

our humble supplication unto Thee for these Thy servants, upon whom, after the example of the holy Apostles, we have now laid our hands."

Here is a direct appeal to the Scriptures of the New Testament, reminding us of the words which stand at the head of this paper, "*The doctrine of baptisms and of laying on of hands.*"

That this is the origin of the rite there can be no doubt. Bishop Titcomb, in his *Church Lessons for Young Churchmen*, says of it: "It takes its rise from an old practice of a similar kind which we find in the Acts of the Apostles. It appears to have been a custom of the Apostles, after certain intervals of time, to revisit the infant churches which they had planted for the purpose of looking after their converts, of cheering and encouraging them, and establishing them in the faith of Christ. On such occasions they laid their hands upon them."

"*The doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands.*" This is certainly a strong passage in support of the rite of Confirmation. Calvin, the great continental reformer, thought so much of it that he said: "If there were no other text this is sufficient to prove Confirmation the doctrine of Scripture."

Be this as it may, we, who are members of the Church of England, are not afraid to appeal to the New Testament. In Acts viii. we read that Philip the Deacon went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to the Samaritans. We further read: "When they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God, and the Name of Jesus Christ, they were baptised, both men and women." Then we have the following record: "Now when the Apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God they sent unto them Peter and John, who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost (for as yet He was fallen upon none of them, only they were baptised in the Name of the Lord Jesus). Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost."

And it is very important to see that the practice of laying on of hands upon those who had been baptised did not cease with the Apostles. We have abundant proof of this on the page of early Church history. Thus Tertullian, who lived only about eighty years after St. John, writes: "After Baptism succeeds the laying on of hands by prayer,

calling for and inviting the Holy Ghost." Cyprian, who lived in the next century, writes concerning the record of Acts viii.: "The same thing is practised among us—that they who are baptised are presented to those who preside over the Church, that by their prayers and laying on of hands they may obtain the Holy Ghost and be perfected with the seal of Christ."

Again, in the next century, we find Jerome writing: "If you ask where Confirmation is written, it is written in the Acts of the Apostles; but if there were no authority of Scripture for it, yet the consent of all the world upon this particular would be instead of a command." We see, then, that the rite of Confirmation has its origin in a practice of the Apostles themselves, and, further, that it has prevailed from the days of the Apostles down to the present hour in a large section of the Christian Church.

Our Church—true to the spirit of moderation which distinguishes her—does not claim for Confirmation any Scriptural command, but she sees in the record of the primitive Church a practice suggestive of it; she notifies the fact that the practice was observed after the Apostles had passed away, and, therefore, claiming the right of appointing her own ceremonies and institutions, she has retained it for the benefit and blessing of her children.

But, whatever doubt may be thrown upon the position which the Church of England takes in this matter, we may safely contend that Confirmation may stand firmly on its own intrinsic merits. No sincere Churchman will be found who is not sensible of its inestimable value. We are quite sure that no conscientious clergyman could be found who could question its importance. The preparation-classes bring him into connection with the young members of his flock, and supply him with one of the most interesting engagements of his ministry.

It affords him an opportunity of dealing with souls which the public services cannot provide. And to the devout mind what can be more impressive than the scene presented on "Confirmation Day"? —"*Do ye here in the presence of God and of this congregation renew the solemn promise and vow that was made for you at your baptism, ratifying and confirming the same in your own persons, and acknowledging yourselves bound to believe and to do all these things which your Godfathers and Godmothers then under-*