

they believed, and the answer of Peter to their inquiry about what they should do to be saved was—"Repent and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins, and you shall receive the Holy Ghost." Cannot every person, who reflects a moment on this passage, see that the remission of sins and the Holy Ghost, were two blessings promised after repentance and faith, and baptism for the remission of sins? When the people of Samaria heard the preaching of Philip, they also believed and repented, and they were baptized, and there was great joy in that city. No doubt their sins were then remitted, an event which would cause joy and satisfaction among the Samaritans. But there was not one soul of all those converts in Samaria, neither man nor woman, who had received the Holy Ghost, they had only believed in Christ and received the forgiveness of sins, but none of them were as yet born of the Spirit. When the Apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, which Philip had preached unto them, they sent Peter and John, and they came down to Samaria and knelt down and prayed for these baptized Samaritans, that they might receive the Holy Ghost;" for as yet," says the Scripture, "he had not fallen upon any of them, only they had been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus; and when they had prayed for them, they laid their hands upon them and they received the Holy Ghost."

Now they must have received on that occasion, something that was powerful and miraculous, so much so that it made itself manifest even to bystanders. The reason which I have for believing this is in consequence of what Simon Magus said and did on that occasion. He came to the

Apostle Peter and offering money to him, said—"Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay my hands he may receive the Holy Ghost." He was evidently convinced that there was a power made manifest on that occasion, and as he had been a sorcerer, and had deluded and deceived the people in former times, and had evidently come into the Church with a corrupt heart, he no doubt wished to obtain this increased power to aid him in his future operations. But Peter answered—"Let thy money perish with thee, I perceive that thy heart is not right in the sight of God."

Here then was a sacred ordinance which I wish to call your attention to, namely, the laying on of hands. The Samaritans had, no doubt, believed as firmly as ever persons could believe; they had repented as much as any persons could repent; they had complied with the ordinance of baptism for the remission of sins, and were justified and filled with great joy in consequence of the forgiveness of their sins; but with all this, why did they not receive the Holy Ghost? Why was it not sent down from heaven as it was on Cornelius? Because there were none present on that occasion that needed to be convinced, as in the case of the household of Cornelius; no Jewish brethren there to forbid water; no ones there to have their traditions corrected, and consequently the Lord did not give a sign to them. But when they were confirmed, he sent upon them the Holy Ghost through the sacred ordinance of the laying on of hands. That is as much an ordinance as baptism.

Here then is one instance wherein we differ from the main portions of the religious world. It is true the Church of England practices confirmation—their lay hands upon those