

has the desire or not. The present Czar of Russia is the eldest son of the late ruler of the Russian Empire. Whether he likes it or not, his birth made him "heir apparent" to the throne. Immediately upon his father's sudden death, without promises or ceremony, he became Emperor, and began to perform his duties, although he has not yet been formally crowned.

So it is with us. In Baptism we have been made citizens of a heavenly country. We have been made heirs of a heavenly throne. It is indeed a beautiful sight to behold those who appreciate their gifts, crowding to the chancel steps to say that they value what their parents did for them, and that they gladly confirm vows then made in their behalf. But whether they do this or not, they are under the same obligations. We must obey the law, we must do our duty to God, or we shall certainly suffer the consequences. While, then, it is convenient and proper that we renew the vows and promises of our sponsors, yet this is not the chief object of Confirmation.

II. Again, it is said that Confirmation is the confession of Christ before men. So it is. The young and the old who have not done so before, "with their own mouth," "openly before the Church," own their allegiance to Christ. For man or woman to break away from corrupt associates and careless or evil habits, and promise before the world to be faithful followers of Christ, is a brave and noble thing to do, always requiring courage and decision. Our Lord knew this, and therefore He said whoever would confess Him before this wicked and adulterous generation, He would confess before His father and the holy angels.

But coming to Confirmation is but one of many ways by which we confess Christ before men. Every time we refuse to laugh at some evil joke, or to mock at religion; every time we refuse to be dishonest in business, or irreverent in church; every time we stand to sing a hymn, or kneel to say a prayer; every time we bow our heads at the Holy Name, acknowledging the power of the Crucified—we by this means confess Christ before men. While, then, we do take a stand in Confirmation, and profess that we are Christ's soldiers, yet this is not the chief object in coming to this holy rite.

III. The great object of coming to Confirmation is to receive "the gift of the Holy Ghost." Eighteen hundred years ago and more, a young Deacon driven from Jerusalem by the fierceness of the first persecution, went to a neighboring people for refuge. While among them, he preached the Gospel and baptized many converts. When the Apostles in Jerusalem heard this, they immediately sent two of their number down to these people, and after they had questioned them and prayed for them, "they laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost."

Ever since this event, recorded in Acts viii., baptized people have been coming to Confirmation, that they may receive the laying on of hands and be blessed with the special gift of the Holy Ghost. Ever since that day, as we read in Heb. vi., the laying on of hands—with repentance, and faith, and Baptism—has been reckoned among "the principles of the doctrine of Christ." Again, then, we assert that the great object in coming to Confirmation is to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

It is well to renew your vows; it is well to profess Christ openly before the Church; but it is a greater privilege to receive the sevenfold gift of the Holy Spirit! We might be ever so willing to do our duty, and yet fail for the want of strength.

In the olden times, when every freeman wore a sword, it was the custom, when the Creed was recited, for every man to draw his weapon, in token of his willingness to fight for the faith that he professed. In this day, no hostile foes are seen around us, to war upon

our Christianity. But we have unseen foes that we must dread. There is a wicked host around us, seeking our destruction. In Confirmation we buckle on an unseen sword—to fight these battles. Yea! the sword of the Spirit shall then be ours; and if we have the will, and the perseverance, and the wisdom to use our weapons aright, we shall always have the power, and the majesty, and the victory on our side to keep the enemy at bay through life, finally to beat him down under our feet, and at last to be "more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

A lull has taken place in the great Parliamentary struggle over the future government of Ireland. We share in the wonder of an Irish Church contemporary that a stern *non-possumus* was not presented to Mr. Gladstone's motion to bring in his Home Rule Bill. The result of the first reading has undoubtedly been to familiarize the English public with the idea of legislative separation as a not improbable event, and so far to prepare the way for its ultimate adoption. Amid the too general lethargy which has succeeded the first burst of indignation in England, it is refreshing to read the out-spoken utterances of the *Guardian*, which, after supporting Mr. Gladstone through thick and thin for nearly forty years, says of his latest attempt at legislation:—"It is as bad in execution as it is in intention, as clumsy in the way it brings about the dismemberment of the United Kingdom as it is reckless in the sacrifice of national interests to party purposes."

THE Provincial Legislature of Quebec has gone out of its way to express its sympathy with the anti-British schemes of the English Premier and his new friend and henchman, Mr. Parnell; but the Marquis of Lorne has informed the British public (and in doing so has once more proved himself a true friend to Canada) that such resolutions on this side of the Atlantic mean nothing. They are simply designed to catch the Irish vote, which, in our large cities especially, is a not unimportant factor in political elections.

A SHORT PAPER ON THE PLYMOUTH BRETHREN.

READ AT THE WINNIPEG CLERICAL UNION, ON APRIL 8TH, 1886.

(Continued.)

A third grave error of the system also emanates from that prolific source of evil, spiritual pride. Naturally, a body of sinless and perfect people must experience extreme difficulty in selecting one of their number to be the instructor of the rest. Consequently, they give it up, and, to avoid all jealousy, constitute all alike priests and teachers, both men and women. They hold that under the present dispensation of grace, there is no regular ministry in Christ's Church, that "all are kingly and priests unto God."

Does it not seem to you that people must have a veil over their eyes when they fail to perceive that an ordained ministry is recognized in God's Word and continually alluded to? The Lord Himself chose twelve apostles. He afterwards sent seventy disciples, two and two, to teach and to preach. Paul and Barnabas ordained elders in every church. Titus was left in Crete, that he might ordain elders in every city. The command was given to the Hebrew Christians, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves." And St. Paul, writing to the Corinthians, exclaims,

"Are all apostles, are all prophets, are all teachers?" Certainly not. These are offices to which men are specially called. Our God is a God of order, and not a God of confusion; and one of the very few rubrics laid down in Scripture is this, "Let all things be done decently and in order." Everything in Holy Writ points to a settled ministry and the perfect organization of the Church. But does not experience and even common sense itself enforce and support the same doctrine? Can we expect the Church to present a bold front to the enemy, and do aggressive work for God, if all its members are like a rope of sand, without cohesion, without organization? What would become of God's heritage if the Plymouth Brethren system was to grow to any extent? What would become of the dark places of the earth, for on principle they do no missionary work? Their attention is entirely devoted to unsettling the earnest and faithful workers of various Church organizations. They resemble that unprincipled bird which roams over the forest in search of ready-made nests in which to lay its eggs and get them hatched by other birds gifted with more patience and industry.

More than eig-teen centuries ago, the Lord Jesus Christ, whom these paragons of perfection profess to revere and follow—the Lord Jesus Christ then handed His apostles the following commission: "Go therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Again, in the parable of the supper, He commanded His servants, when all things were ready, in the following unmistakable words: "Go ye out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in." But these self-satisfied individuals are supremely indifferent to all such injunctions. Far from going out into the wilds of heathen lands—far from crossing the seas, scaling mountains, braving the frosts of the poles or the pestilential climes of the tropics—they will not even labor among the ignorant and depraved of the towns and villages in which they are themselves. The prevailing idea among them is that their mission is to the "awakened in the churches."

As I said in the beginning of this little paper, this sect, which first saw the light in the year 1830, presents contradictions which it is almost impossible to reconcile. They seem to prize the "pearl of great price" for themselves, and yet they are more assiduous far in poisoning the minds of Christian people against the various churches through which they have been brought to Christ than in teaching and enlightening strangers to God and His Holy Word. Such is not the spirit of Christianity.

They seem to reverence and study the Word of God, and yet they treat some portions of it with something little less than contempt. They profess great regard for God and his law, and yet the Commandments, which the Saviour said he had not come to destroy, but to fulfil, they repudiate and refuse to be bound by them. In truth, Plymouth Brethren are Antinomians.

They profess great humility, and yet practically they are so proud as to refuse even to worship with members of other Christian bodies.

I cannot undertake to explain how it comes to pass that so much good and truth can co-exist with so much that is false and evil. I merely suggest that not a few in that small sect are better than their creed, as is frequently the case among Romanists.

The literal explanation of some isolated passage of God's Word has forced them into certain untenable positions. They cannot recede from one without giving up the whole, and that they refuse to do. Besides, there is something very flattering to the human heart in the fancied superiority which the people affect. The Pharisee felt immense satisfaction as he stood and sounded his own praises. There is a humility which is very like pride.