though I feel that it must be apparent to its advocates, notwithstanding the importance which they attach to it, that there is good reason to suspect a misconception of the Apostles' words and actions in this particular, from the fact that Jesus Christ neither said nor did any thing to enforce or sanction such a rite. But let us examine the passages which are said to show its authenticity.