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Louisa Charteris
from
Mr. Alison.

upon being informed
26th of March 1825

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INSTRUCTIONS

FOR THEM THAT COME TO BE

CONFIRMED;

BY WAY OF

QUESTION AND ANSWER:

WITH

Prayers

FOR THEM TO USE BEFORE AND AFTER THEIR
CONFIRMATION.

“ Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the
Holy Ghost.”—*Acts viii. 17.*

BY ROBERT NELSON, ESQ.

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INSTRUCTIONS

FOR THE

COMMISSIONERS

OF THE

REVENUE AND FINANCE

IN

INDIA

AND

INSTRUCTIONS

FOR THE

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OF THE

REVENUE AND FINANCE

IN

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AND



INSTRUCTIONS

FOR THEM THAT

COME TO BE CONFIRMED.

Q. *WHAT* is confirmation ?

A. A solemn rite, instituted by the Apostles, wherein the *Bishop*, by laying on of hands, and by fervent prayer, and authoritative benediction, conveys to such persons, who, in the presence of God and the congregation, sincerely renew their baptismal vow, a farther degree of God's grace and Holy Spirit.

Q. *What* is the end and design of confirmation ?

A. That baptized *Christians* should, by their own deliberate choice, take upon themselves that vow and promise, which was made in their names by their godfathers and godmothers, when they were admitted members of *Christ's* church; so that the confirmed person expressly consents to the baptismal covenant, and before God and many witnesses engages to perform his part of it.

Q. *At what age is confirmation to be administered?*

A. The church of *England* hath not determined any certain age, but requires it to be done only to such as are come to a *competent age*: which implies that none should be admitted, till they understand the nature of the baptismal vow, which they then renew, and till they are capable of making a prudent and firm resolution of observing it.

Q. *What custom was there among the Jews, which bore any resemblance with confirmation?*

A. The *Jews* were wont to bring their children before the congregation at thirteen years old*, when they had learned the law, and the explication thereof, and their daily prayers; whereupon they were declared *sons of the precept*, and henceforth they were to answer for their own sins, for which before, the fathers, and not the children, had been responsible; and the rite ended with prayers and praises.

Q. *What hath the church of England declared concerning confirmation?*

A. That it hath been a solemn, ancient, and laudable custom, continued from the Apostles' time †, that all Bishops should lay their hands upon children baptized and intructed in the catechism of the Christian religion, praying over them, and blessing them.

* Buxt. Syn. Jud. Cap. vii.

† Can. xl.

Q. *How does it appear that this rite was used by the Apostles?*

A. We have the Scripture itself for the evidence of the fact * ; for when the men of *Samaria* had been converted and baptized, and had received the word of God, the Apostles *St. Peter* and *St. John* were sent to confirm those new converts, to lay their hands upon them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost † ; and the disciples at *Ephesus*, after they had been baptized in the name of *Jesus*, were confirmed by *St. Paul*, who laid his hands upon them, and then they received the Holy Ghost. And further, the same Apostle mentions, as fundamentals, not only the doctrine of *baptism*, but the *laying on of hands* ‡, by which the ancient interpreters have always understood *confirmation*, which appeared so plain to *Calvin* himself ||, that it was his opi-

* Acts viii.

† Acts xix. 9, 6.

‡ Heb. vi. 2.

|| In Loc.

nion that this one place shews evidently that confirmation was instituted by the Apostles.

Q. How does it appear that confirmation was not confined to the age of the Apostles?

A. Because this solemn rite is highly useful and beneficial to the spiritual wants of *Christians* in all ages; who stand in need of the influences of God's Holy Spirit to the great purpose of sanctification; and was, as such, accordingly practised by them in all the succeeding ages of the church, as appears by the testimony of *fathers* and *councils*, who in this matter speak as witnesses of a catholic custom.

Q. Give me some testimonies of this practice?

A. *Tertullian*, who flourished about fourscore years after *St. John*, and who is very careful in relating the practice of the primitive church, tells us, *That after baptism succeeds*

laying on of hands, by prayer calling for and inviting the Holy Spirit*. And St. Cyprian, who flourished about sixty years after Tertullian, hath this remark upon the history of the Samaritan converts: *The same thing, says he, is practised among us; that they who are baptized in the church, are presented to the governors of it†, the Bishops, that by their prayers and imposition of hands, they may obtain the Holy Ghost, and be perfected with the seal of Christ: Which is, by confirmation, to attain the highest order of Christians.* St. Jerome speaks full to the point‡: *If you ask, says he, where it is written, it is written in the Acts of the Apostles: But if there were no authority in Scripture for it, yet the consent of all the world in this particular is instead of a command.*

* De Bapt. c. 8.

† Epist. 78.

‡ Dial. Advers. Lucif.

Q. *What are the effects of confirmation?*

A. In the primitive church, these effects were *extraordinary gifts*, such as were necessary then in the infant state of the church; but upon the settlement of it, the Holy Spirit guides it by secret and invisible communications, which those receive who are qualified to partake of them in this regular and ministerial way; and they are those ordinary helps and assistances, which are necessary for the performing of the conditions of our salvation, which we cannot work out without the influences of the Holy Spirit.

Q. *Who is the proper minister of confirmation?*

A. The administration of this rite was devolved by the Apostles to their successors, the Bishops of the Catholic Church; for though *Philip*, the deacon, had liberty both to preach and baptize*, yet the Apostles

* Acts viii. 13, 14.

only had the power to confirm *, as is plain by the history of the *Samaritan* converts; and therefore this rite is appropriated to the Bishops, as being successors of the Apostles in the government of the church, in all the primitive records of Christianity.

Q. *What ceremony is used in confirmation?*

A. The laying on of the hand of the Bishop upon the head of the person to be confirmed; a very ancient ceremony of giving blessings, practised by the *Jews*, and made use of by our Saviour himself, and adopted by the Apostles, with prayer for communicating the Holy Spirit in *confirmation*, and which gave name to the whole *office*, which is called *the laying on of hands* †.

Q. *What qualifications are necessary for the Candidates of this holy ordinance?*

* Acts viii. 16.

† Matt. xix. 13. Acts vii. 17. Heb. vi. 2.

A. Those who are brought to be confirmed, ought to be thoroughly instructed in the nature of their baptismal vow, which they then renew, and of that obligation they lie under to perform it. They ought to be acquainted with the meaning of this holy rite, and whose office it is to administer it. They ought to have a competent degree of the knowledge of those Christian duties that relate to God, their neighbour, and themselves. And in order to these ends, it is advisable that they should some time before read over the *confirmation* office.

Q. *What particular preparation is necessary before confirmation?*

A. The persons to be confirmed ought to examine themselves concerning those sins of omission or commission they have been guilty of, in thought, word, or deed, and to confess them to God, declaring their hearty sorrow and repentance for them, and ear-

nestly begging God's pardon and forgiveness: to which they must add serious resolutions of living answerable to the Christian religion. And that their prayers and holy purposes may be effectual, they may do well to join fasting to them, that they may be the better disposed to receive the influences of God's Holy Spirit.

Q. Since you mention the necessity of making serious resolutions of living answerable to the Christian profession, when you receive confirmation; pray what do you resolve in relation to those enemies that oppose your salvation, the devil, the world, and the flesh?

A. I resolve, by the grace of God, to be always upon the watch against those various ways in which each of them is likely to endanger my salvation; I resolve to use all fit and proper means to secure myself against those dangers; and particularly to fortify

those weak places of my mind, which my temper or circumstances of life render most exposed to them.

Q. What do you resolve in relation to the devil?

A. I resolve, by God's assistance, never to give my consent to any of those wicked thoughts which he may throw into my mind; nor to comply with any of those temptations whereby he solicits me to sin; neither will I make use of those ways of consulting him, which ungodly men have taken. And particularly resolve to avoid all pride, malice, and envy, all treachery, lying, revenge, and cruelty, which are most properly the works of the devil.

Q. What do you resolve in relation to the world?

A. I resolve, by the help of God, not to do any thing unlawful in order to procure honour, riches, or pleasure; neither will I

set my affections immoderately upon any lawful enjoyment. I resolve to contradict the evil maxims and customs ; to avoid the bad company of a vain wicked world ; and to forego all worldly comforts and possessions, all my natural relations, and my own life, whenever they stand in competition with my duty.

Q. What do you resolve in relation to the flesh ?

A. I resolve, by God's help, to resist the unlawful desires of my own corrupt nature ; to suppress all lascivious and wanton thoughts ; to avoid all filthy and obscene discourse ; and never to gratify my fleshly appetites but with temperance and sobriety, and only in such a manner as is allowed by the law of God. And in order to this purpose, I will shun sloth and idleness, which are common incentives to our carnal minds.

Q. *What do you resolve in relation to your faith?*

A. I resolve to be steadfast in the belief of the being of a God, which is evident from his making and preserving all things. I resolve steadfastly to believe, that in this one glorious Godhead, there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; that the second person in the blessed Trinity, God the Son, took upon him human nature, was born of a virgin, and died upon a cross as a sacrifice for the sins of the world; that he rose again the third day from the dead, ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God; and that he will come again to judge the quick and the dead. That this Son of God, our Lord *Jesus*, planted a church while he was upon earth, and committed the care of it to his apostles, with a power to ordain others to succeed them in their office. That the Holy Ghost bestowed miraculous

gifts upon the Apostles, to fit them to convert the world, and to bring all mankind into the Christian church; in which, forgiveness of sins, and Eternal life after the resurrection of the body, are always to be obtained.

Q. Why do you resolve to believe thus?

A. Because these, and all other points of my Creed, are revealed in the holy Scriptures by God himself, who is infinite Truth, and cannot lie; who is infinite Love, and will not deceive me.

Q. What do you resolve in relation to your practice?

A. I resolve, by the help of divine grace, to observe all those precepts which relate to God, my neighbour, and myself.

Q. What do you resolve in relation to God?

A. I resolve to pay my obedience to him in a due and devout attendance on prayers, both in public and private, and on the holy

Sacrament. I resolve to own his bounty in all the good things I receive, and to submit patiently to his wisdom in all the afflictions I suffer. I resolve to reverence his holy name, never to use it lightly, nor to profane it by customary swearing, much less by false and faithless oaths. I resolve to reverence his holy word, constantly to resort to his worship, and observe his day particularly set apart for it, and to shew a due regard to all things and persons devoted to him, and commissioned by him.

Q. What do you resolve in relation to your neighbour?

A. I resolve, by the grace of God, to be just in all my dealings, never to deprive him of his right by fraud or force; to be sincere in my expressions, and to be true to my promises. I resolve to relieve his necessities according to my ability, and to be candid in interpreting his words and actions; never to

slander him by false reports, or unnecessarily to publish his faults by evil-speaking. I resolve to be meek and patient under all provocations, and to be ready to forgive all affronts and injuries; and study to promote peace among all men. I resolve to love, reverence and obey my natural parents, and to perform the several duties I owe to all my governors in church and state.

Q. What do you resolve in relation to yourself?

A. I resolve, by the grace of God, to humble myself under a just sense of my own faults and defects, not to be puffed up with a vain conceit of myself, or with a contempt of others. I resolve to be chaste in all my thoughts, words, and actions; and to avoid every thing that may in the least have a tendency to uncleanness; to be temperate in the use of meats, drinks, and all other enjoyments, and to flee from all temptations to drunkenness. I resolve to deny myself, to keep my body

under by fasting and abstinence, and to mortify my affections to the things of this world ; and to be ready to part with any of the conveniences of life, rather than forsake the ways of truth and righteousness.

Q. From whence appears the necessity of being sincere in these resolutions ?

A. Because God, who knows our hearts, will reject our pretended dedication of ourselves to his service, if we engage only out of custom, and in compliance with the fashion of the world ; and consequently will withhold his grace from us, since we render ourselves unworthy of the influences of it, by never really resigning what we openly profess.

Q. What are the great advantages of confirmation ?

A. It is a new engagement to a Christian life ; and is a lasting admonition and check, not to dishonour or desert my Christian pro-

fession : It tends to preserve the unity of the church, by making men sensible that they are obliged to communicate with such ecclesiastical superiors, as are endowed with all those powers that were left by the Apostles to their successors. And it is moreover a testimony of God's favour and goodness to those that receive it.

Q. How is it a testimony of God's favour and goodness to those that receive it?

A. Because his lawful minister declares, that God accepts their proficiency, and advances them into the highest rank of the faithful, by giving them a title to approach the Holy Table. And because God vouchsafes thereby to communicate supernatural strength to encounter their spiritual enemies, and enable them to perform what they undertake.

Q. What care has the church of England shewn for the effectual administration of confirmation?

A. Such is the wise discipline of our holy mother, that, both by her *rubrics* and *canons*, she trains us up by gradual steps for a worthy partaking of this holy rite; for, in our baptism, she requires sureties that shall engage for us, and give security for our Christian education in the communion of the church, they being obliged not only to see us instructed in all necessary points of faith and practice, but to take care, that, when we are fit, we be brought to the Bishop for *confirmation**.

Q. *What farther care has the church expressed in this particular?*

A. The parish priest, or curate, is particularly enjoined to *catechise, to instruct, and examine the youth and the common people in the principles of the Christian religion, according to the church catechism*†. And the

* Exhortation at the end of public baptism.

† Can. x. lxi.

church farther requires, that none be presented as candidates, till they can give an account and reason of their faith, of which the minister who presents them is to be judge; and none are even then to be confirmed, except the Bishop approves of them*: And, to strike a greater awe in the candidates, they are solemnly charged to answer as in the presence of God and the whole congregation.

Q. Why is a Godfather or Godmother required for the persons to be confirmed † ?

A. As a voucher for the sincerity of the parties they stand for, and to be a continual monitor to them to perform their vow, as well as a witness of their making the same.

Q. How hath the church endeavoured to prevent any neglect in those that are en-

* Rubrics after the Catechism.

† *Ib.* at the end of the Catechism.

trusted with the administration of confirmation?

A. She wills and ordains, that every *Bishop* or his *Suffragan*, in his usual triennial visitation*, should perform, in his own person, this right and usage; but if, through any infirmity, he is hindered from making his triennial visitation, he is charged not to omit it the following year, as soon as conveniently may be.

Q. *What is the minister of the parish obliged to, when the Bishop giveth notice of a confirmation?*

A. The minister of every parish is obliged to bring or send in writing, with his hand subscribed thereunto, the names of all such persons within his parish, as he shall think fit to be presented to the Bishop to be confirmed†.

* Can. lx. † Last Rubric after the Catechism.

Q. *Ought confirmation to be received more than once?*

A. It is not to be repeated, because this solemn renewal of our baptismal vow is sufficient by being once performed; and for further supplies of grace, we have hereby a title to receive the *Holy Communion*.

*A prayer before Confirmation, to be used
by those that are preparing for it.*

Most merciful God, by whose gracious providence I was born of Christian parents, and early dedicated to thee in holy baptism; make me thoroughly sensible, I beseech thee, of thy infinite goodness in bestowing upon me the blessed privileges of being made a member of thy church, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.

Grant, O Lord, that by the assistance of thy grace, I may carefully and zealously perform all those conditions upon which thou wert pleased to vouchsafe to me such inestimable benefits: that I may constantly resist the devil, and all those temptations by which he seeks to destroy me: that I may renounce

all covetous desires of honour, riches, and pleasures, and all those evil customs and maxims of the world, which alienate men's minds from the love of God: that I may mortify the inordinate appetites of my own corrupt nature, of my own carnal mind: that I may believe all thy holy revelations, and keep thy blessed will and commandments all the days of my life.

And now, O Lord, that I am about to renew the solemn vow of my baptism, and publicly in thy presence to ratify all those things I then promised by my sureties, I humbly beseech thee to enlighten my mind with the knowledge and understanding of that solemn engagement I then made, and am now about to confirm; influence my will and all the faculties of my soul, heartily and sincerely to perform it. Let not the many and grievous sins that I have committed, deprive me of those assistances of thy Holy Spirit,

which I now expect to receive ; but on my true repentance, let the precious blood of my Saviour wash away all my past sins, and grant that I may be enabled to mortify and subdue them for the time to come. And forasmuch as without thee I am not able to please thee, pour thy Holy Spirit into my heart, that by his holy inspiration I may think those things which are good, and by his merciful guidance, may perform the same, through *Jesus Christ* our Lord ; in whose blessed name and words I continue to pray, saying,

Our Father, &c.

A prayer after Confirmation, which may be said while others are confirming, and may be added to the Evening Prayer by the party confirmed.

BLESSED and praised be thy holy name, O Lord, for those fresh supplies of grace which thou hast been pleased to communicate to me.

Blessed be thy name for those comfortable assurances thou hast given me of thy favour and goodness towards me. Blessed be thy name for that privilege thou hast now bestowed upon me of approaching thy holy table, and of strengthening and refreshing my soul by partaking there of the body and blood of *Christ*.

Increase in me, O Lord, more and more, the gifts of thy Holy Spirit, that I may be wise for eternity, and make it the chief business of my life to please thee in all my actions ; that I may love and fear thee above all things ; that I may be just and righteous in all my dealings, and ready to communicate to the necessities of others ; that I may keep a constant watch over myself, so as not to exceed the bounds of temperance and sobriety.

Grant, O Lord, that my corrupt nature may be daily renewed and purified by thy Holy Spirit ; that no danger or persecution may affright me from my duty ; that no pleasure may make me careless and negligent in the performance of it ; and that, under afflictions most grievous to flesh and blood, I may be entirely resigned, and submit to thy holy will and pleasure. Let thy Holy Spi-

rit, O Lord, so guide and govern me through the whole course of my short life in this world, that I may not fail to obtain eternal life in the world to come, through *Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

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