

Popish Confirmation

by Ian Paisley

Ian Paisley critiques the sacrament of Confirmation as a Popish delusion with no biblical foundation, urging believers to stand firm in the truth of Scripture.

Scripture: Mark 16:20, Acts 15:32, 1 Corinthians 1:6, Ephesians 6:17, 2 Timothy 2:15

Topics: "Protestant Reformation", "False Sacraments"

Description

Ian Paisley denounces the sacrament of Confirmation in Popery, highlighting its false claims of conferring grace and salvation under threat of anathema. He contrasts Apostolic Confirmation, based on the truth of the gospel and the Holy Spirit's work, with the empty rituals of Popish Confirmation, emphasizing the dangers of spiritual delusion and idolatry. Paisley urges the people of England to reject these man-made sacraments, stand on the truth of God's Word, and defend Protestantism against the encroaching threats of Popery.

Transcript

CONFIRMATION is a sacrament of Popery, which, it is stated, "confers grace," and without which there can be no salvation, and this is to be received under pain of anathema! While Baptism gives spiritual life, Confirmation imparts strength, and of a spiritual child makes a spiritual man.

The administration of the rite is gone about much in the same way as that of baptism. The Bishop anoints the forehead with chrism, saying, "I sign thee with the sign of the Cross, and confirm thee with the chrism of Salvation," at the same time gently slapping him on the cheek, "to remind him that as a courageous champion he must be prepared to brave with unconquered resolution all adversities for the name of Christ."

It might be supposed that confirmation was a less safe matter than baptism, as an experiment on public credulity, on account of the more advanced years of the subjects of it; but from the pains Popery takes to withhold the Sacred Scriptures, and to keep its youth in a state of spiritual ignorance, it has little to fear from years. Accordingly the matter is not minced in the "Instructions and Devotions for Confirmation," used at this moment among the English Papists, as the following will show:

"Confirmation is a sacrament instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ, to make us perfect Christians, and it is so called because it gives to them that receive it, if duly disposed, a great inward strength, a holy vigour of spirit, and firm constancy of mind for the exact discharging every duty that belongs to the Christian life,

and happily finishes in them, that which baptism had begun, making them of infants in Christianity, to become perfect men."(Instruction for Confirmation, p. 4.)

Now, this language is, at any rate, intelligible; and whether it be correct or not, may also easily be determined. The making a person a perfect Christian is a great work, which is not to be effected when he is asleep, or without his cognizance; he who receives "inward strength, a holy vigour of spirits, and firm constancy of mind," must be conscious of the wonderful work, the mighty change that has been effected in him; nor will he alone be aware of the fact, since it will never fail to make itself externally manifest to all beholders.

But is it really so in respect to Popish Confirmation? We refer the inquirer, for an answer, full and unerring, to Popish society in Great Britain and Ireland, on the Continent of Europe, and all over the world. The allegation is equally at variance with reason, with Scripture, with experience, and with observation.

Who ever met a sensible Papist, who professed to have been the subject of this wonderful change, bringing light, strength, and vigour to his soul, through the imposition of the Bishop's hands? It is altogether a deadly delusion, a lying fable, eminently calculated to further the destruction of mankind! The "strength" it imparts, if any, is that of blind confidence; the "vigour of spirit" is suicidal presumption!

This sacrament of Confirmation, so-called, is a thing wholly unknown to the Word of God. In the New Testament there is not a tittle on which it can be based; it is a pure creation of Popish craft. The word confirmation is not unknown to the Scriptures; there was such a thing as confirmation in the days of the Apostles; but no two things on earth can be more unlike each other than Apostolic and, Popish Confirmation.

The one was a reality, the other is a fiction. The one was effected by the truth of the gospel, the other through an exhibition of unmeaning mummery. Nothing can be more simple than Apostolic Confirmation; it was effected by the Holy Spirit, solely and uniformly through the truth. Paul, 1 Cor. i. 6., says, "Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you;" "the testimony of Christ," meaning the gospel, the thing believed concerning Christ, the Divine Head. It was "confirmed," that is, proved to be of God, by the miraculous powers conferred upon believers; "so that ye come behind in no gifts, waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall also confirm you unto the end."

Here, then, we have a two-fold confirmation; first, of God's testimony to man; and secondly, of man's faith in that testimony, and both by the same means. Again, "they," the Apostles, "went forth to preach everywhere, the Lord working with them, confirming the Word by signs following."

"Confirming the Word." What does this mean? It can only mean one thing-proving the Divine origin of the Word by the signs, wonders, and mighty deeds, done by the Spirit of God. Thus the Apostles confirmed Christ's mission from God, and their own mission from Christ. Again, the Apostles came to Antioch confirming the souls of the disciples," and exhorting them to continue in the faith. To "confirm the souls," and "strengthen the faith" of the disciples, by which it is realized, meant the same thing. No ceremony whatever was connected with the deed.

We hold Popish Confirmation, then, and Popish Baptism, to be a great and dangerous delusion; and it will be seen from the definitions given that they are simply two stages of the same process; the first giving spiritual life in all its parts, and the second developing those parts into maturities.

We consider these errors as most deadly and would earnestly warn the people of England against them, and beseech them not to be dazzled with dignities, cardinals, princes, and popes, but to rise superior to the idolatry of -wealth, splendour, and great names, and to do homage to nothing but the truth of God set forth in the Holy Scriptures.

The time is come, when the people of England must take their stand on Revelation, and with the sword of the Spirit be "valiant for the truth," fighting the battles of Gospel verity and Christian freedom, as did their fathers. The danger to our Protestantism is increasing every hour, and it behoves those that desire to preserve what remains, to drive the enemy from the gate, and to rid themselves without a moment's loss of time of the Popish Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation.

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