

Our Contributors.

CHURCH ARCHITECTURE.

BY R. O. S.

The interior arrangements of a church are generally symbolic of the character of the worship celebrated there. In Roman Catholic churches the altar holds the chief place, symbol of the mystic faith of that Church. In the Reformed the pulpit occupied the centre, for now the Word and preaching of it was made the centre of worship, often to the ousting of other parts equally necessary. In the modern religious auditoriums (by courtesy, we may call them churches) both pulpit and table are thrust aside, and now the organ and the choir are the centre of all. This shows very aptly the trend of the times where both word and sacraments have become secondary matters, and music, solos, duets, trios, quartets and what not, form the leading part of our worship. It is true that, in our Church many churches so arranged have not come to this, yet the danger is that they will yet come to what they symbolize, and in three-fourths of our churches the organ and choir occupy the chief place.

Dr. Hunter, a leading dissenting minister in Glasgow, says that "the average nonconformist church is about the last place in which to find a true devotional spirit," and I fear many Presbyterian churches are little better. Dr. Hunter suggests as one aid to the recovery of this spirit, having becoming churches. He says: "A beautiful church is the least of all helps to worship, yet it is an aid which ought to be sought and gratefully accepted." He speaks truly. On entering an average Presbyterian Church now, are we impressed and made more reverent as we used to be in the old days? No, indeed. When we enter, were we ignorant of the character of the building, we could not tell but what it is a music hall, we have entered, semi-circular seats, even sometimes opera chairs, nothing churchlike in the decorations, no text of Scripture on the walls, no religious symbol whatsoever, but the whole end of the building occupied by an organ, with a platform and seats for singers, and a desk for the lecturer or leader. If we happen to be acquainted with the looks of religious books we may have a suspicion that the place may sometimes be used for religious purposes, but our conclusion would inevitably be that the first purpose of the place was music. Well I confess to having no feeling of reverence on entering a hall of this kind; I can not feel it is a House of God.

The Presbyterian church should get away from this evil. The Church should be arranged for hearing it is true, but there is an opera house style of architecture, and a churchly, and the latter should be maintained, and I will venture to give a few hints as to improvements which I think should be made in the arrangement of the sanctuary. I do not myself like the semi-circular style of our churches, but I'll say nothing against that, for that perhaps could be retained, and still be church-like, but every pew should be supplied with hassocks for kneeling on during prayers. I believe the majority of our people would prefer kneeling to sitting, for there is a strong feeling against the lazy and unscriptural posture. The Church failed in her duty in the transition period between standing, and sitting during prayers. Of course it may be, as Principal Caven said in class one day, I fear a little sarcastically, that we have got so spiritual now that posture makes no difference.

I am very doubtful about the good taste of having the front of the Church to which all eyes are turned completely occupied by pipes of an organ, it is certainly opposed to all Presbyterian traditions, in church symbolism. Instead of the organ there should where possible be stained glass windows, or suitable decorations. The choir should never be placed above and behind the pulpit. This is one of the most abominable

of all modern innovations. What would our fathers say could they see the pulpit cast down, and the choir elevated, the choristers going up the same stair, sometimes even occupying the same platform as the preacher. This plan is very unpleasant for the minister, and distracting for the people. Choirs have a bad name for talking, etc., in Church. I do not think they are worse than other people, but, being just behind the minister, every movement made distracts the attention, every action is noticed. The different styles seen in the choir too are anything but a means of grace. If all choristers were vested, then that objection would be removed, but still in a Presbyterian church, organ and choir have no right to occupy the place they do. The best place for the choir is, I think, in the rear of the Church in the gallery, although a place at the side has its advantages. If it is directly in front it should be very little if any above the level of the congregation.

There should always be a place well raised so as to be easily seen by all for the communion table, which it should always occupy, and not, as it often is, never seen except when there is a celebration. I was at one time a member of a Church in Toronto where, at a sacrament time, some of the front pews had to be removed to make room for the table. O Tempora! O Mores! The table should always when possible be one built especially for the purpose. On the same platform there should always be a font, placed in the most convenient place. This should be of stone if the congregation can afford it. If our wealthy people here would do as they do in Scotland, present things like these in memory of friends our churches would be much better provided with what is necessary as well as ornamental. If a stone one can't be got then a handsome wooden one can easily be procured. There should be also and most important of all a pulpit, not merely a lectern after the American style, but a pulpit, there may be a lectern too in the good old way, but anyhow there should be a pulpit for the sermon. In Scotland the fashion at present is to build the pulpit of stone. I should like to see that introduced in Canada, although it is rather expensive.

St. Andrew's Church, West Toronto, is in many respects an ideal modern conservative Presbyterian church. As soon as you enter you feel you have entered a Church. The arrangements are churchly except that in the gallery the pews are too narrow to permit of kneeling; anyhow there are no hassocks to kneel upon. The choir and the organ are in the gallery at the rear so that there is nothing to take away the attention from the service. In the front there is the table with the ministers and elders' seats always in their places, and also the font, although the platform might be a little higher, and larger, and not quite so crowded with pews. Then on raising our eyes our Presbyterian heart is gladdened by the sight of a real pulpit, while still higher is the stained glass window of the Good Samaritan one of the most beautifully executed windows in Canada, I've been told, and it certainly is a sermon in itself.

Here then there is nothing foreign. We can give our undivided attention to the service, for there is no fluttering of dresses finding of places, turning of leaves, or whisperings to draw away our attention from the worship of God.

I have called this an ideal conservative Church, and I would have nothing to say against our churches if they were all like that, but even there the pulpit dominates everything else too much. Some one has said that the religion of the Scots is of the head, not the heart, is too intellectual, and not devotional enough. I deny it is too intellectual, it can't be, we must keep up our high class preaching. As Dr. Proudfoot says, if the Presbyterian Church allows her preaching to deteriorate, then she becomes weak even as the others. But I admit that there is not enough devotion or feeling; the

pulpit dominates all. This should not be. The preliminaries to the sermon should be abolished altogether, and a service of worship introduced, to take equal rank with the pulpit.

The Scottish Churches are realizing this and are modifying their church architecture to give effect to it. Speaking of the new Morningside Free Church, lately opened by Dr. Smith, ex-Moderator, the paper says: "An internal feature is an apse in front of which and in the centre is the communion table, the pulpit being placed at the side." This has for some time been the style in favor with churchmen, and I am glad that Free churchmen are beginning to see the advantages of this arrangement. I expect that soon most of the Scottish churches will be built after this plan and I hope that the Canadian Church will not lag behind. I suppose I'll be told this is not Presbyterian. I wonder which is further from it, this arrangement, or the popular music-hall style. The former is simply a return to the old, ante-Westminster Assembly Presbyterian order. Before that time the reader in the lectern (afterwards occupied by the preacher) read the lessons from the Bible, and the prayers from Knox's Liturgy, after which the minister ascended the pulpit and preached, an order which I have read is followed to the present day in some of our churches in Holland.

I hope the Church will awaken to the need of attending to this important matter of church architecture, before the reverential spirit is altogether destroyed, and many of our devout people driven to where the longings of their hearts will find more satisfaction. Not certainly that the Church building can give that, but it is a help which is not to be despised, and as I said in the beginning the style of interior arrangement is a very good indicator of the trend of the Church, and many will agree with me when I say that reverence and worship are two things very much needed in our churches.

JESUS THE MESSIAH.*

BY REV. JOHN BURTON D.D.

The nineteenth century, among its many characteristic endeavors, has been fruitful in producing Lives of Jesus Christ, a manifest proof that still that name is before any other name in satisfying humanity's needs. A scholarly friend introducing to my notice Canon Farrar's "Life of Christ," said, "This is final, no pen need attempt another." The fascination of the Canon's style with succeeding years has passed away, and while one still enjoys the florid periods and wealth of learning with which that work abounds, the conviction remains that you are not brought into contact with the Christ of the gospels, either as the synoptics present him, or as the loved disciple pictures his Master; you see Him the rather as under the shadow of the cloisters at Westminster. Dr. Cunningham Geikie's Life is an elaborate compilation of facts and opinions; while the less pretentious and older Life by Andrews still deservedly holds its place of merit for the careful reader of the gospels; and Ellicott's historical lectures should not be forgotten. Neander's 'Life of Christ,' though written with Strauss's mythic theory in view, is worthy of a place upon the student's desk, but a real life of Jesus of Nazareth, presenting Him to modern eyes as He actually was and is, is yet a desideratum. When the late Chunder Sen was in England he told a British audience that they did not appear to understand the founder of their religion. "Christ," he said, "was an Eastern, and the practical Western world took Him out from His surroundings and painted Him as a Western." "He speaks to us," said the Brahmin, "as He does not to you." There is need of one familiar alike with the Occident and with the Orient, gifted with the spirit of loving rever-

ence for the Redeemer, to translate into our present day modes of thought the sayings and the doings of Him whose testimony the gospels are. We have seen somewhere the remark that whoever attempts to write over the gospel narratives proves by his presumption his unfitness for the task. In measure that is true. What we need is not rewriting, but a sympathetic translating of other idioms, words, customs than our own into the current language of the day, that the living Jesus may appear to us as He really was and is in His own loving sympathy and glory, no veil of misinterpreting between. A step, and that by no means an unimportant one, has been made in this direction by Dr. A. Edersheim in his "Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah," which work has been also issued in an abridged form since his death by the joint labors of his son and Dr. W. Sandy, of Oxford. Dr. Edersheim was educated in the Jewish faith, but subsequently embraced Christianity, taking orders eventually in the Anglican Church. He sees Jesus with the eye of a friendly Jew, and thus is enabled to present to us the gospel history in very much of its true setting. Of course it is not possible for a Western Jew any more than for an Anglo-Saxon to thoroughly place himself where an inhabitant of Palestine was when the crowds assembled on the Jordan banks to hear John proclaim the Messiah in their midst; nevertheless we have a reverent loving reading of our gospels as they are, by one whose whole early life was passed in tender memories of that law which Jesus came to abrogate by fulfilling. In his modesty our author claims no more. His book is not a finality, but it is a valuable contribution, and in this abridged form affords easy, pleasant, reliable and profitable study for the fireside, as well as for the desk. It is not critical, does not profess to be, it is the gospel narratives read by a scholarly reverent and converted Israelite, and in a plain unpretentious manner, yet with clearness, presenting to us Jesus of Nazareth as He spoke unto an Israelite's conversion.

PARVUM IN MULTO.

MR. EDITOR,—Sometimes a contributor to the press has his article returned to him with a slip enclosed, on which are the words, "Declined with thanks." This certainly is—to use a common phrase—*multum in parvo* (much in little). It is pointed, well, in more senses than one. But below is a specimen of *parvum in multo* (little in much), in a case of the same kind. A Mongolian Knight of the pen and scissors had a M. S. sent him which he did not see his way to give to the world; he therefore, returned it to the writer, with a letter of which the following, the *New York Times* says, is a faithful translation:

"Illustrious Brother of the sun and moon: Behold thy servant prostrate before thy feet. I 'kowtow' to thee, and beg that of thy graciousness thou mayest grant that I may speak and live. Thy honored manuscript has deigned to cast the light of its august countenance upon us. With raptures we have perused it. By the bones of my ancestors, never have I encountered such wit, such pathos, such lofty thought. With fear and trembling I return the writing. Were I to publish the treasure you sent me, the Emperor would order that it should be made the standard, and that none be published except such as equalled it. Knowing literature as I do, and that it would be impossible in ten thousand years to equal what you have done, I send your writing back. Ten thousand times I crave your pardon. Behold my head is at your feet. Do what you will.

Your servant's servant,

THE EDITOR."

I would respectfully suggest that the editor of this paper should get a few thousand copies of the foregoing letter printed, and put one into every M. S. which he returns to the sender. The cost

*"Jesus the Messiah," by Dr. A. Edersheim, 8vo, pp. 650. Longmans, Green & Co., London; Toronto, Wm. Briggs. \$1.75.