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CONFIRMATION INSTRUCTIONS.

ARRANGED IN
SIX LESSONS, CHIEFLY DESIGNED TO
INTERPRET THE SERVICE; WITH THE SERVICE,
PRAYERS, MEDITATIONS, &c.

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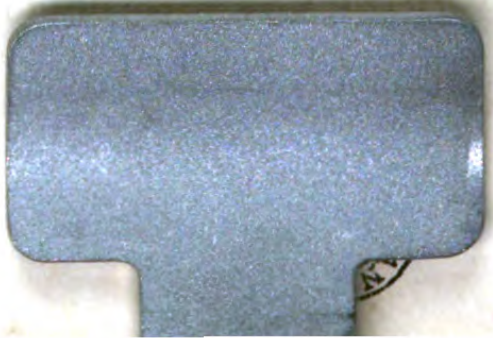
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PREFACE.

THIS Manual contains the usual Prayers and Meditations common in similar productions. It contains also Instructions arranged in six lessons, corresponding to the number of weeks not unfrequently devoted to special preparation.

They are arranged with this idea, that they are to be used as the notes of the Teacher's Lesson. The large type with the numbers attached form dogmatic statements, which the Candidate is expected to commit to memory: the second size of type forms explanations of these statements necessary for understanding them: the small type is usually illustrative matter, to be used according to the capacities of the Candidates. The Manual is not intended to be of use by itself, and therefore much of this matter is merely suggestive. The whole is meant to interpret the Service, which is printed at page 13, to which reference is made by numerals in the margin. The marginal notes in the Service gather up the instructions given in the Lessons. This copy of the Service is intended to be that used on the day of Confirmation, in order that these references may, so to speak, keep before the mind the meaning it has come to attach to its different parts. Two tendencies appear in similar Manuals,—to exaggerate one side or other of the acts of Confirmation. It has been here kept in view to give due prominence, first, to this fact, that we confirm our vows, and, secondly, that we are confirmed by the Holy Spirit.

Aug. 1863.



I.

THE CANDIDATE ALONE.

A short Litany to be added to his Morning and Evening Prayers during his preparation.

O God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost—ever blessed, ever glorious Trinity—three Persons and one God—

Have mercy upon me, Thy servant, and Thy child.

I beseech Thee to hear me, good Lord ; that Thou from whom all wisdom and true knowledge cometh wilt grant me at this time a hearing ear and an understanding heart ;
I beseech Thee to hear me, good Lord.

That Thou wilt give me Thy grace to profit by the instruction I receive, and that by Thy Holy Spirit's aid I may be truly enlightened on those things that pertain to my everlasting welfare ;

I beseech Thee to hear me, good Lord.

That, as I did promise in infancy repentance, faith, and obedience, so now openly within Thy house, and before Thy Church, and to the chief pastor of Thy flock, I may renew these vows with an earnest and hearty desire to perform the same ;

I beseech Thee to hear me, good Lord.

That as I have in the waters of regeneration been born again to the beginning of a heavenly life, so now I may in such wise come to this holy ordinance, that I may be ANOINTED with all Thy gifts and graces, SEALED by Thy Holy Spirit for Thine own, and blessed with the EARNEST of Thy everlasting joy and peace ;

I beseech Thee to hear me, good Lord.

Lord, have mercy upon me.
Christ, have mercy upon me.
Lord, have mercy upon me.

Our Father, &c.

II.

THE PASTOR ALONE.

*Prayers which may be used during the time he is engaged
with the instruction of Confirmation Classes.*

O God, by Whose gracious Providence I have been appointed a shepherd of Thy sheep, an instructor of the lambs of Thy fold, grant that I may serve Thee acceptably with reverence and godly fear, teaching only what is well pleasing unto Thee and profitable for Thy children. Endow me, I beseech Thee, with such a measure of Thy grace as may deepen my anxiety for their spiritual welfare. Inform my teaching with the force of conviction, and guide me in dealing with the individual wants and needs of those now more especially under my care. Grant this for Thy dear Son's sake, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O Lord Jesu Christ, I bring before Thee one by one these Thy children, for whom Thou wast contented to be born, to suffer, and to die :

Hear, I beseech Thee, my prayers and supplications for them :

Give to each a hearty earnestness in coming to this holy ordinance :

Inspire them with proper motives :

Quicken their understandings to the instructions given them :

Guide their wills to a right decision :

And prepare them by shewing to each the sins and weaknesses to which he is especially exposed.

[Here may be named individuals]—

Bring them thus, O Lord, to this holy ordinance :

And finally lead them to a constant attendance at thy Holy Table; that they may continue ever one with Thee and Thou with them henceforth and for evermore.

Amen.

III.

THE CANDIDATE WITH HIS FRIENDS.

He is recommended to write out this short Prayer, and give it to his God-parents, Parents, or others whose prayers he desires to have.

O God, who art pleased to accept the prayers which Thy servants offer for one another, hear my prayer for Thy child now coming to this holy ordinance of Confirmation—

Grant unto *him* grace to be well prepared for the same—

Give *him* day by day higher and purer motives; a holy heart and a chastened life—

Give *him* an earnest desire for Thy service: and when *he* draws near to renew the solemn vow of *his* baptism, grant *him* Thy grace to enable *him* to persevere in keeping the same unto *his* life's end, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

IV.

THE PASTOR WITH HIS CANDIDATES.

Prayers at the commencement of a Confirmation Class.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Christ, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Our Father, &c.

Prevent us, O Lord, &c.

O Lord God Almighty, Who hast endued Thy Church with singular gifts of the Holy Spirit, leave us not at this time destitute of Thy manifold blessings, nor yet of grace to use them to Thy service and to Thy honour and glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Look upon us and hear us, O Lord our God. Sanctify the words of Thy servant, and bless the understandings of Thy children: anoint the lips of the teacher and open the hearts of the taught, that, with minds instructed in Thy Will and Ways, and hearts inflamed with love to Thee, they may be prepared for the due reception of this holy ordinance, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

V.

INSTRUCTIONS.

CONFIRMATION—PREVIOUS REQUIREMENTS.

I.—Baptism.

In the New Testament and Prayer Book this is indicated, (Heb. vi. 2 ; Acts viii. 16, 17, xix. 5, 6 ; C. S. 1, 4, 8.)*

Hence the first inquiry is into the Baptism of the Candidate, (Acts xix. 3.)

II.—Some knowledge of Christian Truth—

i.e., intellectual preparation, or of the [head or] understanding.

This knowledge is implied—

1. In the Services of Holy Baptism, (Exhortation to Sponsors in Service for Infants, and 1st Rubric in that for Adults.)
2. In the Confirmation Service, (C. S. 3.)
3. In the Catechism, (title “An Instruction,” &c.)

These truths are to be found—

1. In the Bible at large, (Art. VI.)
2. In the Catechism, (C. S. 3.)
3. In the Creeds, (Art. VIII.)

All should have some knowledge, however little. A little is not sufficient for all. God requires knowledge of His Truth according to our capacities and opportunities—“To whom much is given, of them shall much be required,” &c. No one is to keep away because opportunities and capacities have been small.

In this part of preparation the pastor can afford help, and is a competent judge of its sufficiency.

III.—Years of Discretion—i.e., such an age as admits of

Moral preparation,—preparation of the heart, (C. S. 1, 4,) (called “competent age,” Catechism, 3d Rubric, end.)

“Years of discretion,” and “a competent age,” are expressions used in addition to the requirement of knowing the Creeds, &c., and seem to indicate an age of *moral* responsibility, a knowledge of right and wrong, a capacity of choosing the good and rejecting the evil.

This requirement implies such preparation as can be had from God's grace only. He disposes the heart. Hence is implied the duty of special prayer, (see p. 3)—self-examination,—retirement,—asking the prayers of others, (p. 5.) (1st Rubric, Adult Baptism.)

In this part of the preparation the Pastor can only help by his prayers (p. 4) and his advice. The candidate must be the final judge of his fitness in this sense.

* The reference C. S. is to the Confirmation Service, (p. 13,) the numerals to the figures in the margin.

CONFIRMATION—WHAT IT IS.

It is two things—

I.—The Confirmation of our Baptismal Vows by ourselves.
(C. S. 5, 6.)

Meaning of Confirmation—To strengthen or establish. A wall is strengthened by the addition of a buttress—a report by additional evidence—A conviction by greater or additional reflection—A promise by the addition of repetition. So

In Confirmation the Baptismal Vows are strengthened or bound more firmly on us by repetition. This implies the Vows have been binding ever since Baptism.

You cannot strengthen a thing that does not exist. Therefore the expression, (C. S. 6), “which your Godfathers and Godmothers then undertook for you,” means *not* undertook to perform for you, *but* undertook that you would perform.

II.—The Confirmation of us by the Holy Spirit, through the laying on of the hands of the Bishop.

From the above definition of the word confirm, confirmation means the strengthening, establishing, assuring of us by an additional gift. The gift is the gift of the “Holy Spirit;” called also, “God’s Heavenly Grace,” (C. S. 9, 11; Acts viii. 17, xix. 6.)

Means of conveying the gift—“The laying on of hands.”

Historical significance of this is transferring or conveying a gift, thus—

1. The patriarchal blessing, by Joseph, (Gen. xlviii. 14.)
2. The blessing of healing, by Christ and Apostles, (S. Mark vi. 5; Acts xxviii. 8.)
3. A general blessing, by Christ, (S. Mark x. 16.)
4. Ordination—Joshua, (Deut. xxxiv. 9; Num. xxvii. 18.) The Deacons, (Acts vi. 6.) Timothy, (1 Tim. iv. 14; 2 Tim. i. 6.)

The authority for the ordinance—

1. The example of Apostles, (C. S. 13; Acts viii. 15–18.)
2. The statement of St Paul, (Heb. vi. 1, 2.)

The authority for the minister of Confirmation.—Apostles evidently alone confirmed, (Acts viii.) Our Church has reserved its administration to Bishops, as successors of the Apostles.

Importance of Confirmation.—St Paul called it “a foundation,” (Heb. vi. 1, 2.)

THE VOW RENEWED IN CONFIRMATION— WHAT IT IS.

It is a vow—

I.—To renounce the Devil, the World, the Flesh.

The meaning of the word “Renounce”—To give up or cast off, and implies some active effort to keep ourselves free.

The DEVIL and all his works. Note the reality and personality of the Devil, (S. Matt. iv. 1-11); also our experience of something ever leading us to wrong against our judgment—also how this was realised in the ceremony of exorcism. The works of the Devil are all sins whatever, for he tempts by the world and the flesh. Name some of his works.

The WORLD, its pomps and vanities—*i.e.*, the things of this world, wealth, pleasure, honour, &c., so far as they lead the mind from God.

The FLESH, its sinful lusts—*i.e.*, its desires which become sinful by excess or misdirection; sloth, intemperance, impurity, &c.

II.—To believe the Articles of the Christian Faith.

The Christian Faith is a belief in Persons and Facts—in the *Persons* of the Trinity, in the *Facts* of Revelation past or future.

These Persons and Facts are revealed in the Bible.

They have been handed down in brief Articles in the Creeds.

Contents of the Creeds:—Statements of the operations of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the threefold work of Creation, Redemption, Sanctification.

Names of the Creeds—Their *History*—Their *Connexion*—Their *Use*. (1.) As a summary of articles. (2.) As a form in which to declare our faith.

III.—To keep God's Holy Will and Commandments.

These are written—

1. ON OUR CONSCIENCES. Some dim sense of right and wrong is found in every condition of humanity, (Rom. ii. 14, 15.)

2. IN THE BIBLE. The whole Bible is the expression of God's Will, and the vow implies such a knowledge of and obedience to the mind of God as careful study may accomplish, according to ability and opportunity.

3. IN THE TEN COMMANDMENTS MORE PARTICULARLY. Note (1.) Our Lord's division of these into the two great lines of duty, (S. Matt. xxii. 35-40.) (2.) His instruction how to apply these commandments and to expand them into principles of action, (S. Matt. v. 21, 22; 1 S. John iii. 15; S. Matt. v. 27-30.)

THE GIFT RECEIVED IN CONFIRMATION— WHAT IT IS.

It is the Gift of the Holy Spirit, (Acts viii., xix.)
The Nature of the Gift is suggested in the Words applied to it in Scripture, (2 Cor. i. 21, 22 ; Eph. i. 13, 14.) It is,

I.—A Confirming, or Stablising, or Strengthening—2 Cor. i. 21 ; Eph. iii. 16.

i.e., against the fatigues of our Christian journey, and against the attacks of our spiritual enemies, (Bap. Service, "We receive this child, &c., to fight manfully.")

II.—An Anointing: in which sense Confirmation is our setting apart to a higher Christian life, and the conferring of His grace to enable us to live it.

Anointing conveys a twofold idea—(1.) The designation or setting apart for a particular office ; and (2.) The enriching with such gifts and graces as are necessary for fulfilling its duties.

Historical significance of anointing—(1.) *As a setting apart.* Jacob the pillar, (Gen. xxviii. 18.) The priests and the Tabernacle, (Lev. viii.) Saul, (1 Sam. x. 1.) David, (1 Sam. xvi. 13.) Christ, (S. Luke iv. 18.) (2.) *As an enriching.* It is said of each in the last three passages that each received the Spirit by the anointing.

III.—A Seal: in which sense Confirmation is (1.) God's setting His mark upon us as His own, and (2.) His declaration or attestation "of His favour and goodness toward us."

Sealing also conveys a twofold idea—(1.) It is the setting a mark upon anything to mark it, or stamp it as a man's own property, (Rev. vii. 3 ; Ezek. ix. 4.) (2.) It is the attestation of anything, the declaration that it is true, that what has been done is real and valid, (S. John iii. 33 ; Neh. ix. 38 ; S. John vi. 27 ; C. S. 13.)

IV.—An Earnest: in which sense Confirmation confers a portion of those graces which form God's pledge to us that they shall increase in time and be perfected in eternity.

(2 Cor. v. 5 ; Eph. i. 14.) An earnest is a part of anything received beforehand as a pledge that the rest shall be received. Our practice, *e.g.*, of depositing a part of the purchase money.

In one of these passages the earnest is "the Spirit," (2 Cor. v. 5 ;) in Eph. i. 14, it is of "our inheritance"—*i.e.*, the Spirit is the earnest of that inheritance where the fulness of the Spirit will be ours.

THE GIFT RECEIVED IN CONFIRMATION—
WHAT ITS EFFECTS ARE.

They are sevenfold, (C. S. 9; Isa. xi. 1, 2)—

I.—Understanding:

Which enables us to *apprehend* God's Truth in all its fulness. 1 S. John ii. 20.

II.—Godliness:

Which *disposes the heart to accept* the Truth which the understanding has apprehended. Prov. xvi. 1, 9.

III.—Wisdom:

Which *guides the will to choose* God and His Truth, which understanding has apprehended and godliness has disposed to accept. 1 Cor. xii. 8.

These three Gifts thus direct us to our end. The next four enable us to accomplish that end.

IV.—Knowledge:

This *instructs* us on the difficulties that lie in our way: the enemies that oppose, both within and without. 2 S. Peter i. 2. 1 S. John ii. 20.

V.—Counsel:

This *enlightens* us to adopt such means as may assist us in our difficulties, and aid us in our struggle against these enemies. Ps. lxxiii. 24.

VI.—Holy Fear:

This *inspires us with such reverence* for God, and such distrust in ourselves, as may preserve us in that state of mind best adapted for using our counsel and knowledge. Prov. xiv. 26.

VII.—Ghostly Strength:

This *enables us to persist* and to persevere in that life, enlightened by knowledge, guided by counsel, and preserved in holy fear. S. Matt. x. 22. Rev. ii. 10.

BAPTISM, CONFIRMATION, COMMUNION—
THEIR CONNEXION.

Their connexion is implied—

I.—In the provisions of the Book of Common Prayer.

Baptism to be followed by Confirmation, (Baptismal Services, Exhortation to Sponsors, and Rubric at the end of Adult Service,) (C. S. 8, 9.)
Holy Communion to be preceded by Confirmation, (C. S. 15.)

II.—In the idea of the Christian condition.

1. In the idea that it is a condition of Life, of which

Baptism is the new birth, (Baptismal Service, “Seeing these children are regenerate,” &c.) (C. S. 8; S. John iii. 3-5; Titus iii. 5.)

Confirmation is the invigorating and endowing with new powers, (C. S. 9)—*i. e.*, with the sevenfold gifts of the Spirit required for the perfection or completion of the life begun in Baptism.

Holy Communion is the perpetual preservation and renewal, (Cat. “the strengthening and *refreshing*,” &c.) Note also the prayer, “*Daily* increase,” &c. (C. S. 9, 11.) Also the Lord's Prayer, “Give us this day,” &c.

2. In the idea that it is a condition of Covenant, of which

Baptism is the formation. A covenant is an agreement, (S. Matt. xxvi. 15.) Note the threefold promise and the threefold blessing, (Cat. and Bapt. Services), together forming the agreement.

Confirmation—the renewal. Note the renewal of the threefold promise, (C. S. 6,) and the reception of the sevenfold blessing, (C. S. 9.)

Holy Communion—the continued preservation. Note, 1st, the preparation for Holy Communion (Cat., last question) is an exact equivalent to the Baptismal vows, and the “benefits received thereby” correspond to the above blessings.

3. In the idea that it is a condition of Society, which

Baptism is the admission into, (Baptismal Service, “We receive this child,” &c.) (1 Cor. xii. 13; S. John iii. 5.)

Confirmation, the claim and recognition of membership in, (C. S. 5, 6, “in the presence of the congregation.”) Note also Confirmation considered as a seal or mark by which the confirmed is marked as one of the flock.

Holy Communion, the preservation of membership of. Note, The practice of Apostles. When they “*came together*” it was “to break bread,” (Acts xx. 7, &c.,) as if “breaking bread” was their bond of union as a society. Note also, Excommunication—that is, putting out of the society—means forbidding to communicate.

VI.

THE DAY OF CONFIRMATION.

Thoughts and Ejaculations to be used on getting up, and, where possible, at other times during the day, especially in Church before the Service begins.

This day is a turning point, a crisis in my life.

I am about to renew a pledge. *O God, give me a holy and determined resolution to keep it!*

If I come rightly to this ordinance I shall receive a blessing. *God grant I may come rightly!*

If I do not come solemnly, reverently, and with the full intention of doing my best to bring forth the fruits of a higher life, I had better not come even now. "It is better not to vow than to vow and not to pay." *O Holy Spirit, give me such holy reverence and truth of mind that I may come so as to receive a blessing.*

If I fall away into sin after receiving this blessing, the sin will be deeper and darker than if I had received no blessing. "To whom much is given, of him shall much be required." *O God, make me faithful unto death, that I may receive a crown of life.*

If I am not the better for this day's blessing, I shall be worse. What is not a savour of life unto life is a savour of death unto death, (2 Cor. ii. 16.) *O God, grant that it may be unto me a savour of life unto life everlasting.*

Things to be remembered.

To be careful not to get agitated or disturbed in any way during the day.

To go over the Confirmation Service, if possible, and recall the instructions I have received upon it.

To impress my own part of the Service upon my mind—viz.

To kneel in private devotion till the service begins. (See above and page 15.)

To stand up when the Minister begins the exhortation, (C. S. 2.)

To join very fervently in the Responses, the "Amens," and especially the answer, "I do."

To spend the remainder of the day as religiously as possible.

VII.

THE ORDER OF CONFIRMATION;

1. Definition of Confirmation. OR LAYING ON OF HANDS UPON THOSE THAT ARE BAPTIZED AND COME TO YEARS OF DISCRETION.

I.

2. ¶ Upon the day appointed, all that are to be then confirmed, being placed, and standing in order, before the Bishop; he (or some other Minister appointed by him) shall read this Preface following.

3. Explanation of what is previously required by the Church. To the end that Confirmation may be ministered to the more edifying of such as shall receive it, the Church has thought good to order, that none hereafter shall be confirmed, but such as can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments; and can also answer to such other questions, as in the

4. short Catechism are contained: which order is very convenient to be observed; to the end, that children being now come to the years of discretion, and having learned what their Godfathers and Godmothers promised for them in Baptism, they may themselves, with their own mouth and consent, openly before the Church, ratify and confirm the same; and also promise, that by the grace of God they will evermore endeavour themselves faithfully to observe such things, as they, by their own confession, have assented unto.

¶ Then shall the Bishop say,

6. The Confirmation of the vow. Do ye here, in the presence of God and of this congregation, renew the solemn promise and vow that was made in your name at your Baptism; ratifying and confirming the same in your own persons, and acknowledging yourselves bound to believe, and to do, all those things, which your Godfathers and Godmothers then undertook for you?

¶ And every one shall audibly answer,
I do.

II.

7. The blessing of Confirmation comes from God. *The Bishop.* Our help is in the Name of the Lord;
Answer. Who hath made heaven and earth.
The Bishop. Blessed be the Name of the Lord;
Answer. Henceforth, world without end.

The Bishop. Lord, hear our prayers.
Answer. And let our cry come unto Thee.

8. *The Bishop.* Let us pray.

The connexion between Baptism and Confirmation.

The seven-fold gift of Confirmation.

ALMIGHTY and everliving God, who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these Thy servants by water and the Holy Ghost, and hast given unto them forgiveness of all their sins; strengthen them, we beseech Thee, O Lord, with the Holy Ghost the Comforter, and daily increase in them Thy manifold gifts of grace; the spirit of wisdom and understanding; the spirit of counsel and ghostly strength; the spirit of knowledge and true godliness; and fill them, O Lord, with the spirit of Thy holy fear, now and for ever. *Amen.*

10. ¶ *Then all of them in order kneeling before the Bishop, he shall lay his hands upon the head of every one severally, saying,*

11. The act of Confirmation. DEFEND, O Lord, this Thy child [or *this Thy servant*] with Thy heavenly grace, that *he* may continue Thine for ever, and daily increase in Thy Holy Spirit more and more, until *he* come unto Thine everlasting kingdom. *Amen.*

[*Say on being Confirmed :*

O Holy Spirit, fill the heart of Thy child, and kindle in it the fire of Thy love. Give unto me the fulness of all Thy gifts and graces, that I may henceforth live as a true soldier of the cross of my Redeemer.

This to be learned by heart during preparation.]

III.

12. ¶ *Then shall the Bishop say,*

The Lord be with you.

Answer. And with thy spirit.

¶ *And (all kneeling down) the Bishop shall add,*

Let us pray.

OUR Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil. *Amen.*

And this Collect;

13. The authority of Confirmation. ALMIGHTY and everliving God, who makest us both to will and to do those things that be good and acceptable unto Thy Divine Majesty; We make our humble supplications unto Thee for these Thy servants, upon whom, (after the example of Thy holy Apostles,) we have now laid our hands, to certify them (by this sign) of Thy favour

- and gracious goodness towards them. Let Thy fatherly hand,
 14. we beseech Thee, ever be over them; let Thy Holy Spirit ever be with them; and so lead them in the knowledge and obedience of Thy word, that in the end they may obtain everlasting life; through our Lord Jesus Christ, who with Thee and the Holy Ghost liveth and reigneth, ever one God, world without end. *Amen.*

O ALMIGHTY LORD, and everlasting God, vouchsafe, we beseech Thee, to direct, sanctify, and govern, both our hearts and bodies, in the ways of Thy laws, and in the works of Thy commandments; that, through Thy most mighty protection both here and ever, we may be preserved in body and soul; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

¶ *Then the Bishop shall bless them, saying thus,*

The Blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be upon you, and remain with you for ever. *Amen.*

15. The connexion of Confirmation and holy Communion. ¶ *And there shall none be admitted to the holy Communion until such time as he be confirmed, or be ready and desirous to be confirmed.*

VIII.

MEDITATIONS AND DEVOTIONS.

ST MATT. vi. 24.—“*No man can serve two masters.*”

When I was baptized I was pledged to serve God as my Master. I have this day, of my own will, and with a full consciousness of the very important step I have taken, renewed that solemn pledge. I have again taken the oath of faithfulness to serve under the banner of Christ crucified, and to fight manfully against sin, the world, and the devil. Grant me, Most Merciful God, Thy Divine help in keeping that vow. Enable me to be true to Thy service. Let no rival take possession of my heart. But grant that, whenever I have to choose between inclination and duty, between pleasure and principle, between self-interest and truth, between the world and Christ, I may have Thy grace to cling to Thee, my only Master and my only Lord.

I ST JOHN ii. 20.—“*Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.*”

Our sufficiency is of God in all things. Every good and every

perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights; and not only can we not *do* what is right, but we cannot *know* what is right except we receive it from on high. It is only the anointing of the Holy One that can give us a clear knowledge of our Christian duties.—May I ever have that knowledge, O God, through the gift of Thy Holy Spirit. May no falling away of mine ever darken that light. May I daily increase in Thy Holy Spirit more and more, and know more and more of Thy Holy Will until I know it perfectly in Thy everlasting kingdom.

PSALM xxxii. 8.—“*I will guide thee with mine eye.*”

Thy service, O God, is difficult at first. I know that I shall often be tempted to violate Thy service, even though I have now taken this solemn vow to cling to it. I shall be tempted by my own desires—tempted by my daily business—tempted by companions—tempted by pride, by covetousness, by vanity. But I know also that Thou wilt give me strength against these temptations. I know that as I struggle against them their power over me will decrease—that Thy service, difficult at first, will become easier in the doing of it, until by Thy guidance I may walk safely in the paths of righteousness.—Grant me, O Lord, such a measure of Thy grace that Thy service may become the daily pleasure of my life, and that I may cease to require to be held by “bit and bridle,” and learn to be guided by Thine Eye.

ST JOHN xvii. 15.—“*I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil.*”

I have now renewed my promise to “renounce the world.” I have done this solemnly in the presence of God and of this congregation. Give me Thy grace, O God, fully and truly to have before me what this means. I am placed in the world; I have duties to do in the world. I have my daily business, my relations and friends, my family, my companions, my duties at home, in public, in business, in pleasure. Grant me Thy grace, O Lord, so to feel all these duties, and so to do them, that Thou and Thy service may ever remain my first love and chief care; and that by Thy mercy I may be so preserved from the wickedness of the world, that I may be found at the last prepared for the perfect righteousness of Thy everlasting kingdom.