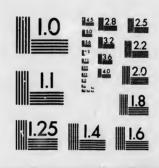


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CATECHISM

FOR THE USE OF

Those who intend Presenting themselves to the Bishop

FOR -

CONFIRMATION.

Ινα επιγνως περι ων κατηχηθης λογων την ασφαλειαν.
St. Luke i. 4.

AUTHORISED VERSION.

"That thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed" or catechised.

By W. H. SNYDER, B. A.

PUBLISHED BY WM. GOSSIP, 109 GRANVILLE STREWT.

1865.

"If I have done well and as is fitting the story, it is that which I desired, but if slenderly and meanly, it is that which I could attain unto."— II MACCABEES, XV. 38.

INTRODUCTION.

THE want of a manual of instruction, such as is contained in the following pages, has long been seriously felt and acknowledged.

For my own part, when preparing my candidate for Confirmation, I have, at times, been most painfully impressed with the *incompleteness* of the *viva voce instruction* I was endeavouring to impart, and more particularly was such the case, when I reflected how very soon all the arguments and reasonings employed might be forgotten, and, perhaps, uncared for.

Repeatedly, without success, I sought for some little work to place in the hands of my Catechumens, which would not only strengthen their faith in the Ordinance itself as an Apostolic rite and a means of grace, but, which would also, at all times, supply them with arguments to meet the objections of gain-sayers. True, there were very many most excellent tracts and sermons upon the subject at hand, and a

few short Catechisms also might be obtained, but none of them seemed exactly suited to remove the difficulty, under which, in common with many of my brethren. I continued to labour. Hence the following Catechism. And although I do not flatter myself that it is, by any means, all that it ought, or all that it might be, or is calculated, in every respect, to supply what is wanted, yet I cannot but humbly hope, that by God's blessing, it will render some little assistance to those engaged in the very important work of preparing the young for a solemn dedication of themselves to their great Master's service. Such as it is, however, I commend it to the charitable consideration of my brethren and fellow Churchmen, sincerely praying, that it may not be altogether useless; and if it be the means of encouraging even one, who may be asking his way to our "Zion with his face thitherward," to seek until he find, and should build up one son or daughter of the Church in our most holy faith, my labour will not have been in vain, nor shall I lose my reward.

W. H. S.

St. James's Rectory, Mahone Bay, 1865.

A CATECHISM.

Ques. What is Confirmation?

Ans. Confirmation is that Holy, Catholic and Apostolic rite, in which they who have been baptized, renew, ratify and confirm in their own names and persons, and of their own free will and consent, the solemn vows and promises made for them, and in their names, at their baptism; and by the grace of God's Holy Spirit, therein imparted to worthy recipients, are also strengthened and confirmed in that state of salvation, unto which, by Holy Baptism they were called.

Q. Was that holy rite always known and distin-

guished by the name it now bears?

A. In the times of the Apostles, and for many years after them, it was not generally known and distinguished by that name.

Q. How then was it called?

A. "The laying on of hands"; "The sealing," or "anointing."

Q. Why was it so called?

A. Because the Apostles, and the Bishops their successors, "laid their hands" upon those who had been baptized, and because in the earliest and purest

ages of the Church the baptized were signed by the Bishop with the sign of the Cross, and anointed with oil; thereby conferring upon those duly qualified the gifts and graces of God's Holy Spirit, -Sealing and marking them, in token that thereafter they should not be "ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified,"-and most significantly representing that "unction" which they who are sanctified have "from the Holy One."

Q. In the ancient Jewish Church which had the rite of circumcision, and the festival of the Passover; in place of which we have now in the Christian Church, baptism and the Lord's Supper, was there not a certain custom or ceremony, which, in its import and design, as a connecting link between circumcision and the Passover, bore a very striking resemblance to Confirmation, the connecting link between Baptism and the Holy Eucharist?

A. The Jews, when their children were thirteen years old, and had learned the law together with its meaning, and their daily prayers, were wont to bring them before the congregation, whereupon they were declared "Sons of the Precept," and henceforth were to assume the responsibility of their own sins: -and as in Confirmation, the solemn rite was conclud-

ed with prayer and praise.

Q. Have we not good reason for supposing that our Saviour Himself complied with that custom?

A. Having increased in wisdom far beyond His age, He was brought by His parents, when twelve years old, into the temple; and, as it behoved him to fulfil all righteousness, (every jot and tittle of the

law,) it is very reasonable to conclude that He was then received into the number of the "Sons of the Precept or Statutes."

Q. Can you assign another very probable reason?

A. In the second chapter of St. Luke's Gospel, forty-sixth verse, we read, "And it came to pass, that after three days they (His parents) found Him in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions;" a situation in which He would not have been found, and a privilege it is at least reasonable to suppose, if not absolutely certain, would never have been granted one so young had He not first been numbered among the "Sons of the Precept."

Q. Is Confirmation a Sacrament?

A. It has never been so considered by any pure branch of Christ's Church.

Q. What is a Sacrament?

A. A Sacrament is "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ himself as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof."

Q. Why, then, is not Confirmation a Holy

Sacrament?

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A. Principally, because it was not instituted and

ordained by Christ Himself.

Q. If then Christ, the great Head of the Church, neither instituted, nor commanded, the holy rite of Confirmation to be administered, nor even gave any positive directions respecting it, what authority has the Church for its use, and continuance?

A. The example and practice of the Apostles,

which, in every thing pertaining to the edification, government, and discipline of the Church, have ever been rightly considered equivalent to a command.

Q. What proof have we, that the Apostles prac-

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tised the holy rite of Confirmation?

A. In the eighth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles we read, "Now, when the Apostles, which were at Jerusalem, heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John, who, when they were come down, prayed for them," (that is for those who had been baptized by Philip,) that they might receive the Holy Ghost, for as yet, He was fallen upon none of them, only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. Again, in the nineteenth chapter, we are told, that St. Paul, having baptized "certain disciples," whom he found at Ephesus, afterwards laid his hands upon them, and the Holy Ghost came on them.

Q. Is there any mention made of this holy rite in

any other part of the New Testament?

A. In the sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, St. Paul, speaking of the principles or rudiments of the doctrine of Christ, uses these words: "Not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works," (or works that cause or deserve death,) "and of faith toward God,—of the doctrine of baptisms, and of Laying on of hands."

Q. What reasons have we for supposing that the "Laying on of hands," just mentioned, refers to

Confirmation?

A. First—because in the verse it comes immediately after Baptisms; secondly—because it is reckoned among the principles, rudiments, or beginnings and foundation of Christian doctrine; and, lastly, because, unlike the other instances in which the ceremony of imposition of hands was practised, such as ordination of ministers, healing the sick, and conferring ordinary blessings—which concerned the individuals alone more immediately interested—the "Laying on of hands," referred to by the Apostle, was a rite, ceremony, and practice in which all baptized Christians, of every age and nation, male and female, were as deeply and personally interested, as they were in repentance, faith, baptism, resurrection, and the eternal judgment.

Q. Have we any additional proof from the writings of the Fathers, and the records of Councils, that the Apostles practised the rite of Confirmation, and that it was likewise continued in the Church for

hundreds of years after the Apostolic age?

A. We have proof the most abundant, undeniable, and conclusive. Tertullian, who wrote only eighty years after the death of St. John, the beloved disciple of our Lord, positively affirms, that "after Baptism follows the 'Laying on of hands,' when the Holy Ghost is invited and called for by solemn benediction, upon which that most blessed Spirit willingly descends upon the bodies cleansed by Baptism and blessed by Confirmation." Again, he says, "The body is overshadowed by the 'Laying on of hands,' that the soul may be illuminated by the Holy Ghost." And again, to the objection

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urged by some persons, that Baptism alone was sufficient, he well replies: "It is for them that die presently after, but not for them that live and fight against their spiritual enemies; being cleansed by baptismal water, we are prepared for the Holy Ghost under the Angel or Bishop of the Church."

St. Cyprian, who wrote sixty years after Tertullian, referring to the Confirmation at Samaria, says, "Our practice is, that they who are baptized be presented to the Rulers or Governors of the Church, that by our prayer, and 'Laying on of hands,' they may receive the Holy Ghost, and be perfected with

the seal and signature of the Lord."

St. Jerome, who lived in the fourth century, alluding to Confirmation, uses this language—"The celebration of this ordinance was conferred upon the Bishops for their honour. If you ask where it is written,—it is written in the Acts of the Apostles; but, if there were no authority in Scripture for it, the consent of the whole world in this particular

would be equivalent to a command."

In the Council of Carthage, held about the middle of the third century, and at which no less than sixty-six Bishops were assembled, it was decreed: "That every one who is baptized should afterwards be anointed, in order to his receiving the grace of Christ, and become by Confirmation the anointed of God." The Council of Eliberis, in Spain, held in the year of our Lord 301, required "all baptized persons to be brought to the Bishop, in order that they might be perfected by his benediction, and imposition of hands." In the year three hundred

and fourteen, the Council of Arles, at which the Bishops of York and London and other British divines were present, passed a decree that, "Arians, bartized in the name of the Trinity, should not be re-baptized, but that only hands were to be laid upon them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost."

Q. Is Confirmation generally necessary to be re-

ceived by all baptized Christians?

A. If the example of the Apostles, and the universal practice of the Church, for the first fifteen hundred years after Christ, be equivalent (as St. Jerome very correctly affirms) to a command; then, unquestionably, the duty of all who "have been baptized unto Christ," and have therefore "put on Christ," is to renew their vows and promises, and to re-bind themselves by a solemn personal engagement to the Church and service of their covenant-keeping God.

Q. Are there any other reasons why those who have been baptized, especially in their infancy,

should be Confirmed?

A. There are several. According to an established rule of the Church, "none shall be admitted to the Holy Communion until such time as he be Confirmed, or be ready and desirous to be Confirmed; and our blessed Saviour's own words are—"Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you."—St. John, 6, 53. And, further, Confirmation is necessary, because, they who were baptized in infancy, being altogether unconscious of the nature, responsibilities and privileges of the covenant entered into

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between them and their God, should now, when they have "come to age," (if they desire to retain their privileges and would still continue to be members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven,) in their own persons and names, solemnly and openly before God and the Church and their chosen witnesses, ratify and confirm their baptismal engagements, and of their own free will and consent promise to believe and to do all those things which their godfathers and godmothers undertook for them.

Q. Does not the Church enjoin it as a solemn duty upon godfathers and godmothers to see that those for whom they acted as sponsors shall, when properly instructed and prepared, be brought to the Bishop to be confirmed by him?

A. At the conclusion of the service for "Public Baptism of Infants," the minister is directed to

charge them so to do.

Q. For what purpose must every candidate for Confirmation have a godfather or a godmother?

A. As a witness of his or her vow, and as occa-

sion may require, to remind them of the same.

Q. What is required of persons to be Confirmed?

A "The Church hath thought fit to order, that none hereafter shall be Confirmed, but such as can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and can also answer to such other questions as in the Short Catechism are contained."

Q. What promises must they make?

A. The same that were made for them by their godfathers and godmothers, when they were baptized.

Q. What were those promises?

A. "That they would renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh; secondly, that they would believe all the Articles of the Christian faith; and, thirdly, that they would keep God's Holy Will and Commandments, and walk in the same all the days of their life."

Q. What three all important duties are contained

in those promises?

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A. Repentance, without which man must perish everlastingly. Faith, without which it is impossible to please God, or to be saved. Obedience or Holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

Q. What are the benefits whereof they are partakers who receive the holy rite of Confirmation?

A. Admission to full Communion with the Church, and to all those precious privileges which Christ, our Saviour, died to purchase for His people. Moreover "it is a lasting admonition and check not to dishonour or desert our Christian profession, and tends to preserve the unity of the Church, by making men sensible of their obligation to communicate with their ecclesiastical superiors, who are endowed with all those powers that were left by the Apostles to their successors"—the Bishops.

Q. Are there any other benefits of which they

become partakers?

A. Having been "regenerated by water and the Holy Ghost"; if they be now true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, and have repented them sincerely and heartily of their former sins, and are steadfastly

purposed and determined, by God's help, to lead new lives,—in other words, if their "hearts be right in the sight of God,"—then will their Heavenly Father, whose children they are, for Christ's sake, confer upon them the seven-fold gifts of His Spirit—the Spirit of wisdom and understanding: the Spirit of counsel and ghostly strength: the Spirit of knowledge and true godliness, and the Spirit of His holy fear.

Q. As the miraculous gift of the Holy Ghost, which sometimes accompanied, or followed, the "Laying on of hands," is no longer imparted; should not the rite, or ceremony, by which that gift was conferred, be discontinued, as no longer neces-

sary, or beneficial?

A. Most certainly not; for if that argument had any weight, or such reasoning any force, it would equally apply to Christ's most holy religion itself, and to His duly authorized ministers. At the first, that religion was propagated and established by the aid of miracles, and many of the teachers thereof were endowed with miraculous gifts and powers, but when the end, for which such extraordinary gifts were bestowed, was accomplished, being no longer necessary, they ceased to be imparted; but it cannot hence be argued, or inferred, that, because miracles are not now performed, and miraculous powers are withheld from God's ministers, therefore, neither they, nor the religion which they teach, are needed; and yet, such an argument, and such an inference, would be just as good, and legitimate, as the reasoning of those who say, that, because the miraculous gifts,

which sometimes attended the ministration of "Laying on of hands" in the early Church, have long since been withheld, therefore, the holy rite of Confirmation should be altogether discontinued, as not only not required, but positively useless.

Q. Is not Confirmation now merely an outward form, or external rite and ceremony, conferring no

spiritual blessings?

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A. To those who come to it without the requisite qualifications it is, undoubtedly, a form, and nothing more; just as attendance upon public worship and the Holy Eucharist, or even prayer in the closet, is merely outward religion to those formalists whose hearts are not right in God's sight; but, to every worthy recipient, Confirmation is, as it ever has been, a means of grace and a channel of spiritual blessings to the soul great indeed.

Q. Who alone have authority in the Church to

administer the holy rite of Confirmation?

A. The Chief Pastors, or Bishops—the only true

successors of the Apostles.

Q. What proof have we, that none but the Apostles and Bishops, their successors in office, had, or

have, any legitimate authority to Confirm?

A. In the eighth and nineteenth chapters of the Acts, where we have the only account of the administration of the holy rite of Confirmation in those days, we read, that the Apostles alone laid their hands on those who had been baptized; and in the writings of the Fathers, already quoted, nothing is more clear, full and satisfactory than the evidence which they afford, that the Bishops, or Governours,

or Chief Pastors of the Church alone confirmed, sealed and anointed the Baptized. And, further, it is equally easy of proof, that for the first fifteen hundred years after Christ no true branch of His Church can be found in which Confirmation was administered by either Priests, or Deacons, but by the Bishop alone.

Q. After Confirmation, will you not in a more especial manner be bound to continue unto your life's end a faithful servant of Christ and a consis-

tent member of His Church?

A. I certainly shall be most firmly and solemnly

bound so to do.

Q. Of what particular sin would you be guilty, if, after you had been confirmed, you separated yourself from the *Church*, and joined any of the opposing sects and denominations which unhappily abound?

A. I should be guilty of the great sin of schism.

Q. What is schism?

A. It is rending the seamless garment of Christ—the Church; and making a division in that Body, for the *unity* of which, its great, ever-living Head, while here on earth, prayed most fervently, and laboured most earnestly.

Q. What do the Holy Scriptures teach us con-

cerning the sin of schism or division?

A. In his Epistle to the Galatians, fifth chapter, ninetcenth and twentieth verses, St. Paul uses this emphatic language, "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these—hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envy-

ings, and such like; and they, which do such things, shall not inherit the Kingdom of God." Again, in other of his Epistles, he says—"Mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them."

"For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of

the simple."—Romans, 16, 17, 18.

"Ye are yet carnal, for whereas there is among you envying and strife and divisions, are ye not carnal and walk as men: 'For while one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are ye not carnal'?"—1 Cor. 3, 3, 4.

"There should be no schism in the Body; but that the members should have the same care one for

another."-1 Cor. 12, 25.

Q. In order that, after you have been confirmed, you may never be guilty of schism, or any other great and grievous sin, thereby provoking, most assuredly, God's wrath against you, and greatly endangering your covenant, standing, and privileges, what must you do?

A. I must use rightly and diligently all the appointed means of grace—not one only, to the neglect, or entire exclusion of any, but each and all in

their proper order, time, and place.

Q. What are the divinely constituted means of

grace?

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A. Chiefly prayer—public and private; the Holy Sacraments—especially the blessed Sacrament of

the Body and Blood of Christ; and God's Holy

Word—read and preached.

Q, Will you then, to the best of your ability, faithfully and diligently use those means of grace, and obediently keep God's Holy Will and Commandments, and walk in the same all the days of your life.

A. "I will endeavour so to do; the Lord being

my helper."

PRAYERS TO BE USED.

BEFORE "LAYING ON OF HANDS."

Gracious God, and Heavenly Father! I, Thy baptized and redeemed child, am now about to rebind and dedicate myself to Thee and to Thy service, and to promise and vow that I will fight manfully, under the banner of the Cross, against sin, the world, and the devil, and be Thy faithful soldier and servant unto my life's end.

Give me grace, therefore, I beseech Thee, seriously to consider the nature and most solemn responsibilities of that promise and vow, and power faithfully to fulfil the same. Grant unto me, also, the sevenfold gifts of the Spirit, and seal me unto the day of redemption, through Jesus Christ our Lord! Amen.

WHEN HANDS ARE BEING LAID ON.

Oh! Lord, my God! May the prayer now being offered up in my behalf by the Bishop, be heard and

answered by Thee; and grant that I may indeed be "defended at all times by Thy most gracious and ready help," and that I "may continue Thine for ever, and daily increase in Thy Holy Spirit, more and more, until I come to Thine everlasting kingdom." Grant this, oh Lord, for Jesus Christ's sake—our only Saviour and Redeemer. Amen and Amen.

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AFTER "LAYING ON OF HANDS."

Almighty and everlasting God, to Thee I have made my vow-to Thee and to Thy service, I have bound myself by a perpetual covenant, which, while life shall last, I dare not, I cannot, break, without incurring the deepest guilt, and fearfully endangering my soul's everlasting salvation. Help me. therefore, heavenly Father, I most humbly beseech Thee, to do as I have promised, and day by day increase in me true religion, and nourish me with all goodness, that so I may be continually going on to perfection, until in Thy kingdom of purity and holiness above, I shall become holy as Thou art holy, and perfect even as Thou art perfect; and to Thy name be all the praise. Hear me, oh Lord, hear me, and send down an answer in mercy, for Thy dear Son's sake, Jesus Christ, our Lord!-Amen.

HINTS TO THE CONFIRMED.

Acts viii. 15, 16, 17; xix. 6. Hebrews vi. 2.

By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.—Ephesians ii. 8.

If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.—Luke xi. 18.

BE HUMBLE.

Endeavour to live in a deep sense of your own sin and weakness, and of the sufficiency of the grace of Christ.

Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.—Proverbs xvi. 18.

Without me ye can do nothing.—John xv. 5.

I can do all things, through Christ, Which strengtheneth me.—Philippians iv. 13.

When I am weak, then am I strong.—2 Corinth. xii. 10.

Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.— Ephesians vi. 10.

Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as those that must give account.—Hebrews xiii. 17.

BE WATCHFUL.

Remember that the enemy of your soul desires its ruin; resist the beginnings of sin, whether they come by evil thoughts,—evil company,—idleness. In conversation ask yourself, is what I am about to say true, is it useful, is it kind?

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil. as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour; whom resist, steadfast in the faith.—1 Peter v. 8, 9.

Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, keep the door of my lips.—Psalm exii. 3.

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Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.— Matthew xxv. 13.

BE PRAYERFUL.

Constant in your attendance at Church—pray also—when you lie down and when you rise up; pray—in your daily employments, Is anger rising? pray. Are you inclined in the presence of others to be ashamed of Christ? pray. Does temptation assault? pray.

I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.—Psalm exxii. 1.

Pray without ceasing.—1 Thessalonians y. 17.

In everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.—
Philippians iv. 6. Romans viil. 26. 2 Corinthians vi.
16, 17, 18; vii. 1.

BE HOPEFUL.

Press forward—rest not satisfied because you have been a partaker in this rite, but let your mind

be directed at once to the Sacrament of the LORD'S Supper. If you come not thither, there will be reason to fear that the blessing to be expected in Confirmation has been made light of by you to the injury of your soul. Come, therefore, but with fixed purpose of heart, to "yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." Come - "Repenting truly of your former sins, steadfastly purposing to lead a new life;" come-"with a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ, and a thankful remembrance of His death;" come-"in charity with all men;"-"so shall ye be meet partakers of those holy mysteries," and shall go forth to "glorify God with your body and your spirit, which are His."

And Jesus said unto him, No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.—Luke ix. 62.

Remember Lot's wife.—Luke xvii. 32.

For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come.—1 Corinthians xi. 26.

This do in remembrance of ME.—1 Corinthians xi. 24.

But let a man examine hin self, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup.—1 Corinthians xi. 28.

DAILY MORNING PRAYER.

O Heavenly Father! I thank Thee for sparing me to the beginning of another day: keep me from wicked thoughts, words, and actions: may I often through the day look up to Thee in prayer for Thy

Holy Spirit. May I remember that "Thou God seest me." May I keep out of the way of temptation, and strive to live as a child of God should live. O Lord, I am weak—do thou strengthen me, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Our Father, which art in Heaven, &c.

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EVENING PRAYER.

O God! before I go to bed this night, I would ask Thee to pardon all my sins, and to give me Thy blessing: make me thankful for all Thy mercies. The night of death cometh, when no man can work: may I be more careful to serve Thee, and may all my hope of salvation rest only on Thy dear Son, who died for sinners; Oh that I may walk in the light, and His blood cleanse me from all sin. Grant this, O Lord, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Our Father, which art in Heaven, &c.

BEARCH THE SCRIPTURES DAILY.

BE DILIGENT IN THY CALLING.

BE MUCH IN SECRET PRAYER.

NEGLECT NOT SELF-EXAMINATION.

LET THY WORDS BE FEW.

KEEP THY CONSCIENCE AS THE APPLE OF THINE EYE.

LIVE EACH DAY AS IF IT WERE THY LAST.

DO ALL, "LOOKING UNTO JESUS," AND RESTING ON HIS GRACE.

"BE THOU FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH,"

(SAITH THE LORD CHRIST,)

"AND I WILL GIVE THEE

A CROWN OF LIFE."

