

confirmation. This was to confer the extraordinary power of working miracles, *that* is for a very different purpose. If it be asked why this power was conferred on the early Christians, it may be replied that it was to furnish striking proof of the truth of the Christian religion, to impress the people, and thus to win them to embrace the Gospel. The early Church was thus armed with the power of the Holy Spirit; and the extraordinary attestation of God to this message, was one cause of the rapid propagation and permanent establishment of the Gospel."

5. The only other passage which is quoted by both the advocates of confirmation referred to is Heb. vi. 2, where the "laying on of hands" occurs fourth in a list of six fundamental principles of the doctrine of Christ. The "laying on of hands" was a usage common in the ancient Church. It was practised by the Jews in the offering of sacrifices, in the presentation of prayer, or the imparting a blessing.

Lev. xvi. 21; xxiv. 14; Num. viii. 12. Prayer and intercession was offered; parties were set apart to office in this way. When Jesus took up the little children in His arms, "He laid His hands on them and blessed them." He very often also laid His hands on the sick when He healed them.—Matt. xix. 13, Mark v. 23; Matt. ix. 18. The imposition of hands by the apostles was gone about in healing the sick, as in Acts xxviii. 8; in communicating the Spirit's miraculous gifts, as in Acts viii. 17, 19, and xix. 6, which I have already explained; and in ordaining to office, as in Acts vi. 6, where the seven deacons appointed to look after the temporal affairs of the Church and to care for the poor were thus ordained, not by one, but by the whole body of the apostles; and in 1 Tim. v. 22, where Timothy was ordained not by one Apostolic Presbyter, but by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery. Now, as to which of these is meant in Hebrews vi. by the "laying on of hands" nothing is said. Very many consider that it refers to the solemn service of ordination. But if it be the second, as we have already shewn, it cannot exist now, as the apostolic office closed with its original occupants, and no bishop or presbyter can now either perform miracles themselves or convey the power enabling others to do so. What proof is there that the Holy Spirit is imparted in any form at the rite of confirmation? As regards miraculous gifts, it cannot be, and as regards regenerating and sanctifying grace, judging from the formal, mechanical way in which it is often received, and the worldly lives of many who receive it, is it uncharitable to suspect that it is not?

#### CHRIST NEVER CONFIRMED NOR ORDERED IT.

Having thus shewn that the passages referred to, and others which have been also adduced elsewhere, have no reference whatever to the rite of confirmation, you will notice the significant fact that we never read of Christ having been confirmed, or even hinting at confirmation as being necessary as a pre-requisite to membership in His Church.

Remember how particular He was about attending to every imposed ordinance, to every required form. Recall His regular goings up to Jerusalem to the appointed feasts; recall His inviolable habit of attending the synagogue and keeping the Sabbath—"as His *custom* was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day." He was a habitual church-goer and Sabbath keeper, and in this He hath left us an example that we should follow His steps.

If anyone in the world could do without the help of ordinances surely it was He. In view of this, "for-sake not the assembling of yourselves together as the manner of some is." Then remember how he acted in connection with His baptism. When John the Baptist hesitated, deeming the ordinance unnecessary in His case, saying, "I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me," Jesus said "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness"—literally to observe every righteous institution—to undergo every rite that is required. Had confirmation been counted by Him essential, He, who was so exact about other institutions, would not have omitted this. Had He deemed it necessary to come before hand, as a passport to His holy table, surely that table would not have been spread for His disciples, in presence of their enemies, without something being said about this. Indeed He would have confirmed them all, and ordered them to do it to others. But He opened not His mouth upon it. He spent three years instructing them what to do and

teach. After His resurrection He lingered six additional weeks on earth, speaking to them of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. Yet this thing is never mentioned. Before leaving His chosen disciples on the slopes of Olivet, He instructed them to teach "all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

#### THE FATHERS NOT TO BE TRUSTED.

And still this thing never came out. We have seen, after the most careful examination, that there is not one solitary command on the subject. I know that the *early fathers* are appealed to, but what are they as set over against Christ and the apostles. Remember how very soon did corruption creep in! In apostolic times the mystery of iniquity did already work. Even the earliest of the fathers are no safe guides in interpreting Scripture. Did time permit, we could cull numerous extracts from the writings of Barnabas, Irenaeus, Origen, Chrysostom, Justin Martyr, Clemens Alexandrinus, Tertullian, Cyprian, and Jerome, containing the grossest misrepresentations of the plainest passages of Scripture. We find them departing from the doctrine of Christ and the apostles on some of the leading points of evangelical belief, and introducing into the Church superstitious rites and idolatrous observances. I am well aware that passages may be quoted from the fathers countenancing the rite of confirmation, and other rites and ceremonies that find no sanction in Scripture. But remember what the fathers themselves say on the supremacy of Scripture. "Dear brother," said Augustine to Jerome, "I think that you will not have your books reputed like unto the works of the prophets and apostles—for I (the Scripture reserved) do read all other men's works in that manner, that I do not believe them because the author so saith, be he never so well learned and holy, except that he can certify one by the Scripture." They who, failing to substantiate their positions from Holy Scripture would try to prop them up by appealing to the fathers, would do well to remember such high Episcopal authorities as Bishop Jewel, when he says, "Instead of all those learned fathers, or, rather above them all, Paul, the Apostle, cometh to my mind. To him I run. To him I appeal from all manner of writers, doctors, and fathers that think otherwise"—or Bishop Hooper, when he says, "The water at the fountain head is more wholesome and pure than when it is cary'd abroad in rotten pipes. I had rather follow the shadow of Christ than the body of all generale conselles or doctors sith the death of Christ. The verity of Christ's religion was perfect in Christ's time, and in the time of the apostles."

(To be concluded in our next.)

#### INTEMPERANCE.

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In view of the recent action of the Toronto Presbytery, permit me to lay down and substantiate as briefly and as *temperately* as I can the following postulates.

1. Christians should follow no course of conduct which they do not clearly see to be right, while in Christian morals the Word of God is the sole standard of right and wrong. Christian duty is to depart from evil and do good. It is evidently not enough for the Christian to say that he does not see a certain course of conduct to be wrong, he must see and be satisfied that it is right, otherwise to him it is wrong, for all duty implies *intelligent* obedience. It is not sufficient for him to say that he sees no harm in doing this, but does he see any good in doing it, and does he see any harm in letting it alone. The Scriptural maxim is, that a man do nothing which he knows or even suspects to be wrong, and do everything in his power which he knows and believes to be right. Now, since the design of man is the glory of God and his guide in this is the Word of God, the question is, how, under such a guide, and to what extent, does the use of strong drink tend to the glory of God, for, in as far as it does so, men are under obligation to drink it, and in as far as it fails to do so they are equally bound to let it alone. The measure of God's glory must ever be the measure of men's drink. Further, if this is the will of God, even our sanctification, and if this implies a crucifying the flesh with its affections and lusts, a no longer yielding our members as instruments of unrighteousness, a denying ungodliness and worldly lusts and living soberly, a purifying ourselves even as Christ is pure, how far does strong drink aid us in the attainment of that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord? Oh, is it not in-

sulting, not simply to our Christianity but to our God-given humanity, to ask how *does*, how *can* the use of strong drink as a beverage, in *any* way glorify God or sanctify man. On the contrary, it ever has been and still is fearfully and fatally subversive of all that is God honouring and soul saving, and every real revival of religion, whether recent or more remote, has been most marked in its converts abstaining from strong drink. But some after all may be ready to ask, what has religion to do with drinking? and barricade themselves behind the bulwark that the word "tee-total" is not found in the whole Bible. This to them may seem witty, but it is woefully weakly, for if religion has nothing to do with drinking, surely the less that they have to do with it the better. Religion has ever to do with all that a man is and has. Principles right in their essence will ever be right in their issues, and conversely, evil practices are ever the evidence and the effect of evil principles.

2. Christians should ever prize highly and honour lovingly their blood-bought liberty. Infidels who practically know no better are fond of representing Christianity as opposed to liberty, and its disciples as the veriest slaves, while they themselves are sold under sin, for "he is a freeman whom the truth makes free, and all are slaves besides." Christianity not only provides it, but gives the fullest liberty for the attainment and enjoyment of all that is good, and all beyond this boundary is not liberty but bondage. Such being the case, the Christian should carefully avoid unnecessarily going to the very verge of his liberty, for it savours of much that is wanting and much that is wrong, when there is a delight or even a desire of coursing along the dividing line between good and evil. Such should ever remember that while they are free they are fallible, and should carefully avoid the using of their liberty for an occasion to the flesh, for oh how often has the abuse of liberty led to bitter, *bitter* bondage. It should not only be the Christian's prayer but his purpose and his practice too, not only to depart from evil, but ever strenuously to abstain even from all *appearance* of evil. Like the Irish coachman, it is wise to keep as far from danger as we can. While men's minds like their bodies are of various measures, and their consciences like their countenances of various casts, yet the rule of life is ever and to all the same, and if so, it argues a woful want of love for the right and a lamentable longing for the wrong, when the professed followers of Christ seek to run an unhallowed rivalry with each other in trying how much they can guzzle without getting drunk, how much they can consume without endangering their Church connection, or how much they can sip and soak in their evening socialities without unfitting them for drawing nigh to God in the solemnities of the family altar, or the secrecy of closet devotion. One may drink so much and suppose himself unscathed, another may go farther and think he is none the worse, while another may drink deeper still, declaring that he can stop when he likes, yet oh how many thousands has such unhallowed rivalry hurled from comparative eminence and affluence to painful wretchedness here and unspeakable woe hereafter. "If sinners entice thee consent thou not."

3. Christians are under obligation to respect, as their own, the welfare of others. Our obligation like our being is from God. Men can neither originate the one nor eradicate the other. He may doubt his obligation, deny or disown it, but he can never destroy it. He can no more throw it off than he can his existence. It begins with his being, and is co-extensive with it alike in range and duration. If even a heathen felt this so strongly as to say that nothing was alien to him that was human, how should this put to the blush many a so-called Christian who, while he professedly owns, yet practically dishonours, his obligation to love his neighbor as himself. A man's guilt is fearfully doubled and deepened who not only does wrong himself but has pleasure in those that do the same, yet there is presented alike as a plea and a palliation, "Am I my brother's keeper?" betokening at once a desire and a disposition neither to be copied nor commended. The law of love is to look not only on our own things but also on the things of others, and the more near they are to us by nature or neighbourhood, the more fully should the obligation be felt and the more faithfully discharged. True indeed, obligation may involve self-denial, but such is always salutary and safe, not only in resisting evil, but in foregoing for the good of others even that which is lawful, and ever considerably drawing the generous