

London, where churches are abundant and population has been steadily decreasing, so that it was impossible that the churches should be filled. Unwilling as churchmen were to sanction the principle of abandoning a spot once consecrated to Christian worship, they were forced to allow that the churches were not all wanted where they were placed, that they were greatly wanted in the increasing parts of the metropolis, and that the land on which they stood in the city could be sold for large sums of money, which might be applied for church extension. But after all these were quite exceptional cases in circumstances of the same kind; whereas it has been quite a common thing for nonconformist places of worship to disappear in districts in which the inhabitants became poorer, and to follow the wealthy pewholders to the suburbs. This is certainly a very peculiar interpretation of the statement: "The poor have the Gospel preached unto them."

Our readers are probably aware that the subject of Free Seats have been warmly debated in England, and various Bills have been introduced into Parliament with the object of doing away with appropriated seats. We learn from the *Guardian* that a new attempt has been made. "A Bill which appears to tend in the right direction has been introduced into the House of Commons by Earl Compton with regard to seats in church. It is the Bill which four years ago was introduced into the House of Lords by the Bishop of Salisbury, and receiving the strenuous advocacy of the Bishop of Peterboro, was there read a second time. Its object is stated as being 'to restore the ancient common-law right of the whole body of the parishioners to the use of the parish church.' With this view it proposes to declare that every parish church in England and Wales is 'for the free use in common of all the parishioners for the purpose of divine worship according to the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England.' And it is not to be lawful for any Bishop, Ordinary, court, or corporation, or other person whomsoever, to issue any faculty granting or confirming, or in any other way to appropriate, any seat or pew in any parish church to or in favor of any person whomsoever, except in the cases expressly mentioned in the Bill. At first sight this would appear to even go as far as to oust the authority of churchwardens with regard to the appropriation of seats. More especially is this indicated by the preamble, to which some exception has been taken in times past. This states that—

"The rights of the parishioners, according to law, have for many years past been infringed in many parishes and places by the appropriation of seats and pews to certain of the parishioners to the exclusion of others, and especially of the poorer classes, to the great hindrance of religion, and it is expedient that such common law should be declared with a view to its better observance."

It is not necessary to give the other provisions of the Bill, as few of them are applicable to our own circumstances. It may be noted, however, that the Bill does not interfere with the Faculty pews or other legal rights. If these are to be altered, it must be done in a regular method by buying out the holders, if they are willing to be bought out; and, if not, we suppose the infliction must be endured until the education of public opinion shall reach the privileged persons.

There are various evils which are confessedly connected with the present pew system. It is not merely that the poorer classes are alienated from our churches, but a spirit of selfishness and exclusiveness is fostered among those who are in attend-

ance. Of the existence of these evils there can be little question, whatever we may think of the best means of remedying them. In England the difficulty has been to provide a substitute for seat rents, the offertory not being found adequate for the purpose. But with ourselves the envelope system seems fairly well to meet the need; and there would therefore seem to be no hindrance in the way of making the proposed change.

But there is a serious hindrance in the habits of a large proportion of our church-going population. To this we adverted in our former article, and it is not necessary to dwell upon it here, otherwise than to consider what remedy may be found which shall, to as small an extent as possible, disquiet those who have been accustomed to appropriated seats.

Of course, the change should, in most cases, be gradual; and we are afraid that the method at present adopted in the city of Toronto—of having all the seats free at the evening services—is far from satisfactory. In some churches we fear that it has led to a good many persons giving up the habit of going to Church twice on the Lord's Day. Then it has also led to a degree of friction between seat-holders and occasional attendants, the seat-holders going for their books to their own seats, have occasionally been unpleasant to the early comers who have occupied them, and sometimes, in spite of the new regulation, have actually demanded possession of them. Moreover this provision for outsiders at an evening service has done very little towards securing them as regular attendants and communicants. Such a device can, therefore, only be regarded as a temporary measure while things are in a state of transition.

A much better method is that of having half the seats in a church made free and unappropriated, while the other half are assigned to private families. In this case the division should be right down through the church, leaving equal portions, and equally good, free and unappropriated. How can it be wondered that the occupants of the free seats as now generally existing should resent being thrust to the back of the congregation? Where the division separates off the northern and southern blocks of the church, no such complaint is possible. This method has been adopted with marked success in many of the new district churches in England. We think, however, that by far the greatest number of recently built churches in the Old Country have been made free and unappropriated.

A plan which has been found to work admirably in some places is, to allow the regular seat-holders their privileges up to the hour of beginning service, and after that moment to treat all the vacant places as free. Of course it is not the ideal method, but it does not work badly, and it prevents the parishioners from being crowded out of their parish church by strangers or occasional visitors. It is well that attention should be widely directed to this subject. The ways of removing the evils complained of may be diverse; but by degrees we shall finally reach the same conclusion.

EXCHANGES BETWEEN DIOCESES.

(COMMUNICATED.)

In the *DOMINION CHURCHMAN* of the 10th of May, last year, a regret was expressed as to the existence of a narrow spirit in the management of diocesan finances; that each diocese had made a different disposition of its share of the commutation fund, and that in proportion as dioceses increased so did divisions. The view was then expressed that there

should be no obstacle put in the way of any clergyman, with the Bishop's consent, exchanging from one part of Canada to another, and it was proposed to substitute for the present policy of inequality and isolation, one of equality and interchange.

At the meeting of the Synod of the diocese of Niagara, held in the following month of June, the report of a committee on exchanges between dioceses was presented by the chairman, the Rev. Rural Dean Forneret. This report showed that while the dioceses of this province had various rules and scales of pension, they were almost unanimous in grading a new comer according to his length of service in his new diocese, and not in the Church at large, in depriving the out-going clergyman of his claims on the Widows' and Orphans' or disabled Clergy funds, and in refusing to return to him, whole or part, of any qualifying fees paid in by him. It seemed to be impracticable for the Provincial Synod to centralise and administer the funds for the benefit of the whole of the ecclesiastical province, but it did appear feasible for that Synod to suggest and recommend some plan for reciprocity between the several dioceses.

When this report was considered, the Synod adopted a memorial to the Provincial Synod, setting out the facts and saying that this state of things entailed unnecessary and unjust loss on many faithful servants of the Church, by grading them, not according to their services to the Church at large, but only with regard to their work in a particular diocese, and the memorialists asked consideration of the matter and the suggestion of some plan of reciprocity by the Provincial Synod.

It is to be regretted that the Synod of Niagara did not go further and formulate a scheme which could have been submitted to the other Diocesan Synods for consideration and criticism. It is too much to expect the Provincial Synod to spare the time necessary to take up this important subject and legislate upon it. The utmost that could be done would be the appointment of a committee, which means three long years of waiting. But were it approached by delegates who had already considered the matter, who had, in fact, done the committee work at home, a considered and tolerably perfect measure could be at once submitted to the Provincial Synod for acceptance or rejection.

It is not too late for either the Niagara, or the other Synods, to take the matter up in this spirit, and we trust that they will do so, and that this impediment to progress will soon be removed.

THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

CHAPTER IV.—

THE PRIESTHOOD OF THE MEMEBERS OF CHRIST.

A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD.

The priesthood of all the members of the mystical body of Christ is plainly asserted in the first general epistle of St. Peter (ii. 9): "Ye are a royal priesthood;" and it is necessary that we should carefully examine this passage as well as the parallel texts in the revelation of St. John (i. 6; v. 10; xx. 6) before passing on to the consideration of the Christian Ministry in its more restricted sense.

The passage in St. Peter's epistle is evidently a quotation from the Book of Exodus xix. 6. The words employed by the epistle are precisely the same as in the Septuagint version of the Old Testament. In the Hebrew, as in our English translation, the words are "A kingdom of priests;" and it is noteworthy that the right text of Rev. i. 6, "hath made us a kingdom, priests unto our God," is almost an exact transcription of the Old Testament original in accordance with the strong Hebrew colouring of that book.

It is unnecessary to comment upon the various