

Thus I have endeavoured to present before you in as brief and as clear a manner as possible, the strong proof on which the church bases the right of Confirmation. She has Apostolic sanction and practice; she has the testimony of the earliest and purest days of the church; and even those who differ from her, and who oftentimes speak unkindly of the Bride of Christ, unite in bearing testimony to the fact, that it has the word of God to recommend it, and in addition, is well adapted to promote and increase holiness of heart and life. Why they do not practise it, is not for us to say. Our duty is to rejoice and give thanks to God that our lot has been cast in this goodly heritage of the Lord.

I would notice, very briefly, the next point proposed to be considered, viz: *its benefits*. On these I need not dwell. For if it be, as we have proved it to be, sanctioned by the Word of God, the benefits connected with its observance must be great. It is to receive as God has promised the gift of the Holy Ghost to renew and sanctify the heart. "In baptism," properly received, "He is given for the purpose of regeneration—to effect that new birth by which we are born into the church of Christ, obtain remission of all past sins, and a new nature. In confirmation, He is given for the purpose of Sanctification, a renovation of the heart in holiness. In confirmation, the new creation is animated, and enabled to live according to its new nature, by the energy of the same most Holy Spirit." (Bishop Seabury.) "We have the evidence," says Bishop McIlvaine, "that in the earliest period of

sin," and a complete "new birth unto righteousness." Should any young person say, if all this is comprised in being confirmed, then I will not be confirmed at all, I answer, you are bound to all this by your profession of Christianity; so that confirmed or not confirmed, this yoke is about your neck, and if you break it or throw it away, it is at the peril of your final destruction. Again, the rite itself is useful to call these things to remembrance, and who knows how much grace may be received during the performance of the ceremony, and especially by having a holy man's hands laid on your head, and the blessing and protection of God solemnly invoked in your behalf? Tell these things to your dear daughters and sons, and tell them another thing of which few would think, namely, that not having the opportunity of being confirmed when I had arrived at that age in which I had an ecclesiastical right to receive it, I was determined not to be without it, and therefore went and received confirmation even since I became a Methodist preacher. Yes, I was confirmed in the Collegiate Church, at Bristol, in the year 1792, by that very holy man Dr. Lewis Bagot, then Bishop of that See, and afterwards Bishop of Norwich. You see now, my good sister, both from my teaching and my practice, what I think of the rite of confirmation, and I will just add one word more. I believe the rite will be very solemnly administered by the present Bishop of London, who will go through the whole with an honest conscience toward God. I have sometimes thought that I should write a little tract on this, as I did on the third collect for grace, now called "The Traveller's Prayer."

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the Apostolic ministry there was the practice, on the part of the Apostles, of the laying on of hands upon the baptized, and that it was specially connected with receiving the Holy Ghost." Of course this is based upon conditions. It presupposes that true repentance has been felt for sin, and full trust placed upon Christ, connected with a desire to obey and serve Him. And no amount of these is required. The beginnings are enough to secure the blessing of God. He asks all his children by baptism to come to him and receive additional supplies of grace. He will not break the bruised reed, or quench the smoking flax. And this blessing which the humble receiver of the holy rite of Confirmation has conferred upon him, is to prepare him for still higher privileges in the church of Christ. It is to fit him for receiving spiritually the broken body and the shed blood of Christ; to assure him by these holy emblems of God's favour and goodness, that he is a very member incorporate in the mystical body of his Son, which is the blessed company of all faithful people, and an heir through hope of his everlasting kingdom. And this is not all: It secures for him those daily supplies of grace which he so much needs to strengthen him for those conflicts which he must have with the world, the flesh, and the devil. These are to be continued to the end of his course. God has fixed no limits to his efforts—he is to be faithful unto death.

Lastly: *What are the obligations connected with the reception of this holy rite?* These can be answered in a word. To glorify God in their bodies and spirits, which are his. It is not an idle ceremony, leaving the recipient to live as the men of the world live. By his own solemn vows he has promised to live in accordance with the will of God. The church, in heaven and on earth, has been witness to these vows, and the Spirit of God has been invoked by the Chief Pastor and by the people, to give strength to his resolutions, and permanency to his faith. And that he may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of his Saviour, the Church demands of him that he should come to the Holy Communion with an humble and penitent heart. Not once, but at all times (when possible), and there renew his solemn vows, and in it receive those supplies of grace so necessary to refresh and purify his soul.

These are the duties which the church demands of all who receive this holy rite. And if her children become careless and forgetful, it is not for the want of kind entreaty and affectionate reproof. Her services are continual invitations to return to Christ; and they hold out the strongest motives to unwearied diligence in his service. We ask you, then, to think of these things, and come to this holy rite with no confidence in yourselves, but with a firm trust in the mercy of God through Christ. Look continually to his promises, and if ever tempted to