

Levi Pennington

People

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Pennington to Josiah Pennington, April 20, 1965

Levi T. Pennington

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April 20, 1965.

Dear Joe:--

So far as I know, you are the second preacher in the Pennington family to speak from an Episcopal pulpit. Glad you had a chance to do it. I'm sure it did not do the Episcopalians a bit of harm.

This denomination (I heard them called Piscalapians when I was a boy, and a Mrs. Traum, wife of the Christian pastor in Richmond always called them the Epitholics), or rather their rector in Traverse City away back when, messed up what I thought was going to be a very pleasant and profitable series of articles on the different denominations in Traverse City at that time. There were the Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Friends, Episcopalian, and perhaps another denomination or two, and I had it arranged, or thought I had, that the pastors of each of these churches would in a nice way tell something of his denomination and its work, at home and abroad, to the enlightenment of his own membership and all the rest of us.

The Episcopal Church in Traverse City at that time I think was the smallest in membership of any of the churches I have mentioned, as its house of worship was the least imposing; so I thought it would be a nice thing to ask the rector of that church to turn in the first of these articles that I thought would be so helpful.

The article came in on time, and it appeared as the first of the series. And it was a treatise on "Apostolic Succession" and it proved, to the satisfaction of the writer, that the Episcopalians had as much claim to apostolic succession as the Catholics did, and more than anybody else did.

Well, I did not know any more about apostolic succession than a Kaffir would know about Avagadro's Law or the Zend-Avesta. But there were people who did. The Methodist pastor was next, as I remember it, and did he put that Epitholic in his place?! Why, the Methodists had as much apostolic succession as both the Catholics and the Piscalapians. And if you think the Presbyterians were short on apostolic succession, you surely did not read that article, from the learned Presbyterian brother.

I think the Quaker pastor came next, and so far as his article was concerned you could have guessed that he never heard of apostolic succession, wouldn't know it if he met it on the street, did not think it mattered whether there was apostolic succession or apostolic secession or apostolic repression or any other apostolic -sion of any kind. But when the Baptist brother "came to bat" -- well, the series did not last as long as I had expected, but it was at least five innings too long.

(I've been told since that experienced newspaper men know that such a series of articles as that never succeeds, but I was not at that time an experienced newspaper man, and I "learned the hard way.")