

Nor feel the hands of love that press me,
Nor the frame with mortal terrors shaking,
Nor the heart where love's soft bands are breaking

"So would I die!
All bliss, without a pang to cloud it;
All joy, without a pain to shroud it;
Not slain, but caught up as it were,
To meet my Saviour in the air:
So would I die!
Oh, how bright were the realms of light
Bursting at once upon my sight!
Even so I long to go:
These parting hours, how sad and slow!"

His voice grew faint, and fixed his eye,
As it gazed on visions of ecstasy;
The hue of his cheeks and lips decayed,
Around his mouth a sweet smile played.
They look'd—he was dead!
His spirit had fled,
Painless and swift as his own desire;
His soul undress'd
From her mortal vest.
Had stepp'd into her car of heavenly fire,
And prov'd how bright
Were the realms of light,
Bursting at once upon the sight.

For the Christian Messenger.

NOTES OF A TOUR.

No. IV.

DEAR BROTHER,—

In my last I gave some information respecting the First Baptist Church in this city. I may now add, that brother Alexander, the Pastor, commenced his labours there in February, 1863. Since that time, 51 have been added by baptism, and 47 by letter; total, 98. The decrease, by death, dismission, &c., has amounted to 14; clear increase, 84.

The first Baptist Church is a working church. Besides their own Sunday School, numbering 178 children, they have two other Schools, at their Mission stations, containing 156 more. The pastor devotes particular attention to the young men of his church and congregation, and finds them a band of willing agents, ready for any christian enterprise which he may suggest.

There is a society to which the appellation "Second Church" is given in the City Directory, but which has not united with the Association. Certain dissatisfied ones withdrew from the First Church a few years ago, and carry on worship by themselves, under the superintendence of Mr. Thomas McGinn. It is said by some that they are inclined to hyper-calvinistic views; by others, to Scotch Baptist peculiarities.

Plymouth Brethrenism has done its separating work here, as well as in many other places, beginning with an outcry against sects and parties, and ending by forming a new sect;—inveighing against restricted communion, and then refusing fellowship to societies or individuals of their own cast, if they happen to deviate from the common standard.—for they have a standard, after all, notwithstanding pretences to the contrary. I am told that there are half a dozen societies of these "Brethren" at Kingston, each standing firm to its own separate communion and repelling all the rest.

One of the Montreal societies is called "The Christian Assembly." Mr. Baynes, Bursar of McGill College, and Mr. Duncan Bell are the leading spirits. They occupy Nordheimer's Hall, a large building, much used for concerts and public exhibitions. They meet by themselves on Lord's day mornings, for mutual edification and the observance of the Lord's supper, and invite the public to attend an evening service, when Mr. Baynes preaches. His discourses are reported to be thoroughly evangelical and useful.

The other society is much smaller, consisting chiefly of a few Baptists, whose preference of open communion leads them to meet together in a private house, also for conference and the communion, and thus to deprive themselves of the opportunity of uniting with their brethren for the purposes contemplated by church organization, according to the New Testament. It is much to be regretted that these friends should be thus lost to the Baptist cause in this city. Their co-operation with their brethren would materially aid that cause, and their usefulness would be greatly increased by their ceasing to stand aloof.

The Ottawa Association, with which the Montreal church is connected, held its Anniversary on the 15th and 16th of June last. It comprises fifteen churches. The following is an abstract of the statistics:—baptized, 172; by letter, 54; restored, 2; dismissed, 35; died, 8; excluded, 5; withdrawn, 4, clear increase, 176, being an average of nearly 12 to each church, or 12 per cent on the gross membership. I wish that the reports of the Nova Scotia Associations had been equally favourable.

The week before last a party of us went to Ottawa, the future capital of Canada. The mode of travelling to that place is diversified. We went by railroad to Lachine—nine miles;—then by the steamer *Prince*

of Wales to Carillon;—then by rail, twelve miles, to Grenville;—then by the Steamer *Queen Victoria* to Ottawa. The whole distance is 120 miles, and the transit usually occupies ten hours. Ottawa is a city of 16,000 inhabitants, but looks more like a large straggling village than a city. The parliamentary and governmental buildings are rapidly approaching completion. They are constructed on a scale of great magnificence, and will cost about five millions of dollars. There are three buildings. The central one, containing the halls for both branches of the legislature, and rooms for their officers and committees, is 472 feet in length. The tower will be 190 feet high. There is a separate building for the Library, circular in form, 90 feet in diameter, and joined by a corridor to the Picture Gallery. The other buildings will furnish accommodation—the one for the Executive Council, the law offices, the financial and agricultural departments—the other for the Post Office, the Board of Works, and Crown Lands Commissioner. The walls are of Canadian stone, the facings being of Potsdam sand stone, and the arches of the windows of red stone from Ohio. The pillars supporting the galleries and roof of the legislative halls are of Annapolis (Canada) marble, elegant in construction and beautifully polished. The buildings are fire-proof, and the arrangements for heating and ventilation are said to be very complete. The plateau on which they are erected commands an extensive prospect of scenery of the finest character.

Last week I went to the Saguenay. This was a very interesting trip. The river Saguenay falls into the St. Lawrence about 150 miles East of Quebec. The banks are generally high and precipitous. We went as far as Hall's Bay, about 60 miles from the mouth of the river. The day was fine, the atmosphere clear, and the passengers, ourselves included, enjoyed greatly the views, now lovely, now grand, which were presented to us as we steamed along. One spot, Trinity Bay, was especially interesting. The rocks at its two extremities are named, the one, "Eternity," and the other "Trinity." The latter is so called because it seems to be composed of three portions resting on one another. These rocks or capes are respectively 1800 and 1500 feet high, and rise perpendicularly out of the water.

But I must close. I cannot finish, however, without expressing my satisfaction with the manner in which the Dalhousie question was met at our Associations, and at the meeting of the Methodist Conference. Our unanimity, and the hearty co-operation of our Methodist friends cannot but be productive of good-effects in certain quarters.

Yours truly,

J. M. CRAMP.

Montreal, Aug. 2, 1864.

Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, AUGUST 10, 1864.

Pews, Free-seats, &c., in the House of God.

The arrangements of the present day respecting the worship of God and the preaching of the Gospel, unless supplemented by a readiness to afford accommodation to strangers and casual hearers, are very liable to a charge of exclusivism and selfishness. Each denomination shut up in its own place, and little or no effort made to bring in those who are indifferent, and to press the claims of God upon them, the very opposite of the christian spirit may be unintentionally taught. Instead of a large-hearted benevolence, such as that of our Lord and Master, a narrow bigotry may be supposed to animate those who take the Word of God and act according to its teachings,—daring to think for themselves and be governed by their convictions. There is doubtless some ground for such an impression where no effort is put forth by professing christians to make others feel that they are welcome to come and participate in our religious privileges.

Christ gave to John's disciples several characteristics of his ministry, the climax of which was that, "to the poor the gospel is preached." This feature, we presume, was one which he intended to be continued by his disciples to the end of time. There is some difficulty, however, in carrying this out. Any direct attempt to provide for "the poor" as a class would be resented by them, and in many cases would raise a barrier rather than present an inducement to their regular attendance.

Some parties attempt to provide a remedy for this difficulty, and meet the objection of there being any exclusivism in the circumstances of persons having certain places in the house of God appropriated to their use, by denouncing the pew-system, and demanding

that a portion or the whole of the seats in churches should be free, as if the announcement of free seats were synonymous with a free gospel; "Without money, and without price" being perverted from its proper application respecting the way in which God bestows the blessings of his grace, to that of encouraging a parsimonious spirit, and appealing to men's niggardliness and cupidity for the purpose of securing a larger measure of popularity.

The pew system, as it is called, may have various modifications and gradations, from that of the strictest self-indulgence to that of the most considerate attention to others, and the manifestation of christian kindness in giving invitations to those who would not otherwise be in attendance at public worship. In many places it is more convenient to have the pews or sittings held at a certain regular charge upon those who occupy them, than to leave every individual to choose what seat he will occupy, and yet contribute towards the necessary expenses, or withhold any contribution, as he thinks proper. We do not think that abolishing of pews in places of worship and making some or all of the seats free, necessarily drives away exclusivism, or ensures courteous attention to strangers. Even where this is done the places that are usually occupied by certain individuals and families come to be considered as appropriated to them, as much as if under lock and key, so that, just as under other arrangements, those seats only which are occupied by transient hearers are really free. We have to desire to interfere with the internal arrangements of the churches, as we believe that no system will supply the place of christian kindness and personal attention to the comfort of occasional worshippers.

The duty of attending to the wishes of strangers and a readiness to find places for them, is, we believe, too often neglected by christian churches and people, under the impression that one or two who may take upon themselves this special charge, are quite sufficient for the purpose. This we think a great mistake; the benefit of such courtesy is lost by all the others when such feeling prevails. A kind offer of a seat in a place of worship on the Lord's Day, or an invitation to the Prayer Meeting or week evening service would convey, perhaps better than any thing else, the love felt by Christians for the careless and indifferent, and would probably do them more good than a year's ordinary attendance without such indications of regard. Christians always on the alert to do good, will be diligent in this as well as other duties. Merely assisting to pay the minister who preaches the gospel, and giving of our money to sustain the worship of God may be as well performed by wicked men as by Christians, but where a desire is felt for saving the souls of men the actions should be somewhat in harmony with such desires. This too might often afford an opportunity of making enquiry of strangers and of dropping a word which might convey lasting good to them.

These thoughts have been suggested by reading the following article in one of our exchanges:—

HUNTING FOR A SEAT.—We know a gentleman who has on Sunday afternoons been taking walks about Zion in New York, for the purpose of making observations, and he is prepared to make a few notes about pews. 1. All the churches outside the Methodist Episcopal that he has entered are pewed, unless Trinity be an exception. Even a Catholic church he entered he found pewed, the pew doors locked, and the keys not at hand. This struck him as a great novelty. He has worshipped in Catholic churches in the Old World, and always found them free. 2. He has generally succeeded in getting a seat, though not often without being subjected to much waiting and some mortification. 3. The churches in which he found the greatest difficulty were those in which there was the largest account of "empty boxes" and the poorest preachers. 4. As a general rule the heterodox churches offer the stranger the most cordial welcome. 5. The Episcopal churches give the least cordial one. In one of them on Fifth Avenue he tried three times to get a seat. One thing has particularly surprised him, a stranger may stand till the sacristan is ready to find him a place, while gentleman after gentleman passes to his seat, each eyeing him, as if to say, "What business have you here?" On only one occasion has a pew-holder invited him to a seat, and that was at Dr. Spring's (Presbyterian). He mentions it as a pleasant episode in his church explorations. On only one occasion did a pew-holder say to him, as he left the church, "Come again; you will find my pew open." This is another pleasant incident; it occurred at Dr. Dowling's, (Baptist.)

We have received a Boston paper, "The World's Crisis and Second Advent Messenger" containing a letter entitled "Provincial Report," dated Halifax, July 1, 1864, and signed "Edwin Burnham," giving the writer's estimate of the people of different denominations in some of the Western parts of this province.

At first sight we thought of copying the whole letter into our columns, without note or comment, thinking its disgusting levity would tell its own tale; but as that course might be misconstrued, by some, into an endorsement of its statements, we reconsidered the matter and thought it might be better, and more in accordance with our own feelings, to give the writer a severe—letting alone. As, however, that might also be misunderstood and charged to indifference towards our brethren, and the credit of Nova Scotia generally, we concluded to give our readers just a specimen of the style and character of this gentleman's writing, and inform them that he is known only as he terms himself, as an "Independent Evangelist," and therefore the credit or otherwise of his sayings and doings belongs to himself. We are sorry to find one professing to be a minister of the Gospel ready to adopt such means as he appears to have done to propagate his sentiments.

After telling his readers: "So far my tour into the Province has been a success," he says: "The people in this whole region, from Digby to Goat Island, are decidedly, with a few good exceptions, the most mean, ignorant, savage, sort of people I ever fell in with. From Digby I went up to Smith's Cove and preached one evening to a tolerable congregation. There is bigotry and stinginess enough here. At one place where I stopped I asked the lady if I could have some milk for breakfast. She said 'Yes you can but we have pigs and calves to feed!' Go it pigs and calves."

After laboring at Smith's Cove "two Sundays and several days," Mr. B. says, "The Baptists got mad at the doctrine of God! 'The poor Adventists got awfully scolded for not coming in to help,' &c. 'The Methodists were fearfully mad that the Baptists were likely to prosper. The Episcopal Churchmen looked sour, bitter, and kept 'glum.' Church members told foolish lies and bigger fools believed them.' 'Finally' he says, 'The pot boiled so hard that the cover had to be removed, and I hopped out into the 'Advent Tabernacle' where I preached some days, &c."

From Bear River I went to Goat Island and saw some good people, but the most of them are a stupid class. I had a meeting appointed one day at three o'clock, and the people kept stringing in until four; of course I could not get time to preach. I thought of shooting the Poke."

There, we presume our readers will agree with us in thinking that quite enough attention to bestow upon these elements of Mr. Burnham's "success!" Even these are not the worst passages in his letter. It would be far better, we think, for preachers not to get under a "cover;" but if "independent" they should carry out their independence, they would not then have occasion to "hop out into the 'Advent Tabernacle.'" If Mr. Burnham's preaching is like his writing it is not much calculated to raise the character of his hearers.

The American Tract Society is prosecuting the work of colportage pretty extensively in this province—employing young men of different denominations belonging to Nova Scotia to travel in destitute parts, where such Christian agencies are likely to be useful. By Scripture reading and visiting from house to house for the purpose of selling, or, in cases of destitution, giving religious publications, a vast amount of good is being done.

Mr. Kemp, of Boston, one of the principal agents of the Society, has been spending several days in Halifax. On Monday afternoon a meeting was held in the basement of St. Matthew's Church, to which the ministers and leading men in the different congregations of the city were invited. Several of the Colporters were present, and related what they had experienced in their journeyings; shewing the necessity for religious books, and the anxiety of those they visited to obtain these publications. The works of the American Tract Society are of a superior religious character, suited to all christian bodies, and calculated to do much good. A public meeting was held last evening in the same place as the above—the basement of St. Matthew's Church—for the purpose of making known more generally the nature of the colportage operations of the Tract Society, and for awakening a greater amount of interest in the spread of christian truth by these means.

Since the above was in type we have learned that eight colporters are employed in this work. They have distributed during the year, by sale and free grant, 19,192 volumes.—They have also visited 10,371 families, conversed on religious subjects and prayed with 4,569 families, and have attended and taken part in 242 prayer and other religious meetings.