

D.—You certainly seem to put this point before me into a new light. I must confess I never saw the value of my baptism so before. Then you mean to say, do you, that all who are baptized do really form one brotherhood, all having Christ, the second Adam, for our new Divine Head?

C.—Yes, certainly. He is the one living and life giving head of the body, and we who are baptized are the individual members of it. Wherever they went the Apostles of Christ set up this new brotherhood. In every heathen city, such as Corinth, and Ephesus, and Rome, and Philippi, a new visible society was formed, which was the church in that city. The company of the baptized in each place constituted the body of Christ, or the church, in that place, and all these branches of the church were united in one under the Apostles, who ordained ministers to carry on their work in every city. (Acts xiv. 23.) Here then you see, Mr. Marshall, Christian unity, in the fellowship of the Apostles of Christ, was at first provided for and constituted. In each place there was one body, one society, one church. In the case of the church at Corinth you read how very severely St. Paul rebuked the spirit of division as soon as it ever began to appear, and how he commanded that there should be "no divisions" amongst them, but that they should be all "perfectly joined together." To break the unity of the church at any place was one of the greatest sins a member of the church could commit. So that we read of the first believers, that they "continued steadfastly in the Apostles' fellowship." Now-a-days, indeed, any persons who please think that they have both the liberty and the power to form a new society in any place, and then to call it a church, which, of course, is the complete sin of schism, and the destruction of Christian unity. Just as if some of those baptized Corinthians had the power or the liberty to "separate themselves," and to form another society at Corinth. Could they rightly have made another church at Corinth, do you think? Could they have still been in "the fellowship of the Apostles?" Could they have any valid sacraments? Could they have pleased the Lord in so doing? Is not the very idea of more than one church in one place quite unscriptural and anti-Christian?

D.—Well, it's certainly a pity, I do think, that all who call themselves the disciples of Christ are not united in one society in each place.

C.—This unity is completely provided for, if we will only keep the institution of Christ, and not put human inventions into their place. The "one baptism" has been divinely ordained on purpose to be the one door into the Church of Christ, and so to unite us all into one society. This "one baptism" ought therefore of course to be felt by us all to be the only divinely instituted means for admitting us in Christian unity and fellowship; the divinely appointed bond of church membership. It ought to be to us all a very strong principle and a very powerful motive, binding us all in one body; for it is a means and a body of union, both visible and invisible, such as there is and can be none other like it; having been given us by God Himself when manifest in the flesh here upon earth.

If we do not think much and make much of this divinely instituted bond of church membership and means of Christian fellowship, we cannot rightly have the least hope of ever regaining the precious blessings of Christian unity any more.

D.—As you say that this is only the entrance into church membership, and the first bond of Christian unity, will you now explain what you think is the second chief bond of unity?

C.—You can yourself easily tell what it is. But I think, Mr. Marshall, I shall tire you, if I say to you to-night what I wish to say concerning it. Will you give me leave to call once

more, and to have one more conversation with you?

D.—Well, perhaps this would be the best plan; for I should like to think over again what you have now said about this first means and bond of unity.

C.—I pray God that I may be able to help you to see and understand that our Lord has built His Church in perfect unity, and that our present most unhappy and sinful state of disunion is mainly owing to our want of seeing and using rightly the means and bonds of unity which have been thus divinely given us.—*Wrayby Village Dialogues.*

CONFIRMATION.

THE OUTWARD RITE.

Q. You say that you ought to be confirmed, because Confirmation—the *Laying on of Hands*—is a rite of *divine appointment*. How is this proved?

A. 1. Our Lord promised His Apostles that the Holy Spirit, who was to come after His Ascension, would *lead them into all truth*, and during the great forty days between His resurrection and ascension, our Lord himself "gave commandments" to them, and spoke "to them of things pertaining to the kingdom of God" (Acts i. 2-3).

2. Very soon after the descent of the Holy Spirit, on the Day of Pentecost, (probably within year) we read that the Apostles, hearing that certain people in Samaria had received the word of God, and had been baptized, sent St. Peter and St. John to them, "Who, when they were come down prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost": *Then laid they their hands on them* (Acts viii. 17) It is clear that this was the special purpose for which they had come. A similar circumstance is recorded of the Apostle St. Paul at Ephesus (Acts xix. 6)

And yet we are not told anywhere that the Apostles instituted this rite, as we are told when they instituted the *Order of Deacons* (Act vi. 2-6)

The Apostles simply administered the rite as though it was a known and recognized institution.

3. It seems almost impossible not to conclude from this circumstance that the rite of *Laying on of Hands* was one of the things concerning which our Lord gave instructions to His Apostles.

But, even if it was not ordained by Christ Himself, a rite instituted by the Apostles who, we believe, acted under the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit, may properly be said to be of divine appointment.

N.B.—We gather from the instances of the administration of the rite recorded above, two facts concerning the outward rite—

- i. That the *Laying on of Hands* was administered *after baptism*.
- ii. That while baptism might be ministered even by deacons, the "*Laying on of Hands*" was restricted to the highest order of the ministry—then, *the Apostles*.

Q. Was *Laying on of Hands* a well-known sign of special blessing amongst the Jews?

A. Yes. It was used—
1, as a sign of blessing (Gen. xlviii. 13-18);
2, to transfer guilt (Lev. xvi. 21);
3, to impart healing (S. Mark v. 23);
4, to convey spiritual gifts: and
5, as a sign of being set apart to God's service (see Num. viii. 10, xxviii. 18; Deut. xxxiv. 9).

So our Lord took the little children in His arms, and laid His hands on them and blessed them (St. Mark x. 16).

And just as "baptism," which had been used in the reception of proselytes was elevated by our Lord into a Sacrament of the Gospel—the pledge of the new birth—so the "*Laying on of*

Hands" was now made the outward sign of the conveyance of a great spiritual gift.

Q. You say that "*Laying on of Hands*" is reckoned, in the Epistle to the Hebrews (vi. 1), amongst the "principles" or "foundation" things of the doctrine of Christ. But how do we know that it is *this* rite to which allusion is there made?

A. The only other *Laying on of Hands* used in the Christian Church was for *ordination to the ministry* (Acts vi. 6.; 2 Tim. i 6.) All the other things here mentioned as "principles of the doctrine of Christ," are necessities for all Christians alike, which Ordination would not be. Besides it is mentioned immediately after baptism, just in the order that would be natural if, as the Church has always believed, this rite was intended to be the thing referred to.

N.B.—It can be shown that all the most learned interpreters of the Bible have, from the earliest times, understood this as referring to "Confirmation." It was not disputed till the disuse of the ordinance amongst certain bodies of Christians made it necessary to invent some excuse for the neglect of this principle.

Bishop Hall well says:

Dare any Christian presume to say that the Apostle—the great and wise master builder of the Church—mistook the foundation whereon he built? or dare any one presumptuous soul single this one article from the rest, as merely temporary, when all the rest are granted to be of eternal use?

The reason why these are selected as "fundamentals" would seem to be as follows:

The Resurrection and Judgment are the first motives which awaken men to become Christians;

Repentance and Faith are the first requirements before men can be made Christians. Baptism and Confirmation are the first acts by which the Christian character is imparted.

Some people may wonder why the Holy Eucharist is not mentioned amongst these "principles" being as "necessary." The reason is probably that the Holy Eucharist belongs rather to the "perfection" to which we are to go on. The Apostle is "here contrasting those two ordinances which convey for the first time a new character to the soul, so that they cannot be repeated with those other acts which are repeated continually throughout the Christian course."—From *Manual of Confirmation, Masters*.

He said to His Apostles: "He that heareth you, heareth Me" (St. Luke x 16); and that these and such like words did not merely refer to the Apostles personally, but to them as the representatives of His Body, is evident from what He afterwards said—"Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (S. Matt. xxviii. 20).

A learned Lutheran, Delitzsch, candidly says:

Can we suppose that the Apostolic writer of this Epistle would represent the *Laying on of Hands*, following after baptism, as among the *fundamentals* of Christianity, if it was not an holy ordinance and had not a divine promise annexed to it?

Q. You say that it is an ordinance of the Church to which you belong you are bound to submit to it if you would "fulfil all righteousness." State why.

1. *From the Example of our Lord.*

Our Lord, Our Great Example, while He was in this world, scrupulously fulfilled all the requirements of the law of the Church (the Jewish Church) to which He, as man, belonged.

He was circumcised.

At the age of twelve He came to the temple to be admitted as a hearer of the law.

He paid the temple tax

He attended the Feasts at Jerusalem.

He even came to the baptism of John, though He had not need of it for Himself. It was on