

Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL & GENERAL INTELLIGENCE

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

NEW SERIES. }
VOL. XII. No. 5. }

HALIFAX, N. S., WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 30, 1867.

WHOLE SERIES. }
VOL. XXXI. No. 5 }

Poetry.

The smitten Christ.

I saw my Lord draw nigh,
And He was weeping.
"Why weepst Thou?" I said,
"Why weepst Thou, O Lord?"
He lifted up his Head;
I listened for His word—
Silent He stood, His gaze upon me keeping.

I felt my spirit faint
And fall before Him.
Such sadness in His eyes!
Such sorrow in His face!
Then spake He in this wise,
With accents full of grace;
I yearned to clasp His feet and to adore Him:

"I have been smitten," said
He, slowly sighing.
"Who smote Thee, Lord?" I cried,
With hot and hasty ire;
"A friend," He said and sighed;
Quenching my sudden fire
By such a look as ended Peter's lying.

"Thou art the smiter," said
Those eyes most holy.
"No ruffian's brutal hand,
No reckless scoffer's spite,
No wilful foeman's band,
Could thus my bosom smite."
I sank before Him, broken, weeping, lowly.

Tenderly then He laid
His hand upon me.
"Arise, My child," He said.
"Arise, thou art forgiven;
Weep not; be comforted;
But let my heart be riven
No more by blow from thee; by blood I won
thee."

Ladies' Repository.

Religious.

Church Architecture.

Many of our readers are at one time or other concerned in alterations and improvements in their places of worship, or perhaps in the building of church edifices, and it is well that whatever is effected in this way should be done in the best manner. We have, therefore, thought they would be pleased to read an article which we find in the last number of the *London Freeman* on this subject. A few things in it do not apply to this side the Atlantic, we have consequently thought it well to omit those passages, and copy what we believe will be read with interest, and in many cases be of practical value to parties concerned in such matters:

In London alone the Baptists occupy many of the largest and most prominent chapels, and the plans now maturing, under the auspices of the Union will add to their number and importance. This being the case, it is evidently most desirable that the attention of our churches should be drawn to the subject of chapel building. It may be said that these matters are best left in the hands of competent architects, but at the same time nothing is so likely to make an architect work honestly and carefully as the knowledge that he has to do with men whose minds are well educated in those questions of good taste and sound judgment which constantly arise during the progress of a building.

And if we wanted an argument more cogent with which to enlist the attention of our ministers and deacons, we need only to remind them of the pains and struggles which they have to pass through in raising the needful funds, and to appeal to them whether, in the prospect of such efforts, it would not be expedient to get the very best building as well for "their love" as for "their money."

Once up, our chapels must stay up, "for richer for poorer; for better for worse;"—we cannot afford to re-build simply because our first venture is ugly and inconvenient. Perhaps we have been too careless of the history which is inaugurated when a new chapel is opened. Though no consecration service is then and there engaged in, yet the very truest and noblest consecration shall descend upon that edifice if it be the arena of a battle with

world and flesh and devil; the motionless axle round which shall revolve the ever progressing wheel of our religious life—the holy of holies where the peace of God comes unseen unto awakened souls—the harvest field where golden sheaves are garnered for heaven. Such a consecration all our chapels will have if their walls resound with the faithful preaching of Christ and Him crucified. That strong feeling with which men who have no religious spirit cling to the old parish churches of England, may be exchanged with us for the stronger bonds of sacred association. The chapel where we worshipped with our fathers; the pew where we first felt any concern for our salvation; the baptistry where we were buried with Christ; and the place where we entered on the responsibilities of a married life; these will all be centres round which in after years solemn memories will cluster.

Let there be nothing, then, in the building itself to dissipate such impressions, nothing to associate the ridiculous with the sublime in the house of God. If this line of thought has won the attention of "those whom it may concern," let us see what are our requirements in a new chapel.

We must gather them entirely from our own experience; for we have nothing to do with tradition, for our necessities do not find a parallel either in the heathen temple or the Gothic cathedral.

The chapel then to answer our purpose must be a building where all can see and hear, and where the Lord's supper can be taken, and baptism administered with decency and ease. In few words, this is probably all that we absolutely want. And it cannot be denied that many of our older chapels answered the demand far better than the new. Call them barns if you will, they did no dishonour to a day when the parish churches were delivered over to the tender mercies of the churchwarden, with much zeal and no knowledge. That they were stowed away in by-lanes and courts was a consequence of the laws which made Nonconformity an offence against the peace of the realm. But we have passed these times now. The church-warden has relinquished his pail of white-wash, and talks learnedly of verandas and clerestory and apse; the chapel falling on better times, too, has come down the narrow court, and left the lanes and alleys, and now takes its stand in the principal street. And this being so we must put a good face on it at all events, and not run the risk of being driven back to the hole and corner again—this time not for obnoxious doctrine but for obnoxious taste.

If we cannot do better as regards hearing and seeing than was done by our forefathers—we can certainly improve on their designs, and perhaps add to the comfort and satisfaction of the worshipper.

It is worth while before going any further to consider the materials at our disposal; to bring them together as the Israelites did the stuff for the Tabernacle, and see what we can reckon on as available for our purpose.

When you have it cheap and good, of course there can be nothing better than stone; but we shall in many parts of England be unable to find stone, and in such a case we shall do well to have regard to the capabilities of honest brick. The last fifteen years has shown us what hitherto little dreamed of variety of colour and shape lies in brick, and the same time has tested also the durability of the improved material. We have exactly the same resources, if we had but the same tact in using them, that were at the disposal of the old architects in Spain and North Italy and Belgium.

In many cases where wood was formerly employed it will now be possible to employ iron. It admits of cheap and tasteful casting and has one great virtue that it wears well.—Use good brick or stone for the walls, and as much battening of wood as can be afforded (a capital example is to be found in Mr. Spurgeon's Tabernacle). But there are many features in the interior of a chapel where iron adapts itself admirably both to use and ornament. Columns, carrying the school-room ceiling and chapel floor, for example, bolted into others carrying the gallery and roof, ensure the safety of the building in case of fire; and in the gallery front (generally a dully monotonous succession of panels) open iron-work gives a charming appearance of lightness and beauty. A very successful instance of

this is to be seen in Rye Hill Chapel, Newcastle-on-Tyne, where the same pattern is also repeated round the organ gallery and the minister's platform.

The second question is as to style. We put it after that of material because we reckon it as less important. Bad material is always contemptible, and must receive the condemnation of all, but there is so much difference of opinion as to the style to be employed, that the architect has this satisfaction: it is just impossible to put up a chapel which shall find no admirers.

At the same time a good design is most desirable, if for no other reason, for this at all events, that the useful generally goes along with the ornamental in a thoroughly successful building; and the man who draws a tasteful elevation will most likely be the man able to consult comfort and convenience as well.

The strongest predilection amongst our chapel building committees at present seems to be for the Gothic style. Few of us have the courage, and fewer still the taste of the celebrated preacher who advertised, when seeking designs for his chapel, that no Goths need apply. There are times when we have heartily wished that his advice had been more generally followed.

Most seriously we ask what adaptability Gothic architecture has for our mode of worship. We want no chancel for we have no altar; we want no transept for with us, all must see; we want no high-pitched roof, for we have no incense to wreath up its curling smoke; and no surpliced choir to pour forth sweet sounds to echo and die away above.—Moreover, it is always to be remembered that Gothic architecture demands a vast amount of ornamentation, should always have stained glass windows for instance, and carved capitals and brackets. Now we having determined to do our work honestly and well, shall need a longer purse than falls to the lot of most building committees if we indulge in these adornments. Between the costly symbolism of York or Salisbury Cathedral, bristling within and without with "sermons in stone," and the Carpenter Gothic of many of our new chapels, the distance is as vast as between honest broadcloth and Manchester "shoddy." But we put it to all acquainted with the subject to decide whether the shoddy does not lie much more within our means than the broadcloth. Gothic must be pure to please; it cannot be pure if it is to satisfy the demands either of our worship or our purses.

We have another style equally national; the suitabilities of which, for our wants, we would very strongly impress on our chapel architects. We allude of course to the Norman, connected, if historical associations were worth anything, with the memories of a simpler and purer faith than the Gothic recalls; and (which is more important for our purpose) admirably adapted in cost and manipulation for our requirements. The plain round arch, the breadth of nave, and simple ornamentation of the Norman, would, with skilful management, do well in our smaller chapels. In North Italy we have very fine examples of the Romanesque, which resembles the style in question, applied to buildings of noble proportion, and were we bound to one style "pure and simple" we should prefer this to any other, taking into consideration the demands of the case.

It will be seen that we have not, as yet, touched on the merits of the Classic model. In England, we have no conception of what a classic building is. It is only under the burning blue sky which shows the severe outlines to perfection, and in that brilliant light which brings out every detail with exquisite distinctness, that classic architecture has a chance of doing itself justice. It emphatically delights in the open air, suffers under heavy roofs and painted windows, and demands the magnificent preparations and vast outlay petrified in St. Paul's, as the price of naturalizing in our own land. But what possible purpose is there in the pretentious portico, with its big columns, in our chapels? What teaching is there in the classic plan, or classic details, all full of heathenism, under which we can learn anything. Paul's words in Mars Hill, if properly read and understood, speak the death warrant to classic architecture in its pretensions to meet the demand of our worship.

Abandoning all questions of association,

for indeed we are not given, as a body, to indulging in much sentiment, we have not far to go in search of a style which will satisfy all the reasonable demands of good taste, and adapt itself to the requirements of the case in our various services. Already we possess in England some half-dozen specimens of what has been called the *Eclectic* style of architecture: specimens which are eminently successful for hearing and seeing; possess, in abundance, good, bold details, and have answered admirably all the demands which we have any need to make. Adapting this as his basis, a skilful architect may give free scope to his own powers of design, may introduce, if he desires to do so, exterior colours, banded brick or encaustic tiles, may mould his model with perfect harmony with the wants of the church, and produce a chapel that shall be a credit to himself and a comfort to the congregation which is to worship in it. The modern preference for the platform—a most reasonable preference too—can be gratified to the full, more especially if, as is the case at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, the height is relieved by a lower platform carrying the baptistry. And here let us take this opportunity of earnestly advocating the honest and open display of the baptistry, in some part of the chapel where all can see it without indecorously rising and pushing forward. Why should we make the baptistry less prominent in our chapels than the font in parish churches or the table used in the celebration of the Lord's supper?

In the suggestions as to choice of style we have refrained until now from considering the claims of the *theatre model*. But as John Wesley didn't believe that the devil ought to have all the good tunes, and succeeded in consecrating some of them to hymns that will never die, we may fairly ask why only the player is to speak in a building in which he is perfectly heard without exerting his voice which never finds back taunting echoes, or admits on all sides cold draughts. More than all may we ask this when we find that the theatre may be erected at as little cost as a chapel, and that it is quite capable of adaptation to all our purposes.

The advantages of the theatre can soon be enumerated. Its shape assimilates to the horse-shoe, and in the flat of the horse-shoe, of course, the speaker stands. Its walls, instead of being bare and cold, are all alive with people; galleries, boxes, stalls, and pit succeeding each other from ceiling to floor.

The platform will occupy the place of the stage, and there will be found the reading-desk, the baptistry, and the table on which the bread and wine are placed for the communion. At the end nearest the platform the ground will be only two or three feet below this level, but it must rise gradually to the back; and side galleries of no great height could probably be planned to run round from the platform until the rising floor stopped them. The space beneath which could be gained by elevating the floor, could be adapted to a school-room—the vestries and class-room must be behind. Broad entries and passages must be provided at the two sides. The organ could either crown the far end of the chapel, or be placed behind the minister where it would be heard to perfection.

We have thus glanced very rapidly over the various styles adapted to chapel-building purposes. Untrammelled by precedent, unburdened by traditional fallacies, untroubled by hoary superstitions, the art of designing a chapel to fulfil all our requirements demands only careful thought and common sense.

This is a subject which calls for the attention not of the student only; but it is well for the ministers and deacons of churches to turn their minds to it as well, considering themselves as put in trust with this among many other matters connected with their duties, as the standard bearers of the churches—the representatives to future generations of the mental attainments of this. We commend these suggestions, indeed, to all who have at heart the welfare of our nonconformity. A chapel ill designed and "scamped" in execution (the one often follows on the heels of the other), brings down on us well-deserved ridicule; all the more if it is an ambitious spicing of old forms which are meaningless enough in any Protestant church, but ludicrously so in ours.

On the other hand, a chapel carefully