

heavenly thoughts, even while about your earthly employments and refreshments. Make it your business to learn more of this wisdom; call in your hearts; commune often with yourselves and with God; be less abroad and more within and more above; this is by far the sweetest life. Beg of God to wind up your hearts, when you find them heavy and dull, and need much pulling and hauling from your hand. A touch from his hand will make them mount up easily and nimbly."—*Boston Recorder*.

A PASTORAL ADDRESS ON CONFIRMATION.

By a country Clergyman.

My young friends,—I cannot meet you on this occasion, without feeling a more than usual concern for your present and eternal welfare. It is a solemn and affecting period, when those, over whose infancy and childhood, parents, minister, and instructors, have watched with anxious care, are invited to come forward in the name of the Lord, and publicly to devote themselves to his service.

I cannot but admire the wisdom of our venerable reformers, in preserving this ancient and apostolical custom in the Church. It has had the sanction of the wise and good, in all former ages; and has a tendency of the most useful nature. At the same time, I grieve to see the ignorance and carelessness with which it is by many too often abused.

You know how earnest I have been in my endeavours to enforce upon your minds, both publicly and privately, what a solemnity of feeling ought to be found in your hearts at this particular time. O! think, my youthful disciples, what it is to trifle with holy things, and thus to offer to insult God, and provoke him to wrath.

I rejoice, with trembling over you. Some amongst you, I am truly happy to observe, give proofs of a serious impression on your minds. I believe it is your first wish to be found, not only in name, but in reality, "members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven."

Others of you, alas! who offer yourselves as candidates for Confirmation, appear too plainly to be careless, ignorant, perverse. It is time, that you should know your sin, and your danger. Yet I have lively hope, from witnessing the blessing which has on former occasions attended upon exhortation and instruction at these seasons, that it may be the will of our merciful God, now to make even some of you, for the first time sensible of the lost state of a sinner; and the absolute necessity of applying to the blood of Christ, for "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption."

The Church has left me, as your minister, a discretionary power, with respect to whom I may "think fit to be presented to the Bishop to be confirmed." I hope to act in this matter with faithfulness, as well as the tenderest regard for your true interest.

Nothing can be more consistent with scriptural order and pious watchfulness over the spiritual welfare of her young members, than the succession of ordinances and christian instruction, which the church of England has enjoined us to pursue.

No sooner is the child born than the church exhorts the parents to dedicate their infant to God by baptism.—We are mindful of the covenant of grace revealed to Abraham, in whose seed all the families of the earth were to be blessed; and whose children from generation to generation, were commanded to receive the sign and seal of the same covenant; by the Sacrament of infant circumcision. We, therefore, give our infants the sign and seal of the same covenant in the sacrament of baptism; which, as we learn from St. Paul. (Col. ii. 11, 12.) has succeeded to that of circumcision. We rejoice in thinking, that the privileges which God bestowed upon the children of believers, under the Old Testament dispensation, are not withdrawn in the New Testament, but abundantly confirmed by the word of God, and the practice of the first Christians.

Our faith and hope in this matter are strengthened by the recollection, that the promise is not only to us, but to our children. (Acts ii. 38, 39.) We love to remember that in this, as well as in all the spiritual privileges of the church Jesus Christ is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

As the household of Abraham, and the households of the first Christians, (Lydia, Stephanas, &c.) were received into outward covenant relation, by the ordinances, res-

pectively appointed of God; so we received you in your infancy into the bosom of the visible church; knowing that, "if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to promise," (Gal. ii. 29.)

May the charitable presumption, which was then entertained and professed in your favour be realized through the blessing of God, on the means of grace; and so may you prove, through faith, the spiritual children of Abraham.

At the baptism of infants, the church calls upon God-fathers and Godmothers, to make a promise and profession, that the baptized child shall be educated in the principles of that gracious covenant, of which water is the outward and visible sign. Your friends were then charged to see, *not only* that you were called "to hear sermons, and learn the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments: "but" all other things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health;" and that you "should be virtuously brought up to lead a godly and Christian life.

My children, has this been the case with you? Have you been taught these things; and do you know and believe them to your soul's health (i. e. salvation)? Has the outward sign of water been followed by marks of the inward and spiritual grace of Christ, in a godly and Christian life? Are the hopes and prayers of the church fulfilled, in your lives and conversations?

Farther, the ministers of the church are enjoined to be diligent in catechising and explaining the Scriptures to the young of their flock. Has not this been done amongst you? And do you hope, that you have profited by so wise and necessary an attention of the church to your Christian growth and progress in Divine knowledge? Is your Catechism felt in your heart, as well as fixed in your memory?

The next step taken in your behalf is, that of calling upon you, when you come to years of discretion, to declare in your own person, what is your faith and hope, and what your resolution, through Divine grace, as to life and conduct. Parents, friends, ministers, and other teachers, are supposed to have been long labouring to bring you up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. And now the church invites such of you as know, and are willing to acknowledge the blessings which has attended on their labour, to "go up higher" in the house of God, and unite, with his faithful people, in partaking of the Lord's supper.

As a solemn preparation for this, the order of Confirmation is provided and ordained. It used to be called by the first Christians, "the perfecting of baptism," and was always preserved as a distinct ceremony. In this order the church, by adding the public profession of faith and repentance, on the part of the now adult Christian, completes what was began at the previous baptism of the infant.

As in the Jewish church, the infant was circumcised at eight days old, in the faith of Jesus the Messiah; and at thirteen years of age, was brought publicly before the congregation, to make an open confession of his faith; so we use the rite of Confirmation on a similar ground. And where the spirit of the institution is rightly attended to, the greatest benefits, both as to private edification, and the public order and decency of the church, may justly be expected to follow.

By this means an opportunity is afforded of ascertaining, so far as outward testimony can do it, in what cases the baptism of the spirit appears to have accompanied the washing of water. Hence a presumptive evidence may be drawn, who are of the generation of this world, and who are the children of light.

Most anxious do I feel, that the marks of this spiritual and saving change, may be evident in you, and that this may be a time of real Confirmation; that is, of *strengthening* to your souls in all holy knowledge, in affectionate love to Jesus, your Saviour, in hunger and thirst after righteousness, in thankfulness for mercies received, and in a prayerful desire for the increase of every spiritual gift and grace. I hope to see you confirmed in your love towards Him, who first loved you: and to witness the proofs that you are so, by letting "your light so shine before men, that they, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father which is heaven."

Ponder these things in your hearts. Meditate much upon the high privilege of communion with the

Lord, at his table. May we soon behold many young Christians approaching that ordinance, with true repentance for their former sins, a steadfast purpose to lead a new life, a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ a thankful remembrance of his death, and a cordial charity with all men. O, that thus ye may be found, "meet partakers of these holy mysteries."

Read over and compare, very attentively together, the office of infant baptism, the church Catechism, and the office of Confirmation; to which you should add, that for the Sacrament of the Lord's supper. You may also, with great propriety, read the office for the baptism of persons of riper years. You will in that service, see the exact state of knowledge and disposition in which you ought to be found previous to Confirmation.

In examining the Confirmation service in the prayer-book, take into most serious consideration, what you say and mean in the use of those words; where the persons to be confirmed answer the question proposed to them by the bishop, by saying, "I do."

Remember, that you then "do" in the "presence of God, and the congregation, renew the solemn promise and vow that was made in your name at your baptism." You "do" then "ratify and confirm the same in your own persons;" and you acknowledge "yourselves bound to believe, and to do all those things which your Godfathers and Godmothers then undertook for you." Such being the meaning and extent of the words, it is my prayer, that it may please God to perfect his strength in your weakness; and to give you grace not only to say, but do so "with the Spirit and with the understanding also." So shall the prayer which the church offers up for your sake be heard and answered. You shall be strengthened with the Holy Ghost, the Comforter; and be daily increased "in the manifold gifts of grace, in the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and ghostly strength, the spirit of knowledge and true godliness, and the spirit of holy fear."

To you my young friends, who are really in earnest I may say: you are thoroughly convinced, that by nature, you are the children of wrath; that the "imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth;" that you are naturally dead in trespasses and sins;" and that "of yourselves, you have no power to help yourselves." But these very considerations are the ground of the warmest thankfulness in your hearts, when you think of the love of Christ to such helpless, undone sinners.

Meditate on the astonishing work that He performed, and is performing. Think, *who* it was that did it, and for *whom* it was done. Ask yourselves, what, and for whom, Christ suffered; and be amazed, whilst you make the reply.

He left the bosom of his Father, and came into this lower world. For whose sake? For sinners.

He became a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. For whose sake was this? For sinners.

He was despised and rejected of men crucified, dead, and buried. For whom were these things done? For sinners.

He rose again from the dead to justify. Whom? Sinners.

He ascended into Heaven, leading "captivity captive," and spoiling the principalities and powers of darkness: He now sitteth at the right hand of God, and ever liveth to make intercession for them that come unto God by him. For whose sake were all these things accomplished? Still we reply, for sinners.

Is He not thus the sinner's friend, the sinner's God?

Learn then, as pardoned sinners, to love, worship, and obey the Saviour who redeemed you with his precious blood. Give him the first fruits of your heart's affection. Ask him to create a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within you. His may you be, and him may you serve. Come to this solemn ceremony of public Confirmation, with prayer and praise in your hearts, as well as in your lips. For-ake the foolish, and live." "Renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh."

"Come out from among them, and be ye separate," saith the Lord, "and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a father unto you"