

except ordination?" settling that point also; apart from the fact that in many other parts of St. Jerome's own writings he flatly contradicts this maxim of his as to the equality of Bishops and Presbyters. For instance, he says, like St. Clement, that the bishop, presbyters, and deacons correspond to the Jewish High-priests, priests, and Levites. (To Nepotians); that neither presbyter nor deacon may baptize without the Bishop's leave (Against Lucifer of Cagliari); and he tells John, Bishop of Jerusalem, that he had made a grave mistake in saying, out of misjudging civility, that there is little or no difference between a bishop and a presbyter (Against John of Jerusalem). As to the testimony of Eutychius, it is much too late to be of any value, and we have direct disproof of it. The Patriarch Alexander, whom he asserts to have caused the alteration in the mode of consecrating to his own office, died in 325, a few months after the Council of Nice, at which he was present. But in 324, the year before, there had been held a Synod at Alexandria itself, to try the case of one Ischyra, who claimed to be a presbyter, on the ground of ordination by Colluthus, who had set up as a bishop, being in fact only a presbyter. The Council decided that Colluthus was no bishop but merely a presbyter, and therefore that Ischyra and others ordained by him were not presbyters at all, but mere laymen. Now, if the very Patriarch of Alexandria at that actual time had no other consecration than presbyteral, the synod held in that place could not possibly have come to any such conclusion, whatever might have been done in other parts of Christendom, where the peculiar usage just mentioned had never prevailed. There are other flaws in the story of Eutychius, but this single one is fatal, and we may omit them.

As to Bede, he does not say that the monks consecrated Aldan, only that it was from their monastery that he started on his mission. Indeed, we find something which looks more like Presbyterian rule than this amongst the Irish monks, for Bishops in some of their monasteries were subject to the Abbots, owing to the enormous influence of monasticism in Celtic Christianity. But even this tells against the Presbyterians, for those subordinated Bishops were kept for the express purpose of ordaining, which the Abbots, though superior as local rulers, were unable to do. And even the anomaly just mentioned has a parallel amongst ourselves at the present day. At Canterbury the Bishop of Dover is a Canon of the Cathedral chapter; at Chichester, Bishop Tufnell is a Canon; at Litchfield Bishop Abraham is Canon and Precentor, and in all these cases these Bishops are in their capitular character canonically subject to the Dean, though they belong to a higher grade in the Church, so that our own experience disproves the supposed objection.

—Church Times.

It is noted that the Rt. Rev. Lord Arthur Charles Hervey, Bishop of Bath and Wells, entered on the 20th of August upon his eightieth year. He was consecrated in 1869 as the sixty-ninth bishop of his diocese, which includes, with the exception of one parish, the whole county of Somerset.

THE LATE WESLEYAN CONFERENCE.

THE Wesleyan Conference, held this year in Manchester, has been occupied with discussions of a more than usually varied and interesting character. Nearly 1,000 ministers attended the pastoral session, whilst in the representative conference the laymen came very nearly up to the permitted number of 240.

In the conversation on the work and state of Wesleyanism, the Rev. E. E. Jenkins, an ex-president, made an important statement. He said:—

"I wish to say one or two words to-day in the presence of the representatives of entire Methodism on our relation to the Church of England. We are making contributions to that Church year by year, contributions of Methodist families, contributions of areas of population within Methodist circuits. With regard to this latter contribution, I am happy to find that the Home Missionary Committee is dealing with it in a way that will help in the restoration of what really belongs to us in the villages of the country. As to the contribution of Methodist families every year, I want to ask whether we are *in transitu* to some other and remoter position. Our fathers thought that they belonged to the Church of England, and rightly thought so, because they did belong to the Church of England; but we, their descendants, do not belong to the Church of England, although we are grateful to that Church for the benefits we have received. But we must teach our children in our own families that Methodism is the Church of Christ. We must show by our own example that we are in earnest in this conviction. For the Methodist Church is the best Church—the best Church to us. That we know. Let us make that opinion prevail in our own households. If we are doing the work of God as a temporary body and organisation let us say so and be honest before the world; but if we are really the Church let us say that. I know that we labour at this time under considerable disadvantage. We belong to the Church of England in our ancestry and the principles of our organisation were founded on that fact. We are now, as we hope, and as I believe, a distinct Church built upon the Apostles, and we intend to stand there. Sir, why do our people drift away? Is it not because there is something like a misgiving as to whether we are firmly and permanently a Church or not? That is what we have to resist, and if we do not resist it we may multiply our appliances *ad infinitum*, but we are breaking up. Now the Church of England, which was once apathetic, is now an exceedingly vital and active body; and in villages where we are not present there it is omnipotent. I was very much pained the other day in visiting Cornwall, and I sympathize with the representatives from Cornwall, because they represent a Methodism that is stationary and not advancing. Our ministers there are comparatively few; our local preachers are many, and the villages that lie outside the circuit towns cannot be pastorally visited by the ministers, and they are in the hands of curates, and there are a large number of curates in Cornwall. They cannot preach, but they can visit. They have gentlemanly culture, they have kind hearts, they have a munificent charity at their backs; and I should like to ask how poor, partially instructed and totally uncared for Methodists can resist temptations of this kind? They do not resist and they are going into the Church. We ought to face these things, and we ought to strive by all possible means to arrest this going over, year by year, not only of poor and village families, but of

high and respectable families to the Church of England."

On this same subject of the condition of Methodism Dr. Osborn made an equally important speech in the pastoral conference. After remarking that his mind was greatly exercised about the losses they sustained, he congratulated himself on the success of his efforts to get fuller statistics during the last six years than they had had before. From these he found that the number of new members admitted from 1881 to 1886 was 809,069. During this time 81,806 members had died, whilst the number returned as having "ceased to be members" reached the enormous amount of 160,125, the two numbers together being 191,031. Deducting this total from the number of new members admitted, they ought to have had an increase in these six years of 117,188; but the actual increase was only 82,207. What had become of the difference between 82,000 and 117,000—not units, remember, but thousands? This filled him with concern. They were laboring in all kinds of ways some very questionable, and some unquestionable in their character—laboring by an immense variety of agents, but either they did not gather in the results of their labor, or if they did gather them they lost them almost as fast as they gathered them. This very year 46,000 new members were reported as admitted; when deaths, emigrations, and those who "ceased to be members" were deducted, a balance of 12,600 was left. Had they an increase of 12,600? The answer was they had a decrease of eighty-six. To him the prospect was alarming, especially in view of the increased activity of the clergy of the established church in regard to the young. These men were patterns of attention to the schools, and their constant, devoted, untiring labor amongst the children would tell powerfully in keeping large numbers of children out of the Methodist society during the next generation. Children taught by them would be very much harder for Methodists to win. What they themselves must do was to take earlier hold and faster hold of the children whom they had baptised and whose parents belonged to them.

It was stated that there were 9,000 villages in England without any form of Methodism. In a discussion in membership, one minister said, "Methodism had developed from a religious association which almost passionately disclaimed a church position, which fiercely repudiated the idea of being a church, until they had arrived at the state of things when they were prepared to fight to the death any one who in any degree disparaged their full church position. Meanwhile one institution had remained. But the class-meeting no longer held the same relation to the entire organic life of Methodism that it did in the days when they were unencumbered with the duties and responsibilities of a great church system, and it was no longer capable of doing for the Methodist church what it had done for a few generations for the Methodist society. After some remarks from Dr. Rigg, who said they were 'the loosest church in existence,' the subject was referred to a committee, as there was a wide spread feeling that the present system of membership is marked by great anomalies that cannot be tolerated much longer."

It is clear that since Methodism assumed the title of a "Church" it has gone on declining! The reports showed that nearly all the Wesleyan funds show a seriously reduced income, and in several instances a considerably increased expenditure, with, of course, a heavy adverse balance. The Methodist