

and presbyters were equals in New Testament times, when the fact remains that Apostles and Apostolic Legates were set over them; and the real question is whether any traces of their like subordination to superior officers appears just after New Testament times. The second passage cited proves no more than that the Chapter, so to speak, of Alexandria elected the Patriarch, which is true in theory of every old cathedral chapter in the English Church at the election of a Bishop, though it was and is not the usual practice in the East. It does prove that there was no parity of rank at Alexandria from very ancient times, but that a Patriarch was set over the other clergy. And as to the question of ordination, the very next sentence in St. Jerome's letter is, "For what does a Bishop do, which a presbyter cannot do, *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-priest, priests, and Levites (To Nepotianus); 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 Ischyrras, 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 Ischyrras 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 Aidan, only that it was from their monastery that he started on his mission. Indeed, we find something which looks more like the 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 these 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 Lichfield, 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*.

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HOME REUNION NOTES.—No. xxxvi.

THE "CHRISTIAN WORLD" NEWSPAPER AND THE ATHANASIAN CREED.

SIR,—The *Christian World*—a paper with a large circulation among members of the different Christian bodies, and one which thereby might do great things for the cause of Christian unity—gave out in a leader on 'Reverence in Theology' an utterly mistaken view of the purport and origin of this Creed.

It is with great pain and no little reluctance that I give the following extracts, but it is necessary in the cause of Christian unity that such statements should be answered.

The words I refer to are these:—'The Athanasian Creed at the end of a revolting attempt to discuss the mystery of the Trinity, as though it were a subtle point of law, concludes by declaring that everybody who fails to take precisely this view of that mystery, shall without doubt perish everlastingly.'

'The irreverence of such a creed appears to us to be even a more formidable objection to it than its self-contradicting absurdities; by vain metaphysics it first belittles the Infinite and then snatches at the divine thunder to blast every one who will not construct a deity after the same fashion.'

The Creed is a collection of the decisions of Ecumenical Councils of the undivided Church, against various heretical attempts to define and explain the great mysteries of the faith. And if the writer of these sad words will carefully consult the history of the early Church and of these Ecumenical Councils he will find that by these rulings the Church attempted to define nothing. Her great duty was, and ever will be, to hand down undefiled the two great truths entrusted to her teaching:—(1), The mystery of the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity; and, (2), the mystery of the doctrine of the Incarnation of the Son of God.

As in the present day, so of old time, from the first ages of the Christian Church, it was those who *separated from the Church who added to her credenda*; seeking to define things indefinable, and exalting their metaphysical attempts to explain what had been revealed into essential verities. In the same way now each fresh schism adds to the credenda, and would make the latest addition of its own particular Shibboleth of greater importance than the eternal verities themselves.

So far from irreverently attempting to define the mysteries confided to her keeping, the Church has ever sought to *guard* the sacred deposit against the false definitions which the arch-heretics put forth from time to time to destroy the unity of the Church.

These false definitions have been one and all considered and exposed as they arose, and these denials of what is false have cleared the way to what is true, so that the work of the heretics has been overruled to build up and make stronger the defences of the faith.

When these different forms of heresy first arose they did not appear to be of such great importance, but as the new views were more fully expanded it was shown that the logical deductions from them led to a distinct denial of some *essential verity*, and those who first followed the new definition as a speculative idea ended in an open denial of the faith. Then the Church in her Councils, which we believe were overruled by the Holy Ghost, gave her decisions against the corrupt views; and these decisions were accepted finally by all the members of the Church. Thus the Creed which records these various decisions in nearly every verse condemns some distinct heresy; and contains not a *new* definition but the denial of some *false* definition; and thus becomes a sign-post to warn unstable souls against the false definition which would lead them unwarily, as in former times it had led others, to the

denial of universally accepted (or Catholic) truth.

A great deal of nonsense is talked about the damatory clauses of this Creed. They point out that these various heresies denounced one by one will lead men, who have once accepted the faith, away from the essential doctrines of the Christian revelation, and therefore place them outside the covenanted blessings. Those who have broken away from Christian unity, either by making essential an erroneous definition of the faith, or by giving undue prominence to one side of an eternal truth, have always made *their particular view* a necessity of salvation, and, though not in the same words, have *practically* added an anathema against those who reject their special view, believing that none but themselves, and those who think with them, can be saved.

The *Church does no such thing*. She gives no *new* definition, but assures us that the only covenanted way of salvation lies in a belief in the one God in Trinity, as revealed to us in the Baptismal formula, and is the great doctrine of the Incarnation of the Son of God. For in these Christianity and all the blessings of the Christian Covenant do most assuredly rest.

The Bible and the Church have equally nothing to fear from open discussion and historical research; and this remark is particularly true as to the Athanasian Creed, which some years back was vigorously attacked both in Convocation and by outsiders. At that time I had the honour of presiding at a great gathering in St. James's Hall in defence of the Creed, and the attack was rolled back and silenced for a time mainly by two great facts which were brought to the front during those discussions.

First, there was the testimony of active missionaries, fresh from the conflict with heathendom in India and the East, that *they had found this Creed most useful in dealing with the metaphysical objections of those Eastern people*; showing them that those very speculations which they were inclined to indulge in had all been advanced by great men in the early ages of the Church, and had been carefully worked out and answered by the Church long ago.

And the second great fact was an *historical* one—that the more frequent repetition of this Creed, which had been looked upon as a device of the Puseyites, had been specially ordered by Archbishop Cranmer, for the purpose of *counteracting the revival of old heresies* which at that time were threatening, under new names, to overwhelm our national Christianity.

It is much to be hoped that all those who really care for Christian unity (among whom I would willingly accept the writer of this article in the *Christian World*) will be more careful to master the true facts of history before they bring accusations against the undivided Church, or indeed against any of those bodies who, though divided, claim to be essential parts of the Body of Christ. Such accusations cannot tend to peace. Many heartburnings and much *unintentional* irreverence would be surely saved by a more careful and considerate handling of such subjects.—*Earl Nelson in Church Bells*.

DEACONS AND MARRIAGE.

To the Editor of the CHURCH GUARDIAN:

SIR,—You deserve the thanks of true churchmen for your letters on the above subject, a copy of which I trust will be sent marked to all Church Universities and Divinity Schools. Surely it is time the various Synods spoke decisively on the subject and an end put to this irregularity. It is with great regret that one notices violations of this order so constantly in Nova Scotia from deacons who have been brought up under church influences, which certainly ought to bring forth better results and marked teaching and practice.