

the Baptists, and that the beginning of a great calamity, it may be, stares Christianity in the face. If every sect which rejects some truth or emphasizes some other, publishes a Bible of its own, among the many—and each claimed as *the* Bible—how are the people to know which is right, or whether, indeed, God has given to man His Word at all?

A gleam of light breaks through the heavy cloud. It may be that the contemplation of such a possibility may bring the question of Unity more distinctly and more forcibly before the minds of Presbyterians, Methodists and Churchmen; and the prospect of such a dire calamity as the *New York Times* has drawn attention to, and which we have sought to emphasize, may lead to greater and more decided efforts towards that oneness which was the prayer of our Blessed Lord, and which many of His followers in every age since have ardently longed for. Such a course seems shadowed forth in the very remarkable article published on our first page taken from a Presbyterian paper. May God incline all our hearts to work and pray for so glorious a result, so that what now appears fraught with danger may prove the moving cause of the drawing together of some, at least, of those who have hitherto helped to maintain a divided Christendom.

CORRESPONDENCE.

"Free Seats and Rented Pews."

To the Editor of the Church Guardian:

SIR,—I do not intend this as answering all the objections against Free Seats or Pews of your respected correspondent, whose communication had the above heading in the last issue. Most of those arguments have been, I think, ably met by you editorially, and by correspondence in the GUARDIAN from time to time. What I wish is the privilege to give expression to a few of the reasons why I, a layman of our good old Church, am opposed to the system of supporting the ministration of the Church through rented sittings.

In the Parish Church, where your correspondent attended years ago in England, all the "pews" were fitted up in various styles to suit the grade or pecuniary standing of their occupants—the first-class had velvet cushioned sittings and stools, high curtains hung on movable rings, and were expensively carpeted; the second-class were furnished less expensively, and were without curtains; third-class had rush kneeling stools only, and had a cheaper kind of fittings. The FREE SEATS were situated in the spaces between the pews and in a line with the drafts of the doors, and were benches in many cases without backs, and painted in the style of the "pauper coffins," *i.e.*, of a durable lead colour. These were the *free seats* for the poor in this world's goods in a reformed Church of forty or more years ago. Can you not, Mr. Editor, sympathize with one having an "hobby" who was reared in a country where such a state of things were too common? The Rev. gentleman writes of "the Irish Church of bygone days with unrented and yet empty seats." Of this I cannot speak. Yet of the crowded Churches I saw on my last visit to the old country some twenty-five years since, of the hearty responding, of the signs of real, earnest Church life in Churches with free sittings only, of this I can bear pleasing testimony; and believe with very many of our Churches' truest sons, that the sweeping away of those unsightly boxes, and the making of uniform but *free sittings* has been one great help in the success of that glorious revival commenced some forty-five years ago. Your correspondent also writes he has "tried the envelope plan, the subscription list, and the pew rent." Well, now, I would respectfully suggest he leave off trying any more plans, but leave this matter

of providing Church expenses to those whose business it ought to be. I, for one, believe it to be a duty, a *privilege*, to give what I can afford to the support of our dear old historic Church; so cannot number myself with those who readily discover that "the clergyman has been preaching Popery, or has not visited him often enough."

Many of these remarks may cause some to think it easy to find fault with systems of money-raising and would rather hear suggestions. As a humble member of the Church I would wish to see tried the volunteer system, pure and simple, which has often proved successful under the ministrations of clergy of every school of thought. It was tried in the small and isolated town of Pembroke, County town, Renfrew, where I resided previous to coming here, and considering the very small number of "men of means" belonging to the Church was very successful. It is not a question of "High" or of "Low" at all. The Church there progressed equally with the free church system, when under the charge of thorough Christian and working clergymen of opposite schools, *i.e.*, Rev. Wm. (now Canon) Henderson, of Montreal, and Rev. A. C. (now Canon) Nesbitt, of Smith's Falls.

In conclusion, I would say educate the people in the "lost art" of giving. What! grumble in the pulpit about not getting money enough? Yes, this to me seem a clergyman's duty, to speak in terms not to be mistaken. Then, if God does not put it into the hearts of His people to give a reasonable amount towards the support of those who have been called to an office that often proves anything but a sincere, they stifle "the still small voice"; and every town found—after due enquiry by their Bishop—to be able to properly sustain a minister and does not, I would take the clergyman away from for a time, even should such action cause one or more of professed Churchmen to "get religion" and join any of the every-day sects, even to the last and most noisy, "General Booth's Salvation Army."

Yours respectfully,

J. W. POTTER.

Almonte, June 18.

To the Editor of the Church Guardian.

SIR,—Now that the period is approaching for purchasing stocks of fuel for the supply of the dwelling house in the next cold season, it seems well to again remind your readers of the danger to health that arises from the use of anthracite stoves, especially when placed in the principal lobby of the house. It stands to reason that when we find the stove from which the heated air is given off is too hot to be touched with the finger, that the air so supplied cannot be fit for breathing in the sleeping rooms. But as already explained, that is not the whole case, for an *equalized* air is needed for the sleepers—that is an atmosphere as nearly equalized as possible to our artificial modes of heating—whereas the system of heating by streams ascending from the ground floor provides for those on the floor above nothing but a perpetual *fluctus*, or hot and cold wave in this vital medium that has to enter the lungs.

A hard coal stove may not do so very badly in the day-time, for the ground floor alone, because the heated air ascends in a direct line from the stove, and is not breathed at all by those standing or sitting in its neighborhood. Also the lungs are not nearly so delicate while the person is awake. The mischief is that we cannot put out the anthracite stove at night, and though these bad effects may be somewhat mitigated by removing the stove into a sitting room instead of allowing it to be placed in the hall, it would be better still to be without it at night, and for that purpose to substitute a wood or soft coal stove on the ground floor, which can be put out, and adopt a small stove of any sort on the sleeping floor placed far enough from the couches. From this explanation it will be seen that wood or soft coal is preferable, and I am certain that the excellent rule of observing the sensations, will, wherever the two systems are tried, prove the truth of what I have advanced.

SANITAS.

Quebec, June 13th, 1883.

CHURCH CONGRESS AT HAMILTON.

POPULAR LITERATURE AND RECREATION.

THE Rev. G. G. Mackenzie, of Brantford, read a paper on the "Attitude Churchmen should occupy towards Popular Literature and Recreation," from which the following are extracts:—There are many popular amusements which we all conscientiously approve of, recreations for body and mind, not only harmless, but positively necessary and beneficial; while there are more which we must unhesitatingly condemn and do our utmost to counteract. The history of England tells us that during the reign of the Tudors, when the national character was gathering strength, the only popular amusements openly encouraged by authority were those which associated skill with pleasure. Out-door healthful exercise with relaxation, hunting, running, leaping, and wrestling, were esteemed manly amusements. Cricket, football, lacrosse, running, and boating, all motion in the open air, under clear skies, is the finest and keenest recreation possible to a healthy-minded, full, pure-blooded man. So far as these out-door pleasures can be kept distinct from the curse of alcoholic drinks, and that bane of our popular amusements—the treating system—they cannot be too highly prized and encouraged. But, unfortunately, now the announcement of a boat or foot race—quite as much as that of horse-racing—brings together a class of the so-called sporting community, not so much for the old English love of manly exercise, but to ply that most degrading vice of betting and gambling. There can be no two opinions as to the curse of gambling, whether it be in its first apparent harmless beginning at the gentleman's whist-table, or more developed at the gambler's haunt, once-rooted, cancer-like, in its work it may be slow, its result is sure—the destruction of all that constitutes true manhood. Is this not a work for the philanthropist and patriot, to rescue the manly sports of our land from being subverted by degrading vice? There are many places of popular amusement attracting their votaries every night in all our towns and cities. Theatres, billiard rooms, gaming tables, and public dancing assemblies, all with their attending drinking saloons, concerning which the Christian pastor and parent should have no indefinite opinion nor utter any uncertain sound of warning. Let all that can be said in favour of the imaginary theatre as exalting virtue and reprobating vice, and the play containing a moral, yet we must not forget that lesson. In conveying truth almost everything depends upon the medium; literal truths coming from false lives and feigned lips reach no man's heart. The claim of the ideal theatre as a school of morals, I fear, is practically a false one, not because it is necessarily immoral, but because it cannot, from its own nature, be a teacher of morals. The truth cannot proceed from that which is false. There are those who sincerely desire and believe in a reformed stage as a means of doing good. They are the few; the mass who patronize and support the theatre, desire no reform, nor would they patronize any reformed play-house. It is a matter of fact that though the Kembles, the Siddons', and Macready played Shakespeare in a London theatre, it was to largely unappreciative audiences and unpaying houses. But, it is claimed, the theatre represents an art, and society never drops an art; the stage has stood for 300 years and shows no signs of decadence. The crucial question remains, may Christians visit the theatre? I should say if at all, very occasionally. When the play is pure and has some true worth, when the acting has the merit of art, and the place is respectable in its associations, then perhaps, no logical principle forbids it. But if theatre-going become a habit, and the average play an attraction, surely the mental status is weak, the moral sense low, and the taste somewhat depraved. When the higher life is realized I imagine the theatre is rarely, if ever, visited, the expansive power of a new affection has lifted the life from the sensuous to the mental and spiritual. Of billiard rooms, gaming tables, and public dancing halls, the writer has no experience, beyond the