

DIOCESE OF QUEBEC.

CIRCULAR TO THE CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF QUEBEC,
No. 2.
Quebec, 4th Feb. 1851.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,—In pursuance of my promise made at the close of my Circular, No. 1, upon Church-building, published in the last number of the *Canadian Ecclesiastical Gazette*, I now proceed to offer some few remarks and suggestions upon the principles to be observed in the interior arrangement of Churches. It will be still borne in mind that my recommendations are mainly designed to be applicable to such Churches as can be erected by congregations feeble both in number and in resources, in the new settlements, which open themselves, from year to year, in the Diocese; and, as before, "I shall avoid all technical terms whatever, and shall endeavour to make myself plainly and immediately intelligible to persons without any architectural attainments."

1. **PASSAGE UP THE MIDDLE OF THE CHURCH.** It is perfectly indispensable that there should be what is sometimes, although quite improperly, called a *middle aisle*, running up clear and without the obstruction of desk or pulpit, to the rails of the holy table.¹ The fashion which once prevailed to a considerable extent, and is still, in some places, to be seen, of putting up a large enclosed desk and a pulpit of the same description, behind it, directly in front of the communion-table, is now, by common consent, condemned as awkward, inconvenient and unsightly in the very extreme. And the practice of filling up the centre of the Church with a block of pews, is destructive of all good ecclesiastical effect.

There should always be a good, roomy, clear space, at the termination of the passage, between the pews or benches of the Congregation and the rails of the Communion-table; and there are occasions, such as the administration of the Lord's Supper, and more particularly of the rite of Confirmation, upon which, if this space be contracted, much irreverent crowding and jostling and much actual inconvenience will be apt to ensue. It is well worth while to strain a point in order to gain free room in this part of the Church.

2. **COMMUNION-TABLE.** For reasons stated in my Circular No. 1, I pass over all notice of what is properly called a *Chancel*. The holy table, however, which must always be placed at the east end of the Church, may stand with good effect, in a recess, formed by taking off a small vestry in one corner, and a corresponding closet in the other, which may be used for keeping wood, or a Sunday School library, &c.,—the rails being carried along the front of the recess, either in a straight or a curved line, as may be judged preferable. The rails themselves should, if possible, be of turned work, and, in some measure, massive. If the plan of a recess is not adopted, the rails may either be carried across the whole width of the Church, or may run back, at a proper distance on each side, to meet the east wall, in a direction parallel to the ends of the altar. This last arrangement is by some authorities pronounced objectionable. In calculating the space within the rails, the attendance of the Bishop and the Clergymen who may accompany him, upon particular solemnities, should always be taken into the account. The whole of this space should be a raised platform, projecting, one step, outside of the rails, in order to afford a kneeling-place for the communicants. And, if there is room for it, the table itself should stand upon another and smaller platform, raised one step more, with space left upon this second platform for a Clergyman to stand and kneel, at each end. But in a very small Church, this last-mentioned plan is impracticable.

3. **DESK AND PULPIT.** In Churches upon the scale here in contemplation, as it is by far the cheapest and simplest plan, as, in my own judgment it is quite sufficient, at least to begin with, and has a pleasing effect, to have two *lecterns*, or movable stands with turned single stems, matching each other and just large enough to hold a Church-book of the usual folio or large 4to size.² One of these is for the Bible and the other for the prayer-book; and the former serves for preaching as well as for reading the lessons—an arrangement which seems, in a manner, to proclaim the principle that the *teaching* of the Church is the exposition of the *Word of God* or based upon that word. These *lecterns*, (each having a kneeling-stool behind it), are sometimes, if the space within the Church is very confined, placed within the rails, as is seen in All Saints' Chapel attached to the Rectory at Quebec; but properly they are placed just outside, one in front of each corner of the rails but a little off towards the side of the Church, and slightly inclined inward. A very perfect arrangement of this nature may be seen in the Church at Vaudreuil in the Diocese of Montreal served by the Rev. Jas. Pyke.

If a regular desk and a pulpit of a more decided character are preferred, and it is not found necessary from motives of economy, and to adopt the two *lecterns*, the desk should be of light and simple construction, without door and without panels, either at the sides or in front, and without any back,³ and large enough to hold both books. A pattern may be seen in St. Matthew's Chapel, Quebec, and another, upon a different plan, in the room fitted up as a temporary Chapel at Bishop's College, Lennoxville. The supporting sides should be quite narrow and the space between them, in front, may be filled up with three or four small flat bars, separated from each other by a pointed arch. The desk should stand upon a base, of the height of one step from the ground. The pulpit should not be large, heavy, nor lofty; it may be ascended by about four steps, behind, and may rest upon a stem of proportionable height. St. Matthew's Chapel just mentioned affords a pattern which is architecturally correct. Supposing the space to be clear up to the east wall on each side of the communion-table, the desk and pulpit or, as the case may be, the *lecterns*, must, nevertheless, be a little in advance of the communion-table (although not directly before them.)

There is no better material for the more ornamental, and indeed, if it can be afforded, for all the lighter wood-work of the Church, than the *butter-nut* of the country. The birch also works up very nicely into articles of Church-furniture and well chosen pieces of it are particularly suitable for communion-tables.

¹ In large Churches which have been built with side-galleries it may sometimes be unavoidable to retain this position of the pulpit. In order that the preacher may command the whole Church. This was the case in the Cathedral at Quebec, where, however, in the last improvements, the pulpit was made as light, and the whole arrangement as open, as circumstances permitted.

² Plain *lecterns* of this description, of birch or other suitable wood, may be had for 12s. 6d. apiece.

³ If the rails run completely across the Church, the distance of the *lecterns* from the side-walls may still be judged of, from these directions.

⁴ The Canon which calls a desk a seat merely employs, (as I apprehend it), a phrase of the day, to describe any decent and commodious desk—a passing fashion having found its way into the Church, of attaching a seat to a desk.

4. **FONT.** It is the principle of the Church of England to mark out distinctly in her chaste and careful provisions for the public solemnities of Religion, the administration of the two sacraments ordained by Christ; and she therefore rails off the place for the holy table and directs that a stone font be placed in every Church. It is unnecessary to comment upon the slovenly, niggardly and irreverent practice, which nothing but necessity can justify, of using some little common household vessel for the public baptism; and it is a very objectionable custom which has crept in, in some places and is exceedingly common in this Diocese, to have either a small portable vessel manufactured for the purpose, or a small kind of basin sunk into a shaft or pillar. All these substitutes for a proper font are entirely irreconcilable either with ecclesiastical propriety or with architectural taste. The font, to deserve the name at all, ought to be, as all the ancient fonts are and all which are now introduced into Churches built and furnished at home upon even tolerably correct principles, of a size sufficient to make it at least possible to follow the rubric which provides for the case of dipping in the child. I do not mean to censure what has been done in times when men were everywhere careless upon these points; but now that those times have gone by, if we aim, in new undertakings, at having seemly and correct Churches at all, it is a great inconsistency and conspicuous deficiency, not to have a proper font. Where means run short and it cannot be managed to get on at first it should be always kept in view as a thing to be accomplished; and a saving in other points may commendably be made to gain this object. There are two of our Churches in Quebec, which exhibit fair specimens of fonts—the Cathedral in which the font harmonizes with the *Grecian* and St. Matthew's Chapel in which it is in keeping with the *Gothic* character of the building. The latter was the gift of a devout Churchman, Mr. Morgan of Quebec, who undertakes to make fonts to order. The price varied exceedingly according to the ornate character of the article.

The font should be placed as near as can conveniently be managed, to the entrance of the Church.

5. **SEATS.** Of all the innovations of modern times which have tended to disfigure our churches and to give them an unpleasant and un-church-like aspect, there is scarcely any which has been worse, perhaps than the fashion of constructing and fitting up the pews. I shall not here speak, however, of high walled boxes, interspersed among more moderate pews, or of *puddings* of various hues in the same Church—these being enormities of which our country-missions are in no danger. I do not at all hesitate to profess myself opposed, in principle, to the system of leased as well as of proprietary pews which I believe will gradually disappear in Christian Churches—but it is a system recognized by law in this country and must be tolerated while it lasts. Still there can be no occasion whatever, for adopting in new Churches, pews enclosed with doors, which are disagreeable to a correct eye and constitute a considerable and perfectly useless addition to the expense of the structure. The seats may also be made with a rail at the back instead of pannels and here again is a saving of money. The manner in which seats may be made ornamental in a Church instead of disfiguring, is seen in many beautiful examples in England, and some approach to the same thing is to be witnessed in St. Matthew's Chapel, Quebec, and a nearer approach in the Church at Point Levi. The latter, however, is injured in effect by having a row of doors. But in the Churches for the benefit of which I am writing, it will generally be necessary to have the seats entirely plain. They will still look better than enclosed pews.

It is particularly important, in order to the preservation of Church-rules and the promotion of humble and constant devotion, that there should be low kneeling-benches within the seats, so fixed that the worshippers face the desk and pulpit.

6. **VESTRY.** It is quite necessary to have some kind of vestry, for (if there were no other reason,) it will be felt by all persons that nothing can be more awkward and unbecoming than that the Clergyman should put on or change his vestments in the view of the congregation. One mode of providing for this object, has been pointed out under the second head of this letter. Another is to build a small room opening from the side of the Church at the north east corner—or it may be thrown into the form of a prolongation of the Church at the east end, lower and narrower than the main building, so as to have the exterior effect of a *Chancel*, into which it may ultimately, perhaps, be converted. If there is a gallery at the west end a small vestry may be made in one of the corners under the gallery, which may be balanced by the staircase on the other side—galleries, which have been only the creations of necessity to gain room in over-crowded Churches, or, if parts of the original plan, the productions, too often, of a parsimonious calculation to squeeze together the largest possible number of worshippers at the cheapest rate, are by all means to be avoided where no necessity for them exists.

7. **MISCELLANEOUS APPENDAGES.** Chairs should be provided, (as soon as it can be afforded,) within the Communion rails, having some Church-like character, and, if possible, harmonizing with the architecture of the building. Or two or three contiguous stall-seats of a plain fashion, may be made against the side-wall, within the rails, if they extend to meet it. The stalls in the Cathedral and in All Saints' Chapel at Quebec, with proper modification, might furnish hints for the pattern. The Communion-table should never be seen without a decent cover, either crimson, scarlet, purple, or dark blue, reaching down to the floor, of the best material which there are means at command to procure; and the floor within the rails should always be carpeted.⁴ The kneeling-stools at each end of the Communion table, as well as for the desk or *lecterns*, should be covered to match the hangings of the Church. *Lecterns* require no hangings or trimmings. Those for the desk and pulpit should, of course, match the altar-cloth.

To these directions I may venture to add, as not unconnected with the present subject, a general recommendation of strictly enforcing the Apostolic rule, as applied to the appearance and arrangement of material things within the Church, *Let all things be done decently and in order.* Rusty stoves and stove-pipes, and even left standing in summer, fire-wood piled up in view within the Church or tumbled about the floor—unsightly and make-shift provisions for this or that purpose connected with the solemnities of worship, still contentedly retained, which were adopted in the first instance perhaps from necessity,—these are things which should never be suffered in the house of God.—They jar against our feelings of reverence and irresistibly convey the idea of a low and cold estimate of the

⁴ If that form of communion-table be adopted of which the front and ends are closed with ornamented wood-work, the cover should be only on the top.

sanctity of christian worship and the value of religious privileges. It is a special duty of the Church-warden to guard against the occurrence of any such reproach in the Congregation, and it may be hoped that they will feel themselves happy and honoured in preserving respect for the Most High. Nothing, surely, should be permitted to be seen in a Church, which would offend the eye in the house of a well-ordered family, occupying a creditable position in the world.

It is very true, and it is a truth to be carefully cultivated in our minds, that all exterior decency and solemnity in our worship, are of no avail unless we WORSHIP THE FATHER IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH,—and unless THE LIFE WHICH WE LIVE IN THE FLESH WE LIVE BY THE FAITH OF THE SON OF GOD. These principles, I am confident, you will inculcate. But it is a poor evidence, as you will, at the same time, point out, that such teaching has been blessed, or that our religion has taken hold of our heart and affections, if we cannot be brought to make sensible sacrifices of our worldly substance, according to our ability, for the honour of the house of God, or if we manifest a lazy indifference about the preservation of a consistent and reverential character in all the appurtenances of His worship.

I have to request that when any application is made to me respecting the erection of a Church, you will take care that the plan of the interior and exterior are submitted for my inspection.

I have also to request that you will be pleased to direct the attention of all parties concerned in such undertakings with whom you may be connected, to the advertisement of the *Lay Committee of the Church Society* which appears in the *Canadian Ecclesiastical Gazette*.

I am, dear Sir, your affectionate brother,
G. J. QUEBEC.

CHURCH SOCIETY OF THE DIOCESE OF QUEBEC.

The Lay Committee of this Society are prepared to pay half the cost of a few sets of ground-plans, elevations, working drawings and specifications, together with estimates according to the prices of labour and materials,—of churches in brick and stone to contain not more than three hundred, provided that the plans &c., be approved by the Committee, and that they become the property of the Society; and the Committee hereby invite communications from Congregations wishing to build Churches of the description above mentioned.

W. WICKES, A. M., Secretary.

Quebec, Jan. 14th. 1851.

UNITED STATES.

MINNESOTA TERRITORY.

To the Editor of the Gospel Messenger.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,—In my last letter I promised to keep our friends informed of the labours and success of the Rev. Mr. Breck and his associates, in planting the Church in this broad and beautiful land, believing them not to be without interest. I therefore take up my pen at this early period in the new year, to fulfil my promise.

Our brethren continued to live in the tent which they pitched on their arrival, for several weeks, while their house was in progress of building. In this situation I often visited them, and once or twice tarried with them over night, in the tent, and in "the sweet hour of prime," under the oaks, joined them in their devotions, in that "form of sound words," no less appropriate in the grove than in the temple. As soon as the house was enclosed, they moved into it, and continued in it until late in the fall, when it became necessary to remove into a cabin, or shanty, constructed of rough boards, until the house could be plastered and fitted for winter. During all this time their cooking and washing was done, as at the first, in the open air under the trees. They have now, however, better arrangements for these things. They have added a wing to the main building, of twelve feet square, which is used not only for cooking, but for an eating room, while the shanty is turned into a laundry, leaving the original part of the establishment, a room twelve by seventeen feet, for a parlour, library, study and chapel, with the dormitory up stairs. On the whole they are comfortably fixed for the winter, though everything is in the most simple and inexpensive style possible. I am thus particular in this description, with the hope that it may attract the attention of some who live in costly mansions, and can spare something of the abundance with which they are blessed, for the cause of Christ and His Church in this new Territory, and induce them to bestow it without diminishing their other charities, or overlooking the wants of the Church in their own neighbourhoods.

These brethren arrived in Minnesota in June last, and they have already accomplished much. They have established fifteen stations in different parts of the Territory and on the borders of Wisconsin. At all these places they regularly perform Divine service, and feel much encouraged to persevere in the good work they have commenced. In no one instance have they failed to meet their appointments. In consequence of this punctuality, the people are attentive to hear them; and it is to be hoped that many of them will ultimately be gathered into the bosom of the Church, who are now strangers to her doctrines and principles, and are living without God in the world. Up to the present time, in fulfilling their appointments at these fifteen stations, they have travelled on foot three thousand and thirty-two miles; and otherwise, by sailing or riding, sixteen hundred and seven miles, making in all, four thousand six hundred and thirty-nine miles. These are formidable distances in a new country, without bridges, bad roads, and oftentimes no roads at all. Once, two of them missed their way, and remained all night in the woods, without means of kindling a fire, and exposed to a violent storm. At another time, one of them in returning from a distant station, got lost among the hills and valleys, and in his wanderings, stumbled on the lair of a wolf, who gave him a parting grip upon his foot, but fortunately it was protected by a boot, and he received no harm. It would probably be difficult to decide in this encounter, which was the most frightened, the wolf or the wanderer. I mention these things, to show our brethren in more favourable circumstances, the toils, and fatigue, and exposures necessarily incident to the planting of the Church in the West, and particularly in this new and distant Territory. But I am happy to add, that none of these things move these devoted men, nor do they appear to count their lives dear unto themselves.

Your readers are probably aware that we have commenced building churches at the two most important points in this Territory, St. Paul and the Falls of St. Anthony. The corner stone of the latter was laid as late as the 30th of October. It is intended that this edifice shall be, when completed, twenty-four feet wide

by sixty feet long, besides a chancel of the requisite proportions, and in the early pointed style. But from the want of means, only a section of twenty-four feet has been commenced, which must answer for the present, unless a few liberal men from the more favoured portions of our Zion will lend a helping hand. It occupies a beautiful and commanding site, and near the place where I saw eleven years ago, a camp of a party of the Sioux, which had left a day or two before on a war expedition into the country of the Chippewas. This camp was an object of considerable interest, and suggested many reflections upon the manners and customs of that peculiar and mysterious people. It consisted of a large number of booths extending in a straight line of several hundred yards, perpendicular to the river, and opposite to the passage between two beautiful islands above the Falls. In most of these lodges were evidences of their rites and ceremonies preparatory to war, and at the head of the column was a dead dog, bedaubed with various colours, suspended from a tall pole, by the neck, with his face looking to the north, and which had been sacrificed on the occasion to propitiate the Great Spirit. Nothing but the roar of the neighbouring cataract disturbed the solitude and stillness of the place, which had so recently witnessed those dark and gloomy superstitions. It was, therefore, with no ordinary emotions of pleasure that I assisted at the ceremony of laying the corner stone of "the Church of the Holy Trinity," in a place associated in my mind with this wild and savage scene.

The Church at the village of St. Paul, though not finished, was from the necessity of the case, opened for Divine service about the middle of last month.—We hope to have it in readiness for consecration early in the spring, or as soon as Bishop Kemper can make it convenient to visit this distant part of his Diocese. This edifice when completed, will be neat and beautiful, and an ornament to the village, though some men of small wit, "over the way," amuse themselves and others at its antique appearance. It is of small dimensions, being only twenty by forty feet, with a chancel nine by twelve, and a steeple six feet square, which when finished, will be fifty-two feet high, ornamented by the emblem of our holy religion. It is covered with plank and battens, and is only ten feet from the under wining to the spring of the roof, which is open. Our friend, the Rev. Montgomery Schuyler, of Buffalo, has presented us with a window for the chancel, of stained glass, which is now on its way, and which we hope to receive when the navigation opens in the spring. This window is a simple cone in its shape, four feet and a half in width, by eleven feet high, of brown matted glass, with a blue border, and a large crimson cross in the centre. It may be proper, perhaps, to mention, that the writer commenced giving service at St. Paul, five or six years ago and continued to do so at intervals, until the arrival of Mr. Breck and his associates, in the Territory; and that some preliminary steps had been taken towards the erection of a church at that place. The Rev. A. B. Patterson, of Princeton, N. J., when on a visit here, summer before last, promised five or six hundred dollars towards the good work, which promise he has nobly redeemed.—With this sum, together with subscriptions in St. Paul, and the offerings of friends in the vicinity, and at a distance, we have one decent and becoming place of divine worship in Minnesota. I was present and preached on the formal opening of it, and again last Sunday, by exchange with one of the brethren, and met large and interesting congregations. The responses were made with great fervour and devotion. Should this statement meet the eye or attract the attention of those friends to whom I have privately applied for assistance to build this little temple, I would inform them that I am still looking for the fruits of their liberality, and anxious to record their names among the contributors to the first Protestant Episcopal Church in Minnesota.

Although I have spun out this letter to a greater length than I intended when I sat down, I cannot conclude without giving you some incidents of the journey of the Rev. M. Taylor, who stopped with us on his way from Newfoundland to Red River, last summer, gathered from his letters while on his route, and after he reached his destination. He left here on the second of August, and arrived at Prince Rupert's Land on the fifteen of September, making four months from the time of his departure from Newfoundland. The journey was performed from this point in a cart drawn by a single horse, and of most primitive construction, and would be a curiosity in any other part of the world. Circumstances prevented his leaving Fort Snelling for the Falls of St. Anthony, where he was to meet the companions of his journey, a distance of eight miles, until quite late in the evening. "We got over the first marsh," he says, "very well, and the horse pulled along with much spirit, but on coming to a short steep hill, with a bog at the bottom, and not out of sight of the Fort, the horse 'staggered,' as they say in Newfoundland. I tried all sorts of means to move him but he would not stir." After many efforts without effect to go ahead or return, darkness closed around him and his good lady, and they came to the conclusion to sit in the cart until morning. "I unharnessed the horse and tied him with a long rope, and as we heard the band at the Fort playing the *tattoo*, we seated ourselves for the night, commending ourselves to Him who taketh care of His people at all times and in all circumstances, we composed our minds and feeling under our misfortunes." They spent a miserable night, as may be most readily conceived, almost devoured by the mosquitoes, and after a full chapter of accidents the next day, they finally arrived at the Falls, and the day after, pursued their journey to the Sauk Rapid, where they re-crossed the Mississippi, and took their departure to the Red River. "Soon after his arrival in September, he had an opportunity, and sent me a long and interesting letter, detailing many amusing incidents 'of flood and field,' and the cordial welcome he met with among his friends. 'We are not molested,' he says, 'by any Indian bands, though we found that they were near us, and constantly had an eye to our movements. We were often charmed at the wide stretches of the prairie land, the beautiful flowers and the waving grass. The lakes and woods had also a charm, and often did they revive and cheer our spirits.' He speaks in high terms of commendation of Bishop Anderson. He had returned from his visitation, and was employed among other duties in attending to the academy, which he purposed to do, until the arrival of the gentlemen who were on their way from England to take the charge of that institution. He mentions, also, that the Bishop had several candidates for holy orders, at his residence, and that he would hold an ordination in October. But I must hasten to subscribe myself faithfully.

Your friend and brother in Christ,
Fort Snelling, Jan'y 3, 1851. F. G. GEAR.