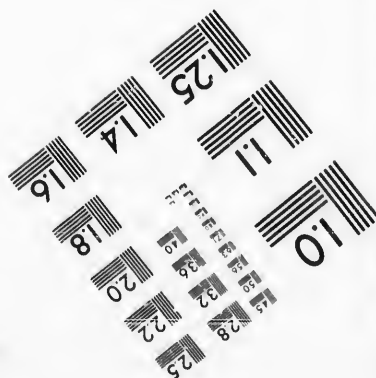
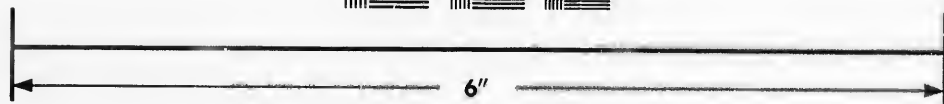
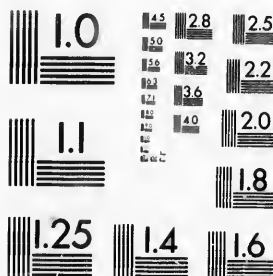


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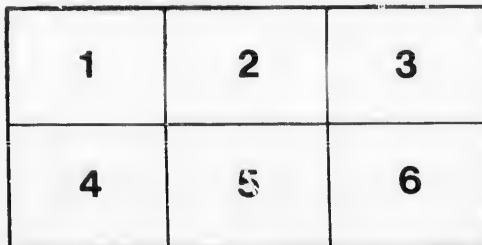
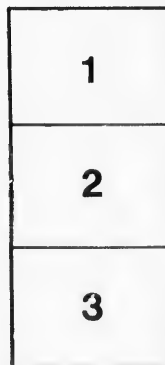
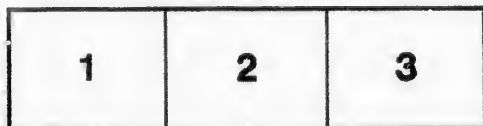
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AN

ADDRESS

DELIVERED

AT AN EXAMINATION OF THE

ST. JOHN'S CHURCH SUNDAY SCHOOLS,

JUNE 15, 1832.



BY

EDWARD WIX, M. A.,

Archdeacon of Newfoundland.



CONFIRMATION.

I.

Witness, ye men and angels! now
Before the LORD we speak;
To HIM we make our solemn vow,
A vow we dare not break:

II.

That long as life itself shall last,
Ourselves to CHRIST we yield;
Nor from His cause will we depart,
Or ever quit the field.

III.

We trust not in our native strength,
But on His grace rely,
That with returning wants the LORD
Will all our need supply.

IV.

LORD! guide our doubtful feet aright
And keep us in Thy ways;
And while we turn our vows to prayer,
Turn Thou our prayers to praise.



St. John's:

J. BYAN, KING'S PRINTER.

1832.

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ADDRESS.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS AND ESTEEMED TEACHERS :

THROUGH the mercy of God we have been spared to another public examination. Four months have now passed, since I last spoke to you on the considerations by which you are bound to make the most of the season of youth and of those religious opportunities which you enjoy in the Sunday Schools connected with the Church. Let us all, teachers as well as children, ask ourselves what improvement we have made, during the last four months, of those religious opportunities which have been within our reach. Are we more serious and more devout than we were? Have we received any addition to the stock of our knowledge in heavenly subjects? Have we become more fitted for that HEAVEN into which nothing unholy can enter, and out of which there is no happiness for the spirits of any of us when they shall have once passed through this state of trial? Do we experience a more lively pleasure than we did, four months ago, when we are engaged in public prayer in the house of GOD, in family prayer in our own houses, and in that private communion which we have with GOD, when, not seen by any other eye than His, we kneel down in our chambers to thank Him for His past mercies and to ask Him to continue them to ourselves, to our friends, and to all men?

Since I addressed you at the last examination a library of 235 volumes has been purchased at a very reduced cost with the sum which was raised in this town by the sale of work in August last; and a most liberal supply of new books and tracts has been gratuitously placed at my disposal by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. I need not tell you that to that magnificent institution this Island, in common with the Christian, and the Heathen world, at large, is most deeply indebted. Through the liberality of this Society any of you who may require books of an instructive kind to assist you in your approach to GOD, may receive the loan of a volume, on each Sunday, from the library which has just been placed in the Church; and you are at liberty to apply, without scruple, to

the Rector, to myself, or to any of your teachers, for such manuals of devotion as you may wish to possess for your daily use.

You may have observed that, on each LORD'S day, the portrait of a clergyman, who is called your Bishop, has been placed in a conspicuous part of the room in which you meet for instruction; and you may have heard and remarked lately, that, in the anticipation of a visit which the members of the Church are shortly expecting from this person, several of your friends are seriously endeavouring, by prayer and meditation and study, to prepare themselves and their servants and children for a religious rite which is called Confirmation.

Now as every member of our communion should be acquainted with subjects of such interest as Confirmation, and what is called Episcopacy, or the antient government of the Church by Bishops, I will explain to you, in this address, what we learn, from the Bible, respecting the office of a Bishop, and the ceremony of Confirmation;—you will, then, know the grounds on which Church-people conceive so much respect to be due to Confirmation and to those officers of the Church who alone have the authority to administer it.

This Confirmation, or laying on of hands, is classed by the inspired writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews,* with the fundamentals of religion, those first principles which should be acknowledged by all Christians. You ought certainly, therefore, not to be ignorant either concerning Confirmation or the nature of *their* office who have the power to administer it.

You have been frequently told that the Christian covenant is a plan of salvation which has been graciously made known to us by JESUS CHRIST. HE came down from Heaven that HE might lay the foundation of this religion, by which men who, through the sinfulness of their nature, and their own actual wickedness, are very far from GOD and holiness, might, through CHRIST, be reconciled to GOD and regain, through the grace of the Holy Spirit, a capacity or power of becoming holy. CHRIST is, accordingly, the HEAD of the CHURCH.† HE had an undoubted right to appoint the rulers of it and to settle the manner in which it should be governed. While HE continued upon earth, HE governed the Church in HIS own person, but, when the work of our Redemption, for which HE came on earth, was finished, HE went up into Heaven. Before HE ascended,

* Hebrews vi. 1—3.

† Ephes. i. 22. Coloss. i. 18.

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however, HE gave to certain persons, who were, on that account, called APOSTLES, a commission to preach, to baptize, and to instruct, in HIS name, and HE promised that "always, even unto the end of the world," HE would be with them.† By this it was clearly meant that HE would be with those who should follow these Apostles in the same office to the end of the world.

To these Apostles CHRIST gave the right of appointing, under Him, other teachers to succeed them, as HE, under the Father, had appointed them to succeed Him; for he says to them "As the Father hath sent me even so send I you."‡ The Apostles thus understood our LORD, and they acted upon this commission, ordaining successors, and settling, with Episcopal authority, all things belonging to the Church.§ Those clergy, then, who have received the commission to preach and to administer the Holy Sacraments, through an uninterrupted succession of Episcopal Ordinations from the time of these Apostles, are to be looked upon as having received quite as undoubted a commission from CHRIST Himself, as if CHRIST had personally called them and ordained them for the ministry. There is comfort, therefore, in attending the ministrations of persons thus ordained. They do not act upon their own authority.* They act in the name, and by the authority of CHRIST.† They are ambassadors for CHRIST; as though GOD did beseech you by them, they pray you, in CHRIST's stead, to be reconciled to GOD.‡‡ They have "power and commandment," that is, a special authority and a special charge, to intercede or to pray for the people; to dispense to them the mysteries of Christianity, that is, both the sublime truths of Christianity and it's Holy Sacraments; and, also, to bless the people in God's name.‖‖ These are offices, however, all of which the second order of the ministry, (priests) and some of which the third order, (deacons) may, in subordination to the Bishops, administer in the Church. But the office of laying on of hands, (whether for conferring the commission of the ministry in Ordination, or for procuring the ordinary gifts and graces of God's Holy Spirit in the solemn rite of Confirmation,) is confined to the highest order of the ministry alone. To persons of this supe-

‡ Matt. xxviii. 18-20. || John xx. 21. § Acts xiv. 23. Titus i. 5.

* Heb. v. 4. † Article xxvi. ‡‡ II. Cor. v. 16-20.

‖‖ Numbers vi. 23-27.

rior order we give the name of Bishops. We respect their office, believing them to have succeeded to the authority of those with whom, in the person of their successors, CHRIST promised to be to the end of the world: and we reserve to their hands alone the office of Confirmation, because we learn, from the scriptures, that persons of this superior order were, in the earliest age of the Church, alone considered competent to administer it. The person of whom we read in the nineteenth chapter of the Acts § as having administered it with so remarkable an effect, was St. Paul, *an Apostle*; and in an earlier passage* we read that St. Peter and St. John, *two Apostles*, were sent, from a distance, to lay their hands, in Confirmation, upon some Samaritans, when (Philip) an inferior minister, who had baptized them, was upon the spot. We may, from this instance, well suppose, that, if the ministry of Philip had been sufficient, he would have confirmed those disciples, as he had before baptized them;—He did not do so, however;—In the early ages of the Church neither priests, nor deacons, ever did. The authority of their commission was not considered to extend so far; and the administration of Confirmation was, like that of Ordination, constantly reserved to the Bishops or Governors of the Church.

Most of you, my young friends! have not yet arrived at a sufficient age, or at a sufficient degree of Christian knowledge, to offer yourselves, at this time, for Confirmation. Confirmation, however, is so connected with the privileges of Baptism, in which you are all of you interested, that the youngest of you should know something concerning it. As the powers of your minds are now opening, and you are every day becoming better able to understand the engagements of the Christian covenant, it is the duty of your parents, and of your clergy, to inform you upon the nature of the privileges to which you became entitled, and of the engagements by which you became bound, at your Baptism; and these,—your kind teachers, would lend their assistance, also, in instructing you upon the same subjects. We feel ourselves bound by our religion to discharge this religious duty towards you; † but, remember, that it is no less a religious duty on your part to lend a willing ear to our instructions than it is on our's to offer them.

§ Acts XIX. 8.

* Acts VIII. 14—17.

† Dent. VI. 7.

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As you could know nothing of the nature of the Gospel covenant when you were, through the mercy of God, admitted into CHRIST'S Church by Baptism, it is proper that, when you shall become acquainted with Christian truth and Christian duty, you come forward, freely, of yourselves, and be publicly confirmed in the resolution to forsake sin and to follow CHRIST:—As you have very often, already, fallen from God's favor by youthful impieties, it will be very necessary, that, when you come to a sense of your unworthiness, you humbly acknowledge both your past sinfulness, and your present want of power to live a Christian life, without the help of God's grace;—and you should piously seek that the promises of God and the privileges of your Christian state, may be confirmed to you in this solemn rite, while you may yourselves be confirmed or strengthened, by it, in your Christian course.

Unless you do make a personal profession of religion, & Holy Ghost (by whose inspiration alone the new life, which was given at your baptism, can be maintained), will not be imparted to you,—and this solemn ceremony of Confirmation is the most ancient and approved way in which those who have been baptized as children, can make, for the first time, such a personal profession of Christianity. Unless you are blessed by God and assisted with His grace, you cannot advance a single step in your Christian course;—now those who, at the time of Confirmation, ask a blessing upon you from God, are the successors of those Apostles whose ministerial actions CHRIST engaged to acknowledge to the end of the world.

When you regard, then, the importance of this ordinance, in order to the completion or the confirmation of your baptism;—when you consider how much it may tend towards the confirmation or establishing of yourselves in your most holy faith, and in a practice suitable to it; and when you bear in mind, moreover, that the proper officer for the administration of this rite, can so very seldom be seen amongst us, you cannot be surprised at the serious preparation which you observe is making on every side for the due reception of our excellent Bishop and of the advantages which may be expected to arise from his visit.

You, my young friends! will not, I trust, be behind any in the respect with which you will regard this our spiritual

Father; you will be second to none in the attention with which you will regard the affectionate admonitions which he may give; and, I sincerely pray that you may be among those in behalf of whom his fervent prayers at the throne of grace may be heard, and on whom, when he has laid his hands, the overshadowing blessing of the Almighty, the FATHER, the SON and the HOLY GHOST—may rest, and abide with them for ever!

On this, the second Episcopal visit which the Protestant members of the Catholic Church have received in this Island, the minds of some, however, will revert to the Bishop's former visit with feelings of a melancholy nature. It cannot fail to occur to some before me, that, when our spiritual father held a Confirmation, five years since, in this town, within a few days of this very date, many took those vows upon them who are now no more! One family, which has supplied us with two of our most zealous teachers, has, within the last few days, been plunged into mourning by the most unexpected intelligence of the early decease of an excellent member, who, at the last Confirmation, took those vows upon herself.—Those who knew the many graces which so beautifully adorned the character of this young confirmed matron;—those who witnessed her amiable desire to diffuse religious and moral improvement among all around her;—those who witnessed her tender anxiety about the pious training of the infants whom GOD had committed to her maternal care;—those, above all, who have been informed of the calm resignation with which she could leave, at a most brief warning, an affluent state, a doating husband, a delightful circle of religious connections, a sweet infant family, and yield her soul, without a murmur,—yea, even with a joyous acknowledgement that, when she reflected on the mercies of GOD in CHRIST, which were sealed to her in her last moments by a participation in the sacred pledges of His love, she was “too, too happy”—will not be disposed to doubt that there may have been virtue in the blessing which was pronounced over her at the altar of GOD, when, at the last Confirmation, she dedicated herself to His service;—they will not dispute the efficacy of the prayers which were then made in her behalf, or doubt that “the manifold gifts of grace” may, according to the petition of those prayers, have daily increased in her until she entered into CHRIST'S everlasting kingdom! Yes—

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we may believe that these prayers were heard. Through the remainder of her short earthly life, and in the last moments of her life on earth, she was strengthened with the Holy Ghost the Comforter; and, though dead, she yet speaks by the example which she has bequeathed to us of the devout use which she made of all "the means of grace," and by the reflection which must arise respecting "the hope of glory" which crowned such a course in her day of trial and the hour of death.

Many—many who, at that time, took those vows upon them have since been removed from this state of probation. You, who, having *then* pledged yourselves to the same vows, are yet spared for further trial, know, that, at the time of Confirmation, when you received the Church's passport to the fuller privileges of her communion, YOUR LIFE WAS VIBRATING UPON A POINT!—TO WHICH SIDE HAS THE BALANCE SINCE INCLINED?

May you, through life, be taught, sanctified, and governed; and, in life's last moments, comforted, by the same Holy Spirit which so cheerly sustained our departed sister! Persevere in your Christian course: You, teach'ers! in particular, do not tire in this charitable work which you have undertaken for the lambs of CHRIST'S fold, or in any other of your holy duties!

It is remarkable that, at the very moment in which I was last recommending, from this place, earnestness to the Christian teacher, from a consideration of the shortness of life, and from a contemplation, also, of the immense spiritual good which a single individual might be the honored instrument of effecting,—the remains of a person were waiting, on the other side of the Atlantic, to be consigned to the tomb, whose praise is in every Church, and a tribute to whose memory should be paid in every School in Christendom: I am speaking of the late Dr. ANDREW BELL, who was buried in Westminster Abbey within four days of my last address to you. Great marks of respect and honor were paid to the memory of this distinguished clergyman at his funeral. Processions of children, who, with countless thousands, now grown up, and, at this time, under training, are indebted to him for the knowledge of the true faith which, through his new and unexpensive system of mutual education, has been placed within their

reach, entreated, at his tomb, that, when they should depart this life, they might rest in God, as, their hope was, this their benefactor did. This great and good man had expended the labor of seven years, entirely gratuitously, on the Madras Orphan Institution, on the Indian coast of Coromandel.*— He had toiled for nearly half a century in training teachers, superintending schools, and forming and new modelling various institutions, for the general introduction of his monitorial system into British and Foreign schools: and where was his reward?—was it in the fact that multitudes of orphans who might, but for him, have sunk into the idolatries, and gross vices of heathen India, sent to him, from time to time, memorials of their fervent gratitude for his disinterested services, and accounts of the respectable stations in society which were occupied by his former pupils, and by others trained up in the same admirable system?—was it in the well-merited affluence which, notwithstanding his disinterested generosity, followed the declining years of this benefactor of his country and of the human race?—was it in the honor which is conferred on his name by the fact that a NATIONAL SYSTEM of self-tuition and mutual oversight, by which, in Schools connected with the Church alone, above 709,000 children were receiving education at the time of his decease, should be called, from his name, the SYSTEM OF DR. BELL, or, from the place in which he first made trial of it, the MADRAS SYSTEM OF EDUCATION?— These, indeed, were rich rewards of His toil. It must have

* When retiring from the superintendence of this Orphan School at Egmore, Dr. Bell writes, 1796 - "This numerous family I have long regarded as my own. I feel all that interest in it's welfare and progressive success, which arises from my situation, from the years I have spent, and the toil I have bestowed on this favorite object."

"These Children are, indeed, now mine by a thousand ties! I have for them a parental affection which has grown upon me every year; for them I have made such sacrifices as parents have not always occasion to make to their children; and the nearer the period approaches, when I must, for a while, at least, separate myself from them, I shall suffer in tearing myself from this charge and the anxious thoughts I shall throw back upon these children when I shall cease to be their protector, their guide, and their instructor." Elements, Part I. p. 55.

Those who would see the whole of Dr. Bell's system fully developed may refer to Elements of Tuition, Parts I. II. and III. published by Dr. Bell 1813, 1814, 1815., (Rivingtons) and to the "Suggestions" of the Revd. Frederic Tremonger, 1813. (Longman), and "Manual of Public and Private Education," by Dr. Bell (Rivingtons.)

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been gratifying to this amiable individual, as he descended to the tomb, to find that there were some in every rank, from that of the monarch to that of the humblest peasant, who acknowledged the invention of his mutual-tuition system to have been an invention which, if we except, perhaps, the art of printing, has had no parallel for the facility, precision, and dispatch which it has opened for the imparting of religious knowledge to the poor, the young, and the ignorant.*

But his greatest honors will be awarded him in that day when countless circles of redeemed spirits shall surround him in his seat of heavenly glory,† when he shall be joined in his holy song by millions who, during his life, and afterwards, shall have been rescued, through the blessing of God upon the system which passes by his name, from ignorance, and wretchedness and vice, and brought up in the pure and pleasant paths of Christian righteousness and faith.

The glory of the greatest discoverers in earthly wisdom shall be dim in that day before the glory of that great name.

* Extract of a letter from James Allan Park, Esq. (now Hon. Sir J. A. Park) to G. W. Marriott, Esq.—dated Dec. 20, 1812.

"Your account of Dr. Bell's success, and of the advancement of his good scheme, is highly interesting to me; I really think, that his plan, if rightly conducted, is one of the most stupendous engines that ever has been wielded, since the days of our Savior and His Apostles, for the advancement of God's true religion upon earth. It never has been my opinion that Dr. Bell is infected with vanity; but there never was a man, who, from seeing his plans taking a wide and deep root in the earth, has had more just cause to be vain than our excellent friend. I am not sure that this is not the commencement, by his means, of that glorious era, when the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea." Elements of Tuition, Part II. p. 186.

Dr. Bell himself says, p. 176. I appeal to the events of the last 10 years; I look forward to the event of every succeeding year, and I fix my eyes with the most entire satisfaction on the judgment of posterity,—the true touchstone of truth or falsehood. With such convictions on my mind, and with such an engine in my hands, I fear not to proclaim aloud, what, 16 years ago I only *whispered*, when I put my original Report of the male asylum into the hands which were to give it to the public, and what I have never ceased to repent to my friends; "You will mark me for an enthusiast, but, if you and I live 1000 years, we shall see this system of tuition spread over the world." It was from my *ashes* I then expected it to spring up. I did not expect to live, as I have done, to see it patronized, where I was most desirous of it's being patronized, and established where I was most desirous of it's being established.

† Daniel xii. 3.

Millions who shall be living in the light of their Savior's countenance, shall turn their spiritual forms towards the spirit of this their sainted father in the LORD, and shall acknowledge,—“Thou art, indeed, deserving of double honor, in this place where all are blessed; for to thee we are indebted that we were not among those out-casts who denied this our LORD CHRIST in whose presence we now rejoice,—that these bodies,§ with which we now surround His throne, were not ruinously degraded to the service and the slavery of “Satan.”

You have, I dare to say, heard that one who deservedly ranked very high among those who were heathens, and knew nothing of the true GOD, or of JESUS CHRIST, comforted himself, when death was near, with the thought that he should now see the great and the good of his own and of former generations who had enriched the world by their wisdom or improved it by their virtue;—We know that, if there were no other Being in Heaven but GOD alone, there would be fullness, abundance, of joy in His presence; yet it may bring the realities of Heaven and the happy seats, which are there in reserve for the faithful servants of CHRIST, nearer to our view, if we think, sometimes, of our being introduced, at the last day, to the Society of all the Saints whose memory we have respected, or whose love we have cherished, on earth—of all who, like Dr. ANDREW BELL, shall have been instruments in the hands of GOD in turning any to righteousness.†

Such instruments we may be ourselves; and such rewards for the kindness which we show to CHRIST's little ones, in the name of disciples, and for the sake of CHRIST, whose disciples we, all of us, are, may be our own.‡ Comfort may arise to us, in the hour of death, from the recollection of such labors as these which shall not be in vain in the LORD*—sweet will be the anticipation that we may shortly join the spirits and souls of the righteous who, in every age, have enlarged the kingdom of the LORD, and—after death—BANDS OF SPIRITS, WHOM WE HAVE HELPED TO FORM FOR HEAVEN, MAY SURROUND OURSELVES.

§ I. Cor. xv. 49—57. † Daniel xii. 3. ‡ Matt. x. 42. * I. Cor. xv. 58.

