

whole case was calmly and deliberately examined and discussed. The presence of the Holy Spirit was invoked. The mind of God as manifested in His Word and in His dealings with the Church was sought. The rights of the Gentile Christians were maintained and vindicated. The law of Moses was placed in its proper position as related to the Gospel. The Church in Jerusalem was predominantly Jewish, and strongly tainted with Pharisaism. Yet the apostles did not diverge a hair's breadth from the line of rectitude to win the applause of the multitude. The result was that the crisis which had arisen, threatening the very existence of the Church, was safely passed,—that a loving, brotherly and unanimous decision was arrived at, and that both truth and love were fully maintained.

6. Observe the wise *expediency* which marked the decision of the Council. The principle of salvation through Christ alone was carefully guarded. In this respect the Gentile-Christians gained all that could rightly be desired. But there were certain practices which were peculiarly offensive to the Jews—such as eating meat offered to idols, (*i. e.* the remains of heathen sacrifices;) and indulging in incestuous marriages and other breaches of the Seventh Commandment (—breaches which were hideously common among the heathen.) From these practices the Council resolved that the Gentile converts should abstain. The eating of blood was in itself a matter of indifference now that the Great Atonement had been made; but for the sake of the weak consciences of the Jews this indulgence is to be abstained from. There is tender forbearance with prejudices and weaknesses when these do not touch the vitals of the Christian system. The Gentile Christians, and their great apostle, were quite willing to forego their liberty in things indifferent for the sake of peace and unity.

7. Christ by His Holy Spirit is with His Church always, even to the end of the world, leading her to all truth. The decision of this Synod was dictated by the Holy Spirit; and at the same time it was

arrived at after much discussion and thoughtful consideration. We may be sure of the approbation of the Holy Ghost if we decide in accordance with the light of Scripture and of events in Providence. It is when the Holy Ghost is in our Synods that we may expect to reach wise conclusions, *unanimously*, as was the case in this instance.

8. The First Council was a noble illustration of the well-known saying,—In essentials, Unity; in non-essentials, Liberty; in all things Charity.

9. When difficulties, divisions, errors, spring up it is a great privilege to bring them before the "brethren" assembled in the name of Christ. The happiest results flowed from the decisions of the Council at Jerusalem. Similar results may be expected wherever Synods are held in the right spirit and attempt the right kind of work.

CHRISTIAN HYMNOLOGY.

BY REV. M. HARVEY, ST. JOHN'S, N. F.

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English Hymn Literature.

In our rapid survey of those great masters of the devotional lyre, who have worthily celebrated what Milton calls "the throne and equipage of God's "Almightiness," raising the human mind to communion with the divine, and uniting music to immortal verse, we have now arrived at the period when English hymn-literature took its rise. We saw, in last paper, that no sooner had the light of the Reformation dawned on Germany, than congregational singing was introduced, and a national hymn-literature sprang up, which, as years rolled on, became by far the richest and noblest that the christian church yet possesses. It is remarkable that when, from Germany, the Reformation spread to England and Scotland, for a lengthened period, it did not create there an evangelical hymnology at all corresponding to that of Germany. In fact, for two centuries, though hymn-writers appeared, at intervals, in England, yet their productions were few and scattered, were not written with a view of being used in public worship, and were not collected into a people's hymn-book. It is worthy of note, that precisely the same thing occurred in the Reformed Churches of France, Switzerland and Scotland. They