

The Laying of Dorford's Foundation Stone

July 2nd 1914

The four pages that follow is the detailed article of the ceremony, as recorded by the Dorset County Chronicle.

The foundation stone still occupies its' original position – just to the right of the previous main entrance.

The New Baptist Chapel at Dorchester.

LAYING OF THE FOUNDATION STONES.

"FORWARD MOVEMENT" SUCCESSFULLY INAUGURATED.

[Reprinted from the *Dorset County Chronicle* of July 2nd and 9th, 1914.]

The Baptist community of South Dorset are steadily assuming their due place "in the sun." Following closely upon the celebration of the centenary of the historic Bank Buildings Baptist Church at Weymouth by the completion of a scheme of renovation involving an expenditure of a thousand pounds, their brethren in the sister town of Dorchester on Thursday inaugurated very successfully and happily their forward movement by laying the foundation-stones of the new chapel and Sunday school buildings which are being erected at the top of the town, on the central and commanding site which was occupied for 18 years by the temporary church of St. Mary's. As we have said in recent issues, the Baptists of Dorchester have long felt that their cause has suffered a great disadvantage in being "cribb'd, cabin'd, and confin'd" in the small and old-fashioned Dorford Chapel built in the reign of William IV. in an obscure and low-lying situation at the point of junction of the borough of Dorchester with the twin town of Fordington; and at last, with faith, hope and courage, they determined to launch out and furnish themselves with more commodious quarters, especially for the important work of the Sunday School, and were fortunate in securing on very favourable terms what must undoubtedly be regarded as one of the finest church sites, in point both of situation and of elevation, in the whole town. Mr. Jem Feacey was the architect engaged, and when he was removed by untimely death the task of designing the building devolved upon his successor, Messrs. Jackson, Son, and Feacey, by whom the plans have been redrawn with admirable judgment, making provision for every requirement.

DESCRIPTION OF THE NEW BUILDING.

In the early Nonconformist Churches, and until the last 50 or 60 years, the style or appearance of their buildings was usually severely plain; but during the latter period the Gothic and Classic or Renaissance styles of architecture have been largely followed; and among their churches it would be difficult to say which of those two styles is the predominant; but it is observable that in their plans the parallelogram is the form invariably insisted upon, and it must be admitted that it gives a more direct view of the preacher to the whole of the congregation than any other form of plan. In planning the new Baptist Church and the Lecture Hall the architect has adopted the parallelogram, and in style an inexpensive but dignified treatment of English Renaissance, and the design is especially appropriate to the surroundings of the site of the church.

The church, which will have its main entrance from Albert-road, will stand back from the road 24 feet. The building is entered through wide folding-doors to a roomy vestibule, from which access is obtained to the two aisles. The new church will be 66ft. long and 38ft. 6in. wide, and provide seating accommodation for about 400

persons. The floor will slope throughout its length. In front of the rostrum will be the baptistery, and on each side the minister's and deacons' rooms. Provision has been made to avoid much structural alteration for future organ and choir gallery, and ample provision is also made for exit by emergency doors. Adjoining, and with easy communication from the church, are a lecture hall and school-room, 29ft. by 53ft.; with five classrooms, primary department, and separate lavatory accommodation. The school entrance will be from the Bridport-road. The heating-chamber and coal store will be placed in the basement, and be approached from outside the building.

Externally the buildings will be faced with red Fordingbridge brick, and the plinth and pilasters relieved with dark Broadmayne brick. Bath stone will be used for the dressing of windows and doorways. The roof will be covered with slate. Throughout the church the windows will be glazed with plain leaded lights, and the lecture hall and class rooms with clear glass, while the artificial lighting will be by electricity. The ventilation and acoustic requirements so necessary in buildings of this kind have been especially studied by the architect. The work is being carried out in workmanlike fashion by Mr. A. E. Pickett, builder and contractor, of the Victoria Park, Dorchester.

VISIT OF THE BAPTIST UNION PRESIDENT.

The special gatherings in connection with the foundation-stone laying occupy three days, and began on Tuesday at eight p.m. with a public service at the Dorford Chapel, at which the members of the church had the honour and great pleasure of welcoming the official head of the Baptist community in the British Isles—the Rev. Charles Joseph (president of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland), of Plymouth. There was a large congregation, the body of the church being filled and many occupying the gallery. Appropriate hymns were sung with heartiness and fervour, Mr. Douglas Jackman being at the organ.

The Rev. Charles Joseph, observing that as they were thinking about building, therefore he would talk about building, announced as his text Psalm cxxvii., 1—"Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." In a sermon marked by scholarliness, deep research, and eloquence, and which will not soon be forgotten by those who heard it, he observed that they were all temples of the Holy Ghost, and they had to build themselves up on the true foundation of character. They also had to build up a name and a reputation, and this could not be done without God. In the constructive work of their lives they must secure God's guardianship, or else they could not dwell in safety. A temple built without God was a vain thing, and a city unwatched by God was an unsafe place. "You are going to build

a new chapel," said Mr. Joseph, "but unless the Lord build it, you are building it in vain. It will be a very much better structure perhaps than the old house, but unless God is with you in your effort, will He be pleased to go with you when you enter it? Are you going to be better Christians in the new house than you have been in the old, and are you going to win more souls in the new chapel? If not, why go there? Are you going to get more people to attend the services in your more commodious chapel? Unless you do, it will make you wretched. In the larger space that you will soon be occupying may God grant you more earnest consecration, more earnest devotion, and more utter submission to His will in your desire to bring souls to Him."

On Wednesday at eight p.m. a praise and prayer meeting was held.

LUNCHEON AT THE TOWN HALL.

At the invitation of the Building Committee a large company sat down to luncheon on Thursday at 1.30 in the Town Hall. Mr. A. R. Edwards (secretary of the church and of the committee) presided, and among the company were Mrs. Edwards, the Pastor (the Rev. F. E. Boorman), Mr. E. M. Walker, of Wellington, county Somerset (president of the Western Baptist Association, which has given liberal assistance to the scheme), Mrs. Walker, Mr. W. Burt, of Yeovil (past president of the association), the Rev. A. E. Johns, of Weymouth (secretary of the association) Mrs. and Miss Johns, Mr. Thomas S. Penny, of Taunton (treasurer of the association), the Revs. A. W. Gummer Butt (Yeovil Baptist), W. Price (Bridport Baptist), R. S. Holmes (Congregational pastor), and J. A. Bailey (Primitive Methodist), Mrs. Holmes, Mr. A. D. Jackman (treasurer of the Building Fund), Mrs. Jackman, Messrs. Douglas Jackman, S. J. Jackson (the architect), and A. E. Pickett (the builder), Councillors W. Evans and R. A. Logan, &c. The vice-chair was filled by Mr. Ernest Brailey (church treasurer and Sunday school-superintendent). An excellent luncheon having been served,

The CHAIRMAN, submitting the toast of "The King," expressed thankfulness for the purity of his Majesty's private life, and his manifest desire to follow in the footsteps of his father as a peace-maker. (Hear, hear.) Proceeding, he announced the receipt of letters of apology from sympathetic friends who were unable to be present—among them the Mayor (Alderman S. D. Allen), who, as superintendent of St. Mary's Sunday school, had gone to Swanage that day with the scholars, Dr. Cosens, Dr. and Mrs. Broadway, Alderman G. Davis, the Rev. J. E. Lewis, who said "I sincerely hope that the financial and spiritual result of your meeting will surpass your expectations"—(applause)—the Rev. J. A. Aldington, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Hughes, Mr. J. A. Travers (past president of the Dorchester and District Free Church Council), the Borough Surveyor (Mr. H. D. Strange), and Mr. Walter Pouncy, the oldest member of their church, who had that morning sent down for exhibition a portrait of the Rev. W. Simcox, pastor at the old chapel in 1830. (Applause.) When Mr. Simcox left Dorchester he went to Shirley; and it was an interesting coincidence that they were laying a foundation stone at that place also. Mr. Pouncy hoped to send a companion picture to Shirley as a token of kindly remembrance. He expressed warm appreciation of the sympathetic interest shown by successive mayors of the borough and members of the Town Council in the work of the churches and in their advancement in religious life. (Applause.) They welcomed two members of the Council that day—Councillors Evans and Logan. Mr. Logan had given them valuable advice in moments of anxiety in connection with the purchase of the site. (Applause.)

Mr. LOGAN, responding to the toast of the Council, said that he recognised the sound judgment and up-to-date spirit with which the Baptist Church had faced their increased responsibilities, and determined to make their exodus from a part of the town which the extension of the borough in the other direction had made no longer convenient. It had always been a pleasure to him on many occasions to meet their amiable pastor and estimable diaconate. They would, he felt convinced, have in the future cause to congratulate themselves on moving westward; and he was sure that the responsibilities which they were assuming would be discharged handsomely and with credit to themselves and to their church. (Applause.)

The Rev. F. E. BOORMAN submitted the toast of "The Western Baptist Association," expressing pleasure at the presence of its leading officers, and gratitude for the generous assistance which it and they had given to the movement at Dorchester. The PRESIDENT, responding, expressed satisfaction at the association being so well represented that day, as they had present, besides the official head, their devoted Secretary, Mr. Johns, and their beloved Treasurer, Mr. Penny, as well as Mr. W. Burt, an esteemed past president. (Applause.) When the needs of the Dorchester church came before the association their appeal was received most sympathetically; and the one desire of the association was to do all that it could, according to its ability, to further their scheme; and they were glad to hear that the "chapel case" awarded by the association had been so successful. (Hear, hear.) Mr. W. BURT declared that he admired their faith and pluck in making this large venture. The Baptists had been said to be a "feeble folk;" but he was glad to see them coming up a bit—and at Dorchester from the lower part of the town to the higher. (Applause.)

The CHAIRMAN said how grateful the Baptist Church were to the sister churches of the town for their sympathy and support, and the new proof which they had given of Christian fellowship.

THE STONE-LAYING CEREMONY.

At 3.30 a large congregation was assembled in and around the rising walls of the new buildings, and the ceremony was watched with much interest by a crowd outside the surrounding railings. The centre of the service was at first the corner-stone of the new chapel, a large and goodly block of Bath-stone incised with the date "July 2nd, 1914."

The service opened with the hearty singing of the inspiring chorale, "Now thank we all our God," Mr. George Barnes (bandmaster of the Salvation Army band) leading the singing with his cornet. The Rev. A. E. Johns offered up prayer, and Ezra iii. and Psalm xlviii. were read impressively by the Rev. J. Bailey. Then came William Cowper's fragrant hymn, "Jesus, where'er Thy people meet."

The PASTOR of the CHURCH, in a few cordial introductory remarks, said that they met under most happy auspices. God had been exceeding gracious to them as a church; indeed, His goodness was past understanding; and the way in which His guiding hand had been upon them for good was nothing short of wonderful. They felt themselves to be a people signally favoured by God. They thanked God for that He had opened to them the way to embark on that new venture. They were there, not to "make Baptist history," but to glorify and magnify God in the laying of that foundation stone. They had come, not to hold their heads high, but with the supreme desire to carry the message of the Gospel and to extend the Kingdom of God. He prayed that they might all be inspired with deep gratitude to God for what He had done for them. He now called upon

the esteemed President of the Western Baptist Association to lay the foundation stone of the new church.

The PRESIDENT thanked the Dorchester Church for the invitation with which they had honoured him to perform that ceremonial, the laying of the foundation stone of their new church for the worship of God. The Western Baptist Association which he and his fellow officers represented that day desired to assist them to the utmost of their power, for they understood that their old chapel, although endeared to them by many hallowed associations, was in no sense suitable and adequate in accommodation, and also that it was situated in a position not desirable. The call had come to them to "come up higher," not only geographically, but also on to a higher spiritual plane. He hoped that their enterprise, receiving the Divine approval, would have a successful issue, that the buildings would be completed without accident to any of the workers, and that their labours would be crowned with great spiritual as well as financial success.

Mr. Sydney Jackson, the architect, then presented Mr. Walker with a handsome ceremonial trowel for the performance of the duty. We may here remark that Mr. S. A. Jackson, of Weymouth, the senior partner in the firm of architects, was also present at the ceremony. The mortar having been carefully spread and the stone lowered into position, the President gave the required taps with the mallet at the four corners, duly applied the tests of the square and the spirit-level to prove the geometrical precision of the performance, and then pronounced the formula of declaring the stone "well and truly laid, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

Many members of the church and sympathising friends then came forward and laid their offerings—cheques and money in little bags—upon the stone. The Rev. R. S. Holmes uttered an earnest dedicatory prayer, beseeching that the material fabric, when completed, might be filled with the light and life of the Divine presence. The hymn, "In the Name which earth and Heaven" was then sung, embracing as it does the apt line, "Praise to Thee, O Master Builder!"

The congregation having removed to the site of the foundation stone of the Sunday-school buildings on the west side of the new church,

The Rev. F. E. BOORMAN said that in their decision to come up to that part of the town the Church had been influenced largely by the consideration of the interests of the children, as they had been sadly in need of proper Sunday-school accommodation in the old Dorford Chapel. They believed that the hope of the future lay with the little ones, and they desired to bring them to a knowledge of the truth in their early days, so that as they grew up they might be fitted to take their place in the church and also in the world, discharging their duties and responsibilities as in God's sight. That was certainly a red-letter day in the history of the Sunday school as well as of the church. He now called upon their beloved Treasurer of the Western Baptist Association to lay the foundation stone.

Mr. THOMAS PENNY, before handling the trowel which Mr. Jackson presented to him, declared amid laughter that of the two stones he would rather lay that of the Sunday school, believing as he did in the paramount importance of the church catering for the children. It was a matter of duty as well as of policy. Some who did not see eye to eye with them in regard to the Education Acts thought that Free Churchmen were somewhat indifferent to the religious education of their children. Such a ceremony as that ought to disabuse their minds of the idea. Far from their being indifferent to the religious education of their children; they said that only those who knew the value of the Gospel by personal experience, and therefore could teach it from con-

viction, should give instruction in the principles of their holy religion. (Hear, hear.) They further held that if they had certain distinctive principles which they thought that they ought to inculcate into their children's minds, those principles should be inculcated in connection with the church with which they were associated, and not by the State. They must all feel the necessity of bringing up their children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." The Church to-day needed the children, and she was slowly awaking to a larger sense of her responsibility towards them.

The stone having been duly laid, the children brought up their offerings in little green bags, of uniform size, and laid them upon the stone, which gave a pretty and appropriate touch to the proceedings. The Rev. W. Price then uttered the prayer of dedication, the Doxology was sung, and the Pastor closed a memorable and effective service with the Benediction.

A large company afterwards sat down together at tea in the Town Hall.

PUBLIC MEETING.

At 6.30 a largely-attended public meeting was held in the Dorford Chapel, and there was a pathetic "valedictory" sentiment in many of the speeches in this meeting which brought the day's doings to an end. Dr. T. B. Broadway presided, supported by the President and Secretary of the Western Baptist Association, and also by the Revs. F. E. Boorman (pastor), W. Gummer Butt (Yeovil), R. S. Holmes, J. Bailey, and W. Ebbs (Puddletown), Mr. A. R. Edwards, and Mr. A. D. Jackman. The hearty singing of suitable hymns was a feature of the meeting, Mr. Douglas Jackman presiding at the organ. The opening prayer was offered by the Rev. J. Bailey.

The CHAIRMAN having offered his congratulations to the church on the success of the day's proceedings, and his best wishes for the successful completion of their important undertaking,

The Rev. W. GUMMER BUTT gave a thoughtful address. The Baptists were growing, he declared, and the past few years had marked a tremendous advance in their denominational effort both in this country and in other countries. They had that afternoon been laying the foundation-stone, not only of a new church, but also of a new and great spiritual movement. (Hear, hear.) While they would naturally regret their exodus from that dear old chapel, he reminded them that they would bring to their new church all the beautiful memories and sacred enthusiasms of that place. When in a few months the scaffolding would be removed they would see a beautiful sight gladdening and satisfying to their eyes; but the "scaffolding" of the spiritual temple, which would ever be a building, would much longer remain standing.

Miss Galloway, of Weymouth, here sang as a solo, "The Lord is my Shepherd."

STATE OF THE BUILDING FUND.

Mr. A. D. JACKMAN, hon. treasurer of the Building Fund, here made his financial statement. The Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland had that day sent them a cheque for £250—(applause)—and had promised them another when the roof was on. The Western Baptist Association, too, had generously given them the "chapel case" for this year. The amounts were not all in yet; but already they had received and banked £76 6s. 8d. (Applause.) Then the town of Dorchester had so far given them £62 17s., and friends outside the town £75 6s. Old iron and sundries from the temporary church when pulled down had been sold for £13 6s. 8d. Members of the church and congregation had paid in to the treasurer £410 4s. 3d. All honour was due to the ladies' earning scheme, under which a sewing class had been started and yielded £43 3s. Then the little people, by the boxes which they had had in their homes, had collected £31 7s. (Hear, hear.)

The total received to date from the church and congregation was £484 14s. 10d. (Applause.) The sums deposited that day upon the foundation stone of the church amounted to £53 2s. 7d., and promises had also been deposited to the amount of £31 2s. 2d. Upon the Sunday school stone £15 10s. 5d. was deposited, and promises for a further £25, so that the amount paid or promised that day was £124 15s. 2d. (Applause.) When every promise had been redeemed the church would have given £670. The actual amount already received from all sources was £1,031 4s. 6d., and they believed that the money was sanctified for God's service. (Hear, hear.)

The Rev. R. S. HOLMES (Congregational minister) assured the assembly that it gave him great pleasure to take part in that meeting because of the long and harmonious relationship which had existed between that church and the church over which he had the honour to preside. (Applause.) And he felt that as long as Mr. Boorman and he were the ministers of those two churches those relations would never change. He conveyed to them the best wishes of his church for the successful completion of the great undertaking upon which they had embarked. That they were building a new church which they expected to stand for at least a hundred years showed their steadfast faith in the ever-living Gospel of Jesus Christ, for they would not put down money hard-earned and given in many cases only with sacrifice unless they were convinced that the Gospel would still be a living power in the world a hundred years hence. Forty years ago science was the new Gospel, and although he desired to speak with reverence of the great leaders of science like Darwin, Huxley, and Tyndall, yet those who expected science to oust the religion of Jesus Christ had been greatly deceived. He wished them good luck in the name of their common Lord. (Applause.)

The Rev. A. E. JOHNS, (hon. secretary of the Western Baptist Association and pastor of Bank Buildings Baptist Church, Weymouth), joined in congratulating the Dorchester church on that great day, marked by the self-sacrificing generosity of the people. As Canon Liddon once observed, pointing to a newly-built chapel, "Only the love of Christ can do that!" Mr. Boorman and he represented two of the Baptist churches of Dorset engaged in the forward movement. What they had done that day would call attention to their denominational distinction. Among all the churches which had their distinguishing tenets, the Baptists had been raised up to assert the personal relationship of believers to Jesus Christ, in faith and obedience to His commands. They had a Gospel to proclaim, a standard of righteousness to maintain, and a character to exhibit. It was for those three purposes that they were building a new church; and might the great Master-builder Himself establish the work of their hands!

The PRESIDENT of the ASSOCIATION, in a short but impressive speech, assured them that the Western Association rejoiced that they had been guided by the Spirit of God, and had had the resolution and courage to go forward on that great endeavour, and that so much success had attended their united effort.

Mr. A. R. EDWARDS, in an intimate and deeply moving speech, traced the various steps by which they had been moved to go forward in that enterprise. It was at the end of the year 1911 that it was laid upon the hearts of the Sunday school workers as well as of the church that in their work among the children they were materially handicapped by lack of accommodation, there being at the Dorford chapel no facilities for Sunday school work beyond the little room at the back of the chapel six feet deep and the width of the chapel. In their forward movement they had been actuated by no motives of social ambition and desire for aggrandisement. Indeed, he for

one had not desired to leave that dear old place hallowed to him by so many tender personal associations. Sixty years ago his father was baptised in that pool by which he was now standing. There, too, he and his wife and children had also been baptised in confession of Christ. How could such a place be to him but absolutely sacred, holy ground? He could not get those revered associations in their new church. None of them, he averred, wanted to leave the place; but they had felt, after long and earnest seeking for divine guidance, that it was the will of God that they should find ampler scope for the carrying on of His work; and in every step that they had taken they could not but recognise His guidance and over-ruling hand. (Hear, hear.) An old scholar of the school, now living at Bath, started their fund with the gift of £5. When they were looking out for a site it came to their notice that the people of St. Mary's Church, West Fordington, on building their new permanent church, wished to dispose of the old temporary church and the land upon which it stood. It was a most desirable site, and they (the Baptists), thinking that the site was worth £1,000, were prepared to give that sum for it; but the owners, having had enquiries after it, preferred that it should go to public auction. He knew a gentleman who told him that he was commissioned to buy the place for a cinematograph theatre at a price of £1,500; but it appeared that such a use for it was not allowable, and at the auction the site and temporary building were knocked down to the Baptists for as low a sum as £590. (Applause.) In all the circumstances attending the purchase of the site they could not but trace Providential leading. Somebody observed to him "You scored over the Church of England there!" Never had so unworthy a thought entered their minds. It was abhorrent to them; as none prayed more sincerely for a blessing upon the people of St. Mary's in their new church than they did. (Hear, hear.) They had had trying difficulties to contend with. He reminded them of the reasons which necessitated the cancelling of the original contract made with Mr. Slade for the building of the new church, and he assured the assembly that the Building Committee had acted with scrupulous honour in paying the contractor within a fraction of the full amount claimed by him. (Hear, hear.) He was glad that they were going to take with them to their new abode the old name of "Dorford," for this name, chosen in 1830 as denoting the place of union between Dorchester and Fordington, would be equally applicable to the new site, although the "Ford" would now refer to West Fordington instead of to East. As to finances, they had now received or been promised more than one half of the total sum that the work was going to cost. (Applause.) They had been greatly encouraged by the marvellously ready response to their invitation for assistance; and he had a dream that the new building when opened would be opened free of debt. (Hear, hear.)

The PASTOR, in a speech full of delightful personal touches, said that he had now been with them three years, and had become wedded to the place. He bore grateful testimony to the tremendous amount of thought and energy put into the work by Mr. Edwards, his son Mr. A. H. Edwards, Mr. Jackman his son Mr. Douglas Jackman, and all the members of the Building Committee; and to them and all who had assisted in any and every way that day he expressed hearty thanks. The day's proceedings had inspired them to go forward firm in conviction, faith, and courage. (Applause.) The collection amounted to £7 7s. 6d.

The meeting then ended with the Doxology and the Blessing.

The Opening of "New" Dorford

July 1915

This occasion, witnessed by "a great assembly of members of the Baptist community and sympathising friends", was covered by the Dorset County Chronicle in its' July 8th edition.

Interestingly, we read that "two nice Gothic traceried and tinted windows from the iron church have been worked in with admirable effect".

THE NEW DORFORD BAPTIST CHAPEL.

SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION AND OPENING.

[From the Dorset County Chronicle, July 8th, 1915.]

Under the happiest of auguries, in the presence of a great assembly of members of the Baptist community and sympathising friends, and in an atmosphere of thanksgiving, hope, faith, and courage, the new Dorford Baptist Church at Top o' Town was ceremonially opened and dedicated on Thursday. It is needless to repeat how, in an abundantly justified desire and aspiration to enlarge their borders, the Baptists took their courage in their hands and resolved to migrate from the humble but much-beloved "Beth-el" built in 1830 at the bottom of the town, to ampler premises, affording greater opportunities for the successful prosecution of their work, at the top of the town; and how most fortunately, at a much smaller price than they had anticipated, they were able to secure in the open market what is beyond question the finest site for an ecclesiastical building in Dorchester—the site which had been occupied for nigh a score of years by the temporary iron church of St. Mary's. All this was told in our report of the stone-laying ceremony a year ago. And now the end is crowned the labour—*finis coronat opus*.

THE FABRIC AND FITTINGS.

The first plans for the new church were drawn by the late Mr. Jern Peacey, architect, of this town, and upon his lamented death his professional successors, Messrs. Jackson, Son, and Peacey, of 26, South-street, took up the work. Owing to financial and other reasons, the Gothic style originally contemplated was abandoned for a free treatment of Renaissance (early 18th century) in red brick with liberal dressings of white stone, Mr. Sidney A. Jackson, L.R.I.B.A., being chiefly responsible for the new plans and supervision of the work. Little need be added to the description of the building published by us a year ago. The principal entrance of the new church is on the east side from Albert-road through folding doors, opening into a mosaic-covered vestibule. From these the two aisles of the church are entered through swing doors. The interior, which is well-proportioned, roomy, and of comfortable and ornate appearance, is 66 feet long and 38½ feet wide, and provides seating accommodation for 345 persons. The floor is sloping, and fitted with pitch-pine seating of a comfortable angle. The ceiling is slightly concave, with coiled abutments springing from a bold cornice relieved with enriched consoles. A feature of the interior is the sunken polished marble baptistry, with the panalled front of the rostrum; which is surmounted at the back with fluted pilasters with foliated capitals, and dentilled cornice and a frieze of the Corinthian order. Flanking the rostrum are the doorways leading to the vestries, having bold surrounds harmonising with the latter, but with Ionic capitals instead of Corinthian. The lecture hall has been increased in area since the building was begun, and is 53 feet long and 29 feet in width. Two nice Gothic traceried and tinted windows from the iron church have been worked in with admirable effect. Five well-lighted classrooms are attached to the block of buildings, together with a room for the Primary Department of the Sunday school.

The electric light is installed with neat pendants and wall-brackets, and the church is heated with radiators. Notwithstanding the scarcity of labour and the difficulty of obtaining materials, the building has been very efficiently carried out by Mr. A. E. Pickett, builder and contractor. The hot-water heating apparatus was installed by Messrs. Lott and Walne, the electric lighting by Mr. G. Andrews, the seating, furnishing and flooring with lino, and carpet for rostrum and

platform by Messrs. Wood and Son, who also supplied the strong and comfortable chairs for the schoolroom; the wood-carving has been skilfully and artistically carried out by Mr. Parsons, of Dewlish, and the external stonework by Mr. A. Grassby, of Maumbury-road. The presentation key, with inscription, was provided by Mr. W. G. Hyde, silversmith.

"MEMORIES" MEETING IN THE OLD CHURCH.

The eve of the opening of the new buildings was made notable by a gathering of singular appropriateness in the old church, where a "memories" meeting was held at eight o'clock and attended by a large congregation. Many of those present can look back on a lengthy period of regular worship in the Dorford Church, which has become to them a place of hallowed associations; and there is a pardonable regret with them that the old church is to be vacated; but this regret is lightened by the knowledge that in their new surroundings there will be increased opportunity for furthering the work which they have so much at heart. The predominant note of the meeting was that of praise and prayer, and testimony of a fragrant character was forthcoming as to what had been accomplished in the past, while the Divine blessing was invoked for the future. The meeting, presided over by the Pastor (the Rev. F. E. Boorman), had an inspiring opening with the hymn "O God, our Help in ages past," which, with the other appropriate hymns, were sung with heartfelt earnestness. Mr. E. Bratley was at the organ. After the offering of prayer and the reading of a portion of Scripture (Numbers ix.),

The Pastor said that even as the children of Israel were commanded by the Lord to go forward, so were they in that church going forward and moving their tent. It would be presumptuous on their part to take the step that they had decided on if it was not with the full assurance that He was with them. They had been bidden to go forward and had put their hands to the work, and deep in their hearts was joy in the thought that God had bidden them go forth. There were also feelings of sadness. Those who had been associated with the church from their early days would certainly not leave such a hallowed spot without feelings of grief. But how good God had been to them in the past, how many times He had manifested His presence, and how He had blessed them! They would rely upon Him in the new enterprise on which they were entering on the morrow, for He who had bid them go forward could not fail to show them the way. The Pastor concluded by announcing the receipt of letter from a recent member of the Church resident in the town expressing thanks for the wonderful blessing that had come into her life through the happy association with the people of God in that church and the joy she had experienced in the services. He was sure, added Mr. Boorman, that there were many present that evening who could bear similar testimony.

Prayer, was then offered in turn by Messrs. A. R. Edwards, W. E. Denslow, H. Knight, A. H. Edwards, and T. F. Scudder, and the gathering ended with the Communion.

THE OPENING CEREMONY.

Representative of the Baptist community, not only in Dorchester and Dorset, but also throughout a large space of the West Country, was the large and reverent assembly gathered outside the main east door of the church on Thursday at 3.15, when in perfect summer weather, most favourable to the occasion, the opening ceremony

was performed, with marked devotional fervour and impressiveness. A West Country Baptist of mark in the educational world had been chosen to discharge this honourable duty, namely, Dr. C. D. Whittaker, M.A., B.Sc., headmaster of Taunton School—a man of “weight,” as was observed humorously, in the physical sense as well as in other senses! He was supported by a considerable band of ministerial Baptist brethren. First there was the Pastor of the Dorford Church, the Rev. F.E. Boorman, who is held in such affectionate regard by his people. Then there were the Rev. John Wilson, of Woolwich, Past President of the Baptist Union, the Revs. A. E. Johns (pastor of the Bank Buildings Baptist Church, Weymouth, and President of the Western Baptist Association), A. W. Gummer Butt and A. W. Martin (Yeovil), W. Price (Bridport), C. E. Lawrence (Sherborne), E. Nunns (Buckland Newton), W. Hogan (Wellington), G. Ambrose (Crewkerne), H. Wyatt (Bridgwater), and A. W. Holden (Hatch Beauchamp). Ministers and members of other Evangelical Free Churches showed by their presence their brotherly sympathy, on the principle “Rejoice with them that do rejoice.” There were present, as “representative men” of the visiting Free Churches, the Revs. J. Arthur Aldington and J. Edmund Lewis (Wesleyan), R. S. Holmes and W. Ebbs (Congregational), and J. E. Sunderland and W. H. Folley (Primitive Methodists), and the Salvationist Officer. Present also were Mr. Alfred R. Edwards (honorary secretary of the Church Building Committee), Mr. A. D. Jackman (honorary treasurer), the architect (Mr. Sydney A. Jackson), and the builder (Mr. A. E. Pickett).

A short outside service opened with the singing of the fine old hymn “O God of Bethel, by whose hand,” followed by the reading of Psalm xcv. and an earnest prayer by the Rev. W. Hogan, of Wellington.

DR. WHITTAKER’S “WHITE-LETTER DAY.”

DR. WHITTAKER said: I come before you to-day a very happy and honoured man. Many dark days have come to me, as to all of us, though, thank God, they have had their silver lining—and there come also bright white-letter days; and this is one of the white-letter days of my life. This is a day of glad fruition of desires, aspirations, aims, and labour honestly carried out during a long time. It has been no light and easy task for you to manage the erection of this building. Many saints of the Lord, before they were called, from this earth to a higher and better life, have prayed that this day might dawn; and one thanks God that they are here to-day to see in actual tangible being what they have dreamed of and longed for. And the younger of your people have worked their hardest and won praise in attaining their desire, so that they might for many a long year worship in these walls, and make your church strong and vigorous and flourishing. This cannot be, in one sense, a day of unalloyed joy. At the solemn dedication of the second Temple the voice of thanksgiving and exultation was drowned by the lamentations of those elders who remembered the glories of Solomon’s first temple and deplored its destruction. And in like manner many of you who have come up here with thanksgiving and joy yet think wistfully of the old house of prayer (built in 1830 at the bottom of the town) for which you have such tender and hallowed memories. And indeed I can feel with you, for nothing could be more precious to me than the little chapel in Essex in which I was led to the Lord. And those of you who have worshipped in the old building, and especially those who were “born again” in it, cannot but feel that they are leaving behind them many sacred and precious memories. And in thanking God that He has brought us to this new house of His, our thoughts go back to the sturdy old fathers who worshipped there. Their creed may, as some say slightly, have been narrow; but what lives of spiritual and moral marrow and sinew it brought forth! A hundred years ago we were just emerging from a strife parallel to that in which we are engaged to-day. It was the firm stern sense of duty that saved England then; and I make bold to claim that it was in no small degree due to the stalwart manhood of those stern old Puritan fathers of ours. (Hear, hear.) And I pray that all who

leave the old house of God and come to the new to worship may not regard with impatience and contempt the old Puritan theology of those sturdy fathers of ours. If God has given us in many respects a fuller vision, let us thank Him and live up to it; but let us not despise and pooh-pooh that Faith of our Fathers that brought forth such solidity and strength of religious and moral character. (Applause.) If only we can live the lives that those fathers of ours lived, England may bless us in the future, even as we bless our forefathers of a hundred years ago. And I pray that you, the Baptists of Dorchester, as you now come into your new house of God, may rejoice and triumph in the “New Theology” in the true sense of the phrase; but in no sense despise and think unduly narrow the Old Theology that sustained your fathers and helped them to live as they lived and die as they died. May we be worthy of them!

MR. JACKSON (the architect): I have pleasure, Doctor, in presenting to you the key of the new church.

DR. WHITTAKER: I am exceedingly grateful for this gift, and now (inserting the key into the lock) I open this house of the Lord and pray the Lord God Jehovah, the God of our Fathers, and our God, to enter before us into this house that you have built for Him; and I pray Him to dwell there among you, and shed the light of His countenance abundantly upon you. Amen!

Dr. Whittaker then led the way into the church, followed by the large assembly of several hundred people, singing the “introit.”

“Oh enter then His courts with praise,
Approach with joy His courts unto.
Praise, laud, and bless His name always,
For it is seemly so to do.”

DEDICATION SERVICE.

So large was the attendance that the comfortable seats in this commodious new church were all filled, and the overflowing congregation had to be accommodated with many chairs brought in from the schoolroom. The service was conducted by the Rev. A. W. Gummer Butt, of Yeovil, who read Solomon’s prayer at the dedication of the Temple, and offered apposite and earnest prayer. The opening hymn set the key of the devotions:—

“Oh Thou, Whose Hand has brought us
Unto this joyful day,
Accept our glad thanksgiving
And listen as we pray.”

MR. E. R. Dodd was at the harmonium.

THE REV. JOHN WILSON ON THE “BIBLE.”

The Rev. John Wilson, of Woolwich, past president of the Baptist Union, special preacher at the dedication service, preached a sermon instinct on the human side with eloquence and literary distinction, and on the divine side with spiritual unction and evangelical appeal. His subject was “The Bible,” and the text he announced I. Peter i., v. 25—“The word of the Lord endureth for ever.” The Baptists had, he remarked, been said to exalt preaching at the expense of worship; but it cannot be less important to listen to God than to speak to God. The poets had for generations been entering their vigorous protest against materialism as opposed to faith. Coming to the Bible—the Book—withstanding all that criticism had done, and much of the criticism had been corrective and wholesome, making Scripture even more interesting and intelligible, the Bible remains to-day “the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.” It requires a saint to be a real Biblical scholar, and he reminded the congregation of how spiritual illumination made the Bible entirely a new book to a scholar like Thomas Chalmers. Uttering an eloquent eulogium upon the Bible, he spoke of it first as literature. Jerome called it “the divine library,” Ruskin and Stevenson modelled their consummate styles upon the Bible, and George Eliot, even after she had lost her faith in the spiritual message of the Bible, admitted that she still read it every day, for the sake of its language—even as a good pianist practises the scales daily. But the Bible, though literature, is unlike all other literature in that it is a message from the living God to the mind and heart, the conscience and moral sense of the reader. And although it comprises 66 different books it is not a mere

"omnium gatherum," for through them all runs a marvellous unifying spirit, evidence of its inspiration. It is also infallible—for if a man wants to find God through it, he will not miss the way! Inspiration is not mechanical, but vital—"Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Thus, although it was inspired man who spake, the Bible represented for us God Himself speaking to man for his salvation and eternal welfare.

After service a large company, making two parties, sat down to tea in the new schoolroom, the ladies of the church presiding at the tables. It had been proposed that visiting representatives of other Free Churches, the Revs. R. S. Holmes, J. E. Lewis, and J. E. Sunderland, and the Salvation Army officer should make short speeches of congratulation and "God's speed" at the tea table; but owing to the large numbers, the heat, and the necessity for two parties, the speeches were dispensed with.

PUBLIC MEETING.

MR. BURBERRY ON "CHURCH AND CHAPEL" AND "THE BOOK."

There was again a large gathering at the public meeting at 6.30. The rostrum was adorned with vases of lovely white lilies and palms, and the glow of other flowers brightened the interior. Mr. T. Burberry, of Abbots' Court, Weymouth, presided, supported by the Pastor (the Rev. F. E. Boorman), the Revs. John Wilson and G. Ambrose, and Mr. T. S. Penny (of Taunton). The opening devotions were conducted and prayer offered by the Rev. G. Ambrose, of Crewkerne.

Mr. T. BURBERRY, who was received cordially, in offering his congratulations to the Dorchester Baptists upon the opening of their new church, said he hoped that it might be a church of the living God filled with a living congregation. They used to call a Baptist place of worship a "chapel," and he did not know that they had improved matters by calling it a church. He lived at Hook, a little place five or six miles the other side of Basingstoke, and there they had a place of worship which they called "the hut." Formerly it was used in the Boer War, and when that war was over a number of these huts were brought to England and sold, and he bought one of them. He had before that a little party who met for worship in his house, and then they adjourned to "the hut." And in the hut, not even dignified with the name of "chapel," let alone "church," they had been honoured with a visit from the President of the Western Baptist Association (the Rev. A. E. Johns), two visits from the Rector of Weymouth (the Rev. T. Lancaster), and another from the Vicar of St. John's, Weymouth (the Rev. F. E. Coryton). So that, as they would conclude, "the hut" carried with it no narrow spirit. (Hear, hear, and applause.) While he was never ashamed of being a Baptist, he would become a Churchman to-morrow if he could get closer to God. For that was the supreme, all-important fact—nearness to God. St. Paul, writing to the Corinthians, said (according to Dr. Waymouth's translation) "Recognise your position, and keep closer to God." Would that there were ten thousand of such little huts scattered about the country. Wherever God is truly worshipped there is,—what?—a house of God, a "house of prayer for all people." For it could not be a house of God if it was not a house of prayer. ("Amen.") He was going to provide that chapel with a Bible for every seat, and why? Because he loved the Book, because, in the first line of a beautiful hymn, "I love the sacred book of God." In what was called the Lord's Prayer, but what ought more properly to be called the Disciples' Prayer, they prayed to God "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, as in Heaven, so on earth;" and never had he felt the power of that Divinely dictated prayer more than amid the cruelties and sorrows of this wretched war. He closed with the couplet

"Prayer and praises go in pairs,
He has praises who has prayers."

MR. PENNY'S "THREEFOLD WITNESS."

Mr. T. S. PENNY, J.P., of Taunton, honorary treasurer of the Western Baptist Union, said that, as the senior official of the Western Baptist

Association, it was his privilege and great pleasure to congratulate the church in Dorchester upon its courage, its faith, its hopefulness, and the splendid result of its efforts in the building of that new place of worship. (Applause.) The whole association admired the persistence with which the friends at Dorchester had toiled and hoped and prayed, and had at last seen their labours crowned with success; and on behalf of every church in the association he offered congratulations and best wishes. Now why, he asked, should there be a new building at all? They had a building at the bottom of the town which answered its purpose, and in that building great blessing had come in days gone by. Why, then, have a new building? Some might answer, for the sake of greater comfort. But comfort was not an unmixed good. Sometimes it tended to sleepiness more than to saintliness, to indolence rather than to inspiration. He took it, therefore, that there was some higher and better motive in the hearts of those who resolved to erect that building. And that motive, he suggested, was that in the new building there should be a better witness to the Gospel. (Hear, hear.) This witness was specially needed to-day in three directions. First in Sunday-school work; and he was glad that in the design of that building careful attention was paid to the needs of the children. He congratulated those who designed that new building upon having provided so fine a schoolroom and classrooms adjoining it. It was high time that more attention was paid to the work among the children, for the general decline in their Sunday school attendance was one of the most serious symptoms of the present day. Secondly, there was propaganda. If their Baptist principles were worth anything they were worth inculcating—(hear, hear)—and they ought to tell their young people clearly and fully why they were Protestants and Baptists. Thirdly, there was the direction of more evangelical fervour. (Applause.)

At this point Miss Plummer sang sweetly and with devotional effect the solo, "Peace, Perfect Peace."

The Rev. JOHN WILSON, of Woolwich, in a touching speech of anecdotal vein, called attention to the wonderful opportunities opened up by the war for new evangelistic effort. It was a mistake to suppose that men were not interested in the Gospel, in the things of God. On the contrary, if only they came into heart-to-heart touch with men, as he had in third-class railway carriages, they would find that it was the one thing above all others in which they were interested. For example, one woman who used to go to the cinema regularly, now cared for only one thing—to know whether God really heard prayer for her boy in the trenches.

THE TREASURER'S FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

Mr. A. D. JACKMAN, honorary treasurer of the Building Fund, being called upon by the Chairman to present his financial statement, observed that there were three kinds of givers—the flint, the sponge, and the honeycomb. To get anything out of the "flint" one had to hammer it, and then—one only got the chips! (Laughter.) As to the sponge, if filled with water, the more you squeezed it, the more you got out of it. But the honeycomb overflowed with its own sweetness, and reminded them that "the Lord loveth a cheerful giver." Some, though good-natured, only yielded to pressure; but happily, in regard to their building scheme, there had been very many like the honeycomb, who gave freely and graciously. (Applause.) As to their receipts, the members of their own church had given £473 3s. 1d. For the opening services they had subscribed £38, and promises were further made of £75, making together £586 3s. 1d. Then there was raised by the church and congregation, by means of the sewing circle and the working scheme, £58 11s. 3d., and a further £5 added for the opening services. The contents of the collecting boxes amounted to £39 5s. 2d., making a total of £688 19s. 6d. The Western Baptist Association chapel case yielded £93 10s. 6d. Gifts from friends outside the church and congregation yielded £120 15s. 7d. —(applause)—and for the opening services £56 13s. making £177 8s. 7d. Then there was the Baptist Union Twentieth Century grant of £500. —(applause)—of which £250 had been paid,

already and the other £250 been promised to-day. The collections at the stone-laying yielded £80 0s. 4d.; from the luncheon and tea, £7 3s. 4d.; and the sale of sundry materials realised £14 10s. 6d. bringing the total up to £1,561 12s. 9d.; and by the afternoon collection that day of £42 1s. this had been raised to £1,603 13s. 9d. Besides this they had gifts promised of £108 13s. 8d., and they were hoping that the fund would be increased largely by that evening's collection. Their new building was the only Evangelical Free Church in that extensive and important quarter of the town the west, on that side of South-street, and they hoped that it would be the birthplace of many precious souls, where they would find the Lord. Jesus Christ and comfort in time of trouble (Applause.)

MR. EDWARDS AND DEAR "OLD DORFORD."

MR. ALFRED R. EDWARDS, J.P., honorary secretary of the New Church Building Committee, speaking evidently out of a full heart and with intimate simplicity and earnestness, made a very moving speech, charged with tender reminiscences of the dear old Dorford Chapel which they left the night before, and the memories of which would ever be embalmed in their hearts as holy. The reviewing of these old associations must have made many eyes in the assembly water. Mr. Edwards began by reading a letter of congratulation and God-speed from Pastor John Hockey, of the Spurgeon Memorial Chapel at Bexhill, who came to Dorchester from Montacute and joined the Baptist Sunday school when his (Mr. Edwards') father was superintendent. Numbers of their friends, continued Mr. Edwards, did not realise what the transition from the old building to the new meant to many of them gathered there that evening. Some had suggested that their desire in coming into that larger place was that they might as a church and community be "thought more of!" And one said "Now pray for grace not to be high-minded!" Why, his answer was "This new building will never be to us, can never possibly be, what the old one was." There was an old family pew in old Dorford which one could never reproduce, and an old pool in which some of them confessed their loyalty to Christ in baptism. The new pool before the rostrum from which he was speaking, more beautiful though it and its surroundings were, could never have the same hallowed associations for him and for many of these present. Yet, though old Dorford was so endeared to their hearts, though they were attached to it by so many unspeakably tender ties, yet to have stayed there when God pointed out to them the way forward and upward would have been to be disobedient, to dishonour Him. It would have been sheer selfishness. He cited again, as at the stone-laying gatherings, strong reasons for thinking that they had been unmistakably led to that new place by God's hand. One was the purchase of the site and of the iron building upon it for £590—less than half of what they at one time were prepared to offer. Then, a fact that Mr. Jackman had already referred to, all the Free Churches and mission halls of the town, and the Salvation Army Barracks, were located in the east part of the town, and the Baptist's new building would be the only Free Church place of worship on the west side of the Town Pump! The appearance of the building had been criticised not a little. Some called it "a barn." Well, might they get a "barnfull!" the ingathering of a rich harvest as the result of much patient seed sowing. Others called it "a factory." Infinitely better, he retorted, was it to have life and the hum of productive machinery than a place such as a beautiful mausoleum he once visited in Germany, in a lovely situation and perfect in its Greek architecture, yet empty, silent, and smelling like a tomb! They wanted in their new building a little more of what he might call Church-family life, the sense of brotherhood, a realisation of the bond which made them one—the bond of love for their common Saviour and a unity of desire to do His will. (Hear, hear.) If they believed that God had led them there, then he was sure they would all help their community to clear the new building of debt. (Applause.)

The PASTOR (the Rev. F. E. Boorman) read a letter from Sergt. Arthur W. Edwards, R.A.M.C., younger son of Mr. Alfred Edwards, who has been

in France for the past four or five months with the South Midland Brigade Field Ambulance, wishing "success in the new venture, which, after all, was not a venture, for instructions were received from Headquarters that the work should go on and not stop." Another letter of congratulation and good wishes was from Mr. Douglas A. Jackman, eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. A. D. Jackman, who is labouring with the Y.M.C.A. in France, and who said "the opportunity here is so great that one is swallowed up in the possibilities of the work." They were, continued Mr. Boorman, greatly influenced in coming to that place by the claims of the Sunday School; and they also hoped to influence for good and for God the neighbourhood into which they had come. He was thankful to have about him a band of earnest, whole-hearted workers, who sustained and encouraged him in his work. He paid a tribute to the interest and painstaking of the architect and builder in overcoming many difficulties and, in such trying conditions, bringing the work to a successful completion. He returned thanks comprehensively to all who had taken part in that day's proceedings and contributed towards the fund, to the ladies for the arrangements of the tea, to Mr. Walter Rogers for kindly lending palms, &c.

The collection at the evening meeting amounted to over £48. The Doxology and Benediction closed this most successful and memorable series of meetings.

SUNDAY'S SERVICES.

SERMONS BY THE WESTERN ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT.

The first Sunday at the new church was naturally regarded as an auspicious and important date, and it was signalised by the ministrations throughout the whole day of the Rev. A. E. Johns, pastor of the Bank-buildings Baptist Church, Weymouth, and President of the Western Baptist Association. There were large congregations, especially in the evening. The hearty singing of well-chosen hymns from the fine Baptist hymnology was a special feature of the services. Mr. E. R. Dodd presided at the harmonium in the morning and the Pastor (the Rev. F. E. Boorman) in the evening.

The Rev. A. E. Johns is well known as a "stalwart" of the Baptist ministry, a man of graciousness as well as power in the pulpit, and one whose sermons have a distinctive quality of thought as well as of spiritual leaven. Remembering the importance which the Dorford Baptists attach to the Sunday school, and their determination to cultivate assiduously this "nursery garden" of the adult church, it was not surprising that, in the course of the morning service, Mr. Johns bethought himself of the children, and their special needs and capacity. It was a most happy and delightful address that he gave them, "all for themselves." The only record that we have of our Lord's early life, he pointed out, is that he was found in two houses, namely, "His Father's House"—the Temple, and his earthly parents' house and home at Nazareth, whither he went down, "and was subject unto them." To the grown-up congregation he preached an inspiring sermon from the Psalmist's words "Strength and beauty are in his sanctuary."

In the afternoon there was a special service for the children, to whom Mr. Johns gave an admirable address on "The Red Cross and other Crosses." Miss Woodward sang a sacred solo. We may here mention that Mr. Ernest Brailley is the efficient and energetic superintendent of the Sunday School, which is now expected, with the improved accommodation, to increase in numbers. In the evening a sermon of sound exposition and evangelical fervour was based on the statement from the Epistle to the Hebrews, "Jesus Christ (is), the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

The collections throughout the day, on behalf of the new building fund, came to £5.

Next Sunday the special preacher will be the Rev. I. L. Near, of the Baptist Church, Penge; the following Sunday (which will be Sunday School day) the Rev. E. W. Mills, of City Road, Bristol, will conduct the services; and on the 25th July the Rev. James Seager, now of Truro, and a former pastor of old Dorford, will be the preacher in the new.