

most sacred and most cherished doctrines of the Catholic Church. The coronation of a sovereign is, and ought to be, an impressive and sacred ceremony. It is more than a splendid spectacle; it is "a solemn recognition of the mutual obligations between the sovereign and the subjects, made in the presence of that Almighty Being by whom alone kings do reign. It is essentially in its history and in itself, a religious service, and not a mere pageant of pomp or a mere show of song and tinsel. When God chose Saul to rule as first king over His own beloved people, the Jews, we are told in the Old Testament that "Samuel (the High Priest) took a vial of oil and poured it upon Saul's head and kissed him and said: Is it not because the Lord hath appointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?" And then "Samuel said to all the people, see ye him whom the Lord hath chosen, and there is none like him among all the people? And all the people shouted and said, God save the King." (I Samuel X, 24.)

This custom of royal unction was peculiar to the Jewish people. "Nowhere else," says St. Augustine, "were kings anointed, than in that kingdom where Christ was foretold and whence He was to come." And this sacred ceremony seems to have descended to all Christian nations. At all Christian coronations we find that the religious element surpassed in importance everything else. Anointings and prayers, vigils and fasts, oaths and admonitions went to compose the ritual by which sovereignty was conferred upon the rightful heir.

And the history of Great Britain affords a remarkable confirmation of this assertion. Not until 597 A. D., did the great missionary St. Augustine, land upon the shores of England, bearing to the nation the blessings of the gospel of Christ. Yet in the pontifical of Archbishop Egbert, who died in 766 A. D., we find the following profession to be made by the sovereign :

I who, by the Providence of God, am about to be King, profess before God and His angels, that henceforth, according to my knowledge and power I will do and keep justice and peace to the Church of God, and to the people subject to me, with due regard to the mercy of God, according as I shall be able to ascertain by the council of my faithful (advisers). "