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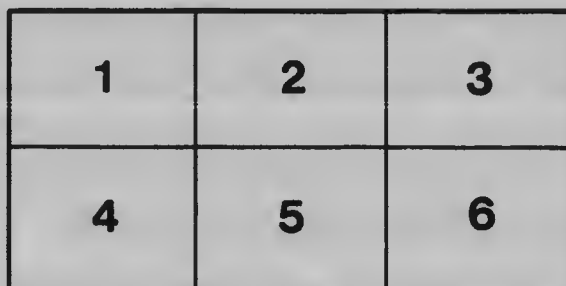
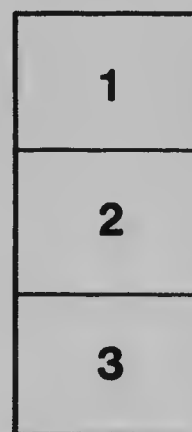
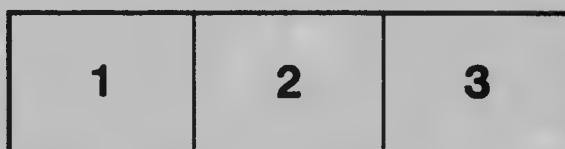
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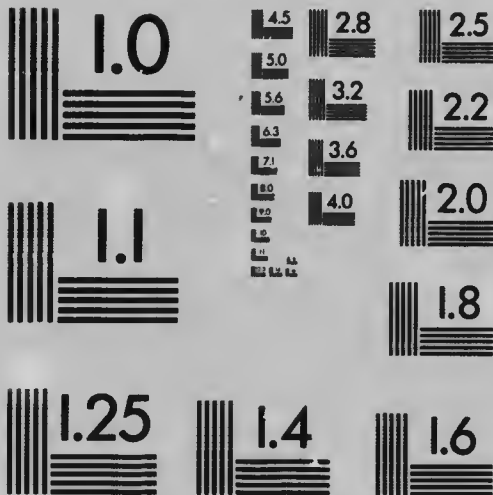
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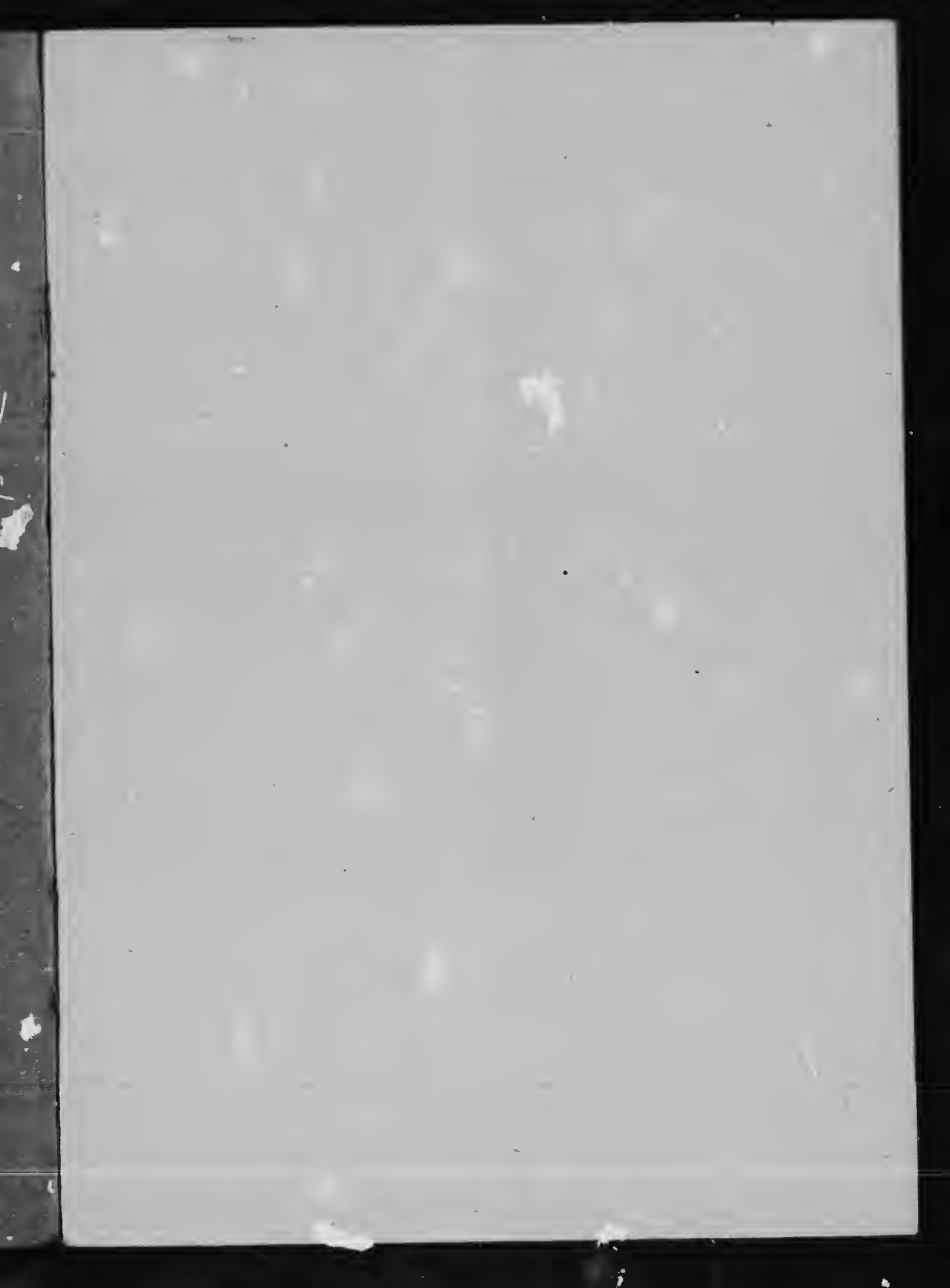
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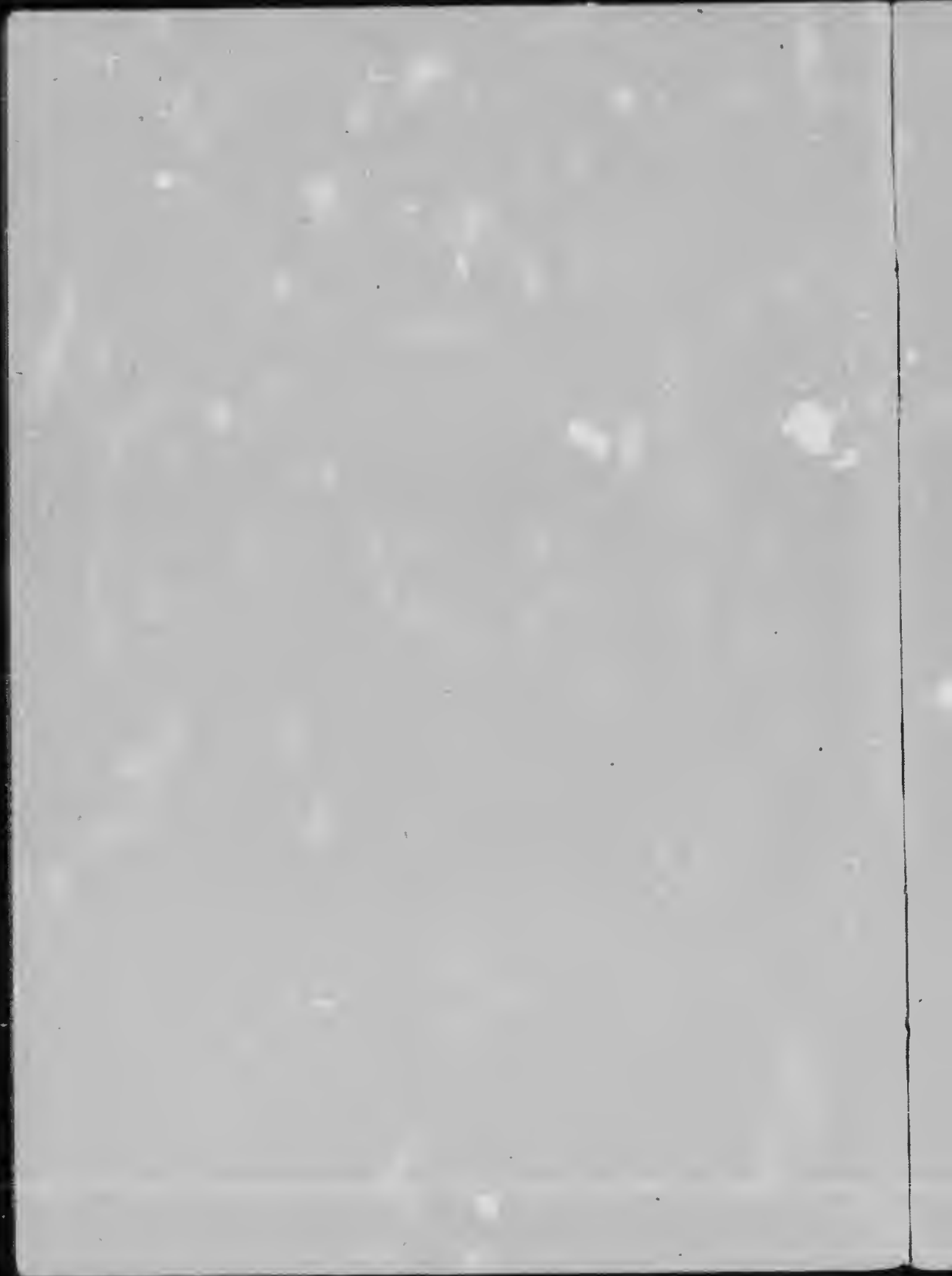
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CONFIRMATION

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WHAT IT MEANS;
WHAT IT REQUIRES.

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CONFIRMATION

There are three questions that every one who thinks of being confirmed would like to have answered.

1st. WHY DO WE HAVE CONFIRMATION IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND?

The Presbyterians, the Methodists, the Baptists profess to follow the lines of the Bible and the teaching of Christ and His Apostles, yet they do not have it. Why does the Church of England?

2nd. WHAT IS THE MEANING OF CONFIRMATION ACCORDING TO THE SERVICE OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND?

We do not mean merely as regards the rite or ceremony of the laying on of the Bishop's hands on those who have been baptized. What is it in its deeper aspects, its real significance, its spiritual meaning?

iv.

3rd. WHAT IS REQUIRED OF ONE WHO IS DESIROUS TO BE CONFIRMED IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND?

What are the qualifications that are insisted upon by the Church of England, before a person can consider himself or herself prepared to come forward, or in the words of the rubric, "to be presented to the Bishop to be confirmed"?

To answer these questions as simply and clearly as possible is the object of this little work.

CONFIRMATION

PART I.

WHY DO WE HAVE CONFIRMATION IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND ?

To begin with, we have Confirmation in the Church of England because we believe that there is no more appropriate, edifying or scriptural method for the public ratification of their faith on the part of those who have been incorporated into the Church by Baptism in the days of their childhood, or when they were of riper years.

“It is an order very convenient to be observed.”

The ingenuity of man in these modern days could hardly invent an ordinance so solemn, so beautiful, so spiritually helpful.

But there is another reason, a deeper and far stronger reason, and that is because it has come down to us from the most ancient days with the sanction of Scripture, and the authority of the usage of the primitive Church.

One of the foremost of the grand old doctrines of the Church of England is that laid down as the Church's teaching in the sixth article :—
“Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read there-

in, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation."

We will take first the mere outward or ceremonial action, the laying on of hands. With regard to this we find that it was used with an earnest prayer for God's blessing in both the Old and the New Testament. For instance we find that the laying of hands was used:—

1. In solemn benediction of the young.

As in Gen. 48: 15, 16, where old Jacob blessed the sons of Joseph and prayed, "God bless the lads."

And in Mark 10: 16, where it said, "Jesus put His hands on them."

2. In helping the sick and poorly.

As in 2 Kings: 5: 11; Acts 28: 8; Mark 16: 18

3. In the consecration or designation of any one for a sacred position or calling, and the impartation of spiritual gifts.

In Deut. 34: 9, it says, "Joshua was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands upon him."

Acts 6: 6, "They laid their hands upon them."

2 Tim. 1: 6, "Stir up the gift of God which is in thee by the putting on of my hands."

We learn then from all these passages the scripturalness of the form of laying on of hands, that is, of the ceremonial part of the service. As a mere man-made order the idea of an old and honored father of the Church laying his hands with loving desire and faithful prayer upon the heads of the youthful aspirants for Christian communion would be beautiful and touching. But how much more touching, how much more beautiful, when it

has the Divine sanction in the action of the leaders of God's Church in the days of old, and of our blessed Lord Himself.

But when we come to the days of the Apostles we find that there was in the Apostolic Church a rite or ceremony which was the counterpart to our order of Confirmation, and has been regarded as the undoubted antitype of our Church of England Confirmation service to-day.

First of all, turn to Acts 8: 12, "They were baptized," and then read Acts 8: 15, 17:

"The apostles prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost. Then laid they their hands on them and they received the Holy Ghost."

Then read Acts 19: 5, "They were baptized;" and also verse six,

"And when Paul had laid his hands upon them the Holy Ghost came on them," etc

One of the great sayings of the famous Bishop Lightfoot was that, short of an express statement, we can possess no better assurance of a Divine appointment, or, at least, a Divine sanction, than apostolic direction.

Now here we have an apostolic precedent in apostolic action and direction, and we gather from these passages that there was in the apostolic church an order or a ceremony or a performance, call it what we will, which had these features.

1. It consisted in the laying on of hands.

2. In the laying on of the hands of a distinctive person or persons. It was not the laying on of the hands of an ordinary minister who was ordained to preach the word and to baptize. A preacher like Philip was evidently incompetent to perform the rite, or they would not have sent all the way to Jerusalem for Peter and John. The

act would not have been confined then and afterwards to a higher order of the ministry.

3. In the laying on of hands on those who had been before baptized.

4. In the reception of the blessing of the Holy Spirit. In the eighth chapter it is expressly stated that this was in answer to prayer, "They prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost;" and in both cases it was accompanied by the manifestation of special spiritual endowments.*

It appears also from another passage in the New Testament as if this rite of the laying on of hands was not to be of the nature of a transitory ordinance, but was to take its place among the permanent institutions of the Church. For if we read Heb. 6: 2 we find these words:

"Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, of faith towards God, of the doctrine of baptisms (Jewish, Johannine and Christian), and of laying on of hands." The laying on of hands, which is here placed after baptism, could hardly refer to the laying on of hands in either mere blessing, or healing, or ordaining, and seems to point rather to a rite similar to that described in the eighth and nineteenth chapters of the Acts. In fact, it exactly describes an ordinance which is in the earlier part of the Christian experience, and

*It is very clearly brought out by Bishop John in his work on Confirmation that, in the case of Samaria the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit were bestowed upon a few, but the ordinary on all, as women were baptized and apparently had apostolic hands laid on them, and yet they were prohibited by express apostolic injunction from participating in that ministry to attest and aid which those supernatural gifts were imparted. See also 1 Cor. 14: 34.

naturally follows in precise order the acts of repentance, faith and baptism.*

Now consider carefully the next point.

It is certain that this rite *did* take its place amongst the permanent institutions of the Christian Church, and has been found in operation in the Church in every age since the time of the Apostles. To prove this we will quote from four of the writers of the early Church called the Fathers.

1st. *Tertullian*.—Tertullian was a great Christian writer of the second century. He was born at Carthage, in Africa, about sixty years after St. John's death, and his father was an officer in the Roman army. In his treatise which he wrote on Baptism he says in chapter eight, that after baptism it was customary to have the imposition of hands with invocation and invitation of the Holy Ghost. "The hand is laid on us invoking and inviting the Holy Ghost." This is what is done in our Confirmation Service when the Bishop and all the people pray for the blessings of the Holy Ghost before the laying on of his hands.

2nd. *Cyprian*.—Cyprian lived about fifty years later. He was also born at Carthage, in Africa, and was made a bishop while still a layman. In his letter to Jubianus 1: 3 he wrote about the incident in the 8th Chapter of the Acts and the 17th verse,

*With regard to this interpretation it may be pointed out here that Calvin, in his commentary on Heb. 6: 2 says: "This one passage amply proves the origin of this ceremony, the laying on of hands, to have flowed from the apostles," and adds, "The pure institution should be retained in the present day, but the superstition corrected." This is exactly what the Church of England has done. That this verse refers to Confirmation was the opinion also of Grotius, Beza, Gerrard, Richard Baxter, and many non-Episcopal divines.

and added, as if it was an ordinary and well-known fact, "Which is also one practised among us, that those who are baptized into the Church are presented to the leaders of the Church (the word is *prepositis*, and evidently means the bishops, the administrative heads of the Church), and by our prayers and the imposition of hands obtain the Holy Spirit and are perfected by the sign of the Lord."

3rd. *Jerome*.—Jerome was a great Christian writer who lived about a century later in the Western part of Asia. He is called Hierome in our 6th article. In one of his writings against the *Luciferians*, Jerome (cap. 4) describes the practice of the Bishops of his day, and says that it was customary for the churches in the smaller and more distant towns and cities to have the Bishop go out and lay his hands on those who had been baptized by presbyters and deacons and invoke the Holy Ghost. And in answer to a supposed question as to scriptural authority for the custom he answers: In the Acts of the Apostles, and then he adds: "But if there were no authority of Scripture, the consent of the whole of this part of the world would be equivalent to a (Divine) command."

4th. *Augustine*.—Augustine was a great writer of the early Church. He was the famous Bishop of Hippo, in North Africa, where his fame is still preserved among the Arabs by the name of Rumi Kebir, the great Christian. In his treatise on the Trinity, Lib. 15, cap. 26, he says "The disciples did not give the Holy Ghost. They prayed that He might come upon those upon whom they laid hands; they did not give Him themselves. Which custom the Church now observes by her rulers." (That is, by her bishops.)

From these four witnesses we may infer then that the practice of the Christian Church during the first five centuries had these things in common with the apostolic practice:

1. The laying on of hands.
2. The laying on of hands upon those who had been baptized.
3. The laying on of the hands of those of the highest ministerial order. Though baptism could be administered by either presbyters or deacons, the rite of Confirmation could not. It was the Church's custom to reserve the act of Confirmation to the Episcopal order.

4. The laying on of hands after prayer for the blessing or gifts of the Holy Ghost.

It is fair then to conclude, that short of an express direction for the perpetuation of this practice in the Church we could possess no stronger evidence of God's intention than the fact that the laying on of hands on those baptized was certainly a practice of the Apostles, and the practice also of the early Church. And so the Bishop says in the Collect after all have been Confirmed: "We make our humble supplications unto Thee for these Thy servants upon whom (*after the example of Thy holy Apostles*) we have now laid our hands."

It is well known, however, how easily things that are pure in origin became abused by superstition, and how ceremonies that were at the first of godly intent and purpose devised, at length turned to vanity and superstition.*

*Read the quaint and suggestive words of the preface in our Prayer Book entitled *Of Ceremonies*. They deserve the earnest study of every young churchman.

It is hard to determine exactly when the process of corruption set in. During the fourth and fifth centuries there are many signs of a decline from the simplicity of the faith and worship of the Apostolic Church, and before many ages the most sacred rites were degraded with practices that were heathenish in form and in operation. The mystic powers of priest and prelate were magnified, and in proportion as ceremonies multiplied the simplicity and spirituality of worship receded. The belief gradually grew that the Bishop possessed the power of imparting the Holy Ghost by the mere act of the laying on of his hands, and that the Holy Ghost was given apart from any intelligent action or living faith on the part of the persons to be Confirmed. The practice of administering the rite to little children also, had somehow grown up. And as the Holy Ghost was supposed to be given by the Bishop's hands, it was administered even to babies, who were mere unconscious recipients. Then came the practice of anointing them with oil. So superstitious had the minds of men become that it was actually believed that when the Bishop consecrated the oil that was used, there was brought about some mystic change in its nature, and the oil thus ceremonially employed actually imparted the Holy Ghost. And so it came to pass as the ages drew further and further from Scripture they grew darker and darker. Little by little the purity and reality of the Confirmation ordinance disappeared, until in the middle ages of the Catholic Church there was little left but the name.

As for the ceremonial action, there was no laying on of hands at all in our sense of the words. In the Eastern Church the Bishop or priest simply signed the forehead of the infant

with the sign of the cross with the oil-be smeared thumb of his right hand immediately after the rite of baptism; and in the pre-Reformation Church of England the Bishop signed the child or baby with the sign of the cross and merely touched the forehead with his thumb for the anointing of oil.

As far as the solemnity and beauty of the ordinance itself was concerned, its reality seems to have almost disappeared.

The spirit of formalism and fetichism seems to have taken the place of reality. Instead of the rite being administered to a body of intelligent and carefully instructed persons, prepared conscientiously to profess their personal faith, and publicly ratify their baptismal obligations, it was administered to children and even infants, as it is to-day in the Eastern Church.*

And so when God in His own good time gave light to the Church through the Holy Scriptures and opened the eyes of the great Bishop-reformers to perceive the grossness of the darkness that covered the Church, they saw as men never saw before how sadly the rite of Confirmation had fallen.

1. It was administered not in an English service, but in an unknown tongue.

*The usage in the Church of England before the Reformation was not uniform. It was administered within a year, three years, five years, or seven years, according to various diocesan synod regulations, and sometimes even immediately after infant baptism. "In certain church councils held in the thirteenth century in what was still Papal England, the law was laid down that parents should bring their children to be Confirmed by the Bishop within a year, if possible, after birth (Worcester and Chichester), or if not, at least within three years (Exeter), or five years (Sarum). A Durham synod extended the limit to even seven years.—Eliot on Confirmation, p. 14.

The whole service was in Latin.*

2. It was administered, not with the laying on of hands on the head, but with the touching of the brow with the thumb anointed with oil.

3. It was administered as a sacrament. The Church of England teaches now in the 25th article that Confirmation is not to be counted for a sacrament of the Gospel.†

4. Even as a sacrament, it was administered to children, and even infants, without any thought of worthy receiving, or the requirement of personal faith.

There does not appear to have been any demand for personal profession of faith, or even previous instruction or examination.

The idea that the persons to be Confirmed should be required to do anything in the way of a voluntary renewal of their vows, or a personal acknowledgment of their faith, was not thought of. The rite of Confirmation had not for its purpose the renewing of the baptismal vow, and in the days of Papal domination the Church of England never obliged a candidate to confirm the baptismal vows as a part of the order of Confirmation.‡

You can easily understand then when the rite

* "It was done in a strange tongue, that no man might understand what was meant."—Bishop Jewel's works. Park Soc. ii. p. 1126.

†As Bishop Jewel wrote: "Christ did not command it. He spake no word of it. Therefore you may conclude that it is no sacrament."

‡The Church of Rome in the Council of Trent anathematized the idea that young children coming of age should be asked to ratify what their sponsors promised for them.—Pallavicini, Hist. Con. Trid. ii.-14.

was so impaired, and so strangely distorted from its original purity that many earnest men, viewing only its defects, considered it worthless and denied altogether its apostolic value. They declared it was "a counterfeit Confirmation, a mere piece of mimicry destitute of any reality."

Yet in spite of all this some were led by God's Spirit to perceive that Confirmation was a good and a holy ordinance, and that if restored to its pure use it might be once more a blessing. The great Church of England reformers were most thorough in their resolves to get rid of superstitions; but they by no means rejected everything that had been used by Rome. Are we to forsake any *true* opinion because idolaters have maintained it? said old Hooker, the judicious.

Their supreme and only aim was to purge away the evils where there was abuse, to restore that which had been lost where there was value, and to retain that which was scriptural, apostolic, and true. So they determined at once to retain it, as agreeable with the example of the Holy Apostles, and to restore it to its primitive usage.

In their eyes the essential feature of the service as far as the ceremonial part was concerned was the laying on of hands, and, as far as the candidate was concerned, it was that of an open Confirmation of the baptismal vows, and an open profession of their own faith.

They embodied, therefore, these conceptions in a service that was at once suitable and scriptural.

In the year 1549, in the first and half-reformed Prayer Book they restored the apostolic usage of laying on of the Bishops' hands, though they still retained the medieval custom of signing them with the sign of the cross. In the Prayer Book

of 1552* they had the laying on of hands alone, which has been the custom of the Church of England ever since. Thus they brought back to the Church the long-lost custom of the Apostolic Church, and gave to us a ceremony which has been endeared to generations of churchmen by every association of that which is venerable and solemn and appropriate and pure.

But they did more.

They believed that the administration of Confirmation as a mere ceremonial rite to the unintelligent, the uninstructed, and, therefore, the spiritually unprepared, was not in accordance with God's will.

The children were so young that they did not understand what they were doing or what was being done. As Bishop Jewel said: "The infant promised he knew not what, and the Bishop ratified and confirmed where there was nothing to be confirmed." They determined, therefore, in accordance with the usage of the Church in times past, that Confirmation should be ministered to them that were of perfect age. It was to be for them only who had come to years of discretion, and were so instructed in Christ's religion as to be able to openly profess, publicly ratify, and solemnly promise. So they laid down the great principle which is stated in the preface to the service that the Church, that is, the Church of England, hath thought good to order that none hereafter shall be Confirmed but such as can say the Creed, the

*The difference between the 1st and 2nd Prayer Books may thus be briefly stated: the Prayer Book of 1549 was imperfect, and half reformed. The Prayer Book of 1552 was more thoroughly reformed and is substantially the same as our Prayer Book to-day.

Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, etc. That is, they were to be of a sensible age ("having come to years of discretion"), of sufficient knowledge ("having learned"), and personally prepared ("to openly profess their own faith.")

That word *HEREAFTER* marks a great epoch in the Church of England. It marks the watershed of English Church history.

Before that time, that is before the reformation of the Church of England, and the period of 1549-1552, there was widespread ignorance, superstition, vanity. As the Prayer Book describes it, the abuses of religious services at once "blinded the people and obscured the glory of God."

That did not mean, of course, that in spite of ignorance of priest, and pomp of prelate, and superstitious blindness of people, there may not have been many cases here and there of simple faith and earnest purpose, as the snowdrop and the crocus is found to bloom amidst the snows of March. Doubtless many a pure and faithful child, and many a true and holy youth or maiden received the blessing in spite of all the superstition of the rite and the vanities of the service.

What the reformers determined was that never *HEREAFTER*, that is, never after their day, should the Church of England as far as her standards and practice were concerned, permit any to be reckoned amongst the number of her communicants who had not arrived at a period of life when they were capable of intelligent decision on matters of religion; and never *HEREAFTER* should the Church of England allow anyone to be confirmed who had not been carefully instructed in the principles of the Christian faith, and publicly and voluntarily made profession of the same before the Church.

They believed that in this matter they were led by the Spirit of truth, and were restoring to the Church the principle and practices of the apostles and of the primitive Catholic Church.

To sum up.

If we are desired to give an answer to anyone who asks the reason why we have Confirmation in the Church of England, we answer:

Because, in the first place, it is a solemn, helpful and suitable service for the purpose of enabling those who have been baptized to publicly ratify their profession of faith. From the standpoint of fitness and edification it is in the truest sense of the words a reasonable service.

Because, in the next place, it is an ancient, apostolic, and scriptural ordinance. It has come down through the ages with the sanction of antiquity, and the authority of the example of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

And lastly, because it has been reformed and purified with a sagacity that seems almost like inspiration, and adapted with remarkable wisdom to the present day-needs of the Church. Of all the services of all the churches for the public profession of faith on the part of those who desire to be admitted to full communion, none are superior, and few, if any, equal to ours.

It is at once ancient and modern, scriptural and practical, admirably suited for all sorts of men, best fitted for present-day needs, though as old as the days of the Apostles of Christ.*

*It may be of interest to reproduce here the very striking testimony to the value of Confirmation on the part of some who do not belong to the Church of England.

In his work entitled the "Institutes of Religion," John Calvin wrote: "It was an ancient custom in the Church

QUESTIONS.

1. Give Bible examples of the laying on of hands. On what occasions was it employed?
2. Give three texts in the New Testament which refer to the apostolic laying on of hands.

for the children of Christians after they had come to years of discretion to be presented to the Bishop in order to fulfil that duty which was required of adults who offered themselves to baptism, and to make confession of their faith before the Bishop and all the people. Such imposition of hands, therefore, as it is simply connected with benediction, I highly approve, and wish it were now restored to its primitive use uncorrupted by superstition."

"I sincerely wish that we retained the custom, which I have stated was practiced amongst the ancient before this abortive image of a sacrament made its appearance.

"It would be the best mode of catechetical instruction, if a formulary were written for this purpose, containing and stating in a familiar manner all the articles of our religion in which the universal church of believers ought to agree without any controversy. Thus the Church would witness their profession of the only true and pure faith. iv. 19." It is needless to say that Calvin has described exactly what we have now in the Church of England.

In the confession of faith adopted by the Baptist Church in the United States, 1742, these words are found :

"We believe that laying on of hands with prayer upon baptized believers as such is an ordinance of Christ, and ought to be submitted unto by all such persons as are admitted to partake of the Lord's Supper, and that the end of this ordinance is not for the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, but for the further reception of the Holy Spirit of promise, or for the addition of the graces of the Spirit, and the influences thereof ; to confirm, strengthen, and comfort them in Christ Jesus."

Bishop Johns quotes this in his work on Confirmation, and adds that it is the most full and explicit judgment in favor of the high and holy origin and authority of the rite of Confirmation that we have ever yet received. Beyond this, said the Bishop, no Churchman would think of advancing.

3. Who administered Confirmation in the days of the apostles? Why does not an ordinary minister administer it now?

4. Who are the four early Church writers who speak about Confirmation?

5. Tell how the rite of Confirmation became abused by superstition. What was the difference between it and the New Testament ordinance?

6. What did our reformers do with the rite at the time of the reformation of the Church of England? Explain very clearly the changes made not only as regards the rite itself, but as regards the persons receiving it.

A PRAYER

(which might be learned off by heart.)

Grant, O most merciful Father, that I may never be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, but through the grace of Thy Holy Spirit, may manfully fight under His banner against sin, the world, and the devil, and continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant until my life's end.
Amen.

PART II.
WHAT IS THE MEANING OF
CONFIRMATION?

This is the second question.

When we speak of being confirmed, what do we understand by it? What is its object and nature?

To answer this question we will take in their order:—First, the outward part; then the meaning of the word; and then the deeper significance and import of the service itself.

I. *As to the outward part.*

As far as this part of the service is concerned, the question is answered in the Prayer Book in the title of the service itself. "The order (that is, the service) of Confirmation or *laying on of hands* upon those who are baptized and come to years of discretion "

It consists then of three things:—

1st. The laying on of hands.

2nd. Not of an ordinary minister's hands, but the laying on of the Bishop's hands.

3rd. The laying on of the Bishop's hands upon those who have been baptized. Not upon the heads of baptized infants or of little children, as if the rite were a mere mechanical form, or worked some effect apart from the state of the candidate's character; but upon those only who have grown to

years of discretion, are come to a competent age, and are fit to be presented.

II. *As to the meaning of the word itself.*

The word confirmation is the English form of the Latin noun derived from the verb "confirmo," to make firm. It is used in our service in two senses. In the one sense, the active, it means to ratify and renew; in the other sense, the passive, it means to be settled, established, or strengthened.

That the word is used in both these senses in our Prayer Book service is evident.

In the first, or active sense, it is stated in the Preface that the Confirmation candidates shall themselves, with their mouth and consent, openly before the Church, ratify and *confirm* their baptismal promises. That means, of course, that they are voluntarily to renew and ratify the covenant or contract entered into and agreed to at the time of their baptism. "Do ye here—renew the solemn promise and vow that was made in your name at your baptism; ratifying and *confirming* the same in your own persons?"

In the second, or passive sense, it is frequently used. For instance, the curate shall bring the names of such as "he shall think fit to be presented to the Bishop *to be confirmed.*"

"Ye are to take care that this child be brought to the Bishop *to be confirmed* by him," etc.

"On the day appointed, all that are to be then *confirmed.*" These words conjoined with the words of the Bishop's prayer, "Strengthen them, we beseech Thee, O Lord, with the Holy Ghost, the Comforter," and the subsequent prayers, shew that the rite is also called Confirmation because those who rightly, worthily, and with faith receive the same, are truly and really established by

God's grace in their faith, and strengthened by their profession through the blessing of the Holy Ghost.

If you ask which of these meanings is the more important, some may answer one, and some the other. But it is safe for the young churchman to consider them both of great importance.

As far as God's side is considered, He will certainly never fail to give His blessing, and to confirm and strengthen those who plead His promises in faith. "Which promise He, for His part, will most surely keep and perform," (Heb. 6: 16-18). As far as our side is concerned we must come with a willing and receptive spirit, and a prepared heart, and be true and honest in confirming our vows.

Then, and then only, will the service be a *Confirmation** in the highest and truest sense, the service of strengthening and settlement.

III. Let us pass on now to consider the *real and deeper meaning of the service.*

Perhaps the best way in which one can get a clear idea of what our Confirmation means is to go to the Baptismal service and compare and contrast it with that.

Remember that Confirmation has very properly been called the complement of baptism, or that

* The word Confirmation was first used in the Western Church about the fourth century by Jerome, and fifty years later by Pope Leo. Before that it was called the imposition, or strengthening, or anointing.

The Greek word used in the ancient Apostolical constitutions for the rite of Confirmation is the same as that used by St. Paul, 1 Cor. 1: 8; Phil. 1: 7; Heb. 6: 16; a very strong and beautiful word implying the strongest and firmest establishment of anyone or anything.

which completes our baptism. This of course implies that our baptism was an incomplete act.

Some will perhaps be surprised at this, and say: How could that be; how could there have been anything left to fulfil? We will see.

When we were baptized we were baptized, were we not, because we were the children of Christian parents, 1 Cor. 7: 14, who desired that we should be partakers of the covenant of grace.

Nearly all of us were baptized as infants; and we were baptized as little children because it was Christ's desire, and the Apostles command, that children should be partakers of this grace. Mark 10: 13-16; Matt. 28: 19; Acts 2: 39; Col. 2: 11, 12, and Gen. 17: 7, 10-14.*

And when we were baptized we were baptized *conditionally*. That is, we entered into covenant relationship with God, and received the sacrament or sign of baptism as a seal of the promised blessings of God, membership, sonship, heirship, Rom. 4: 11-16, *on condition* that when we were old enough, and intelligent enough, and resolved enough, we would exercise true repentance and profess true faith ourselves. Instead of *our* promising that we would take Christ's side, and believe on Him, and follow Him, others promised these things *for us*. And it was only because they did this in our name, and solemnly stipulated that when we came to age and knew what it meant, we

* Our baptism, St. Paul teaches, was to us in some aspects what circumcision was to the Jews. And of course the rite of circumcision was for infants, and was the sign and seal of their covenant standing, whereby they became relatively and ecclesiastically, as far as covenant privilege and standing went, the children of God and heirs of the promises.

would do all this for ourselves, that the Church allowed us to be baptized.*

Our baptism then had these features:

1. As far as our *intelligence* was concerned, it was an unconscious act. We did not know what was being done, and were entirely ignorant, either of the object or meaning of the rite.

2. As far as our *volition* was concerned, it was an involuntary act. We had neither part nor lot in the matter as far as our will was concerned. We neither desired to be baptized, or not to be baptized. We were purely passive agents.

3. As far as our *profession* was concerned, it was by proxy. Whatever we did was done by others in our name. They promised the renunciations for us; they professed the faith for us; they vowed obedience and the Christian walk for us. We promised nothing, vowed nothing, undertook nothing. And it was an involuntary, a sponsorial, a practically impersonal and private performance because in the Church's excellent system, it was linked with a day in the future when there would be on our part, a public, personal, voluntary, intelligent and conscious profession of all the Christian obligations. (Even in the very rare and exceptional case of *private* baptism, which is not to be done without a great and reasonable cause and necessity, the Church requires that the baptismal vows shall be undertaken for the child if he lives.)

So you see in what sense it is the fulfilment of baptism. It is the completion of the uncom-

* Think out very carefully the meaning of the answer to the question in our Catechism, "Why then are infants baptized?" It is one of the keys to Prayer Book teaching.

pleted covenant. It is the carrying out of the long ago promised stipulations and promises demanded by Christ and His Church of all who would truly follow Him.*

This then is what our Confirmation means:

It means that we have come to understand for ourselves the nature and greatness of Christian privilege, the beauty and sweetness of the Father's love.

As we have grown in years we have learned to believe in God, not merely because we were born in a Christian community, but because our reason and our heart confirm our faith. We have felt the reality of His Being, and the goodness of His grace, and in our hearts we know Him to be the only true and living God. We believe that Jesus Christ, His only Son, is our Lord, and we know the Holy Spirit to be our Comforter. And now we desire to acknowledge all this before men.

We have intelligently considered, and now conscientiously accept all the articles of the Christian faith. And we are resolved to live up to them and practice them in our lives.

We have come to that time of life when we are no longer children. We understand our position and privileges, and are willing now to undertake the responsibilities. And we do deeply realize our need of Divine grace, and long to be strengthened in our position before God.

* You may say that you were baptized when a child by a Presbyterian or a Methodist minister, and had no God-fathers or Godmothers. What then? That makes no difference. Your baptism, if rightly performed, is valid, and though your parents were your only sponsors, your baptism represented your profession and covenant standing. In your Confirmation you ratify and renew for yourself the Christian covenant and profession.

Therefore, publicly, voluntarily, openly, we desire to renew and ratify and confirm for ourselves the solemn vows, once made for us by others, and receive that blessing in the Church's appointed way, which we believe God has in store for all who confess Him before men in Spirit and in truth.

Confirmation therefore is like the spiritual coming of age of a King's Son. It is the heir claiming and receiving his estate. (Gal. 4: 1-7.)

It is, as an American Bishop has put it, the first really free act in the religious or Church life. That is, it is the time when all the grace and privilege, both present and future, that has been made over to us in God's will or covenant, is assented to and accepted by our free will. It is, as it were, that act of ours by which in the presence of God and His people, in His Church, the bond of the Christian heir is solemnly and voluntarily *signed*.

You may have a great many other definitions and explanations of the meaning of Confirmation, but after all, this is the pith and essence of all.

Your Confirmation day is the great and happy day when you freely take your stand on the side of Christ in His Church. It is the day of decision for Christ and His Church. It is the day of confession of Christ before His Church. It is the day of consecration to Christ in His Church. It is a time of many fears and deep misgivings. But it must be a day of joy, for it is the day when you acknowledge Christ to be the Lord and yourself His bond servant for obedience, loyalty, and love. It is the day when, by the prayers of God's people and the laying on of the hands of His minister, you are confirmed and strengthened with the blessings of the Spirit of God.

QUESTIONS.

1. What is the meaning of Confirmation as regards the *outward* ceremony?
2. What is the meaning of *the word* confirmation? Show in what two senses it is used.
3. Why were we baptized when we were children? On what condition were we baptized as children?
4. On what principle can those who were not baptized by a Church of England minister be confirmed by a Church of England Bishop?
5. In what sense is Confirmation the completion or fulfilment of our baptism?
6. What do we mean by a free act? Explain what is meant by ratifying a covenant.
7. What are the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost that the Bishop prays for? If we have not true faith and repentance, is there any blessing?

A PRAYER

(Which might be learned off by heart.)

Grant me, Most Merciful Father, Thy Holy Spirit, that with a pure heart I may take Thy vows upon me. Make me strong and courageous that I may never be afraid to be known as a Christian. Let me never shrink from my duty through the fear of men. May the love of Jesus fill my heart, that in His strength I may be strong. Give me the constant guidance and help of Thy Holy Spirit, for Christ's sake. Amen.

PART III.

WHAT IS REQUIRED OF PERSONS TO BE
CONFIRMED ?

This is the third question.

In other words, what are the qualifications insisted upon by the Church of England before any one is considered fit to be presented to the Bishop to be confirmed by him ?

After what has been written this question seems almost to have answered itself. As you really understand what Confirmation is according to the Church's teaching, you see in a great measure what must be required by the Church. If the rite were what it was in the dark ages, a kind of magical ordinance; if the touching of the forehead with the sacred oil by the episcopal thumb were in itself supposed to bring the blessing of the Holy Ghost; the Church would not require very much on the part of the candidate. The main thing would be dress and ritual. But if the ordinance is one involving the elements of responsibility and preparatory fitness, there must be the fulfilment of certain conditions.

And so we find in the Prayer Book that the Church of England has laid down three lines of qualification which may be thus specified:

The first demand of the Church is that the can-

didate must have reached a certain age. There is an age limit.

The next demand of the Church is that the candidate should be possessed of a certain degree of intelligence. There is a requirement of knowledge.

The third demand of the Church is that there should be a certain condition of heart and life. There is a character requirement.

i. As to the age.

In one of the rubrics at the end of the Catechism it is said that as soon as children are come to "a *competent* age" they shall be brought to the Bishop. The order of Confirmation is for those not only who are baptized, but are "come to *years of discretion*;" and the preface says, "children being now come to *the years of discretion*."

What age exactly is a competent age, or how old one has to be to have reached the years of discretion, has not been authoritatively declared by the Church of England. Some bishops, it appears, have defined fourteen as the required age; and as a rule our bishops do not desire boys and girls younger than that to be presented to them.

But there is no hard-and-fast line possible, and it is well known that some boys and girls are older in sense and character at twelve than others are at sixteen.

The main thing is seriousness of mind, and capability of judgment. If we are really capable of choosing between the false and the true, the good and the evil, the temporal and the eternal; if we are thoughtful enough, and conscientious enough and affectionate enough to make the great decision and choose the better part; we are qualified as

far as age is concerned. We are come to a competent age.*

ii. As to knowledge.

The Prayer Book is very definite on this point. There must be at least an intelligent and thorough understanding of the great outlines of the Christian faith. When you stand before the Bishop, the Church assumes that you know the Catechism off by heart, and are able to say it. Not, of course, that you will be asked to say it all on your Confirmation day, or will be rejected by the Bishop or your pastor if you have not memorized it all with absolute perfectness. †

But as a guarantee that you have been instructed in the great foundation principles of Christianity, and are "an intelligent person," the Church hath thought good to order that none shall hereafter 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."

It must be remembered that when this order was first made it was an almost incredible demand. It was a standard of requirement, as far as Chris-

*As a rule its best in any case of doubt to leave the decision with regard to age with your clergyman, or with your parents. Clergymen generally do not urge the candidates too strongly when they are fourteen or under. On the other hand, when they are 16 or 18 they usually employ a wise earnestness in bringing them to decision, as delay is often dangerous beyond that age.

†Many young people seem to have an idea that they will have to say the whole Catechism off on their Confirmation day. This is quite a mistake. All you have to say is "I do," two words, and two words only. But how much they mean!

tian intelligence was concerned, that was simply unheard of.

The very clergy of the Church had never had such a high standard as that for ordination.*

Nor must anyone think that even in these days of Christian knowledge it is too low a standard. Even if it is regarded as the minimum it certainly is a higher requirement than some imagine.

For think of what it means.

In the Catechism there are five sections, each of them full of deep spiritual teachings: The Christian Covenant, its privileges, responsibilities and obligation; the Christian Creed, my faith in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, etc.; the Ten Commandments, the two aspects of duty towards God and towards man; the Lord's Prayer, its introduction, and sevenfold petition; the two sacraments, their meaning, parts, reason, and requirements. In the Christian Covenant you have unfolded the great realities of the Body of Christ, which is His Church, the family of God, and the heavenly Kingdom. You have also stated those contracts and promises that cover the whole of the Christian life, which you enter into by proxy in your baptism, and are now preparing to renew and ratify for yourself in Confirmation.

In the Creed you have contained the very sum and substance of Christianity, the great founda-

*(In the year 1551 Bishop Hooper had an examination for the deans, prebendaries, canons, rectors, vicars and clergy of the Diocese of Gloucester, 311 in all. They were examined on the Ten Commandments, the Christian's Creed, and the Lord's Prayer. Of the 311, 168 were unable to repeat the Ten Commandments; 40 could not tell where the Lord's Prayer was written; and 31 did not know who was its author. It makes one sad to think that they were the Church's teachers, clergymen of the Church of England.)

tion facts and doctrines of the Christian faith. In the Lord's Prayer you have the grand outlines of the Christian life, and the glorious programme of the Kingdom of God. In the Ten Commandments you enter into the heights and depths of the great requirements of God as touching the outer and inner life of universal man. In the Sacramental part you have explained the two sacramental institutions of the Lord Jesus and the fact and meaning of Christ's Atoning Death and the demands thereof. Truly, it is a great and comprehensive scheme of Christian knowledge, and to know it means not a little proficiency in the school of Christ. And of course you can at once perceive that the Church expects more than saying the mere words by rote; you are supposed to enter into their meaning and really *understand* them. Matt. 13-51. Luke 24-45.

The Church of England then requires, as far as the degree of intelligence is concerned, that every one who is to be confirmed must, at least, be familiar with the leading doctrines of the Christian faith as set forth in the Church Catechism.

And it is evident from the baptismal exhortation that this is not to be confined to a mere knowledge of the Catechism. "You shall provide that he may learn the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments, *and all other things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health.*"

That is, every candidate ought to know *more* than the substance of the Catechism. You ought to know something, for instance, of the history of the Church of Christ, and especially of the Church of England. You should learn about the great periods, and the great leaders, of its long and chequered life.

The names of Augustine and Columba and

Aidan and Theodore and Grossteste and Wycliffe, and especially of Cranmer and Ridley and Hooper and Latimer and Tyndale and Jewel and Hooker, should not be unknown names to you.*

You should know something about the history and contents and teaching of the Book of Common Prayer, which is the Church's handbook of devotion, and the 39 Articles, which "do contain the true teaching of the Church of England, agreeable to God's Word."†

You should try to be familiar with the Bible, learning the names of the books of the Old and New Testament, knowing where each book is to be found, and the plan and purpose of the whole. Of the 66 books of the Bible, 39 are in the Old Testament and 27 are in the New; though all are not equally important, all are inspired.‡

As Confirmation is the entrance door to the Holy Communion you should, moreover, try and specially realize not only the meaning and object,

* See Appendix i.

† See Appendix ii.

‡ As a rule it is wisdom for young people to resolve to read a portion of the Bible every day. Read reverently, regularly, rightly; that is, as a son hearing the Father's voice, as a student earnestly searching, and as one led by the Spirit to understand, and not the letter only, but the spirit. Ps. 119: 18; John 16: 13-14; 1 Cor. 2: 10-14.

It is a good habit to learn one verse of the Bible off by heart as you are dressing, and to read the Bible as the first daily duty. Read the Psalms regularly, especially the 119 Psalm, and in order, the Gospel of St. John or St. Luke, Ephesians and Romans; Matthew or Mark, 1st Peter and 1st John, and in the Old Testament, Genesis, Deuteronomy, Isaiah. But the best plan of Bible study you could possibly adopt is that of the Church Calendar, the wise and good provision of the Church of England for her children.

but the privileges and pleasure of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. There are four simple ways of looking at the Holy Communion:

1. It is *a confession*; a personal and public confession of your Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. It is *a commemoration*; a Divinely planned memento of the Christ who died for us in the past, who lives for us in the present, and who will come back for us again in the future of glory.

“ For thus that dark betrayal night,
With His great Advent we unite,
By one true chain of loving rite,
Until He come.”

3. It is *a covenant*, and in the Communion we enter by our Sacramentum or the loyal soldier's oath to his King, into fellowship with Him and one another.

4. It is *a Communion*; an inward, spiritual, and therefore real Communion; yes, very, very real and precious, with the living Jesus Himself. The bread which we break, *i.e.*, which we ministers break in the Lord's Supper at the Lord's table, is it not the Communion of the body of Christ, *i.e.*, a participation in the Divine Life of Christ Himself. The cup of blessing which we bless, that is, the Chalice which we ministers consecrate at the Lord's table, is it not the communion of the Blood of Christ, that is, a means of our appropriating the blessing of His precious blood shedding? 1 Cor 10: 16. You will, of course, long to know all this and more, and one of the best ways to understand the teaching of the Communion is to carefully think out the meaning of the Prayer Book service itself, and thoughtfully study Articles 25, 28, 29. Always try to realize, however, that it is only as you are taught by the Holy Spirit and led by the Holy

Spirit that you can understand Church doctrine as well as Bible truth. The service is wholly a spiritual one. Christ Himself, Christ only, is the Sacrament. "Regard the elements reverently, but never superstitiously; use them as means, not ends, as symbols, not idols." And when you receive the Bread and eat it, feed on *Him* (not merely on a piece of Sacramental Bread); in your heart (not with your mouth); by faith (not by mastication); with thanksgiving (not "adoration as unto any Corporal Presence, for that were idolatry to be abhorred of all faithful Christians)." Study Articles 28 and 29 with the rubric after the Communion Service.*

iii. As to the heart.

Of course, this is the most important thing of all. We may know everything that is required in the way of Bible knowledge and Church teaching

* You hear sometimes of people who have been confirmed, but have never received the Holy Communion. This is a serious wrong. Of course, it is taken for granted that you will not only come to the Communion as soon as you are confirmed, but that you will come regularly ever after. You need never be afraid to come to the Communion if you are really trusting in Christ. Therefore make regular coming your fixed habit, one of the Medo-Persian laws of your church life.

Always look forward to it with pleasure. It is an invitation to a feast at the table of your best Friend. Do not regard it as burdensome duty, or think of it with a secret fear. It is for refreshment, comfort, calm, and cheer. Come with gratitude. In the service itself be very reverent. It is well to hold the palm of the right hand out quite straight and stiff when receiving the bread, and to hold the cup firmly in the hand also as you take a sip of the wine. When you go back to your seat remain kneeling in silent prayer and pray for all your fellow communicants and for your loved ones, especially any who are careless or wandering from God.

and the Catechism. We may be old enough to satisfy our parents and our clergyman, but the great thing after all in the eye of God, and in the eye of the Church is, *what we are.*

In the dark days before the Church was reformed it is to be feared the great thing was the outward appearance and the outward form; the dress, the posture, and the ritual. But it is not so now.

You are about to make a very solemn vow. You are about to make a very serious promise. You should be old enough, in order that you may realize what you are doing. You should thoroughly understand what you are doing, as you are now responsible for what you do. But the great thing is that you should be sincere. Your honor is concerned. The honor of Christ and His Church is concerned. To go through a service like this as a mere form, to make a profession of repentance and faith when there is no repentance and no faith in reality, would be an act of dishonesty; it would be the enlistment of a traitor or a spy in the army of the King. You must be sincere.

In the Confirmation service,

“This, above all, to thine own self be true,
And it must follow as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.”

No, nor to our God, who is the true God, and His Son, who is the Truth incarnate. If you are only real, if you are only sincere, God will supply all conscious deficiency.

But it is a great mistake for young people to think that Confirmation is only for advanced and matured Christians.

It is for those who are just beginning, as it were, the Christian life. Do not imagine that you are expected to exhibit the marks of a ripened

Christian. You are not asked to produce the certificate of a Christian graduate. You are not supposed to have explored the intricacies of the Athanasian Creed, or the depths of the 39 Articles.

But you are expected to be sincere. The Church takes it for granted that you have resolved to follow Christ. That is, that you have accepted Him in simple faith or trust as your own Saviour, and have decided to be His. You are old enough now to know that there are two paths. There are two masters. There are two careers. There are two companies. You know all this. And you have made up your mind. As for you, you *have decided for Christ.*

That is your reason for Confirmation. You are going to stand up before men, and openly before the Church declare for yourself that you desire to repudiate the side of Satan, and clearly take your stand on the side of Christ with His Church.

Be very clear, therefore, in your own heart and soul about this matter of decision. It is a personal matter. It is a matter of the heart. And in proportion as you are sincere will you be strong, steadfast, and a credit to the Church.*

The secret of a true life is its inner motive, its depth of principle. If the heart is true "in

* How often in the Prayer Book is the emphasis of the Church laid upon this matter of sincerity. "He pardoneth and absolveth all them that do *truly* repent and *unfeignedly* believe His holy Gospel." "The benefit is great if with a *true* penitent heart and *living* (lively) faith we receive that holy sacrament."

"Repent you *truly*. Have a *living* and steadfast faith in Christ." "Ye that do *truly* and *earnestly* repent." "We do *earnestly* repent," etc., etc. Study these adverbs and adjectives. They contain most suggestive Church teaching.

Christ," "with Christ," "for Christ," the life will be right. If by God's grace the mind has been made up, and you are prepared to say that you will follow God all the days of your life, He will give you grace to do it.

People say sometimes rather lightly and carelessly, Is it not rather risky to ask such young people to make such serious vows? Can one be sure that they will hold out, and not go back? Can young people be real in their religious purpose? Is there any guarantee that they will continue and be Christ's faithful soldiers and servants to life's end?

To this we would say, Yes. It is risky. There are perils. But of this all may be sure that if there be a true heart, a simple faith, a yielded will, that His grace will be found sufficient, and that you will be more than conquerors. *He is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless.* Jude 24.

That is the guarantee. That is the only guarantee. "He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him," (2 Tim. 1: 12); my heart, my soul, my life. This is the pledge of success.

We would say when in summing it all up—

If you have really decided for Christ with however simple a faith; if you are really resolved to take your stand as His soldier and servant in His Church; if you are determined to manfully fight the good fight; if you have made up your mind that you will read your Bible and pray every day, that you will never neglect the Church service and the means of grace, especially the Holy Communion; if, however weak and ignorant, and unfit and unworthy you feel, you are really sincere, then you may be assured that you are qualified accord-

ing to the requirements of the Church of England and are "*fit to be presented to the Bishop to be confirmed.*"

But perhaps you have not yet quite made up your mind; you are still reluctant and unresolued. If so, do let me plead with you. Decide for Christ. You believe He came and lived and died. You know He wants you and longs for your love. He is your King. He wants your loyal heart. He says, "Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out." Come to Him now. Come to Him by faith. Come with such words as these in your heart:

" Just as I am, young, strong and free,
To be the best that I can be
For truth and righteousness and Thee,
Lord of my life, I come."

And then confess Him. Confess Him before the Church in Confirmation; live the Christian life in the world; help others to come to Church and to live the Christian life; and you will realize the joy and the truth of those glorious words, "for me to live is Christ," and hear one day the Master's words, "Well done, well done."

QUESTIONS.

1. How old must persons be before they can be confirmed? What does the Prayer Book say?
2. In what five parts is the Catechism divided? Is it enough to repeat it by rote?
3. In what four ways may we regard the Holy Communion? What is meant by eating with faith?
4. What do we mean when we say that we have

decided for Christ? What is meant by personal faith?

5. What are the three great periods of the past history of the Church of England?

6. How did our Prayer Book come to be? When was it compiled, and by whom? What are its four great parts?

A PRAYER

(Which might be learned off by heart.)

O Lord, I come to Thee. I ask Thee to receive me. I desire to be Thine. Here I offer and present unto Thee, O Lord, myself, my soul and body, my heart and life. Accept me, and make me Thine for ever. Keep me, guide me, strengthen me, that I may abide in Thy love, and serve Thee joyfully all the days of my life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX I.

The history of the Church of England may, broadly speaking, be divided into three great periods; the period of formation, *de*-formation, and of *re*-formation. In the first it was founded, in the second it was depraved, in the third it was reformed. The early British Church, founded probably by apostolic men, had its bishops, liturgy and clergy, and was not subject to Rome. After the age of Augustine, 597, who was sent by Gregory, the Bishop of Rome, and of Theodore, 669-687, who made Latin the language of English worship, the Church of England became more and more Romanized and England more and more subjected to the Papacy. The mass, saint worship, worship of the Virgin Mary, prayers for the dead, auricular confession became the teaching of the Church of England which, as a national Church, by slow degrees almost passed out of existence, and practically became in all things but the name the Church of Rome located in England. But the spirit of manly English defiance of Rome in such men as William the Conqueror, Langton, and Grossteste, the Bishop of Lincoln, culminated in King Henry VIII, who cast out the Pope, 1530-1534, and freed England from the Popish domination; and the teachings of Wycliffe and the great Bishop reformers led to the casting out of Popery, that is the *re*-formation of the Church's doctrine and worship, and its reconstruction on primitive and scriptural lines, 1549-1552. The prodigal, after his return, was the same man as when he was fallen; but he was restored and converted. The Church of England now is the same body and has the same name as ten centuries ago and more, but its principles and character are essentially altered. It now teaches as truth what it once branded as heresy (Art. 28-29); it now brands as error what it once taught as truth (Art. 22-23-24-30-31-32). Since that time, in spite of certain periods of dearth, the career of our regenerated and reconstructed Church has

been a career of expansion and blessing; and to-day, with over 300 Bishops in Great Britain and Ireland, the British Colonies and the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States, she stands alone as a Church that is at once ancient and modern, national and independent, Protestant in the essence of her being, and in the truest sense more Catholic than Rome.

APPENDIX II.

Our Book of Common Prayer was first compiled in the reign of Edward VI. There had never been anything like it in the Church of England before, for it was all in English, and there never had been anything like it in the Western Catholic Church, for it offered in one compact volume to the people a form for the people's worship in the Church. The old service books of the Roman churches were not in the least like ours. They were called mass books and breviaries, manuals and pontificals, and they were all in Latin. They were really for the use of the priests and religious orders, and were, in a word, complex, unedifying, and full of erroneous practices and doctrines.

The Prayer Book was largely compiled by Cranmer. It was the outcome of the awakening of the Bishop reformers by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God, who used the most ancient and scriptural parts of the old service books, translating them into English, and drew up in a book for the people's use new services for the communion, baptism, and ordination. The first Prayer Book of 1549 contained the words, mass, altar, and authorized the use of the wafer and the invocation of the Holy Ghost in the Communion, prayers for the dead, the reservation of the elements, and genuflections and Romish vestments that are not now legal in our Church. About that time Archbishop Cranmer, however, confessed that it pleased God to show unto him more perfect knowledge by His Holy Word, and to open his eyes to the perception of medieval errors and superstitions, and in 1552 the second Prayer Book was put forth omitting all these things. And though in 1559 and 1662 it was amended and enlarged, the Prayer Book we now have is substantially the same as that of 1552. Thus it is old in many of its materials, the creeds, the canticles, the collects, etc., but it is new in its spirit, its

purpose, its form. It consists of four great parts: 1. The devotional; (morning and evening prayer, the Litany, Psalter, etc.) 2. The sacramental; the Holy Communion, with the Collects, Epistles, Baptism, together with the occasional services. 3. The Ordinal; for the ordaining of the three orders of the ministry in the Church of England; and 4. The doctrinal; the Thirty-nine Articles. And to-day it stands alone. There is nothing like it in the Christian world. The Church of England is the only Church now existing that puts into the hands of all her members a book which contains a full statement of her doctrines, a complete form of Divine worship for her people, a catechism of instruction for her children, and the method of ordination for her ministers.

