

one it moved as an avalanche moves. It carried all before it.

Since then there has been no such conversions of whole nations to Christ as were so common aforetime. In our day even faith, zeal, prayer, and gifts, are not wanting, but men and means are wasted and efforts are minimised by reason of our unhappy divisions. Our missionary work at home and abroad is administered with wicked waste. There are places where missionaries of half-a-dozen different sects are eagerly competing for converts, while elsewhere, whole nations still lie in heathen darkness. So, too, all around us in our own land to-day, there are places by the thousand where one good church would hold all the people and one pastor shepherd them, but where there are instead half-a-dozen poor little churches, and as many poorly equipped, poorly supported, and often abused pastors. Worse yet: there are spiritually waste places all over this broad land that have practically lapsed into an unchristian, if not actually heathen condition. A comparatively small proportion of the people of this nation have any even outward relation to organised Christianity of any sort. In many villages, and in our agricultural districts generally, such a thing as settled pastoral work is unknown. And yet we have few villages so small or country places so sparsely settled as to be unable to build churches and support settled pastors, if even the Christian portion of the community were of one heart and mind as to the few really essential things for a Christian to know and believe to his soul's health. And yet they find it easy enough to unite in other necessary things. They go to the same town meeting; they deposit their votes in the same ballot-box; they get their mail at the same Post Office, *but in this one matter of religion* they will not be persuaded to unite on any real and solid ground of union. Why not have a Methodist Post Office, a Baptist Post Office, a Universalist Post Office, &c.? 'Why (mensay) it would be perfectly absurd!' Yes, so it would; And yet no more absurd than are our present unnecessary and wicked divisions among those who alike acknowledge and worship a common Lord and Saviour. We all know it, too. Why not acknowledge it, and on our knees before God ask Him to help us to put away this sin, this shame and scandal to the Christian name? Why should it be thought a thing impossible? To God all things are possible.

Our present divisions are not largely our fault. They are inherited evils. The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge. The sad results, however, are no less deplorable. Nor do any escape them. If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it. Denominationalism is not only a great evil, but is a great sin, because now we all see its sad results. If it simply involved a waste of money it would not so much matter, but it involves the loss of souls. With all our manifold modern aids to missionary work the greater part of the world still lies in heathen darkness, and grievous evils,

which are directly traceable to our divided and weak condition, abound on every side in the very heart of Christendom. For over a century now Denominationalism of every sort has had full sway in this land, and it is a great and manifest failure. The masses are still unevangelised and living without God in the world. Many a so-called Christian congregation is more Christian in name than in anything else. In many others the really devout people are outnumbered and outvoted by a worldly and utterly unchristian element. The sad results are manifold—among other things, with all denominations an alarming falling-off in candidates for the ministry. But it is strange, when it is a perfectly well-known fact that in the average congregation, of whatever sort, money often goes for more than character; and a pastor, no matter how blameless and faithful, can eventually be driven from his home and flock if only one or two ungodly, and possibly utterly immoral—but rich men, once resolutely set their face against him? It is a sad, shameful blot upon American Christianity. But it is a sober, though shameful fact. Why longer conceal the fatal cancer that is eating its way into the life of our 'common Christianity?' It is a sordid age. It is engaged in a mad fight for gold. And the broken-up, weak Christianity of our day is peculiarly open to this deadly sin of simony. Brethren, whereunto will these things grow? God only knows. It must, however, be certain, even to us, that unless things are soon better they will soon be worse. God help us and save us from all narrowness, ignorance, pride, prejudice, and mere sectarianism, and of Thy great mercy grant that the comfortable doctrine of Christ may be truly preached, truly received, and truly followed, in all places, to the breaking down of the kingdom of sin, Satan, and death; till at length the whole of Thy dispersed sheep, being gathered into one fold, shall become partakers of everlasting life; through the merits and death of Jesus Christ our Saviour.—REV. W. SNYDER.—From 'The Church Union Paper,' New York.

OUR GIFT ENTERPRISE.

WE issue to-day a list of gifts open to all who fulfil the conditions specified. It is the universal custom of newspapers and periodicals to pay a certain sum to agents who secure subscribers. We propose to give every one the opportunity of acting as an agent for the DOMINION CHURCHMAN and securing the customary reward for work. There is no element of uncertainty about what we offer, we simply say to every one who reads our announcement, work for us in getting subscribers and our reward will be according to work done. In so scattered a community as that of Canada, there are hundreds of hamlets and settlements where we cannot afford to send a travelling agent, for he can make more where the population is more compact. But in these dispersed places there are thousands who would subscribe to this paper were they solicited by a neighbor. To stir up, encourage, and reward workers, we offer to all who send in lists of new subscribers

of three up to thirty, gifts of books or other articles in proportion to the number of names secured. The books are all good literature, and every article we guarantee good of its kind, being supplied to us by merchants of the highest reputation. The prices or values affixed are those for which the goods are being sold by the retail stores. Our young friends should seize this opportunity to secure some valuable books, housekeepers to acquire useful and ornamental additions to their domestic treasures, and clergymen may secure a valuable accession to their ministerial outfit, and at the same time serve the cause of the Church by enlarging the ever widening circle of those throughout the Dominion who subscribe to the DOMINION CHURCHMAN.

THE AGE FOR CONFIRMATION.

By the Bishop of Qu Appelle, in *Canadian Missionary*, to his Clergy and others.

As we intimated in our last number, the Bishop thinks it right to say a few words for the guidance of the clergy and others upon the above important subject.

We, as loyal church people, have to be guided by our Prayer Book, in this as in other matters. What then does our Prayer Book teach us? At the end of the office for the public baptism of infants the Godparents are exhorted as follows:—"Ye are to take care that this child be brought to the Bishop to be confirmed by him so soon as he can say, &c." After the Catechism there is a Rubric that says:—"So soon as children are come to a competent age, and can say, &c., they shall be brought to the Bishop." At the beginning of the Confirmation Service itself it is said that the Church hath thought good to order, That none, hereafter, shall be confirmed but such as can say (as before) to the end that children being now come to years of discretion, and having learned, &c. In the words that accompany the Laying on of Hands, it is said "Defend, O Lord, this Thy Child," Servant being put in for exceptional cases.

From all these passages it must be noted that our Prayer Book uniformly speaks of those who have been baptized as infants as (1) being "brought," (2) as "children," (3) "so soon as they can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments." No particular age is anywhere specified, but any one must admit that each of the above three requirements supposes an early age. And this is in full accord with the practice of the time. In the early Church Confirmation, or the Laying on of hands, was administered even to infants, as a part almost of baptism, though it became gradually separated when Bishops were no longer present at all baptisms. At the time of the Reformation it was always administered to children, usually between the ages of seven and twelve. It must be remembered, also, that in speaking of "children" our Prayer Book uses a term defined in the Canon Law, and therefore well known to the compilers of the Prayer Book, as beginning "at seven, and ending at twelve for a girl, and fourteen for a boy."

It may be said that the necessity that our Church has now made for a child to learn certain things implies an older age. But is this really the case? Do not most children of twelve know these things? And, besides, as we teach children to say the Catechism, we do not hesitate to ask them with reference to the promise their God parents made for them, "Dost thou not think that thou art bound to believe, and to do as they have promised for thee?" and they have to answer "Yes, verily; and by God's help so I will." Does the promise, "I do," made in the Church before the Laying on of hands involve anything more than this? It would be difficult to show how it does.

Somehow, of late years, the age from fourteen to sixteen has come to be considered the proper age for confirmation. What advantages can that age be said really to possess? It is very doubtful indeed whether, if the age of childhood is allowed to pass by, it would not be almost better in the generality of cases to postpone the age still further till full manhood or womanhood is reached, and a more determined profession of allegiance to Christ can be made. The age between fourteen, sixteen or eighteen is wont to be specially fickle and uncertain.

Our opinion on this point however, will probably be determined by our estimate of the value of the Ordinance itself as a *Means of Grace*. If we believe it to be in accordance with the belief of the whole of the early church and with the Apostolic Church ever since, the Rite in which, in answer to our faithful prayers,