

(Acts viii.) and St. Paul does the same to those disciples of John the Baptist, whom he baptized in the name of Christ. (Acts xix. 6.) In Heb. vi. 1, the "laying on of hands" is reckoned among the first principles of the doctrine of Christ. The practice of the early Church is sufficiently attested, among others, by Tertullian, who died A. D. 220:—"After baptism, then, the imposition of hands, with benediction, invoking and calling upon the Holy Spirit" (words which exactly describe our Confirmation Service), and by Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, who, some years later, speaks of it as the office of the Bishops of the Church. In another passage, referring to the imposition of hands by the Apostles, in Acts viii., he writes, "The same custom is now observed in the Church, for those who are baptized, are presented to the governors of the Church, that by their prayer and the imposition of hands, they may receive the Holy Ghost and be perfected with the seal of the Lord."

Confirmation is not a sacrament in itself—it is simply the concluding act, the completion of Holy Baptism, postponed till the child is able to ratify, of its own free-will, the solemn promise and vow made at its baptism. In the case of adults, if the Bishop be present, confirmation follows immediately on the Baptism;—See rubric to Office of Baptism of those of Riper Years.

Confirmation is not "a joining the Church." The New Testament knows but one way of entering the Kingdom of God, and that is, "by water and the spirit" (John iii. 5), by "the washing of regeneration" (Titus iii. 5). In the Acts of the Apostles, we see this principle in practical operation from the first:

On the day of Pentecost, all that gladly received the words of St. Peter "were baptized." (Acts ii. 41.) Therefore, unless there are two kinds of baptism, and the baptism of infants be an idle ceremony without use or value, the baptized child is as much "in the Church," as much a member of the Body of Christ, as the oldest, gray-haired Saint. Do we not say, at every baptism, "we receive this child into the congregation of Christ's Flock," and return thanks to Almighty God that the little one "is regenerate and grafted into the Body of Christ's Church?" Confirmation is only the ordinance, most solemn and decisive, in which the child, come to years of discretion, knowing good and evil, understanding that he is by God's Grace a "member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven," openly acknowledges his Baptism, and assumes its obligations, praying for Divine grace to help him keep his vows and promises, and receiving, if sincere, that grace, through the solemn blessing of God's appointed minister.

Confirmation is *not* the binding heavy burdens upon one's shoulders, which a man could avoid by remaining unconfirmed. The solemn responsibilities of Christianity, like the stern responsibilities of citizenship and of life itself, are *born with a man*, are laid upon him, whether he will or will not, by the facts of his position in this world, and cannot be shirked, still less, annihilated by the easy method of ignoring or denying them. The Sacraments of the Church of Christ lay upon Christians no responsibilities, no duties toward God or man, which do not rest, already and equally upon the unbaptized and the unconfirmed.