

# Confirmation in the Light of Prayer Book Revision

BY WILLIAM LAWTON

“CONFIRMATION, as envisaged by the Reformers and as practised in accordance with the Prayer Books of 1552 and thereafter, has little in common with the rite that was performed, either as a part of the baptismal service or as a separate act, in the Church of the early centuries, and it has no direct scriptural precedent,” says Professor G. W. H. Lampe in his book *The Seal of the Spirit*. If this contention is correct many current practices ought to be reviewed. There are some in the Church of England who make confirmation essential to those who would enjoy its fellowship. The Free Churchman who wishes to join the Church of England is told that he must be confirmed by a bishop, even though his own denomination may have provided him with some equivalent means of sharing fellowship. On the other hand, the Roman Catholic who joins the English Church is not likely to be confirmed, and the ground will be given that he has already been confirmed by a Roman Catholic bishop. Here a further subtlety appears, for we are told that a member of the Church of Norway must be confirmed whilst a member of the Church of Sweden must not. In other words, a theory of apostolic succession is implied.

In practice then, the Church of England today seems to insist not only on confirmation but on episcopal confirmation, by a bishop whose orders accord with some supposed unbroken succession that reaches back to the apostles. The emphasis, both implicit and explicit, is on confirmation as the basis of fellowship. Though not officially defined as such, confirmation is being treated as the rite of initiation, where “through prayer with the laying on of hands by the bishop, the Holy Spirit is received to complete what He began in Baptism . . .” (Revised Catechism, presented to Convocation January 1961; Ans. to Quest. 46).

In the light of this tendency, especially if Professor Lampe’s contention is correct, we must carefully examine our current attitudes and practices, “that nothing be ordained against God’s Word”. The emphases increasingly evident in the English Church since 1928 make it imperative that we study closely the presuppositions underlying the present service to determine whether we are in fact about to accept revisions that have no warrant in Scripture, and even worse, are destructive of the biblical doctrine of regeneration.

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Neither the Prayer Book, nor the general practice of the Western Church allows of the view that the essential matter of the rite of confirmation is in the imposition of the bishop’s hands. However, as distinct from the theory of the unreformed church, the Church of

England asserts that the *matter* of confirmation is the activity of ratifying and confirming baptismal vows on the part of the candidate. The laying on of hands is incidental to the rite as it now appears. This view is elaborated in the Homily of Common Prayer and Sacraments where it discusses "Confirmation of children by examining them of their knowledge in the Articles of the Faith and joining thereto the prayers of the Church for them". The essence then of our Service is that the *candidate confirms his baptismal vows*, and not that the bishop confirms or lays hands on the candidate.

Further, there is no claim in our official formularies that "in ministering Confirmation the Church doth follow the example of the Apostles of Christ" (1928 Prayer Book) such as is elaborated in the eighth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. Instead, the service contains only reference to the imposition of hands as having apostolic precedent and understands this as a mark of fellowship and solidarity. Within the order of service any reference to the imposition of hands "after the example of (the) holy Apostles" is significantly relegated to an aside in one of the concluding prayers. The emphasis of the whole service is, as has been pointed out, upon the activity of those baptized as infants confirming their vows before the congregation. About this last statement more will be said later.

Essentially, the Confirmation Service that appeared in the First English Prayer Book of 1549 was new. Its relation to the service of confirmation in the unreformed church is in title and some general principles only.

The present Roman Rite of Confirmation is very brief and is usually administered by the bishop. The service commences with the imposition of hands after which the candidate is anointed with oil on the forehead, with the words, "I sign thee with the sign of the Cross and confirm thee with the *chrism of salvation*. . . ." According to the Council of Trent (Sess. VII, *De Conf.*, C. iii), the bishop is alone the *ordinary minister*, but the Roman Church allows that in extraordinary circumstances a priest may administer the rite, provided he obtains a special delegation from the Pope and uses chrism blessed by a Roman Catholic bishop. It is worth noting that in the Uniat Churches the priest, as a *normal* rule, as against the *exceptional* rule of the Latin Church, administers confirmation.

When we turn to the Eastern Church a further variation in practice is evident. Here, confirmation is *always* administered by the priest, with no special delegation. This confirmation is accepted by the Latin Church as valid.

What we should particularly note about both these rites is the emphasis on the anointing with oil, rather than upon the laying on of hands, as the essence of confirmation. In contrast to this, we should note that the 1549 Prayer Book, so often lauded as maintaining "catholic" doctrine and practice, discontinued the consignation with oil: the imposition of hands now became central in confirmation. This tendency away from Rome was further emphasized in the Second Prayer Book of 1552 in the bishop's prayer: "Defend, O Lord, this thy child with thy heavenly grace. . . ." But, as Bishop Cosin said (c. 1604), it "seems to be rather a prayer that may be said by any

minister, than a confirmation that was reserved only to the bishop" (quoted in *Liturgy and Worship*, p. 453).

Bishop Jewel seems best to express the Reformed antagonism to the Roman service of confirmation. Of confirmation in general he says: "Christ did not command it: He spoke no word of it"; of consignation in particular he says: "It agreeth not with our Christian faith to give the power of salvation unto oil. . . . It is no fit instrument, without commandment or promise by the Word, to work salvation." (*Treatise on the Sacraments*, Parker Soc. Edn., p. 1126.)

The influence brought to bear upon the Prayer Book service seems to have come from Germany rather than from Rome. In particular, there appears to be evidence of the Church Order of Hermann von Wied, Archbishop-Elector of Cologne who himself was influenced more by the Reformed views of Bucer than by those of Luther or the Church of Rome. (Hermann's Church Order was first published in 1543 and appeared with further modifications in 1544 and 1545.) For example, the first collect following the Lord's Prayer was suggested by a prayer in Hermann's *Consultatio* (published by John Daye, in an English translation in 1547 and revised in 1548). The dominant theme of the prayer is not episcopal confirmation, but that the candidate might constantly increase "in the knowledge and obedience of (God's) Word". In other words, like the Lutheran service, it is an integral part of the Catechism and, as such, emphasizes the ratification of the baptismal vows by the candidate.

Whilst there is a fairly clear verbal dependence upon this Church Order on the part of the First English Prayer Book, the *idea* may have been suggested by the translation of Erasmus's *Exhortation to the Study of the Gospel*, written in 1523. Here, it was urged that it would be desirable "if those who were baptized in their childhood when they come to the age of discretion were commanded to be present at such sermons, wherein it should be declared plainly unto them what is contained in the profession of baptism, and afterwards were diligently examined of each of them by himself, of honest and virtuous men, whether they understood well and remembered such things, which the priest had taught them. And if it shall be found and perceived that they understand and remember well enough, let them be asked whether they ratify and be content with that promise which their godfathers and godmothers made in their name and their behalf when they were baptized. If they say 'yea' thereto, then let the profession be openly renewed, when all be gathered together, which be of one age, and that with godly and sober fashions and ceremonies, meet, chaste and earnest, and solemn, and such as be seemly and according to that profession, than the which profession there cannot be any more holy or more strong." (Quoted by D. B. Knox, *The Doctrine of Faith in the Reign of Henry VIII*, p. 249.)

In Erasmus, as in Hermann, the same attitude to confirmation is evident: it is a ratification of baptismal vows by the candidate, before the congregation. As such, then, the rite is new among the Prayer Book services. It bears only a superficial resemblance to the Latin rite and is more dependent on the confessional declarations of the Continental Reformers.

The dependence of the Prayer Book on Reformed models is most clearly seen when we investigate the relationship that exists between the catechism and confirmation in the English rite. The present book of 1662 preserves a balance established in 1549. According to the Table of Contents as found in the copy of the Book of Common Prayer annexed to the Act of Uniformity, 1661, item no. 19 appears as: "The Catechism with the Order for the Confirmation of Children." This should be carefully compared with the Prayer Book as now printed, where the item has been, without authority, divided.

The intention of the Revisers would seem to have been similar to that of the Reformers of 1549 and 1552 where the service was entitled "Confirmation wherein is contained a Catechism for Children". Though the 1662 Book does not define so closely the union of catechism and confirmation as did the earlier Prayer Books, the rubrics nonetheless involve some such connection: the opening rubric of the confirmation service follows quite naturally on from the two concluding rubrics of the catechism; further, the concluding rubric just referred to states that, "*if the Bishop approve of them, he shall confirm them in the manner following*". Such approval would most naturally be the form set forth in the catechism.

The establishing of this point emphasizes the nature of confirmation as a ratification of vows on the part of the candidate, and not as a laying on of hands by a bishop.

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As against the view just stated, it has been objected that the Prayer Book of 1662 emphasizes the function of the bishop by describing the rite as "The Order of Confirmation, or the laying on of hands upon those that are baptized and come to years of discretion". It is therefore suggested that the title regulates the interpretation of the rite. It should be emphasized, however, that this alternative description of confirmation was added to the amended Book of 1604 *under pressure from the King*, for whom episcopacy was not just a matter of policy but of orthodoxy. According to Cardwell in his *History of Conferences and other proceedings connected with the revision of the Book of Common Prayer, 1558-1690*, the King demanded satisfaction about confirmation, insisting that the candidates "be confirmed with a blessing, or prayer of the bishop, laying his hands upon their heads, abhorring the abuse in popery, where it was made a sacrament and corroboration to baptism" (p. 172). Upon the insistence of the Bishops of London and Carlisle, the King was directed to Calvin's interpretation of Heb. 6: 2: "His Majesty called for the Bible, read the place of Hebrews, and approved the exposition" (p. 173).

What is significant here is not so much Calvin's interpretation of Hebrews but the appended doctrinal comment that the laying on of hands is not "a sacrament by which the spirit of regeneration is conferred, a dogma by which they (the Papists) have mutilated baptism". Rather, he emphasizes that it is "*an appointed rite for prayer, as Augustine calls it*"; he further describes it as "the profession of faith which youth made" (*Commentary on Hebrews*, p. 134). The special activity of a bishop is nowhere mentioned.

It would seem then, that the title of the service was amended by a king who felt that episcopacy was a necessary concomitant of monarchy and yet who accepted an interpretation that, in fact, ignored the function of the bishop and asserted that the matter of confirmation consisted in the candidate's ratifying of his baptismal vows. In point of fact, the title as amended was rendered ambiguous by the ensuing discussion and, despite the amendment, the rite continued to be viewed according to Reformed principles. The addition must be grouped with many others established by this Conference as representing a departure from the intention of the Reformers and as obscuring the clarity of Reformed worship as established in 1552.

This episcopal confirmation as laid down by the Prayer Book can hardly claim to have universal approval. As has been pointed out, there are times, even in the West, when the rite is administered by a priest, even were we to allow a similarity of intention between the Reformed and Latin rites. The Church of England, by emphasizing the action of the bishop is not trying to turn this rite into a quasi-sacrament. In intention, it was to form part of the bishop's visitation of his diocese. Canon 60 of 1604 laid down that confirmation was to be performed by every bishop during his visitation every third year unless he was prevented by illness, in which case it was to take place the following year.

The importance of the bishop, then, is demanded solely by virtue of his other more important function, that of visitation. By implication (and this will be elaborated shortly) the rite will be administered in the presence of the congregation—that is, as with baptism, “upon Sundays . . . when the most number of people come together”. The function of the bishop, here, is no doubt to be paralleled by similar traditions in the early Church.

Our earliest traditions from the post New Testament Church indicate that baptism was administered by the bishop; only in the absence of the bishop could it be performed by “the presbyters and deacons, not, however, without the bishop's authority”. (Tertullian, *On Baptism*, 17.) But, in time, baptism became a normal activity of the presbyter whilst a laying on of hands previously associated with the act of baptism was still retained by the bishop. Originally, this laying on of hands had to do with the reconciliation of schismatics and heretics and only gradually became associated with a curious doctrine of the Spirit which later developed into what the medieval Church called confirmation.

It may be that Cranmer's service of “Publyke Baptisme” in the 1549 rite was an endeavour to retain this early practice of baptism with the laying on of hands. Immediately after the baptism, the rubric requires that “the Godfathers and Godmothers shall take and lay their hands upon the child . . .”. The ceremony was removed in 1552 and has not reappeared in subsequent revisions.

The activity of laying on of hands has been retained by the Church of England in the service of confirmation (though, as we have seen, it must be understood in the terms of Reformed theology). But the retention of the practice has led modern revisers of the Prayer Book to conclude that our service is to be linked historically with the custom of

earlier ages, reaching back, it is assumed, through the early fathers to the New Testament itself. But what the discussions overlook is that the New Testament evidence demands quite another interpretation, and that the earliest writings, outside the New Testament, permit of an interpretation consistent with the New Testament pattern.

When the New Testament speaks of the laying on of hands, the indications are hardly to be understood of some indispensable rite. The chief passage cited by modern revisers (for example, the 1928 Book) is Acts 8: 14ff. where the imposition of hands is associated with the gift of the Holy Spirit. This is hardly confirmation in the modern sense of the word. Clearly, the laying on of hands is a mark of fellowship; the circumstances of Acts 8 were unusual and the reception of these non-Jewish converts required some further recognition on the part of the Jerusalem church. Here the progress of a missionary church is being depicted. The evangelization of Samaria was a turning point in the Church's mission. As Acts unfolds, we see that here is a new base from which the Church will move forward "into all the world". In the light of these facts, it might be argued with some justification that the author has included the description simply because it was irregular. If we insist on using the word "confirmation" in the context of Acts 8, then it must refer to nothing other than the confirmation of the baptisms in Samaria rather than of the persons baptized.

It will certainly be objected that at Acts 8: 17 we read, "Then laid they their hands on them, *and they received the Holy Ghost.*" In pursuance of his thesis, Dr. Lampe points out (p. 76) a passage that is remarkably parallel to the one under consideration. He claims that Paul's arrival at Ephesus marks "another decisive moment in the missionary history". Once again, there is an imposition of hands (Acts 19: 8-20) and it is possible that it is Luke's intention to show a parallel between the ministry of Paul and that of Peter. At several other points certain deliberate parallels are made—for example, 3: 2ff. and 14: 8ff. ; 5: 16 and 16: 18 ; 8: 18ff. and 13: 6ff. ; 9: 36ff. and 20: 9ff. ; 12: 7ff. and 16: 25ff.

Nowhere are we told that the apostles invariably imparted the Holy Spirit by the imposition of their hands. There is no constant pattern in the giving or receiving of the Spirit ; as St. John says, "He breathes where He wills" (3: 8). We should rather recognize that in moments of crisis or decision God may awaken a man to the already present gift of the Holy Spirit or, as in Acts 8, He may impart Him for the first time. We must at all costs avoid the danger of reading back into the New Testament the domestic rules of the modern church.

To defend the doctrine of confirmation by recalling Hebrews 6: 2 is surely to evacuate the rite of any significance at all : a fact is mentioned but no interpretation is given. It is interesting to note, therefore, that Calvin's interpretation of this passage was used in the Hampton Court Conference of 1604 and approved by the King, and that no concept of the Spirit being imparted by the imposition of hands was admitted. It is impossible to argue from a few isolated passages to a universal practice. Though St. Paul devotes numerous passages to baptismal teaching, he never once alludes to the practice of confirma-

tion and considering that Paul stresses the necessity of receiving the Holy Spirit, the omission is all the more noteworthy.

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When we turn to the Church after the apostolic period we still have no clear evidence for the practice of confirmation. The writer of 2 Clement, for example, maintains that entry to God's Kingdom is assured if we "keep our baptism pure and undefiled"; there is no mention of a further strengthening by confirmation (see ch. 6: 9). The earliest suggestion that there may be a regular gift of the Spirit associated with the laying on of hands is in a passing allusion in Irenæus (c. 130-200). Yet the allusion to Acts 8 that is made is not developed so as to allow of an undisputed interpretation, and must be balanced by his numerous clear assertions that Christians are given the Holy Spirit in baptism (cf. *Adv. Haer.*, 4, 38, 2; *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*, 41f.).

The closest approximation to later views of the laying on of hands associated with the gift of the Spirit is in Tertullian (*Liber de Baptismo*). Yet even here the rite of imposition of hands and baptism are one, and there is no justification for calling this rite confirmation, as the Church of England has defined it. Clearly Tertullian indicates that baptism by water is inadequate. In *De Bapt.* 17 he says: "not that in the water we obtain the Holy Spirit, but that, cleansed in the water, we are prepared for the Spirit". This teaching is surely to be linked with Tertullian's general antagonism to the lukewarm religious practices of the day. He says in his *Apology* (ch. 17) that a Christian is not so born but that he becomes so. His writings show a degree of concentration on the work of the Spirit that is not elsewhere to be found. It seems fairly certain that any use of Acts 8 in this connection is rather for polemical than for exegetical purposes.

Dr. Lampe comments: "The unfortunate fact appears to be that Tertullian's theory of the Holy Spirit in relation to baptism can be defended only at the cost of his consistency; and we must hold his confused thought on baptism and the laying on of hands responsible in no small measure for the difficulties and ambiguities which have continued from his days to our own to hamper the working out of a reasoned theology of the operation of the Spirit in baptism and confirmation" (*Op. cit.*, p. 162).

The third century evidence of the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus is often cited as establishing an implicit connection between baptism and the laying on of hands in which the latter mediates the Spirit. But even here we should note that confirmation, such as it is, is by the anointing with oil; the laying on of hands is merely a preliminary. Dr. Lampe comments again: "The chief lesson that the study of the fathers has to teach us on the subject of baptism and confirmation is that, from the time when the Pauline teaching had given way to a conception which associated the gift of the indwelling Spirit with external rites rather than with the believer's faith union with Christ, the thought of the early Church was at least as muddled as our own is today" (p. 185).

As far as the New Testament is concerned, the important thing is

not that the disciples were confirmed but that they were baptized. It is only as we regain a proper conception of the meaning of baptism that confirmation will once again fulfil its rightful rôle. Bishop Jewel voices the attitude of the Reformed Church against an undue emphasis upon confirmation: "Whosoever is baptized receiveth thereby the full name of a perfect Christian, and hath the full and perfect covenant and assurance of salvation; he is perfectly buried with Christ, doth perfectly put on Christ, and is perfectly made partaker of His resurrection" (*loc. cit.*).

Even though a bishop conducts the service of confirmation, the intention is not to exalt the rite over baptism. It is simply a liturgical prayer-meeting where the persons confirmed have met chiefly to ratify their baptismal vows before the congregation. As the Homily of Common Prayer points out, to this ratification of vows there are joined "the prayers of the Church for them".

Neither the New Testament evidence nor the witness of the earliest churches gives us any right to exalt this service to the status of a sacrament. Confirmation, as practised in the Church of England, is a domestic rule established at the time of the Reformation. The present service provides for the candidate to ratify or confirm the promises made for him at his baptism. Inasmuch as it requires a public confession of faith in Christ, it has apostolic precedent. Our *practice* of confirmation is simply *one way* of expressing this confession of faith. The activity of laying on of hands is incidental to the rite. It is as incidental as the laying on of hands was in the Old Testament cultus.

In the consecration of kings in ancient Rome or in the appointment of rabbis the laying on of hands was a natural symbol. When the Seven were appointed in Acts 6: 6 there was again a laying on of hands. Our Lord lays hands on the sick or blesses the children and in no instance is the Spirit given sacramentally. Here is a common symbol representing prayer, blessing, relationship in some close way, and surely, as in Acts 8, in extension of this a commission for service in the missionary Church.

Within our service of confirmation, the laying on of hands represents a similar unity of prayer and of purpose. There are, however, tendencies in the modern Church which obscure this character and make one wonder whether the revised services have rather grown out "of the corrupt following of the apostles". This is especially so when we note the constant reiteration of Acts 8 in a way which violates its context and does despite to baptism and the New Testament doctrine of grace.

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The tendency already observed in the 1928 Book is amplified in the revised confirmation service produced by the Liturgical Commission. The Scripture lessons all emphasize the *coming* gift of the Spirit in such a way as to see its fulfilment in confirmation: Joel 2: 28ff., Acts 1: 3ff., and Jn. 14: 15ff. are all used to demonstrate this point. On reading the service, it is impossible to avoid the view that if the Church of England were to accept this Order of Service or one like it, it would be turning aside from the one fundamental liturgical principle expressed in Article XXXIV, "that nothing be established against God's Word".



This is only the liturgical sanction of that type of theology expressed, for example, in L. S. Thornton's *Confirmation Today* (p. 9), that in the apostolic ministry (that is, through the ministrations of the bishop in confirmation) we are sealed by the Spirit "unto the day of redemption". He develops the implications of this theory to the effect that no unconfirmed person is true Christian.

It is a view such as this that is being pressed in modern proposals for revision. But this new liturgical principle finds expression in a declared reverence for antiquity. We seem set on the quest of reviving what is ancient simply for its own sake with no thought for corruptions that were imposed on the Church in a tolerant pagan society. On the one hand, the desire for what is "primitive" is nothing more than a justification of present abuses; on the other, it is a refusal to see that the only true basis for liturgy is upon the revealed Word of God. "Whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation" (Article VI).

When we turn to the rubric which enjoins that "none shall be admitted to the Holy Communion until such time as he shall be confirmed, or be ready and desirous to be confirmed", at first sight it may seem to refuse communion to any but the confirmed. But the concluding phrase is significant. It brings the rite back into perspective as a *local rule*, normally to be administered, though not vital either for salvation or for fellowship in the Church of England. All that is necessary is the desire and readiness to be confirmed. That is to say, the candidate must be ready to make a personal profession of faith by ratifying the vows set out in the baptismal service. In other words, it is a readiness to be confirmed in one's vows rather than to be confirmed by a bishop that is stressed.

The history of the Church in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in rural England and the United States is sufficient evidence that the administration of confirmation was a rare occurrence, so rare, in fact, that, as a rite of initiation, it would have made Church membership the exception rather than the rule. That confirmation does not grant entry into the Church is testified to by our emphasis on membership in a parish with voting rights for those who are *baptized*.

The intention of the Reformers is clear: confirmation did not grant entry to the Church. The 1549 Prayer Book elaborates this in the last of its "divers considerations" why "this order (of confirmation) is most convenient to be observed": "And that no man shall think that any detriment shall come to children by deferring of their confirmation: he shall know for truth, that it is certain by God's Word, that children being baptized (if they depart out of this life in their infancy) are undoubtedly saved". The substance of this rubric has been retained in the present Prayer Book at the conclusion of the service for the Publick Baptism of Infants. In other words, it is baptism and not confirmation that designates our formal adherence to the congregation.

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In the light of present discussions on church unity, it may be desirable to abandon the practice of confirmation lest it become a barrier to

fellowship. If we are correct in regarding it as simply a domestic rule, then we have no right to insist that others should conform in a matter that is indifferent. A. C. Headlam, discussing the problems of the 1920s about intercommunion, says: "I am surprised to see that it is now being proposed that we should insist upon confirmation as a condition of reunion". (Here he quotes Bishop Gore on the subject.) "I am quite certain that if we are going to do that sort of thing we may as well give up talking about reunion at all" (*Doctrine of the Church and Reunion*, p. 294).

If, however, apart from the question of reunion, we determine to retain our custom of confirmation, then, to avoid ambiguity in doctrine and practice, we must understand the service in terms of the title as it appeared in the Annexed Book, *The Confirmation of Children*, referring of course, to those baptized as infants. The service forms part of the Church of England's instruction to its youth. As with the Reformed and Lutheran Churches, it undertook catechism instruction: it intended to put into operation the same principle expressed by Calvin, that confirmation is "a catechizing, in which children or those near adolescence would give an account of their faith before the church" (*Institutes*, IV, 13). According to the intention of the Church of England, the child presents himself before the church and makes a confession of his faith. Ideally, the confession is examined by questions and answers while the church looks on as witness. A confirmation of this sort is most desirable in the Christian Church. Of necessity, it will be administered "upon Sundays . . . when the most number of people come together".

Our service is sufficiently brief to be inserted in the normal Sunday meeting of the congregation. To conduct a *private* confirmation is, by the definition we have given, a most extraordinary anomaly. The only real justification for conducting a confirmation apart from the congregation is by regarding it, as does Dix (*Shape of the Liturgy*, p. 41), as the completion of baptism and as therefore being inappropriate that the person who is as yet a non-Christian should be present at the worship of the Church. Such a view can, under no circumstances, be justified in a Reformed context.

Not only, however, do we confirm those come to riper years; the present Prayer Book requires as well, the confirmation, under certain circumstances, of those baptized as adults. The concluding rubric to "The Baptism of such as are of Riper Years" suggests that it is expedient to add Confirmation to Baptism as soon as possible, "that so he may be admitted to the holy communion". This section of the Prayer Book seems to be a clear departure from the Reformers' intentions. The service for the baptism of adults was added in 1662 because of the necessity arising from the general neglect of services during the Rebellion and, further, to "be always useful for the baptizing of Natives in our Plantations, and others converted to the Faith". This is only one of the many concessions that the compromise Book of 1662 made that led it to obscure the Reformed principles. Clearly, the implications of this service had not been thought out.

There is a contradiction here, with the concluding rubrics requiring confirmation (*which, by definition, is for children*). It is doubtful

whether Cranmer would have required confirmation on the part of an adult who would be making profession of his own vows in baptism. The insistence on the addition of confirmation, is, by implication, to make baptism a preliminary rite looking to its fulfilment in the laying on of hands. This is a piece of undeveloped thinking that has been made the basis of that sort of modern emphasis which would give us a unified rite containing baptism and the laying on of hands and claim apostolic precedent. In any revision, it would be desirable, whilst retaining the confirmation of children (baptized as infants) to reject altogether the confirmation of those baptized as adults as both redundant and derogatory to baptism.

Here, however, a verbal ambiguity in the present Prayer Book may still permit of a Reformed interpretation. Clearly, the word "confirmation" is used in both a popular and a theological sense. As we have already seen, the title as amended in 1604 defined confirmation in this popular sense as a laying on of hands, and this is implied in the actual prayer of confirmation, "Defend, O Lord, . . .". However, the content of this service demanded the other, theological, sense, that confirmation is the ratifying of vows before the congregation.

The confirmation of those baptized as adults may be meant to refer to the ratification of vows and nothing else. In other words, it may involve nothing more than a recitation of the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments. In this connection, it is interesting to notice that the services of 1549 and 1552 commence at the suffrage, "Our help is in the Name of the Lord". That is to say, with the partial division of catechism and confirmation in 1662 an introduction was added defining the nature of the service as a ratification of vows. The confirmation of those baptized as adults may have been intended to involve simply the first part of the Service down to the answer "I do". To add to this service a laying on of hands need not, of course, imply anything undesirable; but in the light of modern emphases, such an addition could only render the service ambiguous and allow for the intrusion of false doctrine.

In this context, we ought to reconsider the multiplicity of commissioning services that are held, where individual groups again make the sort of promises once made in confirmation. It is not to suggest that these are without their value. But surely, their very use indicates that not only is confirmation regarded as inadequate, but that a defective attitude to baptism also prevails.

As a local rule of the Church of England, confirmation fulfils a very useful rôle. A revision of the Prayer Book must consider the implications of Reformed worship as we have received it. The 1662 Prayer Book, according to the Constitution of the Church of England in Australia, is to be "regarded as the authorized standard of worship and doctrine in this Church, and no alteration in or permitted variation from the Services or Articles therein contained shall contravene any principle of doctrine or worship laid down in such standard" (Section 4; Ruling Principles).

In the light of a tendency more stringent even than the requirements of the Church of Rome, we ought to notice what, for example, the *Summa Theologica* says in its supplement (*Supplementum, Quaest.*

XXXV, Art. IV). Speaking here about ordination, it argues that whilst baptism is essential, confirmation, although fitting, *is not necessary*. Headlam comments: "There is, I think, a tendency of a certain section of the English Church to be far more orthodox, to be enamoured of their own correctness, to desire to impose whatever they do on others, and to forget that there has been in the Christian Church very great variety of custom" (p. 296). To impose a one-sided interpretation on the authorized use of the Church, which a new rite could quite easily do, would be to make nonsense of our formularies and would exclude in time a continued testimony to the Reformed faith. The interests of Evangelicals would be best served by a revision more in keeping with the principles of the 1552 rite, or at least by a retention of the present use with the rubrical directions made more explicit and the service conducted as at present by canon prescribed.

## Evangelical Fellowship in the Anglican Communion

### EVANGELICALS IN TANGANYIKA

BY ALFRED STANWAY

**T**HERE are two quite separate streams of church life in Tanganyika. The one has arisen out of the Universities' Mission to Central Africa. The other derives from the work of the Church Missionary Society, and then of later years societies like the Bible Churchmen's Missionary Society and others. The work of the U.M.C.A. commenced in Zanzibar and covers what is now the Dioceses of Zanzibar and Dar es Salaam and Masasi. When the Federation of Central Africa was brought into being the portion of South West Tanganyika that was part of the Diocese of Nyasaland became a separate diocese, and subsequently these three dioceses linked up with the other dioceses in Kenya and Tanganyika to become the Church of the Province of East Africa at the inauguration ceremony in 1960.

Any student of church history will know that the churchmanship of the Diocese of Zanzibar was for many years a type of very militant Anglo-Catholicism, and it was a former Bishop of Zanzibar that once arraigned the Bishop of Uganda and the Bishop of Mombasa on charges of heresy, which arose out of the great Kikuyu controversy, and of which there is a fairly full account in the Life of Archbishop Randall Davidson.

There has, in recent years, been a much more ready approach on the part of those working in these three dioceses to take their place alongside their evangelical brethren in the church. It might well be said that because the men in the Anglo-Catholic tradition have strong convictions, and are ready to follow them at great cost to themselves,