

THE BUSH CHURCH AID SOCIETY  
CHURCH OF ENGLAND

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Mail-Bag Sunday School



Confirmation Lessons

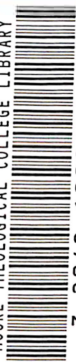
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Diocesan Church House, George Street,  
SYDNEY

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# MAIL-BAG SUNDAY SCHOOL

## CHURCH OF ENGLAND

## THE BUSH CHURCH AID SOCIETY

Diocesan Church House, George Street, Sydney.

### CONFIRMATION.

Lesson 1.

#### What is Confirmation ?

This is a question every member of the Church should be able to answer. In our first lesson, therefore, we give some answers.

1. **Confirmation is an Ordinance or Order of the Church of England** for her members. We find several rules about it in the Prayer Book. First of all, turn to the Baptismal Service and read the rubric (the order or direction written in small sloping letters) at the end of the Service. There you will see that the minister, when he baptizes a baby, gives to the parents and god-parents this order : "Ye are to take care that this child be brought to the Bishop to be confirmed by him so soon as he can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments in the vulgar tongue (meaning, in our case, the English language), and be further instructed in the Church Catechism, as set forth for that purpose."

Now look at the rubric at the end of the Confirmation Service. This, you will see, reads : "And there shall none be admitted to the Holy Communion until such time as he be confirmed, or be ready and desirous to be confirmed."

The Church requires, then, that Confirmation shall take place in the life of her members after they have been baptized; when they know the Catechism, which teaches what things a Christian ought to believe and do; and before they attend Holy Communion.

Why does the Church require this ?

2. **Because Confirmation is a means by which we members of the Church are strengthened in our endeavours to lead a Christian life.** To confirm is to strengthen, and not only do we in Confirmation publicly confirm and take upon ourselves the promises made on our behalf at Baptism, but by the gifts of the Holy Spirit we are confirmed, or strengthened, to fulfil those promises.

#### How has our Church come to have Confirmation ?

This is another question you should be ready to answer.

Our Church has Confirmation—

Because it has come down to us from the most ancient days, with the sanction of the Scriptures, as a custom of the very earliest Christian Church. In the Bible it is not called "Confirmation," but the "Laying-on of hands." That is why, in our Prayer Book, the full title of the Confirmation Service is "**THE ORDER OF CONFIRMATION or Laying-on of hands upon those that are baptized and come to years of discretion.**"

At Confirmation the Bishop lays his hands upon those being confirmed. In our Bible we find that the action of laying-on of hands was used with an earnest prayer for God's blessing both by the leaders of God's people in Old Testament days and by our Lord Himself and His disciples in New Testament days (Genesis 48:9-14; Deuter. 34:9; Mark 10:16, 16:18; Acts 6:6, 9:12, 28:8; and 2 Timothy 1:6). But we find even more than that. We find that it was used by Christ's Apostles in a rite or ceremony which was like our Church Confirmation to-day. The Bible gives several accounts of this ceremony, as, for instance, in Acts 8:5 to 17 and Acts 19:1 to 6. But the one story in Acts 8 is sufficient to show why we have Confirmation in our Church as being the same rite or ceremony as was used by Christ's Apostles. Read that story and you will see what happened :—

- (1) **Philip the deacon** went to Samaria and preached the Gospel.
- (2) Many of those he taught believed and were **baptized** by him.
- (3) Then Peter and John, the Apostles, came down from Jerusalem,
- (4) and, after **praying** for the Holy Spirit,



- (5) **laid hands** upon those whom Philip had taught and baptized.  
 (6) And they (the baptized ones) received the **Holy Spirit**.  
 Now see what happens in our Church to-day:—  
 (1) The parish clergy  
 (2) baptize the children and teach them the faith.  
 (3) **The Bishop**, who takes the place of the **Apostles**, as ruler of the Church,  
 (4) comes down to the parish,  
 (5) and, after solemnly praying for a blessing on the candidates,  
 (6) **lays hands upon** those whom the clergy have taught and baptized.  
 (7) God, in His goodness, bestows upon them the gift of the **Holy Spirit**.  
 They are then full members of the Church, able to receive the Holy Communion, the greatest joy and blessing of the Christian life.  
 In Confirmation, then, our Church is following the practice of the Apostles of Jesus Christ, who were nearest to Him and knew His mind. We need no other authority than this.

### QUESTIONS :

1. What is Confirmation?
2. By what name is Confirmation spoken of in the Bible?
3. Where in the Bible are accounts of Confirmation or "Laying-on of hands"?
4. What answer would you give to the question, "Why does our Church have Confirmation?"

From your Prayer Book print the full title given to the Confirmation Service, and underneath write out Acts 8, verse 17.

## REASONS FOR BEING CONFIRMED.

### Lesson 2.

Having learned from Lesson 1 what Confirmation is, and why our Church has Confirmation, we are now ready to answer three questions that any of you might ask:—"Why should I be confirmed?" "When should I be confirmed?" "How should I prepare for Confirmation?"

1. **Why should I be Confirmed?** We will give five answers:

(a) **Because the Church orders it.** If the Church has felt she cannot allow her members to neglect a custom that the early Christians found so useful and helpful (see Hebrews 6:1 and 2), then you cannot afford to lose or neglect it. And you would be a rather poor and worthless member of your Church if you did not wish to obey what has been her rule and order for some 1900 years.

(b) **Because in Confirmation the Church follows the Bible.** Therefore, by being confirmed you are being loyal to the Bible.

(c) **Because of its Benefits.** We all know it is easier to do wrong than right. We know what is right—our conscience tells us, yet we know we fail every day, in spite of our good intentions. We need some power outside ourselves to help us, and only God can give us that power and strength. He gives it in many ways, and these many ways by which God is willing to help us are called "means of grace." Confirmation is one of them. If, then, you would be the girls and boys, and, later, the women and men you know you ought to be, you will wish to avail yourselves of this means God has of helping you.

(d) **Because of its Opportunities.** Confirmation gives you the opportunity of making for yourself, before others, the promise made for you at your Baptism that you would be Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto your life's end. You are proud and glad to let it be known that you are a member of your family. You should be proud and glad to let it be known that you are a member of the Church or family of Jesus Christ.

(e) **Because Confirmation is the Gateway to Holy Communion.** Confirmation follows on Baptism and leads to Holy Communion. The rule of the Church is that none shall be admitted to Holy Communion, except under special circumstances, until confirmed. You will surely, then, wish to be confirmed, so that you might obey your Saviour Christ's last command, and enjoy that greatest of all Christian privileges, Holy Communion.

## 2. When should I be Confirmed?

The Prayer Book says that Confirmation is for those who have "come to years of discretion." This means those who are old enough to choose right from wrong, and to understand the meaning of Confirmation. There is no set age to this, of course, although it usually means not younger than 14 years. Yet 14 is, in many cases, too young, while in other cases children under 14 years know that they really want to follow and serve Christ. But it is not wise to be confirmed before you fully realise and understand what you are doing. You should not be confirmed only because you think you are old enough, or because someone else wants you to be. You should each wait until you are sure that you do want to be on the side of Christ.

On the other hand, you should not lose the opportunity of being confirmed when you do really understand its meaning. Your need of the help of God's Holy Spirit will go on increasing as you grow older and your duties and responsibilities become greater; and it is dangerous to neglect the means afforded by Confirmation of receiving this help. Some have put off their Confirmation so long that they have lost the opportunity, and have come to regret it. Yet it is good to remember that no one is ever too old to be confirmed. It may need some courage after one is grown up, but when once the decision is made it brings its own reward of joy.

Some hold back from Confirmation for what they think to be good reasons. For instance, some think they are not **good enough**, or will not be able to "live up to" the things they promise. But Confirmation is not for perfect people, for no one is perfect. Rather is it for those who feel their need of Jesus Christ to help them to live up to the things they promise to believe and do. By reading the Communion Service you will see that you are not asked to promise that you will never fail; you are asked whether you intend to lead a new life. This is all God wants you to do, and if you do really wish and intend to lead a better life, then you will find that day by day He will give you the strength and help to do so.

Others think that once they have been confirmed they are more responsible for the sins they commit than they were before. This is a very mistaken idea. Each one has to account for his or her conduct, whether confirmed or not. The only and very big difference is this: It is at Confirmation that you realise that Jesus Christ has taken your sins upon Himself, and that His Holy Spirit is always with you to encourage you and help you to take up the battle of life on the Lord's side and in His strength.

## 3. How should I prepare for Confirmation?

(a) **Attend, as often as possible, the classes your clergyman will arrange.** If unable to attend these classes, then study carefully whatever instruction papers you might receive. These classes or instruction papers are like a chain—linked each with the other, and, if any are missed, the complete teaching is missed.

Study, too, the Catechism teaching. You will remember that at Baptism the clergyman tells godparents that they are to see that the child being baptized is brought to the Bishop for Confirmation, when he can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments, and has been further instructed in the Catechism. This means that before you are confirmed you should have been taught the Christian faith. This the Catechism teaches, for the Catechism contains the chief things which the Bible tells us we are to believe and to do as Christians. Therefore, study carefully the Catechism teaching. Later lessons will give you this teaching.

(b) **Examine yourself,** that is, think carefully to see whether you really wish to lead a better life, and to take your stand on the side of Jesus Christ. You might have some doubts, perhaps, as to whether you are ready to be confirmed. Then ask your clergyman to permit you to attend the classes without promising to offer yourself for Confirmation until you are sure of your feelings in the matter.

If your clergyman—as he probably will—wishes to see you alone before you are confirmed, take advantage of this opportunity of asking him about anything that might be troubling you, or about which you may have some doubts.



(c) **Read your Bible.** While the Catechism teaches the chief truths of the Bible, you should be familiar with the Bible itself, which is God's Word and which shows you the way you ought to live. You should learn the names of the Old and New Testament Books, and where each Book is to be found, and place and purpose of the whole. Therefore, read your Bible carefully and regularly.

At the end of this lesson you will find a series of daily readings from St. John's Gospel, which you might follow during your preparation.

(d) **Pray.** This is the most important of all preparation for Confirmation, that you pray for yourself and ask your godparents and parents and others to pray for you.

Below is a prayer you might pray every day throughout your time of preparation.

### QUESTIONS :

1. Give five reasons why, as a member of the Church, you should be confirmed.
2. What is the one thing above all else that should decide when you should be confirmed?
3. Why is it a mistake to put off being confirmed when you have the opportunity and fully understand its meaning?
4. Give four ways of preparing for Confirmation, and tell which is the most important.

Write out from "The Order of Confirmation" in the Prayer Book the Preface read by the Bishop, commencing "to the end that" and finishing "have assented unto."

### DAILY PRAYER FOR CONFIRMATION PREPARATION.

"O God, Who has put it into my heart to desire to be confirmed, give me a right spirit and an understanding heart. Make me earnest, diligent and prayerful. Day by day teach me Thyself by Thy Holy Spirit and through Thy Word. More and more lead me to know the sinfulness of my own heart, and Thine own great love to me, in Christ Jesus. Help those who teach me to give me the teaching my soul needs. Grant that, at the end of such teaching, I may, with full heart, be ready to give myself to be Thy faithful soldier and servant unto my life's end; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

### DAILY BIBLE PORTIONS TO BE READ DURING PREPARATION FOR CONFIRMATION.

St. John.	St. John.	St. John.
1 : 1 to 18.	7 : 14 to 24.	13 : 31 to 38.
1 : 19 to 34.	7 : 25 to 36.	14 : 1 to 14.
1 : 35 to 51.	7 : 37 to 53.	14 : 15 to 31.
2 : 1 to 12.	8 : 12 to 30.	15 : 1 to 17.
2 : 13 to 25.	8 : 31 to 47.	15 : 18 to 27.
3 : 1 to 13.	8 : 48 to 59.	16 : 1 to 15.
3 : 14 to 24.	9 : 1 to 12.	16 : 16 to 33.
3 : 25 to 36.	9 : 12 to 25.	17 : 1 to 12.
4 : 1 to 14.	9 : 26 to 41.	17 : 13 to 26.
4 : 15 to 30.	10 : 1 to 18.	18 : 1 to 14.
4 : 31 to 42.	10 : 19 to 30.	18 : 15 to 27.
4 : 43 to 54.	10 : 31 to 42.	18 : 28 to 40.
5 : 1 to 18.	11 : 1 to 16.	19 : 1 to 16.
5 : 19 to 29.	11 : 17 to 31.	19 : 17 to 30.
5 : 30 to 47.	11 : 32 to 46.	19 : 31 to 42.
6 : 1 to 14.	11 : 47 to 57.	20 : 1 to 18.
6 : 15 to 27.	12 : 1 to 19.	20 : 19 to 31.
6 : 28 to 40.	12 : 20 to 36.	21 : 1 to 14.
6 : 41 to 59.	12 : 37 to 50.	21 : 15 to 25.
6 : 60 to 71.	13 : 1 to 17.	
7 : 1 to 13.	13 : 18 to 30.	

## CONFIRMATION.

## BAPTISM.

## Lesson 3.

Lesson 2 told of some ways you might prepare for your Confirmation. One was to study the teaching given you, especially in the Church Catechism.

Now, if you look at the Confirmation Service in the Prayer Book, you will see that it begins by referring to **Baptism**. You have also learnt that no one can be confirmed unless he has been **baptized**. Again, the first thing mentioned in the Catechism is **Baptism**. It is, therefore, plain that **Baptism** is the first subject of study for every Confirmation candidate.

Let us see, then, what are some things you should know about it.

### 1. Why are we Baptized ?

Because it is in accordance with the direct command of Jesus Christ, Whose last command to His disciples was, "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them" (Matthew 28 : 19); and, according to St. Mark in his Gospel, Jesus added, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16 : 16).

### 2. What is Baptism ?

Holy Baptism is the way in which we are received into the family of Christ's Church. Just as circumcision was the ceremony by which every Hebrew boy was admitted into the privileges of his race—as God's children and heirs of His promised blessings—so St. Paul says, Baptism was to be the ceremony by which Christians became heirs to the privileges and promises of God through Jesus Christ. (Romans 6 : 3.)

### 3. What are the Privileges or Blessings of Baptism ?

The promises of blessings by God given at Baptism are set out in the Catechism, where you are taught that in your baptism you were made "a member of Christ," "the child of God," and "an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven."

Now let us think carefully of these three forms of blessing, so that you might be quite clear as to their meaning.

(a) **Member of Christ.**—At Baptism you were given your Christian name, to show that you were given to Christ. ("Baptism" is sometimes called "Christening," which means "giving to Christ.") You are now part of His Church, which is called His "Body"; and, as a part or member of His Body, the blessing you receive from Christ is **strength for your daily needs** (1 Corinthians 12 : 12 to 21). This is what Jesus meant in His parable of the vine and the branches (John 15 : 5)—that the branches take strength from the vine. As a member of Christ, His strength becomes your strength.

(b) **The Child of God.**—At Baptism you are received into God's family, and as His child you have the blessing of the promise of being protected and provided for by Him, your Heavenly Father. (Read Romans 8 : 14, 15 and 28.)

(c) **Inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven.**—By faith in Jesus Christ we all become God's sons and daughters (Galatians 3 : 26, John 1 : 12, Ephesians 1 : 5), with the right to inherit or share not only His promised blessings in this life, but the privileges and blessings of His Heavenly Kingdom.

But while these blessings are promised at Baptism, we must remember that it has always been God's rule for His people that they must do their part if they are to enjoy His blessings. Therefore, at Baptism we enter into a covenant with God (a covenant is an agreement between two people, in which they both make promises), when God makes a promise to us and we make promises to God.

But, you might ask, how can we make promises at our Baptism when most of us are baptized as babies? Let us find the answer in some reasons why our Church baptizes babies or infants.

### Why does the Church Baptize Infants ?

(a) Because it is in keeping with the earliest Christian custom. We read in the Bible (Acts 10 : 48, 16 : 33) of the Apostles baptizing whole households. It is not likely that there were no children in any of those households.

(b) Again, those early disciples had been used to seeing their sons, as babies, admitted by circumcision into the Jewish Church, according to their



law; and it is only likely that their children would be admitted in some way into the new Church of God in Christ Jesus. For Christ Himself said He had not come to destroy, but to fulfil their law (Matthew 5:17).

(c) Then again, surely no greater kindness could be done to the little children than to place them in Christ's keeping by prayer at Baptism! Didn't Christ Himself say, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not"? (Mark 10:14 to 16).

But because the Church baptizes children when they are too young to understand, or to make promises, she has made a rule that for every child baptized there shall be godparents—people who make the promises for the child, and then promise to see that the child is taught, as he grows old enough to understand, what those promises mean, until the time when he is able to make the promises for himself (or herself). That time is at Confirmation, having come to "years of discretion," and having learned what their godparents promised for them in Baptism, may come willingly to confirm or make over again those promises; and also to promise, with God's help, to always try to keep them.

You see, then, how Confirmation completes Baptism, and why those who have been baptized ought to thank God for the blessings and privileges they have received.

### QUESTIONS :

1. Why are we baptized?
2. What is Baptism?
3. What privileges and blessings are connected with Baptism?
4. Why does our Church baptize infants?
5. For what purpose does our Church require that there shall be godparents for every child baptized?

From the Prayer Book Service of Baptism for Infants write out the whole, or down to the words, "a godly and a Christian life," of the Exhortation (short sermon) to Godparents.

## RENUNCIATION (or GIVING UP).

Lesson 3 told you of God's promises to you in the covenant or agreement entered into at your Baptism. Now we come to your promises, or vows, which cover the chief things you are to believe and do in carrying out your part in that agreement. In this lesson we will take the first promise.

At your Baptism you promised, or your godparents promised for you, that you should "renounce"—that is, "give up"—certain things.

The Catechism tells you what those things are:—

1. The Devil and all his works.
2. The pomps and vanities of this wicked world.
3. All the sinful lusts of the flesh.

Now you must not make the mistake that some have made in thinking that this Catechism teaching of Renunciation means that Christianity is all "don'ts" and "giving up," and that a Christian is not expected to have any of the brightnesses of life. As a matter of fact, the Catechism does not ask you to give up anything but what a wise person should give up. It simply asks you to be a loyal soldier and servant of Jesus Christ, in Whose service you were enrolled, and, as such, to have nothing to do with the three enemies of Christ—the devil, the world, and the flesh—but to fight against them and keep them at arm's length. These enemies really include all the sins and temptations you will meet through your life; therefore, before we think of what each one really means, I want you to think hard about sin and its results in the world and in your life.

There is a fierce fight going on between the forces of sin led by the Devil and the forces of God and His Church; and as a soldier of Jesus Christ, you must take part in this lifelong battle against sin before, as well as after, your Confirmation.

Sin is disobedience to the will of God, and God does not force us to obey. Sin is a matter of choice. We can obey God or disobey Him, as we choose. He has given us the glorious gift of free will.

Now think of the results of sin.

1. **Sin Separates from God.** Have you ever told your mother a lie? If so, you know that immediately that lie raised a barrier between your mother and you. You didn't want to be in her presence; you could not look her straight in the face, as you had always done. The lie had separated you from her.

And just in the same way our many sins raise barriers between us and God.

It was the awful sense of being separated from God, because of your sins and my sins and the sins of the whole world, that made the Saviour, Jesus Christ, cry out on the Cross: "My God, My God! why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

2. **Sin hurts other people,** nearly always the innocent ones.

3. **Sin spoils us for God's purpose in the world.** God has a purpose for every one of us in the world, and all sins, be they little or big, render us that much less fit for that great purpose.

It is sin, therefore, in all its forms, as the three enemies of Jesus Christ, which you have promised to renounce and to fight against. Let us, then, take these enemies one by one.

1. **The Devil.** How do we know that there is a devil?

(a) **Because the Bible emphatically tells us there is a devil.** Again and again we read of his interfering in the lives of the people of the Bible. The devil tempted Eve (Genesis 3:1 to 5) and David (1 Chronicles 21:1), and Judas Iscariot (St. John 13:27). We read, too, of the conflict between our Lord and the devil (Luke 4:1 to 13). In fact, if we tore from the Bible the parts that refer to the devil the whole Book would be changed. The devil is clearly shown to us in the Bible to be a real person—a spirit of evil, clever and intelligent.

(b) **By our own experience.** Don't we all know what it is to do and say wrong things? Haven't we all at some time been shocked at the wicked thoughts that come to us, even in our best moments? These attempts to spoil our better selves are only what the Bible tells us to expect the devil will try to do in his efforts to harm us.

What does it mean, then, when you promise to "renounce" the devil and all his works?

(i.) It means that you set yourselves to be on your guard and to fight against him and what are called his "works," for all the works of the devil are bad. For instance, **bad thoughts, lies** (John 8:44); **pride** (1 Timothy 3:6); **envy and hatred; tempting other people to sin.** However, black as sin is when we do it ourselves, it is far worse when we tempt other people to do it.

(ii.) It means, too, that you will bear in mind the lesson which Christ taught us by His example when He was tempted by the devil—that the "sword of the Spirit" (Luke 4:1 to 13), which is the "Word of God" (Ephesians 6:17), is the one weapon which never fails to resist attacks of the devil. From this we learn that those are wise who study the Bible, and have its teaching in their memory to help them when they are tempted.

## 2. The World.

The simplest meaning of "the world" in the Catechism is "the things, and the people in the world." "Wicked" means "anything that keeps away from God"; and when you promise to "renounce" "the pomps and vanities of this wicked world," you promise to take all care that the people and things in your everyday life do not keep you away from God, or come between you and God.

(a) By the "pomps" of the world might be understood all that makes for "show" and "display." Not that you must think you are being taught that you should not care about "appearances." Christianity makes no excuse for anyone being untidy, or slovenly, or careless, or reckless (1 Corinthians 14:40). Neither is the love of the beautiful and graceful contrary to the teaching of Jesus Christ, Who so loved Nature and all her beauty. It is only when you allow your love for such things to interfere with your duty to God and to other people, or to make you sinfully extravagant, that they must be guarded against as the "pomps" of the world.



What you are told to do is to guard against spoiling your Christian life by what we might call "regard for appearances." This temptation comes in different ways. It might be in love for dress, or position, or some other form of display that will lead to greed, or selfishness, or the spending of too much time, or money that cannot be afforded, or even using dishonest means to get such things. These are the temptations of the devil against which every young Christian is asked to be on guard, for "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" (Matthew 16:26).

(b) By "the vanities" of this world might be understood the "pleasures" of this life. Not that the Catechism is against all forms of pleasure. There is nothing in the New Testament that would suggest that Christians are not expected to enjoy the ordinary healthy pastimes and amusements. But it is easy to lose love for God through love for pleasure. The Bible does not give any list of what pleasures are and what are not good for Christians, but each one of us must decide how far our religious life is hindered by any particular form of amusement, or to what extent that amusement takes up our time and thought. The true test of pleasures and amusements lies in the words of St. Paul, where he says, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Romans 14:23). Anything that interferes with faith and loyalty to God is sinful, and must be given up. Any form of pleasure, however harmless and innocent in itself, if it interferes with your proper keeping of Sunday as God's Holy Day, with your church attendances, with your Bible study time, or your prayer time, or makes you in any way careless or forgetful of the things of God, must be guarded against as "the vanities" of the world.

You must not overlook, too, the influence your example might have on others. What you might do without being harmed might be harmful to one imitating you (Romans 14:13).

### 3. The Lusts of the Flesh.

This is the third enemy against which you must fight. A "lust" means a desire, and "the flesh" means the "body," or "self." There are some desires of the body that are perfectly natural and harmless, but if you have too much they become sinful. Too much **sleep** becomes **laziness**; too much **eating** becomes **greediness**; too much **drinking** becomes **drunkenness**; and various other desires overindulged become **impurity**.

The "sinful lusts of the flesh" are the bad desires that come to us. In Galatians 5:19 to 21, St. Paul gives a list of sins which is worth studying and thinking over; but each one of us could probably add others to that list, for we each have our own particular fault or failing, which the Bible calls "the sin which doth so easily beset us" (Hebrews 12:1). It is hard to explain why human nature, if left to itself, does bad rather than good. Yet we know it is so. Therefore, be ever on the watch against the evil that is likely to come from within yourselves, often when you least suspect it, and often in a way that is pleasing and tempting and hard to resist. You must take steps, as St. Paul says he found it necessary to do (1 Corinthians 9:27), "to keep under the body"—that is, to keep under control your human nature. You must, in everything, exercise self-control.

### QUESTIONS :

1. What were the three things promised at your Baptism that you would give up?
2. How do we know there is a devil, and what are meant by his works?
3. Against what are you warned as the "poms and vanities of this wicked world"?
4. What is meant by exercising control over the "lusts of the flesh"?

Write out from the Service for the "Public Baptism of Infants" the words the Priest (or Minister) speaks to the godparents, commencing "Dearly beloved" and ending with "His commandments."

### PRAYER.

O Heavenly Father, by Whose mercy I have been received into Thy holy Church, help me to renounce all the enemies of Jesus Christ, Whose soldier and servant I am. Grant that I may not be led by them, but may, by the power of Thy holy Spirit, have strength to fight manfully and successfully against the world, the flesh, and the devil; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## CONFIRMATION.

## THE CREEDS.

## Lesson 5.

In Lesson 4 you learnt of the first promise or vow made for you at your Baptism—that you should "renounce" or "give up" certain things. We now come to your second Baptismal vow, by which you promised, or your godparents promised for you, that you should "believe" certain things.

Some things we believe because we can see, hear, or feel them; therefore, we know they are true. Other things we believe, not because we can see, hear or feel them, but because we have been told about them by others, whose word we trust.

The things you promise to "believe" at Baptism are things of religion, and when speaking of "believing" as regards religion we are speaking of things God has told us or made known to us about Himself and His work in the world, and about the things of Heaven, which things we could never have known in any other way, but which we believe because we trust God's Word.

### Does Belief Matter?

Some people will tell you that "belief does not matter"; that so long as a man leads a good life, what he believes is not very important. Now this is a very wrong and dangerous way to think. First of all, because the Bible clearly tells us that all our good works are useless without faith (and faith is belief; and, secondly, because what we believe influences our actions. If we believe that fire will not burn or water drown, we will probably end up by being burned or drowned. Or if we believe that a certain bridge over a river is not strong enough to bear us, our belief will keep us from going over that bridge. It matters quite a lot, then, in such things, what we believe. And if belief matters so much in the ordinary things of life, what we believe about religious things, about God and Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost and the great unseen world that lies beyond this one, matters enormously.

For what we believe affects what we do, and moulds our whole character. If we believe God is good, pure and true, and holy, we will try to be so, too. But, if we believe, as some heathen do, that God is cruel and hard and immoral, then we will almost certainly be cruel and hard and immoral, too.

It is, therefore, not surprising that the Bible, from cover to cover, teaches that faith is the root of righteousness, that the amount of faith in a life is the truest test and the surest way of finding out the worth of that life.

### What We are to Believe?

The Church, knowing that belief is not a matter of little importance, puts before us her Creed ("Creed" comes from the Latin word "Credo"—"I believe"), which tells us what things we ought to believe. This Creed the Catechism refers to as "all the Articles of the Christian Faith," and it is these Articles of the Christian faith that you, by your baptismal vow, promise to believe. An "article" here means "a part" or "portion," and "the Articles of the Christian faith" mean the many parts that make up the Christian faith. These many parts are the principal truths about God, and the things of God which God Himself has revealed or made known to us through His Word, and which the Church, in her very early days, gathered together in a short form, easy to be understood and remembered. This collection of truths the Church has called "Creeds."

In these Creeds we are not asked to believe anything that is not in God's Word. We know this by the 6th Article of Religion (found at the end of the Prayer Book), which says that no one is required to believe, as a part of the faith, anything that is not read in or may be proved by the Scriptures. But because the Creeds only contain truths that are in the Bible, and can be proved by the Bible, the 8th Article says of the Creeds that they "ought thoroughly to be received and believed; for they may be proved by most certain warrant of Holy Scriptures."

When, therefore, in answer to the Catechism question, "What did your godfathers and godmothers promise then (at your Baptism) for you?" you say that you believe "all the Articles of the Christian Faith," you mean that you believe the truths which God Himself has made known, through His



Word, as set out in the Creed; and that you believe to be true, too, the Bible, which is God's Word, and our only record from God about Himself, His work, and about Heaven.

## The Creeds.

In such passages as Matthew 28:19, Acts 2:22-24, 33, 3:13-16, 1 Corinthians 15:3-7, 1 Timothy 3:16, we see some of the very earliest examples of Christian Creeds, that is, of truths which disciples of Christ were taught both by Himself and by those who carried on His work after Him.

But the three very old forms of Creed that our Prayer Book has preserved are:—

1. **The Apostles' Creed**, which is the simplest, and contains teaching most like what the Apostles taught (though you must not imagine the Apostles compiled it).

2. **The Nicene Creed**, called after Nicea, the place where the first Christian Roman Emperor, Constantine, called Christian scholars together to draw up statements on Christian belief. This Creed is longer than the Apostles' Creed, and is ordered specially to be used at Holy Communion.

3. **The Athanasian Creed**, named after the great champion of the Christian faith, St. Athanasias, who, some 300 years after Christ, so bravely defended the faith against those who said that Christ was not God. This Creed is longer than the other two, and is appointed to be read instead of the Apostles' Creed on special Sundays and certain Saints' days during the year.

But while we have these three forms of Creed, it is perhaps more correct to say there is only one Creed, for, although the three vary in length and wording, they are alike in the three great truths or facts they bring before us. They all remind us of what is called the "threefold revelation of God," or the three ways in which God has revealed or made Himself known to us as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost.

This teaching about God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost is also called the doctrine of the Trinity, or the teaching of God as one God yet at work as three Persons.

It is not hard to understand this thought of God at work as three Persons if we think of ourselves as one person yet of three distinct parts—body, soul and spirit. But on the other hand, our human mind is not great enough to understand all that lies behind this thought of the threefold nature of God, and it is foolish for us to try. Let us rather be content to know that it is one of the mysteries of God that He will one day make plain to us, and let its very mystery speak to us of the greatness of God—the **Almightiness** of God, calling forth our reverence and thankfulness to Him for what He has made known to us of Himself and His work in the world.

## QUESTIONS:

1. What was the second promise made for you at your Baptism?
2. Why does it matter what we believe about religion?
3. What are the Creeds, and what does the Catechism call them?
4. Why ought the Creeds to be believed?
5. How many forms of Creeds have we in our Prayer Book, and what do we know about each of them?
6. What three great truths or facts do all three forms of Creed bring before us?

## PRAYER.

O God, Who hast given us the Christian faith to be our guide in life and our comfort in death: Help me to hold this faith steadfastly unto the end. I pray Thee that I may put all my hope and trust in Thee. Enable me to lay hold of Thy blessed promises; and grant that I may not only confess to Thee with my lips, but live in the light of Thy truth, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## CONFIRMATION.

## BELIEF.

## Lesson 6.

### GOD THE FATHER—CREATOR.

Now we come to the first of the three great truths about God which the Church has set out in the Creed, or "the Articles of the Christian Faith," as the Catechism calls them.

What is the first thing you say in the Creed?

**I believe in God the Father Almighty.** Why do you say you believe in God?

Because mankind has always felt that he must believe in a God. All over the world—in the frozen wastes of the Arctic, in darkest Africa—you will find belief in a god of some kind. In a census taken in India, out of 300,000,000 people only 15 put themselves down as Atheists—that is, as not believing in any god at all. This fact alone shows that there is, and always has been, something in mankind that tells them there is a God, even though down the ages the idea of God has often been a mistaken one and very different to ours, and in some cases nations have lost all knowledge of the true God as He first made Himself known to the people of the world.

And what is our idea of God, and how has He made Himself known to the world? You give the answer in your reply to the Catechism question, "What dost thou chiefly learn to believe in these articles of thy belief?" You say, "First I learn to believe in God the Father,

**Who hath made me and all the world."**

Another word for "made" here is "created"; therefore, you believe that the first way in which God has revealed or made Himself known to the world is as the Creator. How can you say you believe this?

(a) **Because God has said so.** Where? In the Bible story of the Creation (Genesis 1). In that story God reveals or makes known the fact that He is the Creator, or Maker, of the world, and of all creatures. It is a short story in which to tell of the wonderful work of Creation, but we must remember that it is God's lesson to people who knew so little, and would need such simple teaching. The chief aim of the story is to teach that **all that exists began from God**, and this is taught in the first words, "In the beginning God," and in the story which follows.

The fact, then, that God, through His own Word, has revealed or made known the fact that He has made you and all the world is sufficient reason for your believing it. Yet you must believe it, too.

(b) **Because reason says so.** Look at any piece of machinery, and you know there must have been someone to make it. Or listen to a beautiful piece of music, and you know that some great musician composed it. Then think of yourself and the world around you, and you know there must be some great Master-mind behind it all.

Put your hand on your heart and feel it opening and shutting. If it stopped for a moment you would be dead. Does this all just happen of itself? No, you must believe that it is God's hand on your heart, opening and shutting it.

Or think of your conscience. Where did it come from—that strange something within you that says, "You ought to do this" or "You ought not to do that"? If you obey it, well and good; if not, you know no peace of mind until you do. It makes rules of right and wrong for you that you don't make yourself. Do they come by chance? No, they come from God, Who made you. When conscience speaks, it is God making you conscious of His will for you.

And what about the world around us, with all its wonder and glory? Did it all just happen? No, we know that nothing but that all-wise God could bring it into being. Therefore you can say, "I believe in God, Who hath made me and all the world," not only because God Himself has said so, or because reason says so, but

(c) **Because Nature says so.** Look at the world as being God's handiwork, and you will see countless signs of Him as its Creator. It is good and



wise to look out for these signs. Think of the order of the seasons, as they come around year after year; of the stars and planets, kept in their place in space and moving in their order through all the ages. Think of the perfect beauty of the tiniest flower, or the wonderful formation of the very smallest insect; of the marvellous way the clouds and sea and rain work together to support life. By these and numberless other signs, to those who believe in God the world around is always whispering, "God made us."

Then one last thought. It is good and helpful to remember that Jesus Christ taught that God has not ceased His loving care in shaping the world, even to-day. "My Father worketh even until now, and I work," He said (John 5:17). You say in the Creed that you believe in God the Father. Here we see God as a loving Father, Who, having created us and the world in which we live, is continually working and caring for us and all His creatures. Knowing this, we will refuse to give in or be troubled when things turn against us, for we will be sure that God the Father, Who doeth all things well, will not fail to do all things well for us, His children.

### QUESTIONS:

1. What is the first way in which God has revealed or made Himself known to the world?
2. Give some reasons why we must believe in God as the Creator.
3. Tell how the world around us seems to be always whispering, "God made us."
4. What teaching of Christ speaks to us of God as God the Father?
5. What should the thought of God still at work in the world as a loving Father do for us?

### PRAYER.

Almighty God, Maker of all things and Father of all, Who art from everlasting to everlasting: Be pleased to accept my humble worship. Help me to realise Thy greatness and Thy love, and let my mouth be filled with Thy praise, that I may set forth Thy honour and glory all the day long; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(The Questions and Prayer given below belong to Lesson 11.)

### QUESTIONS:

1. Our Church gives the name of Sacrament to only those two ordinances the Scriptures show were ordained by Christ. Which are they?
2. In what way does our Church consider that Baptism and Holy Communion are necessary?
3. How should we prepare for Holy Communion?
4. What thoughts will help us to receive the Holy Communion as Christ intended we should?
5. How are our souls strengthened by the Sacrament of Holy Communion?
6. Give three reasons why we should come to Holy Communion.
7. Tell what coming to Holy Communion should be to every one of us.

Write out from the Communion Service the words the minister says as he gives the Bread and Wine.

### PRAYER.

O Blessed Saviour, Who hast permitted me to be a guest at Thy Holy Table for the forgiveness of my sins and for the increase of Thy grace in me; I thank Thee with all my heart for this great privilege. Grant that I may ever hunger after Thee, Who art the Bread of Life, and come to Thy Holy Sacrament for the strength and refreshment that my soul needs. Help me to show forth in my daily life the fruits of my communion with Thee, so that, at last, I may come to that blessed world where I shall be with Thee for evermore. Amen.

## CONFIRMATION.

## BELIEF.

## Lesson 7.

### GOD THE SON—REDEEMER.

In this lesson we think of the second of the three great truths about God, as mentioned in the Creed—the second way in which God has made Himself known to the world. After saying that you believe in God the Father, you say in the Creed, "and in

**Jesus Christ, His (God's) only Son, our Lord."** Why are you able to say that you believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God?

(a) **Because God has said so.** At His Baptism (Matthew 3, 17; Mark 1, 11; Luke 3, 22) and at His Transfiguration (Luke 9:35), God's voice was heard saying of Jesus Christ, "This is My beloved Son."

(b) **Because Jesus Christ Himself said so.** Christ claimed to be the Son of God (John 10, 36). He also claimed to be without sin, and His life story proved this to be so. Therefore, when He said that He was the Son of God it was the truth.

(c) **Because of His Resurrection.** From the day Christ rose from the dead on the third day after He was crucified, there were (Matthew 28:13 to 15) and have been those who have tried to say and prove that He did not come to life again; but they have failed. Christ did rise again from the dead, and none but the Son of God, Who alone can give life, could have done this of His own power.

(d) **Because of His influence in the world.** The proof that anyone has lived is His influence, that is, the result of His life in the world. The proof that Jesus Christ lived is that all history centres around His birth. What went before led up to it, and all that came after is dated from it. Every time the date of the year is written, it is a proof that Jesus Christ lived. And how else can we account for the great Church of to-day, founded simply on His life and resurrection? And for the fact that countless men and women have felt His influence for good in their lives, as they have come to know Him by prayer and in other ways? And that thousands are willing to live and die for Him to-day? There is no other way to account for it all than by the fact that Jesus Christ is truly "none other than the Son of God."

And what do you say, in the Catechism, about Jesus Christ, God's Son? In answer to the question, "What dost thou chiefly learn in these articles of thy belief?" you say, "I believe in God the Son,

### Who hath redeemed me and all mankind."

To "redeem" means to "buy back," as a slave is bought back or redeemed from the bondage of his slavery. From what, then, has God the Son redeemed or bought back you and me and all mankind? From the bondage of sin.

Sin is a great mystery, but we know it is disobedience to the will of God, and that sin brings punishment. "The soul that sinneth it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:4). When God created man He made Him in His own image or likeness. But man sinned (we read the story in Genesis 3), and the image or likeness of God in man was spoilt and marred. And ever since that first sin, sin has appeared and still appears in every child that is born. We do not know why this is, and it would be a waste of time to try and understand it; but we know it is a very real fact that sin is in every one of us, and that it is true of the whole human race that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3, 23).

But it is equally true that God, in His great love, has provided a means of re-creating or restoring His image or likeness in man, and saving man from the guilt and punishment of sin. Only God could do this, and He did it by coming to earth as the Redeemer.

All through the Old Testament, from the time when man first sinned, we find a very wonderful story of the promise by God of a Messiah, Who would save His people. Prophets who lived thousands of miles apart, and who



## CONFIRMATION.

## BELIEF.

## GOD THE HOLY GHOST—SANCTIFIER.

We come now to the third and last great truth about God and the way in which He has revealed Himself to the world, as set out in the Creed. You say in the Creed,

"I believe in the Holy Ghost." Who is the Holy Ghost?

He is God—God as He indwells, or dwells in you and in me and in all believers. "Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you; which ye have of God," says St. Paul (1 Corinthians 6:19). In speaking of the Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit, therefore, you must be careful never to say "It"; you must always speak of the Holy Spirit as "He," for He is a Person.

And what does God the Holy Spirit do within us? You answer this when, in reply to the Catechism question, "What dost thou chiefly learn in these articles of thy belief?" you say, "I believe in God the Holy Ghost,

Who sanctifieth me and all the elect people of God."

To "sanctify" means to "make holy." The Holy Spirit, therefore, makes us holy. He is the unseen Presence of God within us, who prompts all holy thoughts and actions in you and me and in all God's believing people. As the well-known hymn says:

"Every virtue we possess,  
And every victory won,  
And every thought of holiness  
Are His alone."

This making of us holy is the chief of what are called the "gifts of the Spirit," or the "sevenfold gift of the Spirit" (Isaiah 11:2). And the good that is shown in our lives by the working of these gifts in us is called "the fruit of the Spirit" (Galatians 5:22).

How does the Holy Spirit work?

We cannot see the Holy Spirit, nor do we know just how He does His work, but the New Testament gives several illustrations to help us to understand something of His way of working. For instance, in John 3:8, the working of the Holy Spirit is spoken of as being like the wind. That means that we cannot tell just how and where He may work, but He is known by His actions. As the presence of the wind is known by the movement of whatever it stirs, so the presence of the Holy Spirit is known by the definite signs in conduct and behaviour that can only come from Him (Galatians 5:22).

So when we see men and women, boys and girls acting from the highest motives in a way for which there seems to be no accounting; when we see an unkind person become kind; a quarrelsome one become a peacemaker; an unbeliever changed into a believer; when we see men and boys good and true and pure, and women and girls gentle and loving and Christ-like—we know it is the result of the working of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

But does the Holy Spirit come and work in us whether we will or not?

No, He only comes for the asking—in answer to prayer. And when in prayer we invite the Holy Spirit to come to us, we must treat Him properly. When He prompts holy thoughts and words and actions, we must obey Him; and the strength He gives us to fight against evil must be used. For the Holy Spirit can be "grieved" (Ephesians 4:30), and He can be "quenched" (1 Thessalonians 5:19). To fail to obey Him is to "grieve" Him, and to refuse to use His gifts is to "quench" Him. We must, therefore, guard against grieving or quenching the Holy Spirit, for He will leave the heart that does not obey Him or use His gifts.

The rite of Confirmation is definitely a service of prayer for the Holy Spirit, as is seen by the Bishop's Prayer for the Confirmes—"Strengthen them, we beseech Thee, O Lord, with the Holy Ghost, the Comforter"—and by the prayers that follow. It is, therefore, quite clear that, in answer to prayer and faith, you are, at Confirmation, made **firm and strong**, by the gifts of the

preached thousands of years apart, all looked forward to and pointed the people on to some great one—the Messiah, Who would come to save His people. Years afterwards this prophecy was fulfilled in the Person of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Who, by coming to earth as a Man, and dying on the Cross, redeemed you and me and all mankind from the guilt and punishment of sin.

This rescuing or saving of man from the guilt of sin by the death of Jesus Christ is known as the **Redemption** of man. It is also spoken of as **Reconciliation**, **Atonement**, or **Justification**. **Reconciliation** or **Atonement** gives the idea of a man restored to the position of a son in his father's home, after having wilfully gone from it (Luke 15:11-24); and **Justification** expresses the thought that, because of the death of Christ, man is justified or considered as righteous in God's sight. God does not look on the sinner's guilt; He looks upon Christ's righteousness instead.

But all these terms or words mean one and the same thing—that the death of Jesus Christ has brought about the forgiveness of man by God. Death is the penalty or the price of sin. Christ died, and by His death the penalty was paid once and for all. And now God's forgiveness is for all. The Father's arms are open; He is waiting to forgive.

But on one condition. The sinner must come to God and ask for that forgiveness. Both the Old and New Testaments teach that God hates sin, and that sin separates from God. If, therefore, we are wilfully doing what God hates, we are like the prodigal son in Jesus' parable story. His father's forgiveness was waiting for him, but he couldn't have it while he stayed away and was separated from his father.

God's forgiveness is waiting for each one of us. But we cannot know the joy of that forgiveness unless we, like the prodigal, come and confess our sins.

When we do this—when we come to God and tell Him of all our weaknesses and failures, and confess our sins to Him—then we know the Father's forgiveness is ours (1 John 1:9).

And the story of the Cross of Jesus, as it tells of the great love shown in the suffering and death which He so willingly endured for you and me and for all mankind, helps us, as it has always helped sinners, to come and claim God's forgiveness "for Jesus' sake."

And not only are we forgiven for Jesus' sake, but through Him we have the hope of Heaven. By His Resurrection and Ascension, Christ gained the victory over death, and now the gate of Everlasting Life is open to us. Therefore, we are able to say in the Creed: "I believe in the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting."

But you might wonder—How does it come about that the death of Jesus Christ brings these marvellous results? There is only one answer. God has willed it; He has told us it is so (2 Corinthians 5:19).

Knowing, then, that it is the will of our loving God and Father that these things shall be for all who believe in His Son (John 3:16), let us say with St. Paul, "Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gifts" (2 Corinthians 9:15).

## QUESTIONS:

1. Why do you say Jesus Christ is the Son of God?
2. What do you believe Jesus Christ has done for you and all mankind?
3. How did Jesus Christ save us from the guilt and punishment of sin?
4. What has the death of Jesus Christ brought about?
5. What must we do to receive God's forgiveness?
6. How does the story of the Cross of Christ help us to come to God and claim His forgiveness?
7. What do Christ's Resurrection and His Ascension into Heaven mean to us?

## PRAYER.

Almighty Father, Who didst give Thine only Son Jesus Christ to die for our sins, that we might be forgiven and have the hope of Heaven: Give us grace that we may be always truly thankful for these great benefits, and daily endeavour to follow the blessed steps of His most holy life; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



Holy Spirit, to fight against all that is wrong and evil and impure, either within yourself or in the world around you. You are given strength for the battle of life, with power to bring forth the fruit of the spirit in your life.

But you must not expect this strength given you at Confirmation to last the rest of your life. You should pray regularly for the Holy Spirit to come to you, for His gifts of strength and faith and character must be renewed in you, just as the strength of your body must be renewed day by day.

Therefore, there is no prayer that you should pray more often than this : "O God, give me Thy Holy Spirit, for Jesus Christ's sake."

Just one more point. The strength of the "Holy Catholic Church," in which you say in the Creed you believe, is the belief of her members in those things which the Holy Spirit teaches (John 14:26). And "the Communion of Saints," in which you also say in the Creed you believe, means, in one way, the communion or oneness of those, whether in this world or the next, who are filled with the Holy Spirit.

Having seen, then, all that is meant by the teaching of the Creed of the three ways in which God has revealed or made Himself known to the world as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier—the threefold revelation of God—does it matter what we believe? Yes, it matters greatly. Firstly, because unless we believe we cannot be saved; and, secondly, as Emerson has said, because "a man's action is but the picture book of his creed." Their belief in this Creed or faith of the Church has made the saints all through the history of the Church, and it is by believing it, and letting it mould our lives, that you and I, too, can become like them, and more after the image or likeness of God as seen in the perfect Man—the Man Jesus Christ.

### QUESTIONS :

1. Who is the Holy Spirit?
2. What is the special gift of the Holy Spirit to all who believe?
3. How may we have the Holy Spirit work in us?
4. What does it mean to "grieve" and "quench" the Holy Spirit?
5. What connection has Confirmation with the Holy Spirit?
6. What prayer should we pray most frequently?

After making sure that you know it thoroughly, write from memory, "The Apostles' Creed," as given in the Catechism.

### PRAYER.

O Almighty God our Heavenly Father, I thank Thee for the gift of Thy Holy Spirit. Grant that He may work in me, that I might believe the things Thou wouldst have me believe and do the things Thou wouldst have me do, and so bring forth in my life the fruit of the Spirit to the glory of Thy great Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen,

(The Questions and Prayer given below belong to Lesson 12.)

### QUESTIONS :

1. What takes place in the first part of the Confirmation Service?
2. What should be your greatest reason for wishing to be confirmed?
3. Of what may you take the laying-on your head of the Bishop's hand to be a sign?
4. Why is it necessary to guard against all frivolity and pleasure when the Confirmation Service is over?
5. Why should your Confirmation be a great and joyful occasion in your life?

Write out from the Confirmation Service the Bishop's prayer before the Laying-on of hands, and his words as he lays his hands upon the head of each candidate.

### PRAYER.

O Lord, I come to Thee. I ask Thee to receive me : I desire to be Thine. Here I offer and present unto Thee myself, my soul and body, my heart and life. Accept me, and make me Thine forever. Keep me, guide me, strengthen me, that I may abide in Thy love, and serve Thee joyfully all the days of my life, and, when this life is over, may enter rejoicingly into the higher life and love and service which Thou hast prepared for all who love Thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## CONFIRMATION.

## OBEDIENCE.

### THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

Having studied the first and second Baptismal vows or promises—Renunciation and Belief—we now come to the third thing promised for you at your Baptism, which, as you say in the Catechism, is "that I should keep God's Holy will and commandments and walk in the same all the days of my life." This is a promise of Obedience.

### God's Guide-Posts.

To all who believe in Jesus Christ, God has promised eternal life (John 3:16). The road of that eternal life is like a track across a stretch of country marked out by guide-posts that show the traveller his way. The Commandments of God are the guide-posts, and the chief of them all are the TEN COMMANDMENTS. These Ten Commandments were given to Moses for the guidance of God's chosen people, the children of Israel. They are equally given by Jesus Christ for the guidance and obedience of His followers. But there is a great difference in the teaching of Christ and the teaching of Moses as to how the Commandments are to be understood. The people to whom God first gave the Commandments through Moses had for hundreds of years been living in Egypt amongst heathen who worshipped idols. Consequently, God's people almost forgot Him, and so God had to word His Commandments to them in a way they would understand. But when Jesus Christ came, people knew much more about God, and He was able to show how to interpret and apply those Commandments in a much fuller way.

As an illustration. Supposing you went as a missionary to savage tribes in Africa. They have been used to waiting for their enemy with a club some dark night to kill him. So to teach them the first and most important thing in the Christian religion, which is love, you would probably say, as God said in the Sixth Commandment to the Israelites—who were little better in many ways than the African savages—"Thou shalt not kill." Your savages would understand this, and, if you could keep them from actually killing their enemy, that would be the first step. Then you would hope that some day, after you had taught them little by little, they would come to understand the fulness and the wonder of the Commandment, as Jesus taught it, when He said, "Love your enemies and do good to them that spitefully use you."

But with us it is different. Christ has come and has shown us God, and He has told us He expects us to keep the Commandments much more fully than the Israelites did, or than we could expect the African savages to do. We must keep them "in spirit as well as in letter"; that is, not only must our actions, but our thoughts and the motives from which our thoughts and actions spring, must be controlled by the Ten Commandments.

It is not enough, therefore, to keep from actually killing someone to obey the Sixth Commandment. "Whoso hateth his brother is a murderer," Jesus taught (1 John 3:15). To have even angry or bitter thoughts or feelings towards another is breaking the Sixth Commandment (Matthew 5:22).

And so with all the other Commandments. We are to keep them, not only in letter, but in spirit, too. And when given the fuller meaning that Christ gave to them, we find they cover every form of conduct and duty in life.

### The Ten Commandments.

The Catechism has divided the Ten Commandments into two parts. The first four deal with our duty to God, and the last six with our duty to our neighbour. Taking it for granted that you who are preparing for Confirmation can already repeat the Ten Commandments, let us take them in order, so that you might know, briefly, how Jesus Christ would have you understand each one.

**First Commandment.**—This teaches that you must believe in God, and His great goodness, power and love, as He has made Himself known through His Word. You must put God first in everything. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness," Christ said (Matthew 6:33), "You must not love anything or anyone more than you love God."

**Second Commandment.**—You are to worship God in the right way. It is possible to do the right thing in the wrong way. So it is possible to worship



God in the wrong way—through wrong teaching or wrong forms of worship. God wants your best worship—not half-hearted prayers or carelessness about attending His House of Worship.

**Third Commandment.**—This forbids irreverence, lying and swearing. You must never use God's Name, or anything to which He has put His Name, lightly or irreverently. You must not use your Bible carelessly, nor make use of passages from the Bible in any careless or wrong way. You must never jest about sacred things, nor listen to others doing so. And you must never use bad language, nor allow it to be used in your presence, without a protest.

**Fourth Commandment.**—You are to remember to use Sunday in the way God meant it to be used—as a holy day, putting aside everyday things, as far as possible, and keeping from doing things that would prevent you from honouring and worshipping God, and your souls from being strengthened and refreshed by your giving time to the things of God, and your bodies by rest.

**Fifth Commandment.**—This tells how you should act towards your parents, guardians and any others to whom you owe obedience. You are to be respectful and do what is your rightful duty to them (Ephesians 6:1 to 5).

**Sixth Commandment.**—You are not to entertain thoughts or feelings of hatred or dislike; nor take personal offence; neither must you give way to jealousy (Ephesians 4:31).

**Seventh Commandment.**—You must keep yourselves pure, and avoid all that leads to impurity. This is the great secret of self-control; your thoughts, feelings, tastes and desires must all be brought under the control of the Master, Jesus Christ.

**Eighth Commandment.**—You must be honest in all things, little as well as big things. Wasting time is often dishonest.

**Ninth Commandment.**—You are to be truthful. Not exaggerating, nor acting a lie; nor talking unkindly or untruthfully about others, as scandal-mongers or busy-bodies. But rather you are to try and be a peacemaker.

**Tenth Commandment.**—You must not allow your ambitions to lead you into wrong. A wrong wish will grow into a wrong thought, and a wrong thought into a wrong action. This Commandment is one that condemns the sin that is so common in our country—gambling. You are to be content with what God has given you.

Then you ought never to forget that Christ Jesus gave a new Commandment: "That ye love one another, even as I have loved you" (John 15:12). You might be careful to obey the Ten Commandments yourselves, but if you are critical of or unsympathetic with others who perhaps are not doing so, you are un-Christ-like Christians. You should rather try to help them.

All these Commandments, covering as they do the big sins as well as the lesser sins that come between us and God, you promise in your third Baptismal vow to keep. It means a hard fight, and the harder you try to keep your promise and to give the Ten Commandments the proper place in your life, the more you will realise how much you need Christ's help, and the more ready you will be to listen to His gentle warning, "Without Me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5).

### QUESTIONS:

1. Give your third Baptismal promise.
  2. What has God given to guide our life and for us to obey?
  3. How does Jesus' teaching or the Ten Commandments differ from that of Moses?
  4. What sins would you say the Commandments cover?
  5. What new Commandment did Jesus Christ give?
  6. What do we need if we would keep God's Commandments?
- Write out from the Catechism the two "Duties" (after the Ten Commandments) which explain the Commandments.

### PRAYER.

O God, the strength of all them that put their trust in Thee; Mercifully accept my prayer; and because, through the weakness of my mortal nature I can do no good thing without Thee, grant me the help of Thy grace, that in the keeping of Thy Commandments I may please Thee both in will and deed; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## CONFIRMATION.

## PRAYER.

## Lesson 10.

Having shown that the three things promised for you at your Baptism are that you will (1) renounce or fight against sin, (2) believe the Christian Faith, (3) obey and serve God as a soldier of Christ, the Catechism next reminds you that you cannot hope to do these things in your own strength, but that God is ready to enable you if you pray to Him.

This brings us to the study of the very big subject of PRAYER. There is so much that can be said about Prayer that it is only possible to give an outline in a lesson. The only real way of getting to know something of the meaning and value and power of Prayer is by experience, as we practise and give time and thought to it.

Prayer is at once perhaps both the highest and the simplest thing. A small child can understand what it means, yet the wisest man can never fully understand everything about it.

There is much we might wish to know and learn about Prayer that the Catechism does not teach, but it does teach us one big lesson, and that is that Jesus our Master taught us that we ought to pray, and also gave us a model prayer, which we call "The Lord's Prayer." The Catechism explains this great Prayer in what has come to be called "The Desire." It is good to carefully read both "The Desire"—which immediately follows The Lord's Prayer in the Catechism—and The Lord's Prayer, and compare each part of The Lord's Prayer with what is said about it in "The Desire." For example, where, in the Lord's Prayer, we pray, "Give us this day our daily bread," "The Desire" shows it to mean that we pray God "that He will give us all things needful both for our souls and bodies."

Now let us look at a few other facts about Prayer.

### What does it mean to pray?

There are several answers, but taking as our model The Lord's Prayer, which can be divided into two parts—the first part as prayers for the things of God, and the second part as prayers for ourselves and others—perhaps the best answer to this question would be that Prayer means asking God for what we want, just as a child asks his father (Matthew 7:7 to 11). This, of course, does not mean selfish asking, nor is it the full meaning of Prayer, but we will have more to say about that later. Have you ever thought what a very wonderful thing it is that we here on earth should be able to make requests in this way to God Whom we cannot see? One reason, perhaps, why it is not so difficult to understand why we are able to do this is that we know man is made in the image of God, and, therefore, there is something in us that reaches out to God.

### Why do we pray?

(a) We pray because of that something in us that reaches out to God and urges us to call upon Him in time of need.

(b) We pray because God the Father has taught us, and especially through Jesus Christ, Who not only taught us to pray, but Himself so often prayed. And the more we practise the habit of Prayer the more we discover that we cannot live a Christian life without praying, any more than we can live our ordinary daily life without breathing. It is God's rule that we must ask Him for whatever we need, even though He knows our need before we ask Him. Did we not ask Him for what we need, and receive His answer, we would soon forget that it is God Who supplies our needs.

### How should we pray?

It does not matter in what words we offer our prayers. God does not want long or difficult words, or even well-worded sentences. He wants our hearts to speak through our lips. Some of the prayers in the Bible, which we know received wonderful answers, were very short indeed; for example, those of which we read in Matthew 14:30 and 15:25. It is not the length nor the wording of our prayers that counts with God. It is whether or not they are earnest and from our heart, and are believing prayers. Do not make the mistake here of thinking that believing prayer means that it is the amount of faith we put into our prayers that brings the answers. Believing prayers



simply means being quite sure in our hearts that God hears our prayers, and believing that He is able to and will answer them.

This brings us to the question that is often asked:

### Are prayers always answered?

Jesus Christ said: "Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matthew 21:22). Yet is this the experience of those who pray? Probably the correct answer would be, "No" and "Yes." It is quite certain that we do not always receive exactly everything for which we ask. It would be utterly foolish to imagine that we should, for in that case we should be "dictating," not "praying"; that is, we would be telling God to do or give us things, not asking Him. And anyone who really believes in God as the All-wise, All-loving God, would not want anything that He would not wish, nor think it wise to do or give. That is why, with the true prayer, there is always the condition—if it be in accordance with God's will. And when this rule is carried out, prayers are answered, even though the answer is not necessarily the exact thing for which we ask. It is, however, always something equal to, and often something better than what we ask. For example, when St. Paul prayed to be rid of something (probably some affliction or complaint) of which he speaks as his "thorn in the flesh" (2 Corinthians 12:7), this prayer was answered, but not in the way he, perhaps, would have expected. The thorn remained, but God gave him "grace sufficient" to endure it (2 Corinthians 12:9). That was the best answer, for it brought greater blessing to St. Paul himself, and to all those who have read those words, than could ever have resulted from the removal of the affliction.

### Perseverance in prayer.

This is a very important rule to remember about prayer—keep on praying (Luke 18:1-7). Answers may be, and often are, postponed, sometimes for a very long time. In some cases this is to test our faith, and in others the delay is because the right time for the answer has not arrived. God is never too late, nor ever too early, but He always answers at some time the true, persevering prayer.

Remember, too, that very often the prayer itself is of far more and greater value than any answer. It brings us into touch with the Father in Heaven, and brings peace to heart and mind where we have perhaps been troubled or unhappy.

Remember especially to be very particular about your daily prayers—morning and evening, and whenever else the need arises. Do not allow anything to crowd them out. Make prayer a **habit**, until you feel there is nothing you cannot and would not wish to take to God in prayer.

And remember, above all, that in the Catechism you say you feel yourself bound to believe and to do as your godparents promised for you at your Baptism, and that "with God's help so I will." This help you can only get through Prayer.

Prayer links us up with God and the endless supply of help and good things He is ever ready and willing to give to all who ask in His Son's Name.

### QUESTIONS:

1. What does the Catechism remind us we must do if we would keep our Baptismal promises?
2. Give the meaning of prayer, thinking of The Lord's Prayer.
3. Why do we pray?
4. What counts most with God about our prayers?
5. Tell four things you should remember about prayer.
6. What do we find when we make prayer a habit?

Write out from the Catechism The Lord's Prayer, dividing it into eight parts, written one below the other. Beside it write from the Catechism "The Desire," fitting each part to the part of The Lord's Prayer to which it refers.

### PRAYER.

Let Thy merciful ears, O Lord, be open to the prayers of Thy humble servant: and that I may obtain my petitions, make me ask such things as shall please Thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## CONFIRMATION. THE HOLY COMMUNION. Lesson 11.

We now come to the last subject for study in our Confirmation lessons, although we will have something further to say about your Confirmation day and what it should afterwards mean to you. This last and important subject is the **Holy Communion**.

When you go into church, the thing that is most noticeable is the Communion Table. It is usually raised up at the east end of the church, so that all may see it, in what is called the chancel, so called because it was once fenced off with a screen. (The word "chancel" came from the Latin "cancelli," which means a lattice or railing.) In most of our churches you will see other things—the Font, Prayer Desk, Lectern, and Pulpit. These are all important—the Font because there those being made members of the Church are baptized; the Prayer Desk because there prayers are offered to God; the Lectern because there the Word of God is read; and the Pulpit because there the Word of God is preached. But they all (with the exception of the Font, which, because Baptism means being received into Christ's Church, it put near the door) are put on one side or other of the chancel, for nothing must come in the way of the Communion Table—the most important thing in the whole Church. There centres the highest, holiest, and most precious of all the services held in the church—the Service of Holy Communion.

### And what is the Holy Communion?

(a) **It is a Sacrament.** You remember that the Catechism teaches that Baptism and the Holy Communion, or Supper of the Lord, are the two Sacraments our Church recognises as having been ordained or ordered by Christ Himself as "generally necessary to salvation." That is to say, our Church considers that, to be a Christian, saved from sin to a life of righteousness, Baptism is necessary ("He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," Christ said); and to continue in that life of righteousness, or Christian life, the Holy Communion is necessary—but only generally speaking, that is, where Baptism and Holy Communion can be had. For God can and does save and keep and help His children without the Sacraments, where such Sacraments are not to be had. But where they are to be had, they should not be done without, for they were ordained or ordered by Christ Himself, and, therefore, must not be neglected. Our Church only gives the name of **Sacrament** to those ordinances or rites directly ordained or ordered by Christ, and the only two the Scriptures show us were ordained by Christ are Baptism and the Holy Communion.

(b) **It is a Means of Grace.** You have learnt that "grace" means every kind of help given by God to His children. The Sacraments are the two chief means by which God gives His grace. In the Sacraments this grace is given through symbols or signs, chosen by Christ Himself, which suggest the kind of help that God gives with each Sacrament. These symbols or signs are what the Catechism calls "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace" that make up a Sacrament; that is, "a sign that we can see of something we cannot see." The "outward and visible sign" of Baptism is **water** (placed on the child's forehead with the sign of the Cross "in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"), because water suggests washing or cleansing, and because the "inward and spiritual grace" or good that comes of Baptism is the cleansing of our souls from sin and the receiving of God's forgiveness through Jesus Christ. The "outward and visible sign" of Holy Communion is **bread and wine** (given and received at Holy Communion), because bread and wine suggest food that gives strength and refreshment to our bodies, and the "inward and spiritual grace" or help that God gives in Holy Communion is food or strength and refreshment to our souls, through Jesus Christ, the "Bread of Life" (John 6:48), to help us live our Christian life.

### How to Prepare for Holy Communion.

We have said that the Sacraments are means by which God gives His grace to His children. But the Prayer Book reminds us that if we would have them be the spiritual help to our souls that God intends them to be,



we must receive them "worthily." If we were invited to dine with the King of England, how we would prepare ourselves to be worthy of the honour! How much more should we prepare ourselves when we are coming to meet our Lord in His appointed Feast of the Holy Communion! What, then, does it mean to receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion worthily? We find the answer in the Catechism and in the Communion Service, both of which show that we should come to Holy Communion with "repentance, faith and charity."

If there is one thing more certain than all others, it is that sin is hateful in the eyes of God, and that sin persisted in and unrepented of is the worst kind of barrier between us and our worship and communion with God. And that barrier remains until we confess our sins to God and receive His forgiveness. Before coming to Holy Communion, therefore, you should, as the Catechism says, "examine" yourself and see if you are sorry for what you have done wrong; and, being sorry, confess the wrong to God, with faith in His mercy to forgive through Jesus Christ. But because we cannot expect God's forgiveness if we are not forgiving towards others, you should also examine yourself to see if you have made up, or done your best to make up, any quarrels you may have had, or at least have put away any ill-feeling towards others. Having done this, you will come to Holy Communion with a clear conscience, and with all barriers between you and God cleared away. And you will be receiving the Sacrament of Holy Communion worthily, truly repentant for your past sins, longing for God's help to be better; and, believing in Him, you will be trusting His promise to make the Sacrament do good to your soul.

### How to receive the Holy Communion.

Remember how the Sacrament of the Holy Communion, or the Lord's Supper, was instituted on the night on which Jesus Christ was betrayed (Matthew 26: 26-29; Mark 14: 22-24; Luke 22: 19-20; 1 Corinthians 11: 23-25). Let your thoughts go back to that night and that Upper Room. Think to yourself that the Holy Communion of which you are partaking is the one lasting proof of Christ's life on earth; that at your Service bread is broken and given, and wine blessed and given, and practically the same words spoken as in that Upper Room; and that you are Christ's disciples, even as were those who were with Him on that night. You will not have with you, as did those other disciples, the visible presence of Jesus, your Master; but let the giving and receiving of the bread and wine, as He commanded, carry your thoughts reverently back to His death on the Cross, and up to Him, as He ever lives to bless and help those who, in receiving the Sacrament of Holy Communion, obey Him in faith.

If you receive the Holy Communion in this way you will be receiving it as Jesus Christ intended; you will be confessing that He is your Saviour who died for you, Who lives for you, and Who will one day be coming back for you. You will be "showing forth His death until His coming again." You will be pledging yourself to be loyal and true to Him to the end, as His faithful soldier and servant.

And you will find, as have believers all through the ages who have faithfully received the Holy Communion, that your soul is strengthened and refreshed. Not by the bread and wine (though you must think of them reverently, yet not superstitiously, for they are only symbols), but, as the Catechism says, by "the Body and Blood of Christ." For as strength comes to our body through the food we eat, so in some wonderful and mysterious way that our human minds cannot understand, there comes, or is "communicated" to us with the taking of the bread and wine at Holy Communion, Christ's Divine strength, giving our souls power and strength and refreshment, which are ours because of Christ's giving His Body and shedding His Blood on the Cross for us.

Yet, knowing all this, you might sometime be tempted to ask:

**Why should I come to Holy Communion?** Think of these answers:—  
1. Because you are invited to come to it by our Lord and Saviour, Who said, "This do in remembrance of Me" (1 Corinthians 11: 24). It would be

a very serious thing to refuse to accept an invitation to a feast from the King of England, and an unkind thing to refuse to accept an invitation from a dear friend. How much more serious and unkind to refuse to accept such an invitation from the King of Kings and your loving Saviour and Friend!

2. Because your soul needs it. You know how necessary is daily food to your body, and that without it you would die of starvation. Jesus' solemn words in St. John 6: 53-56 are sufficient to show how much more necessary to your soul, to make you good and pure and true, is the regular strengthening and refreshing which God gives through the Holy Communion. This being so, a true Christian will feel that he dare not neglect the use of it whenever possible, however much he might find he receives help from God through prayer and other means. God does give help through these other means, but they can never take the place of Holy Communion.

3. Because as a member of the Church it is your duty to join in the Service of Holy Communion, in which you, with fellow Christians, glorify God for His great love in the redemption of the world; thank Him for the gift of His Son to be our Saviour, and for all the benefits that are ours through His death; and pray for yourselves and others for forgiveness through the Cross of Jesus Christ.

Seeing, then, what a solemn and great privilege Jesus Christ has left us in the Holy Communion, you will not come to it as a burdensome duty, or as something of which to be afraid. It will be to you an invitation to a Feast at the Table of your best Friend, and you will come gladly and receive this Holy Sacrament with thankfulness and gratitude.

(Questions and Prayer for this Lesson are at the end of Lesson 6.)

## CONFIRMATION.

### Lesson 12.

## THE CONFIRMATION DAY.

Having learned what Confirmation is, and what is required of those wishing to be confirmed, we now come to thoughts of your Confirmation day itself—the great and happy day when you decide for Christ and His Church, the day you confess Christ before His Church, the day you consecrate or give yourself to Christ in His Church.

Before your Confirmation day you should carefully read and become familiar with the Confirmation Service. If you have done this, you will have seen that the Service is in two parts. In the first part you, the candidate, confirm the promises made in your name by your godparents at your Baptism; and in the second, you yourself are confirmed, that is, you are strengthened or made firm to fulfil those promises.

### The Order of Confirmation: You Confirm.

At the end of the first part of the Service, in response to the Bishop's question, "Do you here, in the presence of God, and of this congregation, renew the solemn promise and vow that was made in your name at your Baptism, ratifying and confirming the same in your own persons, and acknowledging yourselves bound to believe, and to do, all those things which your godfathers and godmothers then undertook for you?" you, with all the other candidates, answer, "I do." These are simple, but most solemn words. They can only be said truthfully if you have been sincere in your preparation for Confirmation, and are sincere in what you are doing. These two words mean "I do undertake, as my godparents promised for me, to be Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto my life's end. I have counted the cost. I know what I am doing." If you cannot say this truthfully, you ought not to say the words at all, for to say them and go through such a service as a mere form, without thoroughly understanding the real meaning of what you are doing, or what you are promising, would be an act of dishonesty; it would be like the enlistment of a traitor or a spy in the army of the King.

You are not, of course, expected, because you are being confirmed, to be what is called a "ripened" Christian straight away; but you are expected to be real and sincere in the solemn and serious vow you make.

By your wishing to be confirmed, the Church takes it for granted that you have resolved to follow Christ—that is, that you have accepted Christ in



simple faith as your own Saviour; that you know there are two masters to serve, Christ or the Devil, and that, knowing this, you have made up your mind and have **decided for Christ.**

If you have done this—if you are really resolved to take your stand on Christ's side as His soldier and servant in His Church—then, however weak and ignorant, or unfit and unworthy you feel, you may be quite satisfied that you are **"fit to be presented to the Bishop to be confirmed."** And, above all, you may be quite satisfied that your decision is pleasing to God, for all He asks is that you should be real and sincere in your decision to follow Christ. He will give you the grace to do it as you open your heart to the influence of His Holy Spirit.

### **The Order of Confirmation : You are Confirmed.**

This brings us to the centre of the second part of the Confirmation Service, where, through the Laying-on of hands by the Bishop, you are **confirmed** by God—that is, your soul is made firm or strong by His gift of grace. The Bishop will probably have explained beforehand, in an address, what is the meaning of the Laying-on of hands, and may also have given you some thought to remember in connection with your Confirmation day. Then, as you kneel before him, and he, with the words, "Defend, O Lord, this Thy child with Thy heavenly grace, that he (or she) may continue Thine for ever : and daily increase in Thy Holy Spirit more and more, until he (or she) come unto Thy Everlasting Kingdom," lays his hand upon your head, you may take it as a sign of God's blessing and the help of His Holy Spirit to strengthen you as you earnestly pledge yourself to serve Him.

Now we give you a few suggestions that may help you to make the most of your Confirmation day.

1. Remember that it is one of those events in your life that will never happen again, so make the most of it. Do not neglect anything that might help you to come in the right frame of heart and mind. Carelessness can so easily spoil the impressiveness of a day that some people never forget in their whole lives.

2. In your morning prayer ask God to fit you and teach you and shield you from the many things that might draw your thoughts aside from the seriousness of your Confirmation.

3. Do not let yourself be worried or disturbed about such small things as dress, or the time, or what you are to do. You will only need to follow the directions of those in charge.

4. Ask your parents and godparents (if you are in touch with them) to remember and pray for you during the day and during the service.

5. Use the intervals (which are often long) in the service for serious thought and silent prayer. Think about the promises that God has given you of victory. Praise and thank Him for leading you to make the resolutions that go with Confirmation. You might repeat the prayer given with this lesson, and read such hymns as A. & M. 349, 347 and 270, H.C. 516, 517 and 354.

6. Be careful not to be led into frivolous conversation or pleasure, when the service is over. The fate of the seed sown by the wayside, in Jesus' story of the sower (Luke 8:12), is a warning in this connection. The impressiveness of your Confirmation day may be spoilt for you for all time by your indulging in some frivolity or pleasure after the service.

Above all, remember the reason for Confirmation. You are going to stand up before others and openly, before the Church, declare yourself that you desire to reject the side of Satan and clearly take your stand on the side of Christ in His Church. You will have some natural fears and misgivings because of the serious step you are taking, but it must be an occasion of great joy when you acknowledge Christ to be your Lord and you His soldier and servant, to serve Him in loyalty, obedience and love; and when, by the prayers of God's people and the Laying-on of hands of His minister, you are confirmed and strengthened with the blessings of the Spirit of God.

**(QUESTIONS and PRAYER for this Lesson are at the end of Lesson 8.)**

To those who may still be undecided and reluctant about being confirmed, a word is given at the end of Lesson 13.

## **CONFIRMATION.**

## **Lesson 13.**

### **LIFE AFTER CONFIRMATION**

Your preparation for Confirmation and your Confirmation day may be over. Yet Confirmation is not an end, but a beginning. For you are now to live the life you have promised to live, and in which you have been instructed. As a full member of the Church of Jesus Christ you have definite religious duties to perform, yet you will find after Confirmation that the hardest thing for you to do will be to "persevere" in doing those things. It is, therefore, good to make some such rules as these for your "life after Confirmation":—

#### **1. Become a regular communicant at once.**

Very much depends on this. Your watch will not go for ever without winding it up, neither will your Christian life. Confirmation has opened the way for you to attend the Holy Communion, and at Holy Communion, as you "commune with Christ," you receive from Him power and strength to live the Christian life you have promised to live. Therefore, start your life as a communicant without delay after Confirmation, and persevere in it. Coming to Holy Communion after careful preparation will do a great deal to keep you from "drifting." If it is possible for you to attend Holy Communion regularly, fix the day upon which you intend to do so. It might be every Sunday, or once a fortnight, or once a month. On the other hand, you might have the opportunity only very rarely. But resolve to communicate as regularly as possible, and although, of course, there will be times when things will unavoidably interfere, do not let anything break the habit.

If you become a regular and earnest communicant, your Confirmation day will have truly begun a new stage in your life, and every time you attend Holy Communion you will have afresh that feeling of the nearness of Christ which was so real on your Confirmation day, and which otherwise might fade away in the rush and hurry of everyday life.

#### **2. Take up at once your part in the active life of the Church.**

See to it that you are a useful and worthy **full member of the Church**, not merely an ornamental one, or a member by name only. The very idea is hateful when we remember what the Church is. It is Christ's Body, through which He has, in His love, resolved to do His work in the world. The Church is made up of those people who are its members, and every member who does not do his or her part cripples the whole body of Christ's Church. You do not want to be a crippling member, so

(a) **Attend Church as regularly as possible.** It should not be necessary to urge this, considering this is one of the purposes for which Sunday has been given us. Yet there is such a growing tendency to spend the day pleasuring and such like, without ever a thought of God or Church, or of religious duties of any kind—in spite of the Bible's clear promise of blessing to those who turn away from their own pleasure on the Sabbath and honour God (Isaiah 58:13)—that it is very necessary to remember that to fail to attend Church as regularly as possible is a definite sin of disrespect and dishonour to God, and ought really to be confessed to Him with shame and sorrow.

(b) **Work for your Church.** God has work for each member of His Church. He has work for you. He may not intend that you should be a minister, or a missionary, or a Sunday School teacher (although there is no reason why He may not have planned some such work for you); you may not even be able to take an active part in the work of the Church where you live; but it is God's will for you, as it is for all His children, that **somehow His Kingdom shall be extended somewhere by you.** God **needs** you; you **need** God. He gave Himself to you as a free gift in the gift of His Holy Spirit on your Confirmation day. He needs you in His work in the world, and to stand on His side. So do not fail Him. Do not fail yourself. Believe that you can be and ought to be useful to Him. Start straight away and pray every day: "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do this day?"

(c) **Help to support your Church.** Some of you are already earning a salary or wages of some kind, and others will be doing so later. Remember to lay aside every week for God and His work a fair share of what He enables



you to earn. Or some of you can do so now with the pocket-money your parents give you.

(d) **Know something of your Church and its Book of Worship.**

As a member of Christ's Church, you ought to know something of the history of that Church, especially of that branch to which you belong—the **Church of England**. You should learn about its great periods and its great leaders. You should know something about the history and contents and teaching of the Book of Common Prayer, which is the Church's Book of Worship, and the Thirty-nine Articles, in which we learn how the Church's teaching is agreeable to God's Word. You ought to know why we should love our Church, so that, as St. Peter said, you will "be ready always to tell others the reason of your love for your Church." (See last page.)

3. **Make the most of your Bible.**

It is by means of the Bible that God makes Himself and His will and purposes known to us, and by which we get to know Him. To get to know God is the great object of our religion, yet, sadly enough, there are great numbers of boys and girls and men and women who rarely, if ever, read their Bibles. How can they love God and be interested and keen on His work and purposes in the world if they do not get to know Him? And how can they get to know Him if they do not read His Word in which He tells of Himself and those purposes? And how can they play their part in God's purposes unless they read His Word, which tells them how to live?

Then, too, the boy or girl, man or woman, who never reads the Bible misses the messages that God does, without doubt, give to us out of the pages of His Word, to guide and direct our life. A newly converted young Christian girl living in the country was sorely tempted to join her young friends in Sunday tennis. On approaching her mother about it, her mother pointed out that what she was wanting to do was against God's commandment, and therefore she could not give her consent. About a week later the girl came to her mother and told how, unknown to her, she had planned how she might go. But, not feeling happy in her heart, she had talked about it to God in prayer, and asked Him to speak to her about it through His Word. Taking one of a number of concealed texts which her mother had in a little box, this is what she read: "Blessed are they that do His commandments." (Revelation 22:14).

This young girl knew God had spoken to her. She had proved, as so many of us who have persevered in reading God's Word have proved, and as you, if you make the best use of your Bible, will prove, that God does speak to us through His Word as clearly as you and I would speak to one another. And what is the best way to read the Bible?

(a) **Make a habit of reading a portion of it every day.** But don't read it as a dull book that doesn't concern you; read it as the world's greatest work of literature, and as a wonderful complete story of God's work and purpose for the world, which includes you. Live in the stories as you read them; use your imagination, and your Bible reading will take on a new reality and pleasure every day.

It is good to follow some set course of Bible study, such as that given in the Church Calendar or the Scripture Union Card.

(b) Never forget that it is only as you are **led and taught by the Holy Spirit** that you can understand the Bible in all its fulness of truth and teaching and guidance. Remember how Jesus said He would "send the Holy Ghost, whatsoever I have said unto you" (St. John 14:26). Therefore always, before reading your Bible, pray for the help of God's Holy Spirit, that it might be to you the very real and living Word of God.

4. **Make the most of Prayer.**

God speaks to us through His Word; we speak to God through prayer. The best way to get to know people is by talking to them and their talking to us; and, as the most important thing in the world is to know God, and the greatest thing we can do is to pray, **get to know God on your knees.**

But don't only talk to God by asking Him for things. Get into the habit of talking to Him about everything that interests you, certain that what

interests you interests your Father Who is in Heaven. There is a story told of a small boy at an English school, who was captain of his school cricket team. The other side was slowly but surely winning in a match that this boy was particularly anxious to win. Suddenly he gave the ball to another boy and disappeared, and, says his friend who told the story, "We found him in the club-house in a corner, kneeling and praying to God that our side might win." Now perhaps that was not quite the right kind of prayer; it might have been better had he prayed that God would help his side, but have left God to decide which side should win. But that boy had learned one great lesson—that there is nothing too small in our life to bring in prayer to our kind, loving and sympathetic Lord.

And remember that a few minutes' earnest prayer is worth far more than half an hour's unreal or formal prayers. It is feared that there are a great many boys and girls who never say their morning prayers (they often get up too late). Yet morning prayers are, if anything, more important than evening prayers, though both are most necessary. Think of the many temptations, or that may come through the day—temptations to evil thoughts, bad temper, unkindness, and countless other sins. And the difficulties and problems, or dangers, you might meet! Surely you need your morning prayers to begin the day with God! And in the evening there will be any sins you have committed during the day to confess, and thanks to be given to God for His care and mercies through the day, and a prayer for God's protection during the night.

There is nothing to be ashamed of in saying your prayers. The best men and women in the world all said their prayers, and were not ashamed that people should know it. One of the finest stories of the Great War is the story of the little church behind the French lines where Marshal Foch used to go and pray each day and plan out his campaign in the presence of God.

Prayer is a very great part of your work for God and His Church in her continual battle against evil. So make time to pray every day for God's work and workers in the world; pray against the forces of evil in the world. Pray for your loved ones and friends, for your rector, and for any whom you know have a need. And, lastly, pray for yourself; tell the Lord Jesus all your problems and all your joys, remembering that He loves to hear, and is waiting to help and answer you.

Try to remember these rules for your "Life after Confirmation." Ask Christ your Saviour to come and help you keep them (Philippians 4:13). Then you and others will truly reap the full blessings of your Confirmation.

One word to those who may have read these lessons on Confirmation, but have not yet been confirmed, and may not yet have quite made up their minds and are still reluctant. Decide for Christ. You believe He came and lived and died. You know He wants you and longs for your love. Come to Him now by faith, and 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 before the Church in Confirmation; live the Christian life and help others to live it. In one word, follow Christ; and you will come to know the joy of those words, "For me to live is Christ," and will one day hear the Master's words, "Well done! Well done!"

**PRAYER.**

O God, Who hast promised that we shall be partakers of Christ if we continue steadfast unto the end: Grant me the grace of perseverance, that I may never lose the gift of the **Holy Spirit**, and that I may faithfully keep the vows of my Baptism all the days of my life. May I never deny Thee nor desert Thee. Grant that I may draw still nearer to Thee in the Sacrament of Holy Communion, so that feeding upon the Bread of Life I may be strengthened to do Thy gracious will, and come at last to Thy everlasting Kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



## OUR CHURCH AND ITS BOOK OF WORSHIP.

## THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

The history of the Church of England, or Anglican Church, may, we might say, be divided into three great periods—the period of formation, of deformation, and of re-formation. In the first period it was formed, or founded; in the second it was depraved, or spoilt; and in the third it was reformed. The early British Church, founded probably by some of Christ's earliest Apostles, had its own bishops and clergy and forms of worship and teaching. But after some six or seven hundred years, when men were sent or came over from the Church at Rome, the Church of England, and England herself, came more and more under the rule of Rome, until the Church of England could hardly be recognised as the early British Church, so much was it spoilt and changed by the false teaching and practices of the Roman Church. This state of things continued for a very long time, until, through the defiance of Rome by such brave-spirited men as William the Conqueror, Archbishop Langton, and Grossteste, the Bishop of Lincoln, the English people in the reign of Henry VIII. cast out the Roman rule and freed England from its power. A few years later, through the teaching of Wycliffe and the great Bishop-Reformers, the Roman forms of worship and false doctrines and practices were also cast out, and the Church of England's doctrine and worship reformed or reconstructed on its early and Scriptural lines. This time (1549-1552) came to be known as the **time of the Reformation**.

But to say that the Church of England was founded at the Reformation or by Henry VIII. is not correct. It existed hundreds of years before. It is the same Church, and has the same name as it had ten centuries or more ago; the only difference is that its teachings and character have been greatly altered since it came to see the error of the Roman teaching and practices.

Since the Reformation days, although there have been setbacks, the Church of England has continued to grow and to be blessed by God, and to be used greatly by Him in the extension of His Kingdom, and as a blessing to millions in all parts of the world.

We should, therefore, love and be loyal to our Church, because she stands for and teaches to all her people the great truths of religion, based on the Word of God.

## THE ENGLISH BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER.

The Book of Common Prayer, that is, of united prayer, was first compiled in the reign of Edward VI. There had never before been anything like it in the Church of England, for it was all written in English. The old service books of the Roman churches were not in the least like ours, and they were all in Latin. The people knew practically nothing of them; they were really only for the use of the priests and monks, and were hard to understand and full of false practices and doctrines.

The Prayer Book was largely compiled by Archbishop Cranmer, and was the outcome of the Holy Spirit speaking to the Bishop-reformers, through the Word of God. Some of the oldest and Scriptural parts of the old service books were used, translated into English, and put into a book for the people's use, giving practically new services for the Communion, Baptism, and Ordination. But that first Prayer Book of 1549 still contained some words and practices which Bishop Cranmer felt God showed him, by His Holy Word, were wrong and superstitious, and in 1552 the second Prayer Book was put forth omitting these things. And though in 1559 and 1662 it was slightly altered and added to, the Anglican Prayer Book of to-day is mostly the same as that of 1552.

And to-day the Book of Common Prayer stands alone. There is nothing like it in the Christian world. The Anglican Church is the only church existing now that puts into the hands of all her members a book which contains, in one single convenient volume, a full statement of her doctrines (the Thirty-nine Articles), a complete form of Divine worship for her people, a catechism of instruction for her children, and the method of ordaining her ministers. We must, therefore, thank God for the Prayer Book, and pray that through it we may worship God in spirit and in truth.



