

The Church Times.

HALIFAX, SATURDAY, SEPT. 8, 1855.

CHURCH EXTENSION IN HALIFAX.

We have frequently noticed, within the last few years, several encouraging evidences of increasing earnestness and liberality among the Laity of this Diocese—and it is now our pleasing duty to record a similar instance of munificent zeal for the extension of the Church, on the part of our chief Pastor, the Lord Bishop of Nova Scotia. We allude to the proceedings connected with the building commonly called by the name of SALEX CHAPEL, which has recently been rented from the Trustees by our respected Diocesan, as a place of worship for the accommodation of the poorer members of the Church in this City—and was publicly opened for that purpose, by his Lordship, on Sunday evening last.—The Church was well filled on the occasion, not only by the class of persons for whose use it is chiefly intended, but by a large number of others belonging to the upper ranks of society, who were desirous to witness the interesting service. The Prayers were said by the Rev. J. O. Coehran, the Lessons were read by the Rev. W. Bullock and Rev. E. Gilpin, and the Sermon was preached by the Bishop, who addressed the congregation from a most appropriate text—by selecting those words of our blessed Lord which declare that “the Poor have the Gospel preached to them.” We trust that these words may be considered as a perpetual motto for all the Services which shall be conducted in that Church, and that they may be realized in all the fulness of their heavenly blessing, by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon “the congregation of the poor.” It cannot be denied that there is a large proportion of our Church population, who have been hitherto practically excluded from attendance on the means of grace, and deprived of the opportunity of joining in Christian worship with their richer brethren. It must be confessed that the poor of the Church have been shamefully neglected in the internal arrangements of many of our Churches, while an exclusive system has been permitted to prevail, which carries worldly distinctions of rank and wealth into the House of God, in direct opposition to the language of Holy Scripture, and which virtually destroys the character of united public worship in the Service of Almighty God. Many persons are probably not aware, that the present system of Pews, or enclosed private seats in Churches, is entirely an innovation of modern times, that its introduction is of comparatively recent origin, as it was quite unknown for a long period after the Reformation, and that it is never once recognized in any of the Canons or other Ecclesiastical Constitutions of the Church of England. It seems to have been gradually introduced in the latter end of the sixteenth century—though it does not appear to have been generally adopted in the English Churches till the beginning of the last century, when the old massive oak benches were rapidly superseded by those high square deal Pews, which disfigure so many of the beautiful Churches in England at the present day. We do not mean, however, to impute to the present generation the faults of a former one, which was remarkable for its bad taste and low tone of religious feeling. We are quite aware of the difficulty of applying an effectual remedy for the correction of an abuse which has been so long tolerated by established usage. Our efforts must be directed to the object of avoiding these faults in those Churches which are yet to be built, rather than attempting to remove them in those which are already in existence. On this subject we quote, with full approbation, the judicious and moderate language of the learned Dr. Hook, who says, with reference to the motives of those who took part in this innovation in former times—“It would, however, be equally absurd and unjust to apply such remarks to the present times—nor shall we offer any reasons against pews instead of open benches, except that they destroy the ecclesiastical character of a Church, that they encourage pride—that they make a distinction where no distinction ought to exist, and that they must be erected at a loss of 20 per cent. of church accommodation.”—(*Church Dictionary*, p. 531, 7th Ed.) However, the system which was commenced in the mother country, in a degenerate age of the Church, has also been generally transferred to the British Colonies—and it must be acknowledged, that the same system is sadly visible in our own principal Churches at Halifax, which was erected in the middle of the last century, and which has been too faithfully copied in many of our country Churches. There is evidently a wide disproportion between the extent of the poor Church population of St. Paul's, and the extent of free accommodation provided for

them in their Parish Church. It is much to be regretted, indeed, that there is no authentic Register of the Church Families residing in St. Paul's Parish, from which correct information might be obtained—and, in the absence of such an official document, we are obliged to have recourse to personal inquiries and probable calculations, in order to arrive at an approximation of the truth. We may observe, however, that some important statistical information has been recently collected by the Parochial District Visitors, with reference to this subject. The returns are still very imperfect—including only 18 out of the 21 Districts into which the Parish is divided; but it appears that those Districts contain 140 poor families professing to belong to the communion of the Church of England; and if we calculate according to the same proportion for the other 8 Districts, it would follow that St. Paul's Parish contains upwards of 220 poor Church families, with a population of about 1400 individuals. From this figure it is probable that there are very considerable deductions to be made; but after all due allowance, we may surely ask, what is become of the 1000 Poor of St. Paul's, and where is the accommodation provided for them in their Parish Church and in St. Luke's Chapel of Ease?

It may be interesting to our readers here to state the results of an exact calculation which has lately been made, with reference to the accommodation of St. Paul's, and the proportion of free sittings to the entire church room.

I. BODY OF THE CHURCH.

Private.

108 Pews, accommodating 502 grown persons.

Free.

1 Pew (No. 94) accommodating 18 persons.

Middle Aisle, accommodating 30 persons.

II. GALLERIES.

Private.

Organ Choir and 58 Pews, accommodating 271 persons.

Free.

20 Pews, accommodating 90 persons.

Wall Benches, accommodating 78 persons.

To which may be added the Children's Seats, on each side of the Organ, containing room for 42 children.

The total extent of accommodation in St. Paul's Church is sufficient for 1031 persons—of which 773 are private and the rest free, containing sittings for 258 persons (including children). It thus appears that one-fourth part of the Church room in St. Paul's is nominally free—but it must be observed that this space is not only in the most inconvenient and uncomfortable parts of the Church, but that the seats assigned to the poor and strangers in the galleries, are scarcely fit to be occupied, with the exception of 8 Pews (Nos. 29–32 in each gallery) containing room for 30 persons. This defect is now, we hope, satisfactorily supplied by the Bishop's FREE CHURCH, which contains sittings for 600 persons, 350 in the Body of the Church, and 250 in the Galleries—together with a large and commodious Hall under the floor of the Church, and of the same extent with it, which affords a convenient place for a Sunday School and Lecture room. The Church is to be opened for Divine Service twice on every Sunday—in the Morning, at 10 o'clock, A. M. and in the Evening, at 7 o'clock, P. M., for public Prayers and a Sermon, (the Morning or Evening Prayer to be used alternately with the Litany and Communion Service on each Sunday,) and in the Afternoon, at 3 o'clock, P. M. for catechetical instruction; thus extending to young and old the benefits of Scriptural teaching in the principles of our holy religion, in accordance with the doctrine and worship of the Church of England.

We understand that Representatives for the Diocesan Assembly have been elected, since the Meeting of last year, by the following Parishes or Districts which were then unrepresented:—Albion Mines, Arichat, Digby, Guysboro', Kentville, Rawdon, Ship Harbor, and by Cornwallis and Shelburne, in consequence of vacancies. The ensuing Meeting will be of great importance, as all future proceedings must be more or less influenced by the Constitution now to be settled, and the rules adopted for the transaction of business. We hope therefore that there will be a full Meeting both of Clergy and Laity, and that all will be prepared to give the time required for the full discussion of the matters to be proposed for their consideration. It may be inconvenient to some to come to Halifax two years in succession, but if they come now they will have the opportunity of deciding for themselves how often their presence shall be required. The Committee propose that the Meetings shall be held every second year, but it is open to the Assembly to determine

whether it shall meet more or less frequently. We would suggest for general imitation the example of some of the Parishes, including the poorest, which have provided for the payment of the expenses incurred by their Representatives.

Extract of a Letter from the Publisher:—

“Having now had an opportunity of seeing much of the country between Halifax and Lower Granville, and hearing the opinions of farmers and others capable of judging of the quantity and quality of the harvest, I think I am enabled to speak with tolerable certainty of the agricultural prospects of the approaching autumn.

“A long continued drought during the early part of August, caused great fears for the potatoes and corn. These have been relieved to some extent by heavy rain, which refreshed the parched earth, and will be attended with benefit, but the dry weather will materially affect the yield of both of the above crops. Altho' the quality will be good, the former will be small, and the stalks of the latter are not filled with ears, as in the preceding year. We have heard but little of the potato rot in any quarter. The dry weather was a boon to the hay-makers, especially on the uplands, most of the crop having been secured, in great abundance. This is more particularly the nature of the country in Newport, and the vicinity of Windsor—on the marshes thereabout,—and especially those of the Cornwallis and Annapolis Rivers, on both sides, there has never been a better hay season within the memory of man. Indeed they will with all their appliances, have a difficulty in securing the abundance with which a beneficent Providence has blessed these prolific meadows. Much of the grass on the Annapolis River is as yet uncut, and will probably remain so.

“In some places the weevil, has, it is said, again infested the wheat. I am inclined to think to a very trifling extent. The farmer has discovered what he believes to be a preventative to its ravages, which consists in sowing the seed a little later than usual—a few days is sometimes sufficient as a preservative. All the fields of this grain that I have seen, (and a great breadth of land has been sown with it this year,) look flourishing, everywhere presenting the appearance of an abundant harvest. Oats and barley, wherever sown seem to be excellent—and several fields of rye along our route will bear the same character.

“Of fruit, apples are scarce, except in some favored localities and where more than common care is bestowed upon the orchards. You may however console yourselves in a very prolific yield of the plumb trees.

“Upon the whole, I think I may venture to assert, that the Nova Scotia harvest will be much over the usual average, and as a consequence that the poor will enjoy a cheap loaf during the ensuing winter. May we not forget in the midst of the peace and plenty which are vouchsafed to Nova Scotia, the bountiful Giver of all good things.”

The Bishop intends (D. V.) to hold an Ordination on Sunday, Sept. 23d—and all Deacons intending to present themselves for Priest's Orders are requested to communicate their wishes without delay to the Archdeacon. It is not intended to hold an Ordination on the Sunday before Christmas-day.

(Inserted by Request.)

DIOCESE OF EDINBURGH.

St. George's Chapel, Edinburgh.—The Rev. Dr. Suther took an affecting farewell of his Congregation on Sunday the 29th ult., and was to have been instituted by the Right Rev. the Primate on Sunday the 5th inst. to the charge of St. Andrew's, Aberdeen.

The Vestry of St. George's, on receiving his resignation, entered the following resolution on their minutes:—“The Vestry, in accepting the resignation of the Incumbency of the Chapel now tendered to them by the Rev. Dr. Suther, and in thus dissolving the connection which has subsisted between him and them for the long period of sixteen years, desire to record, not only the deep regret which they feel at being deprived of his valuable ministrations, but also their high sense of the kindness and urbanity which had uniformly graced his intercourse with them, and their sentiments of respect, esteem, and affection for him as their Pastor. They at the same time beg to assure him, that he will carry with him their sincere wishes for his health and happiness in the sphere to which he is now called; and that their earnest prayer is, that he may be long enabled to discharge the duties of his new charge, for the benefit of the Church, and the good of the flock entrusted to him.”

We understand also that a handsome testimonial is about to be presented to Dr. Suther by the Congregation of St. George's.—*Scottish Ecclesiastical Journal.*

The Cape Breton News commencing its sixth volume, comes to us this week in an enlarged and improved form. We wish the proprietor success in his present undertaking.