

The Christian Messenger.

Halifax, N. S., April 19th, 1871.

CHURCH BUILDINGS, THE CHOIR, &c.

The several articles of our correspondents in reference to Praise in the House of God induced us to reflect as to whether some nearer approach may not be made to perfection in the construction of our places of worship, or in the arrangement of their interior, so as to give them a state of more complete adaptation, and thus the better to secure the great object of worship—the united expression of the congregation in the service of praise to Almighty God. We say the great object for we regard the other exercises in public worship—reading the Word, preaching the Gospel, and prayer, as reaching their climax and culminating in the devout and all-absorbing act of singing the praises of the Most High.

It is too often the case that the architects of our church edifices have formed their ideas from models having other objects in view, and have consequently continued the Gothic roof, and general interior of the building to please the eye; and have sought to erect a building rather for the exhibition of architectural taste, than for the comfort and convenience of the worshippers in hearing distinctly what is said by each other and by the minister, and so uniting in acts of devotion.

We take it for granted that the existence of a choir is the most appropriate and convenient arrangement for the orderly, and efficient conducting of our songs of praise. The objections sometimes raised by Christian people are generally against the abuses of them, or against actual improprieties of some persons connected with them, rather than against the choir itself. This being the case we think it should be regarded as a settled institution, and provision made accordingly in our buildings. In confirmation of this view we may offer a few words by way of suggestion. The singing of any congregation must be under the direction of one person, and he must either have the entire management, or be associated with others in that work. If the latter it is a choir, which, especially if aided by an organ, prevents the work of sustaining the music from becoming unduly dependent upon, or burdensome to, any one or more individuals. This then being settled the enquiry arises Which is the best and most appropriate place in the congregation for the choir?—in the gallery, or in a recess behind the minister, or in some other part of the building? Our correspondent "H." two weeks since, perhaps, said sufficient respecting the recess at the back of the minister to shew that that arrangement is not in every respect the most desirable.

He also spoke of the gallery at the opposite extremity of the building which he regarded as more suitable than the chancel-like recess, but he seemed still to dislike the gallery idea, and partially developed an arrangement which he thought would be better than either. We have since then thought a good deal upon this matter, and supposed that it would not be amiss to bring that idea out a little more fully. It appears to us to be an approach to the true principle, having the advantages of both the others without their disadvantages.

Galleries are in many respects undesirable in church buildings. We have no instructions given in the New Testament to guide us in our Church Architecture, nor with respect to choirs, nor yet on many other things which are important in our ecclesiastical arrangements; but we have some suggestions given which may serve as general principles to guide Christians in all ages and countries in their arrangements with regard to fellowship and worship. In the 2nd chapter of the epistle of James we are cautioned against the exercise of partiality, respecting the rich and despising the poor, in christian assemblies and of saying to "the one in gay clothing" "sit thou here in a good place," or "to the poor stand thou there or sit here under my footstool" &c. It may be asked How does this bear on the question? Let us see.

The erection of galleries has generally been for the purpose of giving more accommodation, and increasing the sitting capacity of buildings. Of course this result is accomplished; but, except in very large buildings

it is done at the expense of other parts of the house. The light is obstructed, and the seats underneath it are materially damaged, whilst the gallery itself is resorted to only when the more desirable places below are occupied. People do not often choose a place under the gallery if they can get one in any other place. This may be because they are further off from the minister's voice, and from the choir, whether that be in the gallery or on the minister's platform, and it is more difficult for persons sitting or standing there to join in the singing than in almost any other part of the house.

The thing to be accomplished in the House of God is to utilize all the space, and at the same time to make all the seat-room as near as possible equally desirable. This is the practical application of the Apostle James's principle. These objects may be attained, giving sufficient isolation to the choir and at the same time having no gallery to project over any other seats in the house. Let there be two entrance doors at the end opposite to the minister's platform. Between the doors have, say three seats elevated, the first one about two or three feet above the general level of the floor, and each of the others raised again until they reach the height of the vestibule, over which seats might still rise giving the whole the appearance of a platform rising gradually from the floor, and forming with the rest of the congregation an unbroken company of worshippers. The choir might occupy three or four of the front ones of these raised seats at the end of the building. They would be less conspicuous or separated from the rest of the worshippers than if in the front of the congregation, or in a raised gallery. On this plan there would be no seats under the gallery. We are very much mistaken if this would not be found to be a most satisfactory arrangement for all parties concerned—and enable the choir to render more efficient aid to the people in their songs of praise than by any plan yet devised.

This is not an untried plan. It has been adopted in some of the Boston churches and is also found in several of the Baptist Churches in Cumberland County, and probably in other places.

OUR SCHOOL AFFAIRS.

'The price of liberty is eternal vigilance,' and so the price of public free schools is constant and jealous watch-care, or they will be perverted into denominational institutions, and become the nurseries of a State church in one of its worst forms.

Several of the Schools in the city of Halifax, sustained by the public funds and the hard earned taxes of the people, are exclusively Roman Catholic institutions, and have in them none but Roman Catholic teachers, whilst the other Schools—those really Public—have in them a number of Roman Catholic Teachers. This we think gross injustice,—a wrong which the Commissioners should not longer permit. Either open all the schools sustained by public funds to teachers without restriction as to denomination, or if no Protestant teachers are permitted in the Roman Catholic Schools, let there be none but Protestant teachers in the non-Catholic Schools. We would not have our Roman Catholic citizens deprived of one particle of their just rights and privileges, but we know no reason why they should have favors and advantages which are denied to all other religious bodies.

An article in the Witness of Saturday last opens up a matter of much interest to the public, in this relation. It is well that Protestants should be aware what is being done by the City Commissioners:—

MORE TAMPERING.—We are informed that the subject of building a new school house comes before the Halifax School Commissioners at their meeting on Monday next. Let us have good school houses, but let the Board be careful how it votes away public taxes, in the interest of the Roman Catholic or any other church. It appears that Archbishop Connolly, offers to erect the school house on one of his own sites for the Board, on condition that the Commissioners pay annually the interest on the money he there invests, furnish the house, keep it in repairs, insure it, supply books and apparatus, pay the teachers salaries, and give him virtual control of the election of the teachers and the management of the schools!—That is to say, the Archbishop asks the Board not to discharge the duties which they have solemnly been entrusted, but to unlawfully expend, through him, the public funds of the citizens, in order that Separate Roman Catholic Schools may

flourish in place of public schools, as the law designs. We protest against the Board accepting any such offer from any religious body. Should it be done, we shall be disappointed if some citizens do not expose the matter thoroughly before the Supreme Court. The first blush of the subject ought to be enough:—

1. The School Law does not authorize the Board to do such an act. It is a Public School Law and not a Separate School Law. The law expressly says that "the thirteen Commissioners" shall constitute a Board of School Commissioners for the city of Halifax, and such Board shall be a corporate body and may exercise all the powers and perform all the duties of Trustees of Public Schools in and for the said city." The Trustees of Public Schools are not authorized to do such an act as we are protesting against, nor are the Halifax Commissioners. To do it, is to contemn the fundamental principle of the law. The law which created the Board, makes it their duty to erect school houses, and for this special purpose empowers them to issue debentures, free from taxation, to be a charge on the citizens. The Board has no authority to spend the public taxes in the manner proposed by the Archbishop.

2. It will entail unnecessary expense on the Citizens. This is clear enough. The Board's debentures are selling at six per cent. premium. The money needed to build a new public school house can therefore be obtained without adding scarcely anything to the taxation of the citizens.

In fact the interest on the debentures will be less in amount than the rent now paid by the Board for the want of the new building. To build a separate school house will increase the taxation six per cent. annually on the cost of the building, and it will not belong to the people, nor will the school itself.

We call the special attention of the Government to this matter. The law provides that "the Board shall not enter into any contract, . . . for the erection of any school building, until such contract has been submitted to and obtained the approval of the Governor in Council." It is high time this school house question was squarely dealt with from first to last. We shall await with interest the action of the Board and the Government. We are confident they cannot sanction such an evident evasion of the law.

Our city taxes are sufficiently burdensome already, but if they are expended for the purpose of extending the system of Separate Schools for Roman Catholics, and giving Roman Catholic teachers for Protestant children, we shall regard it as a delusion, and an imposition demanding resistance and redress.

As our Legislature is the source of our laws in this respect, and the representatives of the people are the guardians of our rights, we feel it right and proper that we should ask the electors to be assured, in the selection of men for our next Parliament, that they are such as may be trusted in this matter. The future interests of the province in its educational character rests largely on the results of the coming election. Let every man feel that his vote is a sacred trust committed to him on behalf of his family, and the men and women of the future, and he will not then trifle with it or regard it as a thing to be used as others may dictate, or for any present personal advantage.

We have no party ends to serve in speaking thus. If we had we should be advised to keep silence. Our party is like John Wesley's parish—"All the world." We ask for EQUAL RIGHTS TO ALL, especially in our educational arrangements, and hope to see men returned who have sufficient firmness to resist the pressure of all parties in a contrary direction.

CATHEDRAL WORK.

A writer in the last Quarterly Review, gives an interesting account of Cathedral life and work in England four centuries ago. The value of the Cathedral Endowments to the national literature is clearly shown. But the writer maintains that the time has come when these institutions should be restored to something like their original use. The Universities are becoming secularized; they will be affected more and more by the influence of Dissenters; and they can no longer do the work of training men for the Church, as formerly. The writer advises that classes be formed under the control of the Cathedral Colleges, in which candidates for ordination, after completing a course of general study, may receive professional training. Instead of massing the students in large numbers in one place, it will be better to distribute them to several centres of culture and influence; and the Cathedral Colleges could easily be made the best agencies for this work.

A wise forecast is herein shown on the part of friends of the Church of England, indicating that the interests of that Church will be vigorously maintained, whatever may be its relation

to the State in the future. But we have called attention to the article chiefly to ask our readers to note the preference which it expresses, in agreement with utterances given of late, from various and widely separated sources, for several distinct centres of Education, instead of one large Central University. In respect to Libraries, Cabinets, Apparatus, and expensive courses of Lectures, the large and wealthy University will be above competition on the part of the smaller institution. But educating power does not increase in proportion to the increase of these appliances. Students are affected more by personal contact with disciplined, thoughtful instructors. The condition of a large University is not favorable to this relation. This is acknowledged by many of the best educators of the day, and shows that the importance of the work accomplished by small colleges is sufficient justification for their existence.

In addition to the Report of the Halifax Temperance Union on another page, shewing the labor performed in the endeavour to rescue our fellow-citizens from destruction, we find a short article in the Abstainer, giving some very sensible suggestions respecting the liquor-traffic in this city, as follows:

"For the year ending March 15, 1871, TWO HUNDRED AND SIXTY-FIVE LICENSES for the sale of intoxicating liquors, were granted to persons in the city of Halifax. Taking the population at 32,000 there would be one licensed place for about every 120 persons.

We are not aware as to the number of different classes of licenses granted, but presume they must have averaged at least twenty-five dollars each, which for the 265 would yield \$6,625; or say in round numbers at least \$7,000.

For the sake of this paltry sum, our City Fathers give permission to the number of persons above mentioned to ply a trade which makes drunkards of men and women; destroys morals; causes all kinds of crime and misery; and entails on the city fund a large expenditure for Police purposes, which would otherwise be saved.

Was it not for this license business, at least one-half of the Police force might be discharged; two-thirds, or a large proportion, of Rockhead expenses might be saved; and the city's liability for support of broken down inmates of the Poor's Asylum considerable reduced.

The reader will notice that we have not referred above to the large number of persons in Halifax who are engaged in the illicit retail traffic, and from whom, if the Civic authorities put forth the proper exertion, two, or three thousand dollars more might be added to the city funds.

There is one class of persons in the city who should be made to contribute to the city funds as well as the retailer of intoxicating liquors, viz., the wholesale dealer, who is equally responsible for the results of the traffic; and who, although he may live in a palatial residence in a respectable part of the city, is equally as culpable in the sight of God for the mischief done, as the retailer residing in a den, so called, on Barrack or Albemarle street. If the corporation consider it necessary to grant licenses for the purpose of raising a revenue, they should make the wholesale dealer pay a license fee also—of at least \$100 a year each; and which, we think, would add at least \$2000 a year to the city funds, as there cannot be less than twenty persons in Halifax engaged in the wholesale business who furnish the supplies to the retailer. Our Board of Aldermen should take this matter into consideration.

In disposing of this subject, the reader must not suppose that the \$7000 above mentioned is the whole amount received for liquor licenses during the past year. We believe the amount to be larger than the sum stated; but as the Reports of the Civic Officers have not been published for several years past, we cannot give the precise amount.

A LOTTERY.—A raid is being made upon Nova Scotia on behalf of an institution in Dublin, the "Mater Misericordiæ Hospital," under the care of the Sisters of Mercy.

Tickets by the hundred thousand have been sent by mail to parties who know nothing about the concern, and who, because the prepaid postage is insufficient, have had to pay postage on each parcel.

We have before us a package of eighty tickets, of sixpence each, which cost the young man to whom they were sent sixpence. A number of prizes are mentioned, from a beautiful barouche and splendid pair of horses, etc., said to be worth two hundred guineas, down to a lady's gold watch, valued at £10, including an oil painting of His Holiness Pope Pius IX, value £50, pianos, watches, carpets, jewellery, &c., &c. the duplicate tickets to be returned to Sister M. E. Forde, Superioress.

There are various ways of working the voluntary principle. This form—

that of a lottery—is perhaps one of the most objectionable, and we believe it is unlawful in Nova Scotia. Parties selling said tickets here would consequently be liable to punishment.

We are receiving from many of our correspondents expressions of joy like those which are experienced by the angels, over sinners repenting; but we have from some others words of sorrow and distress at the absence of such indications of the Divine presence. A member of one of our Western churches says:—

"Whilst God is reviving his cause in different parts of the province we are under a cloud, but few attend the meetings. A large majority are dissatisfied. I hope where we are wrong our eyes may be opened to see it, and to repent of our sins daily. The cry of my heart is 'O Lord revive thy work and give not thy heritage to reproach.' Unless the Lord appear for our deliverance, I fear we shall lose our visibility as a church. May the blessed Saviour avert so great a judgment."

We trust that our brother's prayer may be heard and speedily answered. Let him continue to wait and pray, and believe that the Lord has not forgotten his people. Their names are engraven on His hand.

"Judge not the Lord by feeble sense, But trust him for his grace, Behind a frowning providence, He hides a smiling face."

The Master has all resources in his hands and may be preparing a large blessing for him and those of his brethren who are waiting to see the salvation of God.

Notices, &c.

Mr. David Freeman, wishes to acknowledge the following sums for the Margaree Baptist Church.

Collection in Canning, . . .	\$2. 50
Scots Bay,	2. 50
Walter Witt, Esq., . . .	2. 50
	7. 50

Send it to Lachlen McDonald by P. O. order.

RECEIVED FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS.

1871.			
March 29.	Friend in Colechester for native preachers.	\$100 00	
	New Germany Church for Karen p.	10 00	
April 2.	Mrs. M. Marshall, Springfield, for n. p.	4 00	
	Dea. Jacob Denton,	5 00	
7.	Captain D. Masters, Kempt, Hants,	5 00	
10.	A. A. Pinco, Esq., Cambridge;	5 00	
	For Miss Norris.		
April—7.	Bequest of Miss Clara Sharp,	12 00	
	For Miss De Wolf.		
March 29.	Mrs. W. E. Hall, New Germany,	4 00	
	Special Donation.		
April 7.	From Wolfville Baptist Sabbath School, to purchase Maps and Drawings for Schools in Burnham,	25 00	

CHARLES TUPPER, Sec'y. Tremont, Aylesford, April 10, 1871.

ACADIA COLLEGE ATHENÆUM.

The sixth lecture of the course, before the Athenæum, will be delivered by J. B. Calkin, Esq., A. M., on the evening of April 21st, in the vestry of the Baptist Chapel, Wolfville, commencing at 7 1/2 o'clock.

SUBJECT.—"OLIVER GOLDSMITH," W. A. SPINNEY, Cor. Sec. April 8th, '71.

Strange pranks are sometimes played by the types, or the typos, and it is perhaps not surprising that their doings were at first charged to some other than human agencies. Errors sometimes arise from illegible manuscript, but that is not always the source of the mischief. A case of this kind occurred last week in the above notice. The writer said plainly J. B. Calkin Esq. M. A. but the types made of it, J. B. Calkin Esq. M. P. P. of course our young brother the secretary and our worthy friend the Lecturer were surprised, and probably the latter not well pleased that such initials should be affixed to his name. We make the correction this week. Our compositor hopes to be forgiven, as for all his other similar peccadilloes, seeing that it was not done with evil intent.

ERRATA.—"Wentworth" requests us to make corrections of what appeared in his letter last week:

For "part from," read *pass* from; for "one in whose," read *a man* in whose; for "imperialled," read *imperial*; for "appellatives," read *appellatives*; for "hardiness," read *hardihood*; for "Tulle jocus," read *Tulle jocos*; for "harrangue," read *harangue*; for "chastened," read *chastised*; for "Caesarian," read *Cæsarean*.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.—Several communications are received, but too late for our present issue.