COUNSELS TO CANDIDATES FOR CONFIRMATION. FOUNDED UPON "THE ORDER OF CONFIRMATION" ACCORDING TO THE USE OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

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Counsels to Candidates for Confirmation. Founded upon "The Order of Confirmation" According to the Use of the Church of England by John W. Bardsley

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JOHN W. BARDSLEY

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Counsels to Candidates for Confirmation.

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"The Order of Confirmation"

ACCORDING TO THE USE OF

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

BY

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INTRODUCTORY.

"No bishop is ever heard to complain of the weariness of Confirmations. Often as I have spoken with my brethren in all Christian confidence, I have never heard in my life any expressions on that subject save the consciousness, as life goes on, of a deepening interest in Confirmations. And this arises, in a great measure, from a feeling of the greatness of the opportunity,"



T is not easy to realize the contrast which this statement, recently made by the Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol, presents to the infrequency and irreverence of the administration

of Confirmation during the last century.

One of the most cheering features of our own day is this more frequent and reverent administration, and in no respect is this improvement more marked than in the patient, prayerful preparation of the candidates by the parochial clergy. It is no small help in this more effectual preparation that well nigh all our young people can read, thanks to the spread of education, and that thus the instruction orally imparted by the clergyman can be largely supplemented and

strengthened by the private study of some of the numerous publications which the clergy at

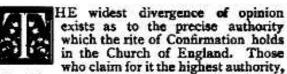
such seasons are accustomed to circulate.

Among these publications this little manual hopes to find a place. If it possess, as the writer believes, distinctive features, they will be found in the fact that it is a simple explanation of the service itself, and in the additional fact that the ordinance is presented in a brighter light than is sometimes thought desirable. Whilst the writer fully recognizes the importance of insisting with candidates upon sin as not only rebellion against God, but as a soul-destroying disease in its effects, he cannot but express his own conviction that too little prominence is given at such times to God's infinite and unspeakable love, and to the Saviour's intense and yearning compassion for the young. Though deeply solemn in its responsibilities, yet the nature of that act ought to be truly joyous whereby the young, when led by the Holy Spirit, intelligently renew their baptismal vows and consecrate themselves afresh to His service who so loved them as to give His life for them. The author has endeavoured to set before himself the rule which good Philip Henry laid down, namely, "So to manage it that the weak may not be discouraged and yet that the ordinance may not be profaned."



CHAPTER I.

CONFIRMATION: ITS AUTHORITY IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.



when they read such passages as those in the Acts of the Apostles (viii. 14-18; xiv. 22; xv. 41; xix. 6), which speak of a laying on of hands in association with the gift of the Holy Ghost and a confirmation of the disciples, and also the passage (Hebrews vi. 2) which couples "laying on of hands" with baptism in the list of the six fundamental principles of the doctrine of Christ, assume that the rite of Confirmation as now practised by the Church is a continuation of the apostolic practice there described. In some cases they go so far as to affirm that God has made its performance obligatory on Christians, and that we have no right to expect to receive this gift from Him unless we use the means thus