

cordance with the views in which he had been educated, making light of the claims of the Anglican Church to Catholicity and Apostolicity, the only refuge he could find was Rome. "For myself," he says, "there appears no logical *via media* between this Church and open infidelity."

Against Mr. Jones, personally, we do not wish to utter one harsh word. In his erratic career we rather give him credit for sincerity of purpose, and certainly congratulate him on not having remained in total unbelief, but we would point the moral of his history as showing how near blatant Party spirit, which is destructive of charity and humility, is to the denial of all religion, to infidelity; and that nothing will really and effectually withstand the Papal pretensions except Catholic Faith, which is alone the "Pillar and Ground of the Truth."

QUESTIONS ANSWERED.

A CONSIDERABLE portion of the correspondence addressed to us privately, consists of questions as to facts or principles requiring direct answers which may be much better attended to in a separate department. We therefore purpose to devote some space to this object, which we trust will prove both useful and attractive. Some questions may require considerable research to furnish answers to them, and as libraries of reference are not very numerous or accessible in this country, a little patience may have to be exercised in waiting for the solution. Some of our young readers may meet with difficulties on which they desire information. If they will send us some questions we will give them the required information.

The following are some questions which we have been asked, with the replies we make:—

DEAR SIR,—I have a child I wish to have confirmed by the laying on of hands. Will you be so good as to tell me what is the age at which the rite should take place?

HARRY BAKER.

The Church has fixed no age for confirmation; but requires the sponsors to bring the children to the Bishop for that purpose as soon as they can say the Church Catechism. So that a Bishop has really no right whatever to fix a certain age for the purpose. Still, many Bishops do fix an age—many of them 14, others 16, &c. We knew Bishop Tonsdale, of Lichfield, on one occasion in Wolverhampton, to confirm some children at the age of eight or nine. If any age is to be regarded as Scriptural, it would appear from our Saviour's example that the age of twelve is not too young for children publicly to dedicate themselves to God. We are persuaded that much harm is sometimes done by deferring confirmation too long. Oftentimes the delay appears to arise from the mistake of supposing that confirmation is a kind of certificate of grace already received, instead of a means by which it is to be obtained.

CHURCH THOUGHTS BY A LAYMAN.

No. 22.

ODDS AND ENDS.

DURING this hot spell sustained attention is not easy; we shall, therefore, break up this number into sections, each dealing with a topic quite enough for a mouthful but not adapted for a meal. Our article on "Not Dancing to Dissenting Pipers," has been honored by the notice of "By-stander," who frankly withdraws from the position he held in relation to our views being a mere reflection of social prejudice, in gentleman-like deference to our protest against its truth. "By-stander" still, however, accuses us of rudeness in speaking of those who dissent from us as "dissenters." We fail to see on what ground the wor-

"dissenter" is objectionable; it is an exact term and a true term, and can only offend those who dislike exactitude and truth in verbal expression. Prof. Goldwin Smith knows too well the value of a good word to object to this one, when we assure him and all it concerns that by "dissenter," we mean one who dissents from the Catholic Church, be he honorable or dishonorable in a social sense.

We turn to another topic, suggested by a previous article on "Exchange of Pulpits," in which we satirized the movement as a hollow piece of sensationalism. The Congregational body were, by their organ, most indignant at our judgment; they denounced us as bigots and condescended to read us a lesson in charity. We have waited for a few short weeks, to watch how long this bogus church unity would last, and, behold, it has gone off into space like a radiant bubble of soap. The Dundee Free Presbytery has touched the thing, and lo! it has burst; that body has condemned one of its members for inviting a Congregational minister to fill his pulpit, because his views are not in accordance with the Presbyterian creed. So passes away the glory of dissenting church unity, which, some said, was the aurora of the millenium. Strange, men do not see that a bundle of sticks cannot be made a living tree, however tightly they may be forced together by an external bond. These wayward societies called "Churches," are fast discovering their isolation; their ludicrous efforts to invent a system of unity is very hopeful, however, as they will eventually turn from the broken cisterns of human devices to the Divine fountain of living unity and life, the Catholic Church.

From dissent on one wing, we will turn to get a lesson from that chief of dissenters, the Pope of Rome. Recently he has presided at a meeting of theological students who debated questions in dispute between Rome and the Catholic Church. The practice of engaging in general debates on controverted topics is of inestimable value to students. In the Divinity colleges of Nonconformity, weekly or monthly discussions are conducted, in which students are trained under the eye of a Professor to state formally the various positions of different schools of thought and to conduct a debate thereon. Now and again the discussion widens out into topics outside mere sectarian theology, and the case of Rome against Protestantism is considered, or Calvinism against the Catholic Church, or Unitarianism against Trinitarianism, or Atheism against Theism, or natural against revealed religion, or modern science in its anti-Biblical aspect. These exercises stimulate the students to habits of reading and study outside of the college course; they tend to ripen the mind, to develop it, to strengthen it and render the mental faculties more ready and elastic. A student who has paid diligent attention to the extra-collegiate course leaves college familiar with every form of objection to revealed truth and to all the views of doctrine of various churches. He can hardly be taken by surprise at any time by a disputant; he has gone over ground carefully, searchingly, and scientifically, while a student, which other men keep stumbling upon in after years without any chart or map to help them to explore. They are like navigators who have tested the shoals and depths and currents and winds of all waters, and can thus boldly conduct others in channels of enquiry from which the inexperienced shrink in fear.

Instead of our Divinity students frittering away time, as we know they do, in debating the customary absurdities of a discussion club, they should be organized under the headship of an experienced, well read President, a good logician, one familiar

with the art of formal debate, and should handle topics having a direct bearing upon the business of their lives as theological teachers and guides.

The attack made by the Rev. S. Gladstone on Sunday Schools seems to be sadly over-estimated. Eccentricity is the only chance certain men have of obtaining public notice, and a very commonplace person with such a name as "Gladstone" is under serious temptation to do something to secure attention outside his own parish. That he is a very incapable manager of the young is manifest, from his picture of a Sunday School being a scene of riotous confusion. It is not surprising, therefore, that his Sunday School is a dismal failure and nuisance, and that when, on the one hand, the Rev. S. Gladstone sees his school as he pictures it—a confused mob, where no teaching is possible—and hears, on the other, the Sunday School system so loudly praised, no wonder he gets angry and declares that "no institution has been so outrageously overpraised." A very general mistake is made here in estimating the public utterances of the English clergy. It is difficult to realize in Canada how infinitely varied, how thoroughly individualised are the clergy of England whose "livings" are freehold, who for not one cent are dependent on the people. This freedom develops all the singularities, oddities, humors and originalities latent in the clergy, and it is by no means uncommon for the bearer of a great name enjoying a family living, who is shut in by fate within a small remote parish, to do and say very strange things in order to assert his independence of clerical conventionalities, and to acquire a notoriety which helps to console his solitude in a country parish and flatter his vain conceit that he is fitted to adorn a more prominent position. Hence this attack on Sunday Schools by the Rev. S. Gladstone. It is not worthy of a more serious reply. We rank it with another clerical speech we once heard by the bearer of even a more distinguished name, wherein it was stated that the Sunday School was a violation of the Sabbath and a subtle attack on clerical order! The school of this critic had proved also a shocking failure, owing to his bad temper and want of tact. To these causes is owing all the opposition or indifference of the clergy who with Mr. Gladstone consider the Sunday School "over-praised."

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT OF A DIOCESAN MINISTRY.

BY THE REV. E. SOFTLEY, B.D.

My second proposition is, that a Diocesan Ministry should be acknowledged and conserved by acknowledging length of faithful service in the Diocese, and in making provision that the salaries be proportioned in amount, according to such service. This position is sustained by the conclusion previously arrived at. What is commended to us by man's moral sense as deserving of gratitude, and as actually appreciated by the recipients of the benefits of Christian love and labor, and as it stands connected with those individuals by whom such benefits are conferred,—such principle should be, at least, equally potent with the body corporate, the Church in its legislative aspect. They, in such capacity, may fully be expected to conserve the principle in the discharge of the functions entrusted to them. It may be said that the principle is acknowledged, and practically, as far as funds are available.

The constitution of a Widows' and Orphans' Fund and Superannuation Fund is an acknowledgment of the principle, and a valuable practical acknowledgment. In relation to both of these Funds there is great cause for gratification and appreciation of the efforts of our Bishop, while we are thankful to the great Head of the Church for our advantages, as compared with other Dioceses. Still, I do but regard it as an argument for