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Callao, Peru.

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My darling Helen: You know by this time that is the wish of papa and mamma that you should be Confirmed this next spring. I am sorry that I shall not sooner be at home, that we might from time to time talk about it; but as I cannot be I must write you a little. It is very necessary to have right knowledge when you are about to do anything of importance; for so you are less likely to make mistakes, to fail, or perhaps even to do harm by your ignorance. So I wish you to have a right idea about Confirmation. There are two principal acts in Confirmation; first in order

though not ⁱⁿ importance, the person, in this case you, confirms the promise made in his name by his or her sponsors in baptism; what that promise was you know from your Catechism. The second, and most important, part is that the person is next confirmed by God, who gives to him the gift of the Holy Ghost. If you will look at the Confirmation Service you will find both these made plain. Thus the Bishop first asks the candidates "do you renew and confirm" your promise; & also tells the congregation that it is "convenient" (that is, suitable) that they should "openly before the Church confirm the same." On the other hand they are spoken of as "all that are to be confirmed" and as those to whom "Confirmation is to be administered"; and at the end of the baptismal

and Confirmation services you will find the same way of speaking, "to be confirmed", in the rubrics at the end. Doubtless the most important use of an equivalent expression is in the prayer before the Bishop lays on his hands: "Strengthen them, we beseech thee, O Lord, with the Holy Ghost." Strengthen is a pure English word, which means the same as Confirm, which is of Latin origin. You see then there are two who confirm; the person who confirms his baptismal promise and God who confirms, strengthens, the person by the gift of the Holy Spirit. Of these the latter is by far and away the most important, for man is weak and often will fail in his most honest efforts; but God is All-mighty, "able to save to the uttermost them that so come to Him"; He cannot fail, neither can His promise. Were it otherwise, papa and

maimma might hesitate to bring so young a child to be confirmed; might say: let us wait till she is older and wiser to confirm her promises. But as it is shall we wait all those sweetest and best years in your life, those years in which the Holy Spirit and his grace can most certainly and perfectly enter into you, strengthening you; shall we keep you back from being confirmed by God. You are not too young to receive His blessing; and we may be very sure that if we kept you back from these manifested gifts of grace, Satan would not think you too young for the work of his evil spirits. Look upon Confirmation therefore in this way, chiefly as God's act towards you; by which you shall receive a special favor and blessing, beginning then and

daily increasing². You will not expect to find
this favor in great degree all at once. When you
see a little boy, like Lyle, you don't expect to
see him next day a full grown man; you
know, though, that the gift of life in him
will cause him to grow, increase day by day,
till he comes to man's size and state. Mamma
cannot make him grow. she might slave from
morning till night, and think ever so hard and he
would not grow an inch." Which of you by talking
thought can add one cubit to his stature?" The
life and growth are God's gift only. But if
mamma did not give him food, and see
him properly clothed, and that he had air and
sun and care for when sick he might well die.
Here you see is man's part. Still the life is
greater, far greater than the meat; God's part
than man's part. So much greater that St Paul,
speaking of his spiritual life, said: "I live, yet
not I, but Christ is living in me". I have
accordingly spoken and wish you to think
much more of it - on the other hand you have

Something to do, as mamma has to keep your
life, which God gave you, well and strong. To tend
and care for the spiritual life, the gift of the Holy
Ghost, which God gave you when you were baptized
and strengthened when you are confirmed, you must
do every day those things which your sponsors
promised and the sum of them is in the lines:

If in our daily course our mind

Be set to hallow all we find &c

There are many wise ways of managing which you
will learn from time to time, but prayer, watching
trying, this is your part - and to hallow all will
lead you to pray and watch and struggle. Do not be
afraid to promise this because you may fail. Your
promise is not that you will never do wrong and
always do right, such a promise would be a lie to
begin with - Your promise is that you "will not follow
nor be led by" Evil. A person does not follow
because he falls down, nor is he led by one who
suddenly jerks him out of his road; no more
does one follow evil, because he falls into a sin; nor
is he led by it, if it one a sudden overthrows him.
Following or being led applies to the daily course

to the direction in which you are moving, not
to particular falls. If you promised to go to Madison
square and not stop it would not be breaking
your promise if by looking at a carriage you
stumbled and fell, or if some mischievous children
were to catch you unawares and drag you toward (16)
Broadway. Get up again and go on, break from
them and resume your way. Yet do not excuse

yourself too easily - Looking round is a fault
if it may cause a fall, though it is not making
a promise - and if you knew the children might
do that thing, you were to blame for not
avoiding them.

Your loving papa

Letter about confirmation

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