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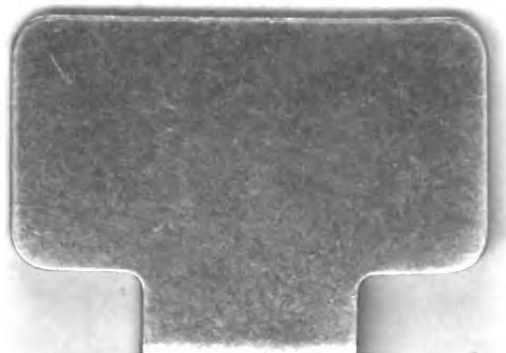
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FOUR ADDRESSES

ON

CONFIRMATION,

GIVEN PUBLICLY IN

ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH, BOLTON,

TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE PREPARING FOR THAT CEREMONY,

IN THE YEAR 1835,

BY THE

REV. W. THISTLETHWAITE, M.A.



LONDON:
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ADDRESS I.

On the Origin and Nature of Confirmation.

MY dear young people, the ceremony of confirmation, or laying on of hands, as it is otherwise called, in which you are going ere long to engage, is a very interesting and important one. I wish to make you well acquainted with its nature and object. I am anxious that you should attend upon it in an intelligent manner, understanding why it is observed, what it requires of you, and what benefit you may expect from it. And I desire that you may go to it with your hearts suitably affected, that so you may truly and faithfully enter into the engagements which it requires you to make, and thus receive the blessing which God is pleased to bestow by it, when it is rightly observed.

To understand its origin and nature, to learn for what persons it is intended, by whom it is to be administered, and the gift which is conferred in it, we will consider the accounts which the Scripture gives us of it.

In the eighth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles and at the fifth verse we find that Philip, one of the seven Deacons of whose appointment we read in the sixth chapter, had gone down to the city of Samaria and had

preached Christ unto the people there, and that they gave much heed to the things which he spake to them, perceiving that God must be with him, by the many miracles which he wrought in their sight. Then we find at the twelfth verse that several “believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, and were baptized both men and women.” At the fourteenth verse we find that when the Apostles, who were at Jerusalem, heard of these things, they sent Peter and John, *two of their own body*, to visit them, and these learning that the Holy Ghost was not given to them, they being as yet only baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, *prayed* for them that they might receive that blessed gift, and then they *laid their hands upon them*, and they received the Holy Ghost.

There is an account of a similar case in the nineteenth chapter of this same book of the Acts of the Apostles. There we read that when St. Paul came to Ephesus, he found there some disciples, who had only been baptized unto John’s baptism, and who had not only not received, but not so much as heard that there was any Holy Ghost. Upon further instruction by him in the Christian doctrine, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, not by St. Paul himself, as we learn from the first chapter of his first epistle to the Corinthians, but by some other person. When this had been done, the Apostle laid *his own* hands upon them, and the Holy Ghost came on them, and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. Thus we find, in both these cases, that the

persons spoken of had been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, by ministers of an inferior rank to that of the Apostles, that the hands which were laid on them were the hands of the Apostles, the highest ministers and rulers of the church, and that then they received the Holy Ghost.

If we now proceed to examine a passage in the sixth chapter of the epistle of the Hebrews, we shall be led to conclude that this was the orderly and regular succession of these two ceremonies in the Apostolic practice. We read there of what the Apostle calls the principles, that is, the first parts or rudiments, of the doctrine of Christ; and among these he enumerates (the one immediately after the other) the doctrine of baptism and of laying on of hands. This seems to shew that the laying on of hands regularly and in all cases succeeded after baptism.

These are the passages in Scripture from which the Christian church has derived, and by which she justifies, this ceremony of confirmation. And you perceive that the persons, upon whom it is to be performed, are those who have been baptized, as you have been; that the person who is to perform it, must be a Bishop, that order having succeeded to the order of the Apostles, who alone performed it in the places of Scripture which we have examined; and that the ceremony itself consists in prayer, and the laying on of the hands of the Bishop, for the purpose of obtaining from God the gift of the Holy Ghost upon you.

We find from history that this ceremony is often mentioned as being in constant use and observance in

the earliest days of the church. This is a great corroboration of our belief that it was established by the Apostles. These early writers all shew that it was a ceremony in constant use and observance among all Christians. Tertullian, within a hundred years of St. John's time, says, "After baptism succeeds the laying on of hands, with prayer, calling for and inviting the Holy Ghost." Cyprian, a very distinguished Bishop of Carthage, about sixty years after, speaking on that passage in the eighth chapter of Acts, says, "The same thing is practised among us ; they who are baptized in the church are presented to the rulers of the church, that by our prayer, and the laying on of our hands, they may be perfected with the seal of Christ." A council of the church held in Spain, in the beginning of the fourth century, required that all persons baptized should be brought to the Bishop, in order that they might be perfected by his blessing and the laying on of his hands. Jerome also, a very distinguished writer, about the end of the same century says, speaking of this ceremony, "If you ask where it is written, it is in the Acts of the Apostles ; and the custom of the whole Christian church has adopted it as law. Where persons have been baptized in inferior towns by Priests and Deacons, the Bishop travels out to these, to lay his hands upon them and invoke the Holy Ghost." This, you perceive, is an exact description of what is about to take place among ourselves at the present time. You have been baptized in one of these inferior towns by a Priest or Deacon, and the Bishop is now about to

travel hither in order that he may lay his hands upon you and pray for you that you may receive the Holy Ghost.

Thus it appears evident that this ceremony was founded by the Apostles; it descended after their example and on their authority through each successive age of the church; it is still observed in both the Roman and the Greek churches; and the Church of England retains it, and retains it, I may add, in the simplicity and purity in which it was first performed by the Apostles themselves, adding no other forms or observances, as some other churches have done, such as anointing with oil and signing with the sign of the cross, but using only prayer and the imposition of hands.

This laying on of hands is an action that is frequently mentioned in the Scriptures, and always denotes that the person doing it acts by divine authority. Thus Jacob laid his hands on the two sons of Joseph, and gave them his prophetic blessing. In this manner Moses solemnly appointed Joshua to be his successor as the leader of the children of Israel. In like manner our divine Lord laid his hands upon the children who were brought to him, and blessed them. And with this same form the ordination of ministers is also conducted according to the Apostolic rule and practice. Hence this ceremony has often the name of "laying on of hands," as it stands in our own Prayer-book, where it is called, "Confirmation, or the laying on of hands upon those that are baptized, and are come to years of discretion." And indeed it seems as if St. Paul himself had given it this

title, in that passage of Hebrews to which I have already referred.

The other name, Confirmation, is given to this ceremony, because you who go to it and fulfil it in a right manner do there ratify and *confirm*, in your own persons and by your declaration, that promise which was made by your Godfathers and Godmothers in your name, and on your behalf, at the time when you were baptized. And now, my dear young people, I beg your very earnest and serious attention. The subject here becomes much more personal to you. We are no longer to consider what the Apostles of our Lord established, what the universal church has received, what is the part of our own Bishop who is now coming among us, but what *you yourselves* are to do. I therefore charge you, by all the authority with which I am invested as your minister, nay, I beg and beseech you, by all the love and affection which I have for you or which you have for me, that you will give a still more attentive hearing to this part of my address to you.

What then are you going to do in this approaching ceremony of Confirmation? You are going, as I have already said, to promise for yourselves, and with your own tongue, that you will now do all the things which your Godfathers and Godmothers promised for you that you should do, when they stood as your sponsors at your baptism. For the Bishop will ask you, as you may see by reading over the order of Confirmation in your Prayer-book, which I hope you will do often and diligently, he will ask you, I say, this question: "Do ye

here, in the presence of God and 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?" To this question you are directed and will be expected to answer audibly, "I do." But even if you do not answer thus, still your appearance there, knowing that such a question will be put to you, and your going up to the Bishop after he has put it, will be as binding upon you as if you had answered aloud; while if your refusal to answer should arise from any unwillingness to make this promise, or any expectation that you shall thereby not be bound to fulfil it, it will be such a piece of deceit and hypocrisy, as will make your attendance a great sin, because it will be a solemn and wilful mockery of God. But I am persuaded better things than this of you, and I trust that you will all be desirous to be sincere in this matter, and to say and do what you have to say and do in a pious and spiritual manner, that so you may obtain a great blessing and benefit to your souls.

What then were the things which your Godfathers and Godmothers promised for you? Or, to speak more correctly, what were the things which *you* promised by these your sureties at your baptism, and which you are now going to promise for yourselves in your own persons in this ceremony of Confirmation? You will find them in the office of Baptism in these

words, "That you would renounce the devil and all his works, and constantly believe God's holy word, and obediently keep his commandments." Or you may find them in the questions which were put to your sponsors by the clergyman who baptized you, and the answers which they returned to him; which questions and answers immediately follow the words which I have just read to you. Or you may find them in your catechism in answer to the question, "What did your Godfathers and Godmothers *then* for you?" namely, when you were baptized, and your answer is, "They did promise and vow three things in my name, First, that I should renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh; Secondly, that I should believe all the articles of the Christian faith; and Thirdly, that I should keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of my life." I will not say any thing to you at present on these words in which you made your promise by your sureties at your baptism, because I intend to give you a full explanation of them in my next address to you. You will however at once be sensible that they are all of them such things as are necessary for your salvation, and therefore necessary for you to do. They are such things as, if you had then been at years of discretion and able to judge for yourselves, it would have been right for you to promise, and therefore it was right for your Godfathers and Godmothers to promise them for you in your name. They promised them for you, because they

knew that it was your duty and would be for your unspeakable benefit to do them ; and thus they introduced you into covenant with Christ, and made you members of his Church, for which you ought to be most thankful, and you should feel that you were bound by this their act on your behalf to do what they engaged for you, as an orphan is bound by all acts of his guardian which are lawful and for his good. The Church has taught you in the catechism to acknowledge that you are thus bound. Each of you is there asked, “ Dost thou not think that thou art bound to believe and do as they have promised for thee ? ” And you are taught to answer, “ Yes verily and by God’s help so I will. And I heartily thank our heavenly Father, that he hath called me to this state of salvation, through Jesus Christ our Saviour. And I pray unto God to give me his grace that I may continue in the same unto my life’s end.” Thus the Church, like a tender and anxious mother, watching over your religious education in your early youth, instructs you in what has been promised for you, and how you ought to feel and speak, determining by God’s help to fulfil the promise, thankful to him for this his mercy to you, and praying to him for his grace that you may always continue in a state of salvation. Observe then, my dear young friends, that the Church has appointed friends to promise for you ; she has taught you what that promise is ; she has instructed you to say that you think yourselves bound by it ; and now she has provided for you a ceremony, according to the Apostolic

model, in which you may publicly take the engagement of this promise upon yourselves, since you are come to an age sufficient for you to understand such important matters, and to act in them for yourselves. You are therefore now going to make this promise ; you are going to engage that you will renounce all the works of the devil, all the vanities of the world, and all the lusts of the flesh ; that you will constantly believe all the truths of God's word ; and that you will obediently keep his commandments. You are thus going to make the covenant with your God and Saviour by your own voluntary act ; you are going to devote yourselves to his service. What has hitherto been done for you by others, you are now going to do for yourselves ; what has been taught you as your duty you are now going to acknowledge to be such. You are going to profess and call yourselves Christians, and to engage that, by God's help, you will believe and live as Christians ought to do.

And now, my dear young people, you see the great importance and very interesting nature of this ceremony, and with how much thought and prayer and holy purpose of soul you ought to undertake it. Look upon it as the first *public* religious act of your lives. And if you will consider the circumstances under which this promise will be made by you, you will see that they fill it with additional solemnity. You will make it in the house of God, and therefore in the presence of God ; you will make it to your Bishop, whose office in the Church is of a higher order than that of any of

your ordinary ministers ; you will make it before me, and oh ! how I do hope and pray that you will have grace given you of God to make it sincerely and to keep it faithfully ; you will make it in the presence of a numerous congregation, of many intelligent Christians, and also of many relatives and friends most anxious for your eternal welfare ; holy angels also will be witnesses, interested by the view of those who are then dedicating themselves to that blessed God, whose face they always behold. Oh ! my young friends, what a happy thing it will be, if you have then the testimony of a good conscience, that in simplicity and Godly sincerity you are there really devoting yourselves to God. But what an awful thought is it, if you shall be without great seriousness of mind on so very solemn an occasion, and in the presence of so many witnesses ! Oh ! remember that one of them at least, even the all-seeing God, will then know all that is in your mind and heart, and that others will live to see whether future proofs of your sincerity appear, and whether you keep the promise which you make, and the covenant into which you enter with God.

Look then, I pray you, upon this ceremony of Confirmation as a most solemn transaction between yourselves and your God, and the more solemn as being, as I have said, the first public ceremony of a religious nature in which you have been so personally and individually engaged, and to be performed in the presence of so many witnesses. Enter into it with much seriousness, consideration, self-examination, and prayer.

It may be a day of great blessing to your souls. It may be that God will then in mercy send down the Holy Ghost upon you. What that blessing is, and why it may be expected, I will endeavour to shew you in some future address. I part with you for the present with a most anxious desire that you may retire from hearing this address with a deep and strong impression upon your minds that Confirmation, in which you ratify and confirm your baptismal vow, with your own mouth and consent, openly before the Church and its Bishop, and in the presence of God himself, is a most important and solemn ceremony, requiring all your attention, thought, and prayer, yet to be engaged in with a willing and thankful heart, as a great spiritual privilege, and with a lively hope of receiving in it great and unspeakable spiritual benefits.

ADDRESS II.

On the Promises made at Baptism.

IN my former address to you, my dear young people, I endeavoured to shew you what was the origin of the ceremony of Confirmation, and why it can be performed only by a Bishop and not by any inferior minister. I stated to you that the purpose for which you were to go to that ceremony was, to ratify and confirm, in your own persons and by your own act and deed, the promise which had been made for you by your Godfathers and Godmothers at your baptism. And I said much with an anxious desire to impress you with a deep and solemn feeling of the importance and interest of this ceremony to you, as being the first time in which you had engaged, actually for yourself and openly before the Church, in any public religious duty of so personal and individual a nature. I told you then that I would afterwards explain to you, more at large, the obligations of the baptismal vow, that promise which you made by your sureties when you were first baptized, which you have therefore been always bound to observe, and which you are now going to take upon yourselves in the presence of the Bishop, of your own minister, of many others

similarly situated with yourselves, and of various other witnesses.

Consider with me then seriously what those engagements were into which you entered at the time of your baptism. They appear in the form of questions proposed by the clergyman who baptized you and of answers given by the friends who kindly stood forward to undertake for you. The first question is this. "Dost thou, in the name of this child, renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the carnal desires of the flesh, so that thou wilt not follow nor be led by them?" They answered for you, "I renounce them all." In the second question the clergyman asked whether you believed all the articles of the Christian faith, going over them as they are mentioned in the Apostle's creed, which I need not repeat to you as you are so well acquainted with it. The answer made in your name was this, "All this I stedfastly believe." The third question was, "Wilt thou be baptized in this faith?" To this the answer was given, "That is my desire." And the fourth and last question put to you through your sureties was in these words, "Wilt thou then obediently keep God's holy will and commandments and walk in the same all the days of thy life?" And thus they finally answered for you, "I will."

Now let us go over these various promises in order. In presenting yourselves to the Bishop for the confirmation of these engagements in your own person you say that you "renounce the devil and all his works, the

vain pomp and glory of the world, with all the covetous desires of the same, and the carnal desires of the flesh, so that you will not follow nor be led by them." The devil is that fallen and wicked spirit who, as a serpent, deceived our first parents to their ruin, and still goes about, like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. He is the father of lies and the author of all evil, the hater and enemy of God, the tempter to sin, and indefatigable in his exertions to ruin men's souls. Shall you go before the Bishop to renounce the devil heartily and decidedly? Oh! I hope that you will, and that now and henceforth you may ever resist him that he may flee from you. The works of the devil are sins of every kind, such as lying, swearing, stealing, sabbath-breaking, disobedience to parents, and innumerable others of a similar kind. Will you really and truly renounce these and all such like works? Are you prepared to say from your hearts that you will? Oh! be ready to do so, I beseech you. The devil and his works are hateful to God: let them be detested and avoided by you. The vain pomp and glory of the world with all covetous desires of the same are also to be renounced by you. You are to engage not to love or follow any of those vain shews, or fashionable amusements, or frivolous pleasures, or extravagant dress, of which persons who are of the world and not of Christ are so fond, and in which they so commonly indulge. You are also to promise not to hanker in your hearts after these things, nor to set your desires upon riches, nor to be ambitious of honours. Can you, my children,

make this promise also sincerely? Will you renounce the pomps and vanities of this wicked world? Oh! "love not the world," as St. John exhorts in his first epistle, the second chapter, and fifteenth verse, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." Besides these things you are also to renounce the carnal desires of the flesh. Of these again there is a long catalogue; such is the corrupt and sinful state of our fallen nature. Among these we may reckon pride, envy, malice, and hatred, lasciviousness, inordinate affection, and evil concupiscence. These sinful *desires* of the flesh, as they work within, bring forth the sinful *works* of the flesh, such as adultery, fornication, uncleanness, drunkenness, strife, murder, and various other actual sins and crimes. You may read of them, yes, and of their opposite virtues too, in the fifth chapter of Galatians, in the fifth chapter of Ephesians, and in the third chapter of Colossians. Oh! then be prepared to renounce all these sinful lusts of the flesh, for otherwise they will render you hateful in the sight of the pure and holy God, and lead you into much sin and wickedness among men. And since these carnal desires are so very sinful in themselves, and also bring forth so many evil works, oh! "keep your hearts," as the Proverb says, (iv. 23) "with all diligence, since out of them are the issues of life." And diligently remember what the

holy Apostle Paul says unto Titus, his own son after the common faith, that "the grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and Godly, in this present world, looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearance of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Remember also how the same Apostle says to the Galatians that our Lord Jesus Christ "gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil *world*." Remember also how St. John says, that "for this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the *Devil*."

The second question put to you through your God-fathers and Godmothers at your baptism was, whether you believed all the leading and essential articles of the Christian faith, the officiating clergyman repeating, as questions, the particulars of the Apostles' creed; and when he had gone through the whole the answer was given, still in your name, "All this I stedfastly believe." Before I refer to these particulars separately, I will remind you of the three general heads into which that creed is divided in your catechism. These have respect to the three divine persons of the Holy Trinity, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. Now in presenting yourselves to the Bishop in Confirmation you ratify and confirm this declaration of faith in your

own persons, you profess that this is your belief. Previously, then, to your appearing before him for this purpose, "examine yourselves whether you be in the faith, prove your own selves." And as this faith when it is true and genuine, is always productive of fruit, or, in other words, is always manifested by good works, it will be necessary that you also enquire into the effects which your faith produces upon the feelings of your hearts, and the character of your lives. Ask yourselves therefore if you really believe in the Almighty Father, maker of heaven and earth, and that he is the Creator of all things that exist, and the giver of your own life, breath, and being; and also if, consequently, you reverence and regard him supremely, acknowledge yourselves his creatures, and serve him faithfully as such.—You must also examine yourselves whether you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, whether with your heart you admit the truth of his essential dignity and glory, whether you fully believe that he became incarnate upon earth, and died upon the cross as an atoning sacrifice for our sins, that he rose again for our justification, that he now reigns in Heaven as head over all things for his church, and will come again from thence in power and great glory to be the judge both of the living and the dead. And you must enquire whether this faith in Jesus has been such as to make you love and praise him for his mercy, and whether in consequence of your possessing it you thus judge, as the Apostle Paul did, "that if he died for all, then were all dead, and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live

unto themselves, but unto him who died for them and rose again." Verily, my dear young friends, by these things only can you really judge whether your faith in Christ be a living and true faith.—Again, in preparing to renew your profession and promise before the Bishop you must enquire respecting your faith in the Holy Ghost. What do you know of this divine Agent? He bears a most important part in the great work of man's recovery to God. It is he who enlightens the mind, and sanctifies the will, who comforts the heart, and strengthens the soul. It is he by whom any one can truly say that Jesus is the Lord, and he by whom the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts. It is he who witnesses with our spirits that we are the children of God, and by whom we are sealed unto the day of redemption. If indeed you believe these things of the Holy Ghost, and all these things the Scriptures declare of him, how earnestly will you desire, and how fervently will you pray, that he may be given to you in all his enlightening, converting, sanctifying, renewing, comforting, strengthening, and guiding grace and power.—You also professed by your sureties at your baptism that you believed in the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of Saints, the remission of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. You are going before the Bishop to ratify and confirm the profession of your belief in these articles of the Christian faith also; therefore you must see to it that you do believe in the Holy Catholic Church, that is, the Holy Universal Church of Christ, of which the Church of England is one pure and

Apostolical part, into which you have been already admitted by baptism, and in which you must therefore continue as a true and faithful member, you must also believe that the Saints, that is, all true Christians who are sanctified by God's grace and holy, have communion with God the Father, and with Jesus Christ, and with the Holy Ghost, and with one another, as one spiritual body; and therefore you must continue in this Godly fellowship, and never do anything to break or divide it. You must also have a real faith in the remission of sins, granted to all true believers through that great propitiation for sin made by the blessed Jesus in his sacrifice of himself upon the cross, and upon that you must wholly depend for the pardon of all your own transgressions. You are also to believe in the resurrection of the body, that is, that your own body, and the bodies of all men, both the just and the unjust, will be raised again, and in the life everlasting wherein the bodies and souls of all shall be fixed in an unchangeable state, the wicked suffering everlasting punishment with the devil and his angels, and the righteous enjoying eternal happiness with their God and Saviour. And the effect of this faith must be that you earnestly desire and endeavour to attain to a happy and glorious resurrection from the grave, and to possess for ever the unspeakable and inconceivable happiness of heaven.

This confession of faith being made in your name by your Godfathers and Godmothers at your baptism, the following question was next proposed to them, "Wilt thou be baptized in this faith?" And the answer which

they returned, replying for you, was, "That is my desire." The last question which was put to you through your sponsors was in these words, "Wilt thou then obediently keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of thy life." And here again they answered for you, "I will." This promise you perceive is what it was perfectly right and proper that you should make. You are sensible that it is indispensably necessary that you should keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of your life, and therefore your sponsors engaged for you that you should. Now in proposing to confirm this promise you must have a real desire and fixed purpose of heart, to live in dutiful obedience to all that God has commanded, and a full determination to endeavour, *by his help*, without which you can do nothing, both to abstain from every thing which he has forbidden, and also to do whatever he has commanded. That such is the meaning of the engagement is evident from those other words, in which the answer to this question is given in the ministration of baptism to such as are of riper years, wherein they say, "I will endeavour so to do, *God being my helper.*" Here I also observe to you that the Catechism shews you that God's will and commandments are principally expressed in the ten commandments, and having shewn you that your duty to God and your neighbour is contained in them, and having also taught you several particulars of your duty in both these respects, it then informs you "that you are not able to do these things of yourselves, nor

to walk in the commandments of God and to serve him, without his special grace, which you must learn at all times to call for by diligent prayer." Therefore in now professing to take this engagement upon yourselves, you must make the promise in entire dependance upon the help of God, and you must pray earnestly and constantly that his special grace may enable you to keep and perform all his will and commandments. And again, since you cannot keep God's will and commandments without knowing what they are, you must diligently study not only the ten commandments but all the Holy Scriptures, that so you may know and walk in all his commandments and ordinances blameless, and keep a conscience void of offence both towards God and towards man. Remember also that this engagement extends far beyond the present ceremony and the day of its observance. The engagement made for you by your sureties, and now to be renewed and confirmed by yourselves is, that you will walk in the same *all the days of your life*. What holy care, circumspection and watchfulness should you use through each successive year! But you need not be afraid to make this engagement, if you be really willing and desirous to fulfil it, for if you sincerely ask the help of God, he will give you his Holy Spirit, to preserve and strengthen you. Henceforth then live with watchful care, in humble dependance upon his help, and with daily earnest prayer for his grace.

And now, my dear young friends, I have endeavoured to shew you what those promises are which you made

by your sureties at your baptism. Think well that you are going to repeat, ratify, and confirm them in your own persons in this Christian ceremony of Confirmation. You cannot but perceive that every one of these engagements was, as I have observed to you before, for your great benefit, and such as you would have made, if you had then known your own duty and interest. They are therefore such as you ought to make now. Let me also remind you that you must not for a moment imagine that if you abstain from taking these engagements upon yourselves, you will not be bound to renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh, and that you will not be bound to believe all the articles of the Christian faith, and also to keep God's holy will and commandments all the days of your life. My dear children, you are bound to do all these things whether you pledge yourselves to it or not. You are bound to it by the command of God, and the duty which you owe, and always did and always must owe, to him. You are bound to it by the sacrament of baptism, and by that sign of the cross which was then made upon your forehead "in token that hereafter you should not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under his banner against sin, the world, and the devil, and to continue Christ's faithful soldiers and servants unto your life's end." And would you now, when you are grown to years of discretion, and able to judge and act for yourselves, would you now

throw off the authority of God? Would you renounce your baptism, and with all the blessings of Christ's covenant of love and mercy? Would you break the engagements into which your sureties entered for you, and reject that holy sign which your minister made upon you? Would you make alliance with the devil, and do his works? Would you live in the ways of a wicked world, and indulge in all the sinful lusts of the flesh? Would you deny all the articles of the Christian faith, and disobediently oppose the will of God, and break his commandments all the days of your life? No, my young friends, I trust you will not do these things. You will not insult your God, nor reject your Saviour, nor renounce your baptism. No; you will go to the Bishop, and take up your baptismal vow before him. You will do this, I earnestly hope, deliberately and piously. You will go with a sincere desire and holy determination to be the Lord's children and servants. You will dedicate yourselves to him. You will avouch the Lord to be your God. Oh! my beloved young people, that there may be in you this understanding mind, this willing heart, and stedfast purpose. And oh! that a gracious God may himself also ratify and confirm his covenant with you, bless you with his mercy, favour, and care, and seal you for himself for ever by the impress of his own Spirit!

ADDRESS III.

On the Benefits to be derived from Confirmation.

My dear young people, we are again met together, that I may give, and that you may receive, such instruction respecting the ceremony of Confirmation, as may prepare you, through God's help and grace, for the right observance of it, and may induce you to go to it with a clear understanding of its nature, in a pious and humble spirit, and with a thankful, rejoicing, and expecting, heart. Observe my young friends, that I not only say to you, with a clear understanding of its nature, and in a pious and humble spirit, but also, *with a thankful, rejoicing, and expecting heart*. Indeed you should be very *thankful* to Almighty God, that he is so gracious as to readmit you into covenant with himself, though you were born in sin and children of wrath. Well may you *rejoice* in the great privilege into which you have been admitted by baptism. And largely may you *expect* great additional benefit from the approaching ceremony, which, as you have seen, is founded upon the practice of the Apostles, and which God honoured so signally with his blessing in their days. I have endeavoured to prepare you for a right observance of this

ceremony, without which you cannot hope to derive any advantage from it, and now I proceed to set before you the benefit which you may expect in it, if you observe it as you ought to do.

By recurring again to the eighth and the nineteenth chapters of the Acts of the Apostles we shall perceive, that when the Apostles prayed for those persons who had been baptized and laid their hands upon them, they received the Holy Ghost. That was the gift which was conferred. In the eighth chapter and seventeenth verse we read, "Then laid they their hands upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost;" and in the nineteenth chapter and sixth verse we read, "And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them."

In those early days God was pleased, for the establishment of the gospel in the earth, to confirm the word preached by the Apostles and others "with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will." Very numerous and various were those which we call the *extraordinary* gifts of the Holy Ghost, as well as his *ordinary* enlightening, sanctifying, and comforting graces. Many of both kinds are reckoned up by the Apostle in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, the twelfth chapter and the eighth verse, where he says, "For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another

prophecy ; to another discerning of spirits ; to another divers kind of tongues ; to another the interpretation of tongues : but all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will." Thus we find in the case of those twelve persons on whom St. Paul laid his hands, that " the Holy Ghost came on them, and they spake with tongues and prophecied."

These extraordinary and miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost are not now to be expected. They were given for an attestation to the truth of the gospel when it was first being planted in the earth. But sufficient evidence of its truth having been fully vouchsafed, they have long ago ceased to be bestowed. Still however the ordinary operations of the Holy Ghost, to renew our fallen nature, to sanctify our unholy hearts, to strengthen our weak purposes and endeavours, to comfort our hearts with spiritual consolations, and to fill us with peace and joy in God, these are always needed ; therefore they are still bestowed, and are to be always desired, prayed for, and expected, in the faithful use of those means and ordinances, in which God has been pleased to promise, and has been wont to give them. This then is the benefit to be expected by you in the ceremony of Confirmation, even the gift of the Holy Ghost to infuse into your souls those spiritual gifts and graces which he is still accustomed to confer.

Now of the greatness of this benefit you will be able to form some idea, if you consider that all that is good and all that is holy proceeds entirely from the

divine influence of the Holy Ghost upon us, who are by nature sinful and depraved creatures. There is not one thing of a spiritual nature which we can do aright, without his grace. We can neither repent, believe, nor obey. We can neither love God nor keep his commandments. We cannot effectually resist the devil, nor overcome the world, nor crucify the flesh. We cannot in any way work out our own salvation, except he work in us both to will and to do; that is, except he make us both willing and able to do it. Thus you see that without this gift of the Holy Ghost we are nothing but poor and lost sinners, that we shall never do any thing that is good, nay, that we shall always be doing that which is evil, and live continually under the wrath of God, and perish everlastingly. Reflect therefore that this gift of the Holy Ghost is absolutely necessary to preserve you from sin upon earth, and from eternal misery in hell. But, my dear young people, though you can do nothing that is good and holy, nor anything that will effect your salvation, *without the Holy Ghost*, there is nothing however good and however holy, nothing that is pleasing to God, or that he requires of you, which you may not do *by his gracious help and blessing*. If the Holy Spirit of God be given to you, he will put into your hearts good desires; he will strengthen all your holy resolutions; he will shew you all the things of Jesus and enable you to comprehend and receive them, he will teach you how to pray with all your heart: he will make you ever thankful to God for all

his goodness and mercy ; he will cause you to love God above all things and your neighbours as yourselves ; he will dispose you to devote yourselves to this service of Christ and enable you to live according to his gospel ; he will render you humble and pious ; he will make you pure and holy, meek and gentle, forbearing and forgiving, like your blessed Saviour ; he will fill you with contentment, quietness, and peace ; he will preserve you from sin in the hour of temptation ; he will comfort you in every season of trouble and sorrow ; he will support you in every trial ; he will give you an experience of the happiness and pleasures of true religion, because he will make you truly religious ; and he will enable you to rejoice in the Lord, and to glory in the God of your salvation. Oh ! my beloved young friends, what will not the Holy Ghost do for you, and what may not you do by him, if you receive him from the mercy and grace of God through the laying on of the hands of the Bishop ? Then will you bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, which are “ love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance ;” then “ through the Spirit” you will “ mortify the deeds of the body ;” you will “ walk in the Spirit,” and so you will “ not fulfil the works of the flesh ;” you will “ sow to the Spirit ;” and “ of the Spirit you will reap life everlasting.” Oh ! how fervently do I pray for you, that God may now, in this ceremony, pour out his blessed Spirit upon you, and that according to his mercy he may save you “ by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost,” then shed upon

you most abundantly. Oh! that “the Spirit of Glory and of God may indeed rest upon you,” so that, beloved, henceforth “building up yourselves on your most holy faith, and praying in the Holy Ghost,” you may for ever hereafter “keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.”

For this blessing the Bishop himself will pray for you at the time when you are assembled before him. He will use these words which you may find in the office of the 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.” In the beginning of this prayer the Bishop refers to your baptism, and trusts, as in charity he is bound to do, from your thus appearing before him, and from your having confirmed the baptismal promises in his presence, that you are partakers of the spiritual blessings which are conveyed by that sacrament, and then he prays for the Holy Ghost to strengthen you, and to increase in you his manifold gifts of grace, especially mentioning seven of them, as the prophet Isaiah does in his eleventh chapter and second verse.—Then again, when you kneel before him, and he lays his hands on

you, he prays thus, "Defend, O Lord, these thy servants with thy heavenly grace, that they may continue thine for ever, and daily increase in thy Holy Spirit more and more, until they come to thine everlasting kingdom." This again, you perceive, is a prayer for the same blessing of God's heavenly grace and of his Holy Spirit.—And once more, after he has laid his hands upon you all, and after a short response and the Lord's prayer, he says again, "Almighty and everliving God, who makest us both to will and to do those things that be 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, 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." Here also is the same blessing prayed for, that the Holy Spirit may be ever with you, and lead you in the knowledge of God's word and obedience to it, till you enter into heaven.

Now do you not think it a great privilege to have such pious and affectionate prayers made for you by one of the highest order of God's ministers, and to have his hands laid upon you, in hope that you may thereby receive that precious gift, the gift of the Holy Ghost, especially when these things are all done after the example of the holy Apostles themselves? Do you not

think that you should be very thankful for such an opportunity of receiving such great blessings as these? And are you not anxious that you may indeed be made partakers of those gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, which are to render you holy and good and pious, and to preserve you from all sin and wickedness, and to make you the humble and faithful servants of God and followers of the blessed Jesus? Oh, young people, if *I* pray for you, if *the Bishop* prays for you, should you not also pray for yourselves most earnestly and sincerely and with all your heart, that the benefit to be derived by the laying on of the hands of the Bishop, and by his prayers for you in this ceremony of Confirmation, may indeed be yours? Yes, surely, you will pray often during the time that yet intervenes before the ceremony that you may be thus blessed with so great a blessing as that of the gift of the Holy Ghost and his abundant grace.

And here I think that I may now reasonably hope that you are disposed and ready to go to this ceremony, with, as I said in the beginning of this address, a thankful, rejoicing, and expecting heart; thankful that so much has been already done for you in your baptism, rejoicing that such a ceremony as this of Confirmation has been provided for you by the care of your church, and expecting that you shall receive this great and most desirable blessing. Sure I am that so many of you as really understand the nature of this ceremony, and also really desire in your hearts and intend, by God's help, to do the things which you promise, as

they were set before you in my last address, will be most willing and glad to go to this ceremony, and may expect to derive great spiritual good from it. If you can estimate the necessity, the extent, the excellency of that good, which is communicated by the Holy Ghost, greatly indeed will you desire to possess it. It is that blessing in which all other blessings are comprised. It has in itself the fulness of all spiritual blessings. It is that which will give you repentance faith and holiness, peace hope and joy, perseverance power and strength. It is that which will win for you the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil. It is that which will cause you to love and enable you to do all the commandments of God, make you grow in grace, and be always abounding in the work of the Lord. Oh! then enlarge your expectations of this heavenly gift. Let your thoughts and desires be fixed upon it. Open your whole hearts to receive it. My dear young people, I do wish to send you to Confirmation in a proper frame of mind; not only with all due reverence seriousness and awe; not only with much humility self-diffidence and prayer; but also with a free and happy spirit, rejoicing in the privilege which you are about to enjoy, and indulging a large and lively hope that the interests of your soul will be much benefited thereby. I could almost say to you as the Apostle to the Corinthians "Our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged. Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels. Now for a recompence in the same (I speak as unto my children) be ye

also enlarged." Oh! yes, my dear children, be ye enlarged in your love and gratitude to your heavenly Father for his mercies, and enlarged in your desires for a full participation in all the manifold spiritual gifts of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter.

Let none of you be indifferent and careless in this matter. I cannot help fearing, such is my anxiety for you, that some of you, after all that I have said, will not understand, and that others will not care about, what they have to do, and what they may expect in this ceremony. I fear lest you should not think, and enquire, and read, and pray, as you ought to do. But oh! be not negligent and unconcerned in so important a matter. Let there be no indifference nor levity in a concern so momentous and weighty. I quote again from the same epistle as before, and I say as the Apostle, "We then, as workers together with him, beseech you that you receive not this grace of God in vain." God has been very gracious to you in providing for you so admirable a means of grace as this. Do not render it ineffectual by your inconsiderate and consequently sinful negligence. Do not thus "frustrate the grace of God," and his merciful intentions towards you. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God" by neither desiring nor thinking of his blessing. It is written that God "will give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him;" but it is also written, "Ye have not because ye ask not." And how can you expect to receive the Holy Ghost, if you pray not for him, if you think not and care not about him? If any such there be, I would rather that you

abstained from this ceremony altogether for the present, that you may go to it hereafter in a better mind. Oh! be diligent, dear children, in the remaining part of your preparation, that you may not lose, through your own fault, the benefit which you might otherwise receive. Deprive not yourselves of so great a blessing. Think, I beseech you, again and again, that in this ceremony of Confirmation you may expect to receive the divine influence and grace of the Holy Spirit, that grace which is the only thing that can preserve you from the temptations and power of the world, the flesh, and the devil, or render you holy and obedient to the word and will of God. It is that very promise of which the prophet Ezekiel speaks, in his thirty-sixth chapter and twenty-seventh verse, "I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them." The Apostle refers to the same in his Epistle to the Hebrews, the eighth chapter and tenth verse, where he says, "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts, and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." Oh! if there be any of you still so ignorant of what this blessing is, or so thoughtless and careless as not to appreciate and desire it, I pray for you in the language of St. Paul to the Ephesians, the first chapter and seventeenth verse, "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know

what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints." Yea and in his language in the same Epistle, the third chapter and fourteenth verse, I too would " bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth and length and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." And again I would pray for you, as the same Apostle does for the Philip-pians, the first chapter and the ninth verse, " that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere, and without offence till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God."

It has been a great satisfaction and encouragement to me to see that these addresses have been attended by so many of the congregation. It gives me hope that many of *you* are interested in the spiritual welfare of these lambs of our flock. I ask you, (the parents and sponsors especially, from whom indeed I may well demand it,) that you will help me to prepare them for a right and profitable observance of this ceremony, by

your additional instructions and admonitions to those of them for whom you are more particularly concerned. Above all, and what I can ask of all, for this is what all may do, I intreat your prayers for me and for them, that I may be enabled so to teach, and that they may so effectually learn, these early principles of our holy religion, and the meaning of this ceremony of our national church, as that they may go to it with minds well instructed and with hearts rightly disposed, and thus become partakers of the great spiritual benefit which it is intended to convey to them. Oh ! pray for them that the Holy Spirit of God may himself be their teacher, that so being all taught of God they may fully understand and faithfully receive all things that relate to their everlasting salvation.

ADDRESS IV.

On proper Behaviour before, at, and after, the Ceremony.

MY dear young people, I have great reason to be satisfied with the attendance which you have given upon these my endeavours to prepare you for the very interesting ceremony, in which you will now have soon to engage. I trust that you may have derived some profit from them, and that you have gained some information on the origin of Confirmation, on the meaning and obligations of those promises which you are now about to make for yourselves, and also on the nature and great importance of that spiritual blessing, which you may expect in your right observance of it. If you have given that attention to the three preceding addresses which you appear to have done, you will be sufficiently informed on each of these particulars, and I now proceed, in this my last address to you, to endeavour to point out how you ought to employ your thoughts in the remaining time previous to your presenting yourselves before the Bishop, what your behaviour ought to be when you are engaged in the ceremony, and finally how you should conduct yourselves after you have thus ratified and confirmed the engagements of your baptism.

With respect then to the manner in which you ought to employ your thoughts on what you are going so soon to do, I advise you to make a very serious examination of yourselves as to your views and desires and sincerity in thus presenting yourselves for Confirmation ; whether you think that you sufficiently understand the nature of the ceremony ; whether you are really willing to renounce the devil, and all vanity wickedness and sin ; whether you truly believe all the principal doctrines of the gospel ; and whether you feel an earnest desire in your soul and a full purpose, by divine help, to keep all God's commandments, and to walk in them all the days of your life. On every one of those three things make a faithful and minute enquiry of your own heart, whether with all simplicity and godly sincerity you can make those professions and promises, and whether it is indeed your desire purpose and determination faithfully to observe them. I further advise you to examine in what particulars you have already *broken* the promises which you made in your baptism, and to humble yourselves before God, confessing and repenting of all your sins. Oh ! think that you have thus brought guilt upon your souls, and that you greatly need the pardoning mercy of God, and the atoning sacrifice of the blessed Jesus for its removal.

I also recommend that you should carefully read over, again and again, the office of Baptism, the Catechism, and the order for Confirmation, as you find them in your Prayer-book. These are all connected with each other ; they are specially intended for the young ; they

have all been drawn up for your instruction and benefit; and the careful study of them cannot but inform you respecting your duty, and strengthen all your good resolutions to perform it. Read also frequently that useful little tract on Confirmation which I have put into your hands. It contains an excellent form of self-examination on all the subjects, into which you ought now to be particularly enquiring, with a form also of confession of sin, and many other things well adapted both to inform and affect you rightly.*

Most earnestly do I also call on you to be much in prayer between this time and the day of Confirmation. Oh! my children, we can none of us learn any thing that is good, or do any thing that is good, but by the teaching and help of God's Holy Spirit. Therefore, as you examine yourselves, pray in the language of David in the close of the hundred and thirty ninth Psalm, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." You should pray that God may shew to you any wickedness that is in you, that you may put it away from you altogether. As you read the things to which I have directed you, you may pray in the words of the Collect for the first Sunday after the Epiphany, beseeching God to "grant that you may both perceive and know what things you ought to do, and also may have grace

* A Method of Preparation for Confirmation, by the Rev. W. H. Hale, M. A.—No. 81 on the list of the Society of Promoting Christian Knowledge.

and power faithfully to fulfil the same." There are also some suitable forms in the little tract which I have given you, which may serve to help you in this matter of prayer. But if in private and retirement you can pour out the desires of your heart to God in your own words, that will probably be the most sincere, effectual, and fervent prayer which you can offer.

These are all things which I have in some measure urged upon you before in my former addresses, and which I hope you have already been doing; but as the time draws nearer, I trust that you will be the more diligent and earnest, give more time to these holy employments, and be in every thing more intent upon your preparation.

I now proceed to speak to you on your behaviour during the day itself, and while you are engaged in the ceremony in the church. Remember then that it is a day and a ceremony of *religion*, of indeed, as I have before told you, the first direct and personal act of religion in which you have yourselves publicly engaged. Therefore there must be no levity of mind or conduct, no vanity respecting your dress and appearance, no idea of amusement or play, as if it were only some holiday. Oh! No. There must be a deep seriousness of mind, marked throughout by a grave and sober deportment. You must think what an important work it is in which you are then engaging, what a great responsibility will then rest upon you, and what a blessing you may receive or lose, according as your heart is right with God or otherwise.

Such must be your feeling through the whole of the day.

During the time in which you are at church you must behave with the greatest reverence and decorum, and engage with your heart in every part of the service. When the Bishop asks you altogether whether you renew the solemn promise and vow made in your name at your baptism, and ratify and confirm the same in your own persons, and acknowledge yourselves bound to believe and do all those things which your Godfathers and Godmothers then undertook for you, you must each of you answer, speaking so as to be heard, "I do." This you ought to feel and resolve in your heart, while you declare it with your tongue; and as you repeat that answer, you ought thereby to devote yourselves truly to the service of God. My dear children, you must look upon those two words, thus solemnly repeated, as a decided act of self-dedication to Him in whose name you have been baptized; and you must think that you have then given yourselves to the Lord to be his for ever, entirely to shun and utterly to reject all his enemies, and all that he hates, and to follow faithfully all that he loves, and do whatever he has commanded. I say to you, my dear young friends, as impressively as I can, that when you have answered to the Bishop's question these two words, "I do," the thought of every one of you should be, "I have now opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I must not go back." You may each say to yourselves what Moses said to the Children of Israel upon a very solemn occasion, "Thou

hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, and to walk in his ways and to keep his statutes, and his commandments and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice." Oh! that the Lord, hearing the voice of the words which ye shall then speak unto him, may say, (as in the fifth chapter of Deuteronomy and twenty-eighth verse,) "I have heard the voice of the words of these children, which they have spoken unto me; they have well said all that they have spoken." And let *me* add, Oh! that there may be such an heart in you, that you may fear the Lord, and keep all his commandments always, that it may be well with you for ever.

When the Bishop prays for you, or with the congregation, you should accompany those prayers and join in them with all your hearts. And when you go up to the rails of the Communion table, that he may lay his hands upon you, Oh! then desire and hope that that great blessing, even the gift of the Holy Ghost, may be bestowed upon you. This, as I endeavoured to teach you in my last address, is the benefit to be expected. It is this which those baptized persons, of whom we read in the Acts, received by the laying on of the hands of the Apostles. Oh! then desire and hope that the same gift may be bestowed upon you, who also have been baptized, by the laying on of the hands of one of the successors of the Apostles. Not that we attribute any virtue to the mere laying on of hands of the Bishop, or suppose that he can give or withhold the gift at his own pleasure; but we trust, and

you may trust, that God will give his blessed Spirit to you in this ceremony, because he was wont thus to give it in the days of the Apostles, because we believe that this ceremony was appointed by those his inspired servants for this purpose, and because we observe it, after their example, in this hope. God has been pleased in many cases, especially in the two sacraments, to appoint outward and visible signs, as means whereby he communicates some inward and spiritual grace, and as pledges to assure us of the reception of that grace, when we duly and rightly use the sign. And inasmuch as you will receive this sign of laying on of hands, in obedience, as you believe, to God's appointment by his Apostles, you may confidently trust that it also will prove a means whereby you may receive the intended grace, and that God will give you his Holy Spirit in answer to your prayers and faith.

When the Bishop has laid his hands upon you all, he will doubtless give you an address, as it has been his custom to do. To this you must listen with devout attention, endeavouring to fix in your memories all that he says to you, and to practise all that he enjoins. In this labour of love to your souls the Bishop will not be wanting to you, any more than the church which has preserved this ceremony for you, or your own minister who endeavours to prepare you to observe it rightly. Oh! then be not you wanting to yourselves. Be full of attention, sincerity, prayer, faith, gratitude, hope, and trust in every part of this interesting service, that the blessing of God may descend upon you, and that

the Holy Ghost may come down from heaven to dwell in you, and remain with you from that day for all the rest of your life.

I now wish to point out to you, as the last thing, what your conduct should be after you have been Confirmed. Let that day be henceforth a day of sacred and pleasing remembrance to you. You will have done a great and good work upon it. The interest which it excites, the engagements which it witnesses, and the privilege to which it admits you, should never be forgotten. I think you may well say of that day what Moses says of a night of great mercy to the children of Israel. "It is a day to be much observed to the Lord." It may be well to make a record of it, to write it in a book, or in such a place and manner as that it may often be reviewed by you. Many have found such a record of this, or of similar days of holy interest, to be very serviceable to them. But whether you do this or not, look upon yourselves as now devoted to God. Think that you have deliberately and solemnly, freely and willingly given yourselves to him as servants to obey him. Think that you should now say of *yourselves* what St. Paul says of *himself* in relation to God, "Whose I am and whom I serve." Consider yourselves henceforth in a new light, even as those who are bound to glorify God not only by all the claims which he has upon you through his mercies of creation providence and grace, not only by your Christian baptism and early dedication to him in that holy sacrament, but also by your own voluntary covenant and vow into which you have entered by your

own personal act and deed, according to the custom of the church and the example of the first disciples in the days of the Apostles. Look upon yourselves henceforth as Christians, who have renounced the devil and sin, and taken upon yourselves the profession of Christ and holiness. Oh! say often to yourselves after that day, as doth the Psalmist in the fifty-sixth psalm and twelfth verse, "Thy vows, O God, are upon me;" or again as he says in the hundred and sixteenth psalm and sixteenth verse, "Truly I am thy servant, I am thy servant." Look upon yourselves henceforth, my dear young people, as having now made your own covenant with God, to love him and serve him, to do his will and glorify his great name.

Let me also earnestly exhort you to *fulfil these engagements*. It is indeed only for this purpose that you should remember the day or consider yourselves the Lord's servants. Endeavour then to fulfil your vows daily. Be at all times careful to avoid what you have renounced, to believe what you have professed, and to do what you have promised. "Abhor that which is evil and cleave to that which is good" all the remainder of your lives. "Deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts," and ever "live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." Keep out of the way of every temptation to sin, whether that temptation might come from person, place, or circumstance. "Resist the Devil and he will flee from you." But oh! resist not the Holy Ghost. Grieve not, quench not the Spirit of God. Fear above all things lest you drive away from

you that holy Sanctifier, that Almighty Strengtheners that gracious Comforter. He should henceforth dwell in you as in his temple. I may say to you, when you have been to Confirmation, as St. Paul said to the Corinthians, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple are ye." Shew then that the Holy Spirit of God dwells in you, and that *you* are holy. Let your lives be ever consistent with the profession and promise which you will make at your Confirmation, exhibiting daily "the fruits of the Spirit," which "are in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth." Study the holy scriptures constantly, that you may understand and receive all their saving doctrines, and that you may also know and practise all their sanctifying precepts.

I also say to you, *come to the Lord's supper*. If you have such views, feelings, principles, and purposes, as shall cause you to go rightly to the ceremony of Confirmation, you have every qualification necessary for your admission to the Lord's table. There is nothing required in the one that is not equally required in the other. Then let me recommend to all such of you as are conscious that you are well-informed respecting Confirmation, that you are sincere in the promises which you will make, and in your desires for the grace of the Holy Spirit, let me recommend to all such of you as truly wish to renounce all sin, to keep all the commandments of God, and to give yourselves to his

service, to come to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper on the very next occasion on which it is administered. You will thereby place yourselves in full union and communion with Christ and his people. You will remember and bear a testimony for your blessed Saviour in the very way of his own appointment. You will derive spiritual strength and refreshment from that holy ordinance in a large measure. Yes, my young friends, if you go to Confirmation truly desirous to be the servants of God, and to receive his blessing, you *may* come, and you *should* come to the Lord's table for the same purposes. And having done this once, you should do it regularly. You should be a constant communicant, never omitting to receive that sacrament except in cases of necessity, and so keeping this commandment of your Lord, as all others, all the days of your life.

Need I add that the whole of your future life, as well as the day of Confirmation and the interval of preparation for it, must be marked by prayer? Prayer, my dear young friends, is indispensable whatever we do, and in every period of our Christian course. Prayer must accompany all our other duties. Prayer must bring God's blessing upon all our services. God is a God that heareth prayer. And the promise of him that cannot lie is thus attached to prayer, "Ask and ye shall have, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened to you."

And now, my dear young people, I have gone through my intended public course of preparation with you for

this interesting ceremony, so peculiarly interesting to you, and on which the holiness and happiness of your future lives so much depends. Fare ye well then, beloved, for this present occasion. God knows how anxiously I desire that you may enter into this approaching ceremony of Confirmation in an intelligent manner, in a humble pious spirit, and with a thankful happy heart, feeling that you are doing what God requires of you, and hoping for his blessing on it. Oh! that it may be a day very rich in spiritual mercies to you. Oh! that it may 'confirm and strengthen you in all goodness.' Most happy shall I be if I see you henceforth living in the fear and service of God, walking humbly and holily in the faith of Jesus, escaping the pollutions that are in the world, crucifying the flesh with its affections and lusts, and growing in grace as you grow in years. Yet though I part with you now so far as these addresses are concerned, I trust that I shall always see you regularly in this house of God at all our public services. In the use of our common means of grace I trust to see you here waiting upon the Lord that you may renew your strength, and seeking further instructions in the doctrines of Christ and the ways of righteousness. Let me repeat my hope also to meet you at the Lord's supper. How shall I rejoice to behold you there presenting yourselves, your souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto him! And oh! let me hope to meet you in heaven, there to sit down together at the marriage supper of the Lamb, there to enjoy together eternally all the

blessings of his great salvation, the “rest that remaineth for the people of God,” the “inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away,” and “the pleasures that are at his right hand for evermore.” Fare ye well, my beloved young friends, for this present occasion. I pray for you, believe me that I pray for you from my heart, “that our God may count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil in you all the good pleasure of his goodness and the work of faith with power, that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.” Once more fare ye well, and may God “confirm you unto the end that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.”—Amen and Amen.

