

A BROTHER'S LOVE:

A BALLAD FOR GOOD FRIDAY.

"Come, Hugh, it is a holiday:
The day is fair and cool;
Come fishing with us presently,
We'll go to Dingley Pool

"Some six or seven of us have joined,
And we shall have such fun;
Make haste and fetch your cap, my boy
You'll catch us if you run.

But Hugh, a little lad of twelve,
Replied in accents slow,
To Frank and John, "No, thank you, boys,
To-day I cannot go."

"Why not? It is a holiday—
I wouldn't stay at home."
"I shall not stay at home," said Hugh,
"But still I cannot come.

"I cannot come, indeed, to-day,
I've something else to do;
You would not laugh so, Frank and John,
Or mock me if you knew."

He turned away with flushing cheek
And quickly moistened eye;
I followed him and gently asked:
"Hugh, will you tell me why?"

His earnest eyes one moment sought
My face, and he replied:
"I could not go a pleasuring
The day my brother died.

"Twas some eight years ago he died—
He gave his life for me,
For I fell off the pier one day,
When we were by the sea.

"And he, sir—he was just eighteen;
He sprang into the wave,
He knew that it was dangerous,
But still he tried to save.

"He caught me safely, but his head
Had struck against a rock,
He lingered on a while in pain,
Then sank beneath the shock.

"And I was such a little lad
Then, I could hardly know
What he had done for love of me—
He always loved me so.

"The day he died, he kissed my face,
As I sat on his bed,
And said to mother, 'Don't let Hugh
Forget me when I'm dead.

"My little Hugh! O! make him love
Me always. Tell him, dear,
How I loved him—and then he stopped,
For death was very near.

"Yet once again he spoke, and said,
'This one thing, too, I crave,
That every year, upon this day,
You bring him to my grave,

"That he may think of me awhile.'
So every year, sir, we
With fresh spring flowers journey to
The churchyard by the sea.

"We lay the flowers upon the grave,
To make it bright and gay,
And think of him, and of his love,
Who died for me to-day.

"I love to think of him, and kneel
Awhile by his graveside—
How could I go a-pleasuring
The day my brother died?"

* * * * *

Ah! how, indeed? Yet year by year,
As comes the one great day
On which our Heavenly Brother died,
To save our souls away,

When He would have us think of Him,
And kneel at His dear side—
What thousands go a-pleasuring,
The day That Brother died!

A CONDENSED VIEW OF CONFIRMATION.

BY THE REV. JOHN WRIGHT.

Authority of Scripture.

1.—The ancient and patriarchal custom of blessing by laying the hands on the head is supposed to have prefigured Confirmation.

2.—The Apostles Peter and John laid their hands on the Samaritan converts who had received the Word of God through the preaching of the Deacon Philip.—Acts viii. 17.

3.—Saint Paul invoked the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands, in the case of believers at Ephesus who had been baptized by another.—Acts xix. 6.

4.—In the Epistle to the Hebrews, Confirmation is classed with "the doctrine of baptisms, and of resurrection of the dead and of eternal judgment."—Heb., vi., 2.

Testimony of Ancient Authors.

1.—In the second century, by the testimony of Tertullian, who lived eighty years after St. John.

2.—In the third century, by the writings of Cyprian, Dionysius of Alexandria, and Cornelius of Rome.

3.—In the fourth century, by Chrysostom, Eusebius, Ambrose and Augustine.

4.—In the fifth century, by Jerome and other ecclesiastical writers of that age.

Other Authorities.

1.—From the Apostolic age to the time of the Reformation, Confirmation was universal.

2.—At the Reformation several religious bodies discontinued Confirmation, because they had unwisely thrown aside Episcopacy.

3.—Confirmation received the approval of Calvin, Adam Clarke, Baxter and other non Episcopalian writers.

4.—The Jews at the present time administer a rite similar to Confirmation, and claim for it great antiquity.

5.—Confirmation is now practiced by nine-tenths of the Christian world.

What Confirmation Is.

1.—As the name denotes, it is a strengthening or confirming in grace.

2.—It is an internal and external rite.

3.—It enjoins a preparation of both mind and heart.

4.—It is a personal consecration to God made "openly before the Church."

5.—It is designed for persons of all responsible ages.

6.—In the case of young persons it implies that they have arrived at "years of discretion," and have been "sufficiently instructed."

7.—It is a ratification of the baptismal vow, in which "the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, and the sinful desires of the flesh" were renounced; a belief expressed in all "the articles of the Christian faith as contained in the Apostles' Creed," and a promise made to "keep all the commandments of God to the end of life."

8.—It distinctly requires faith and repentance, obtained by the assistance of the Holy Spirit through prayer, reading the Scriptures, attendance upon the Sanctuary, self-examination, and a diligent use of all the means of grace.

What Confirmation is Not.

1.—It is not a mere form.

2.—It is not designed simply to relieve sponsors of their vows.

3.—It is not a temporary promise confined to the time and place where it is made.

The Position of Baptized Persons who Neglect Confirmation.

1.—They are guilty of neglecting "the great salvation."

2.—They renounce their baptismal covenant.

3.—They reject Christ.

The Benefits of Confirmation.

1.—It is spiritually refreshing and comforting to those who rightly receive it.

2.—It is strengthening to the golly and receptive heart to have the prayers of the assembled clergy and congregation.

3.—It gives the assurance to those who are faithful of the continual presence of "the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and ghostly strength, and the spirit of knowledge and true godliness."

The Duty of the Confirmed.

1.—Approach the Holy Communion at the first opportunity and continue to commemorate this blessed Feast at each recurring season.

2.—Engage in the activities of Church work.

3.—Devote a part of each day to the regular study of the Holy Scriptures.

4.—Love the House of God.

5.—Cultivate the spirit of giving, by making systematic and frequent offerings to the Lord.

6.—Labor for the salvation of others.

7.—Practice self-denial.

8.—Be prayerful.

9.—Be watchful.

10.—Be faithful unto death.

Motto of the Confirmed.

"GO FORWARD."

"And the Lord said unto Moses, speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward."—Exodus, xiv. 15.

ABOUND MORE AND MORE.

Growth is the law of life, in the spiritual as well as in the natural world. The very instant the Christian thinks he has made sufficient progress in the divine life, that instant he begins to decline, "Giving all diligence," says St. Peter, "add to your faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, charity. For if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And our beloved Church teaches the same great truth. Recall the time, when in the solemn rite of Confirmation you renewed your baptismal vows; when the Bishop, as you knelt before him, laid his hand in blessing on your head and prayed—"Defend O Lord, this Thy servant with Thy Heavenly grace that he may continue Thine for ever, and daily increase in Thy Holy Spirit more and more until he come unto Thy everlasting Kingdom."

Such too was the constant teaching of Christ himself, "I am the true Vine, and My Father is the husbandman. Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit, He taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit": The Vine is not a stately tree, supporting itself, and spreading not its broad branches to shelter and protect others; neither is it beautiful to look upon, or of much value in the arts. "What is the vine more than any other tree or thorn or branch which is among the trees of the forest? Shall wood be taken thereof to do any work?" Its one great purpose is to bear fruit. How appropriate, then, is this comparison by which Jesus likens the Christian to a vine, to bear "much fruit"—this is the special purpose of every Christian life.

Let us endeavor, then, at all times—to show our faith by our works. We have no warrant otherwise to call ourselves God's children. Let it be our constant endeavor "that your love may abound 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."

—What shall we find to lay at His feet? Ourselves—miserable sinners that we are—ourselves, souls and bodies first. Then sacrifice our pet sins to Him who was sacrificed for us. Give up self and selfishness for Christ. Give our time to work for Him and His dear Church. Give our money for His use. In fine, make it a time of sweet and willing Christian sacrifice.—Rev. A. Marks, Rector of Trinity Church, Natchez, Miss.

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