



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 numbers 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 endeavor 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.* 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 Clergy-

* 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 is 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.

men 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, so, in my own judgment it is quite sufficient, at least to begin with, and has a pleasing effect, to have two *lecterns*, or moveable 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.* 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, 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, 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-rails, the desk and pulpit or, as the case may be, the lecterns, must, nevertheless, be a little in advance of the communion-rails (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

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

† 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.

‡ The Canon which calls a desk a *scat*, merely employs, (as I apprehend,) 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 the desk.