

your back, 'How generous I am, how liberal I was just now.' But our Lord meant that the right hand should know what it is itself doing. Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: He meant don't keep telling yourself how generous you are.—*Rev. Sylvanus Stall.*

THE PAN-PRESBYTERIAN CONFERENCE.

From the Omaha Parish Messenger.

The Pan-Presbyterian Synod or Conference has just been held in London. It did two good things. It condemned Christian division as wasteful in practice, not only in the heathen mission field, but also at home; and also sinful in itself and to be deplored in every way. We are not able to gather from the reports read just how far this condemnation was intended to reach; whether it was meant to apply to all Christian divisions, or just to Protestant division, or in a narrower sense still to Presbyterian division only. But how far soever it may have been intended to stop short of saying the whole truth, we are glad to hail it as the harbinger of a better day. Time was, and not so many years ago either, when we had it constantly dinned in our ears that Christian division was just the best thing in the world. It provided a Church for every man according to his individual tastes and preferences. One man was born a Baptist, another a Methodist, another a Presbyterian, &c., and he could not be satisfied nor happy to be anything else. It was best therefore for him to find a Church ready to his hands where he could live and labor and be happy. Moreover sectarian rivalry was provocative of zeal and generosity; and it was a most excellent thing for keeping the Church pure. If the Church were one, it would become corrupt as it did before. Of course this was the sheerest, baldest, nonsense, but yet who among us has not heard these pleas in behalf of schism urged. It was in vain to urge against them that were they true, God and Christ would have foreseen it and made provision for it, and commanded men everywhere to hate one another, instead of loving; to go apart and persecute as enemies, instead of cleaving together, preserving "the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." It was useless to suggest, that while God could, probably would, bring good out of it, yet the rivalry born of religious discord and division was not the Christ-like spirit that could best win a sin-laden, sorrow-bowed world, nor force a scoffing unbeliever to confess that the religion of the Nazarene was the bond that brings together in one all who profess it and live by it. The times, however, are changing, and even if the Pan-Presbyterians went no further than to condemn internal Presbyterian schism as sinful, it did a good thing.

Now let them unite their several members like good Christians. Let there be no P. Church North, nor P. Church South. Let "Cumberland" and "Reformed," and "Associated," and "United," fling their foolish and sinful divisions to the winds, and live and love as brethren. And then, perhaps, God will give them more grace to seek a wider unity with Lutherans and Methodists, if not with Baptists and Congregationalists.

The "Historic Episcopate" may be too much to expect them to accept within any very near future. But if Christian division be sinful, nothing but the presence and power of a greater sin should keep Christians apart. As Presbyterian historians admit that from the days of St. James, the brother of our Lord, to the days of Calvin and Knox, the Historic Episcopate existed and prevailed in the Church; and as seven-eighths of their fellow Christians still

adhere to it, it ought not to be deemed such an absurd or sinful thing for Pan-Presbyterians to admit a presumption in its favor.

Still this is not what we started out to say. Another thing the London Pan-Presbyterians did. They endorsed liturgical worship as a proper, if not the most proper, mode of public worship. That, too, is moving in a backward and a Catholic direction. The Rev. Dr. Shields, of Princeton, may consider himself endorsed in part at least. "All things come to him who waits." Not many years ago the English-speaking Protestant world all but universally condemned "praying out of a book" as formalism. "Extempore prayer alone came from the heart." "The Episcopalians did not have any heart religion, because they prayed out of a book." True, the Presbyterians were willing to pray out of a book part of the time, at the outset, provided they could arrange the book to suit their own ideas, and were permitted part of the time to pray in Church in their own way, without a book; true, also, that the Methodists had actually printed and circulated among them "the Discipline," containing "forms of Prayer" for marriage, for Baptism, for burial, for administering the Communion, and for ordination, all of them taken bodily from the English Prayer-Book, by John Wesley, for their use; true, also, that these good people who never wearied of faulting "praying out of a book," kept praying out of a book, "Jesus, lover of my soul, let me to Thy bosom fly," "Rock of Ages cleft for me," "Let me hide myself in Thee," and such like prayers, without ever dreaming how sweetly inconsistent they were in condemning "Episcopal formalism." It may be, perhaps, that they thought the Lord would have respect unto a prayer that was said out of a book in verse; but would not have respect unto any prayer from a book simply said in plain prose. We have ourselves heard good Protestant Episcopalians express themselves horribly offended at hearing prayers sung, that is, of course, plain prayers in prose. The Lord would not hearken to a prose prayer set to music, but was ready to listen to versified prayer, however horribly sung.

Still we should be, and are willing, to let by-gones be by-gones. If the Pan-Presbyterians are ready to stand by us and say, first, that schism is, as it was in the days of the Apostles, a sin against God and against the brethren, a hindrance both to faith and words; and, secondly, that liturgical worship is better than extempore worship, we should thank God, and wait for further growth in the direction of Catholic unity.

THE HOLY EVANGELIST ST. MATTHEW, OR LEVI.

(21st September.)

This Evangelist was a Roman officer, though a Hebrew. An Arabic writer tells us he was born at Nazareth. He was the son of Alpheus, and Mary kinswoman to the Blessed Virgin, both parents being descended from the tribe of Issachar; by profession a toll-gatherer and money-changer, a trade of bad report among the Jews, but esteemed among the Romans.

For the first eight years after our Lord's Ascension he preached up and down in Judea. The converted then entreated him to write the history of our Saviour's life, which he did.

Of legends respecting him there are many. He is believed to have preached in Ethiopia, lying south of Egypt. Here he had great success through his exertions and miracles, and ordained many pastors to carry on the work he had begun.

Dr. Cave is of opinion, from an ancient authority quoted by him, that he suffered martyrdom at Naddaber, a city in Ethiopia, but the

manner of his death seems uncertain. Whether this Naddaber is the same as Beschberie, where the Arabic writer of his life affirms him to have suffered, does not appear certain. Bishop Dorotheus states that his remains were honorably buried at Hierapolis, in Parthia, one of the first places where he preached the Gospel.

Epiphanius says that his history of our Lord was written not only at the request of the converts, but also by command of the Apostles, and that it was done while he was yet in Palestine, about eight years after the death of Christ. But the ancients differ as to the date, for Nicephorus says it was fifteen years after, and Irenæus places it much later—that is, while SS. Peter and Paul were evangelising Rome, nearly thirty years after the Crucifixion. The correct statement appears to have been the first quoted, that of Epiphanius, because it must have been before the dispersion of the Apostles, since it was taken by St. Bartholomew to India. It was written by him in Hebrew. Soon after it was translated into Greek, by whom does not appear decided, as St. Jerome declares his inability to settle the point. Theophylact says it was reported to have been done by St. John, and St. Athanasius describes it to St. James the Just.

However this may be, the translation was a correct one, and was ever received by the Church as authentic, and placed by her in the sacred canon of inspired writings. By the Nazarees, to whom it is said that the historian Josephus belonged (believing in Christ, but adhering to the Jewish rites and ceremonies), the original Hebrew copy was chiefly owned and used. Thus it was that this book was styled 'The Gospel according to the Hebrews,' and 'The Gospel of the Nazarenes.'

By degrees they interpolated it; passages of evangelical history which they had heard from the Apostles, or from those who had conversed with them, were inserted, a fact to which the ancient Fathers frequently referred. The Ebionites mutilated it, as also did the Corinthians. Either a copy of this Hebrew epistle, or the original, was found among other books in the treasury of the Jews at Tiberias by Joseph, a Jew, who, after his conversion, was held in great esteem in the time of Constantine. St. Jerome says that, in his time, another copy was kept in the library at Casarea, and another by the Nazarenes at Berea, from which he transcribed it. A copy also was found, A.D. 485, in the grave of St. Barnabas, in Cyprus, which was transcribed by the latter with his own hand. St. Matthew's was at any rate the earliest written, and it is the general opinion that it was written in Hebrew, A.D. 37-8, and in Greek A.D. 61.

The apparent discrepancies between the genealogies of SS. Matthew and Luke have been a subject of cavilling to unbelievers anxious to discover excuses for their own incredulity, and of perplexity of a different character to the honest and the faithful. But they easily admit of explanation.

These genealogies are each, respectively, of different branches of Christ's parentage. That of St. Matthew of St. Joseph; while that of St. Luke is that of the Blessed Virgin Mary; only, her husband's name is substituted for hers, which was a custom frequently practiced in the East then, and even to this day. Had her own name been put, as it had a right to be, instead of her husband's substituted for it, no difficulty in regard to it would ever have arisen.

This Evangelist is usually represented with a halbert and a book.—(From the Lives of the Apostles by S. F. A. Caulfield).

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