

SURREY TABERNACLE PULPIT.

PROCEEDINGS

IN CONNECTION WITH THE

LAYING OF THE FOUNDATION STONE OF THE

NEW SURREY TABERNACLE,

WANSEY STREET, WALWORTH ROAD.

THE ceremony of laying the Foundation Stone of the New Surrey Tabernacle took place on Monday afternoon, October 17, in the presence of about two thousand people. At three o'clock Mr. JAMES WELLS commenced the service by giving out the hymn,—

“Keep silence, all created things,”

which having been sung, Mr. WALL, of Gravesend, offered prayer. The hymn beginning—

“Grace, 'tis a charming sound,”

was then sung.

Mr. WELLS, advancing to the front of the platform, said,—Christian Friends, on such occasions as these we generally give some statement or outline of what those principles are upon which we act. Now the first principle which we hold is that of good-will to men. We believe that wherever the grace of God is received, that wherever the truth of God is understood, that wherever the salvation of God is embraced by the heart, it makes a man not only attend to his own soul, but it makes him a friend to others; so that our first principle is, Good-will to all. There is no character, however bad, that we do not wish well to, and desire to see him get out of his badness; there is no person, however much in error, that we do not wish well to, desiring that he may be brought out of that error; there is no fellow-creature anywhere that we can think of that we have not good-will towards. And we hold this principle in entire accordance with the word of God—“Preach the gospel to every creature.” Hence it is we have the Bible free; and that Bible declares the good-will of God—“Peace on earth,” and “glory to God in the highest.” This is our object in erecting upon this ground one of the most magnificent chapels which has ever been built for the denomination to which we belong—a denomination to which I am proud to belong, and of which I am proud to see so many representatives here on this platform to-day; for, though we have sometimes our little differences and shynesses, I believe that if the general foe were to set upon us, it would be soon found that we have a unity of purpose at the bottom—a decision for God at the bottom, that would swallow up our little differences, and form us into an impregnable phalanx. Our motto would then be “Conquest or death; but to give up—never. The truth has taken us up, and we never mean to give that up, God helping us.” We have need to resolve to maintain good-will towards men, for there is nothing they are so much offended at as our regard for their spiritual welfare. The Lord Jesus Christ came into this world to carry out the good will of God, and men were so offended at the Saviour's good-will towards them, that they slandered him, persecuted him, and crucified him. But I will ask this assembly, Did not the Jews as a nation commit a great mistake

when they crucified Christ? I know he came into the world to die, but that did not justify their murderous conduct towards him. We all have the happiness of knowing—for it is something to know—that they made a terrible mistake when they crucified the Saviour. They thought to advance their own welfare thereby, but by that very step they brought about their own destruction.

And I would ask this assembly another question—Did not our ancestors make a very great mistake when they took the Bible from the people, and substituted Popish tradition instead of the Bible? Will you ever suffer any one to do that again? Hold it fast; look upon it as your birthright, as indeed it is, and resolve that you will never give it up for any man on earth, nor for any devil in hell. Well, then, one principle that we hold is good-will towards men.

The next principle that we hold is that of the right of every man to judge for himself. No man, no one man, has any right to dictate to another in matters that pertain to his conscience and to his Maker. If I like to be a Roman Catholic—which I beg to say I am not—it is a matter which lies between me and my Maker, and no man has any right to persecute me because I am a Roman Catholic. Or if I like to be a Wesleyan—and I was once a bit of a one—no man has a right to upbraid me. I act upon my convictions; and if I were a Wesleyan now, I should feel it one of my privileges to go and hear the ministers of that denomination. Or if I was a low doctrine man—which I don't happen to be; you see how unfortunate I am; that there are so many admirable people I don't belong to, it is a misfortune, but I can't help it—but if I were, I should feel it my right to unite myself with them, for I hold that every one is at liberty on such matters to judge for himself. To force people to be religious by legal compulsion is only to make hypocrites. You may force people into the observance of the outward forms, but you cannot thus make them good. You may bring a horse to the water, but you cannot make him drink. You may compel people to attend to certain forms of religion, but that does not make them believe in its truths; it does not enlighten their understandings. Hence when they burned people for their religion, they did not convince the people who were burned that they were wrong. That is not the kind of argument to convince any man that he is in error. Let us, then, maintain our rights and liberties. I should no more consent that a Catholic should be deprived of his liberty, than I should consent for him to interfere with mine. Certainly we have to keep the weather eye open with reference to the Catholics; I confess that that is necessary; but we will not suffer their rightful liberty to be taken from them, nor, indeed, from any one. Every person has the right to judge for himself; let him read the word of God for himself, and go where he pleases.

Now it has been suggested that we are intending to build this chapel where there are several other chapels very near. Well, I say that that is of no importance whatever. Those who go to the other chapels in the neighbourhood go because they prefer those chapels, and those who come to this chapel will come because they prefer it. The people who come here would come if there was not another chapel within a mile, and they would come just the same if there were as many chapels again as there are around us. And so it is with the churches; some of you prefer church; I don't mind which you prefer, so as you give handsomely to the collection this afternoon; but if you prefer the church, you would go to it just the same if it were a mile or two off. We have our kind neighbours here on the left, with their beautiful chapel; those who prefer them and the minister there will go, and very properly so too. If any of you do so, and I should meet you, I shall not look black at you. I am glad to see you go anywhere. It is better than

the public-house, better than ungodliness ; better than that which destroys our youth, degrades our old age, and injures us in every department. I love the word of God in any shape, rather than not the Word at all ; and I say, while each is anxious to maintain his distinctive principles, let us all be anxious to maintain universal freedom.

Now there is the infidel. I cannot say that I cherish so much mercy for him as perhaps I ought, but we ought not to persecute him. We must use two means with him : one is, to pray to God for him ; and the second is, to speak the word of God to him, as far as he is willing to hear—and there we must leave the matter.

Upon this question of liberty I hold that no person ought to be compelled to hear any minister that he does not choose to hear. Every one ought to be at perfect liberty on this point, and I should not deny one of my own children if he wanted to go and hear a Wesleyan. I say let them go, and leave the matter with God, and bless God that they go anywhere.

Let us maintain our liberties, and let us all come out in our true colours. You who go and hear what you do not approve, and pretend that you do, when at the same time you are under no danger of persecution for hearing what you do approve, you must be a double, treble, quadruple hypocrite. You certainly must be. At any rate, if there were much persecution, which would not suit your nerves, I might pity you ; but as it is I don't, for you live in a day when you may come out in your true colours, and are at liberty to hear in accordance with your convictions.

I think there are but three means of getting a congregation :—one is, the minister must pray earnestly that God will send the people to hear the Word ; secondly, he must preach so well, that those who hear him once will want to hear him again ; and third, the people in their several spheres of life must be so courteous, and so sober, and so consistent, as to constrain their ungodly neighbours to say, “Where do they go ? They seem very steady, and sober, and upright—whom do they hear ?” “They hear Mr. A, B, C, or D,”—and so on through the alphabet if you like ;—it is thus the hearers, by their purity of conduct in the world, do draw others to hear the same gospel ; and thus the minister, and the people that know the Lord, are all to be engaged in forwarding that great cause by which the souls of men are saved, and by which God is glorified.

That is our second principle ;—while we, first, cherish good-will towards all men, we insist, secondly, upon the right of every man to judge for himself.

And we should never be angry if we can help it. I preach a good deal about the country sometimes ; and where I was preaching once, when I came out of the pulpit a Wesleyan minister came up to me and said, “You are a saucy fellow.” I told him that I could bring a thousand people to say that ; but I added, “I am told that you are a good fellow—what are you going to give at the collection ?” “Half a crown,” he said ; and so he did. If I had been angry with him I should have got nothing. It is no use to growl ; it is best to take things easy ; and when you find the old man growing uneasy, press him down and conquer him, for you may always be assured that the wrath of man never did, never can, and never will work the righteousness of God.

Now the third principle that we hold is the great principle which all the prophets advocated, which all the apostles succeeded by, which Augustine, and Luther, and Calvin, and all the great and influential men have been so useful by, and which may be summed up in one sentence—justification by faith. We hold that all men are sinners, and that whatever difference there may be in the

practices of men, there is no difference in their nature. We hold that the Lord Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners; that he wrought out and brought in an everlasting righteousness; that he has "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." We hold that no saving knowledge of this sacrifice can be had except by the teaching of the Spirit of God; that men must be born of God; and that it is a work which lies with him alone. We hold that faith is the evidence of being born of God; and when a man is convinced of his state by nature, and is brought to receive the Lord Jesus Christ, and to feel that he is saved by Christ only, we receive that man as a Christian—as one saved by *grace*. We may have our little differences, but we have one great principle in common—salvation by grace; there we stand one.

Then, again, as to the origin of this salvation; it originated—for that is another of our principles—entirely with God. Some people feel offended when we speak of God having chosen a people in Christ; they wonder he did not choose all. But when you are in your right mind you will wonder that he chose any at all. You will also see that whatever there may be in that doctrine offensive to men, none can be saved without it; for unless the Lord is pleased to save you, vain is the help of man. The language of election is, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Election does not hinder me from preaching the gospel to every creature, because that is a part of the gospel that I am to preach to every creature. I am not ashamed to own that I am a "high doctrine" man. They tell us we don't preach the gospel to every creature. The fact is, they won't hear us if we do. A farmer down in Sussex said to me, "You don't preach to sinners." "Well," I said, "I should be puzzled to preach to any one else in this world if I preach at all, especially if they were all like you." "Why," he said, "have you anything to say about me?" I said, "I was just reading about you." "Where?" he asked. "In the first chapter of Romans," I replied, "where your character is painted out; and if you know it you will be very glad that the same gospel that I think it my privilege to preach is a gospel that is preached to sinners."

But not to detain you; I observe, the last principle is the happy results that follow from this good-will, this personal liberty, and a saving acquaintance with the grace of the blessed God. We see in olden times that the tabernacle was built in the wilderness. That resulted from the willing-heartedness of the people. We see that David provided for the building of the temple, and that was the result of the conquests that David was enabled to achieve in the strength of the Lord. And when this tabernacle is built, you may tell your friends if you like that this tabernacle was built in consequence of the conquests wrought—poor sinners conquered and brought down to the feet of Christ, willingly giving up silver and gold without the command of Pope, Bishop, or Act of Parliament, but freely, to build a house for God—a people who found a pleasure in saying, "We will give neither sleep to our eyes nor slumber to our eyelids until we find out a place for the Lord, a habitation for the Holy One of Israel." Just, then, as the people gave up silver and gold and jewels for the erection of the tabernacle in the wilderness—just as David achieved the victory, and applied the spoil to the building of the temple,—so must we.

If I am speaking to young ministers, I would say, If you want a new chapel, you must do as I did. I went into the streets every Sunday morning with no idea of ever becoming a minister, but I so got hooked in that I could not get out. Then we set about for a chapel; and so we have gone on, like a snowball, growing greater and greater every day, until here we are, this afternoon, to lay the

foundation-stone of this new house for the Lord. What size the next chapel must be, when this has become worn out, I don't know. So you must do as I have done. Don't get sniffing about for some aged brother's pulpit; go into the highways and gather the people about you. If you are worth anything they will have you at any price; if you are not, they will soon give you your travelling ticket and tell you so. People will esteem things at their proper value.

But keeping to the happy results, I will just in conclusion say, What nation can equal old England for the benevolence, the Christian liberality, which is displayed in the number of voluntarily built chapels—ay, and churches too, for the greater part of the churches in the Church of England are built upon the voluntary principle. There are very few built out of the pocket of the bishop; they are built upon the same principle that we go upon; and we are proud of our land—proud to see it so studded with asylums and churches and chapels and places of worship.

I would just say, another principle that we hold is that we feel bound to pray, and that earnestly, for the nation in which we live; and our prayer is, "God preserve old England! God bless old England! may her social position be more and more refined; may science and art and manufactures prosper in her midst; and, above all, may the triumphs of the gospel abound. God bless our glorious Queen. May she be long spared amongst us. We pray for her soul and body. We pray for all that are in authority under her, that we may go on, not like brutes and beasts, but like intelligent men, serving God all the days of our lives, and that his blessing may rest upon us and upon our children to a thousand generations. Amen and Amen!

Mr. WELLS then prepared to lay the stone. Holding up a metal case, which it was intended to bury in a cavity of the stone, prepared for the purpose, he said,—This box contains a volume of sermons, a hymn-book, and a statement of our articles of faith. If, at any future time, anything contrary to truth be preached in this chapel, these books will prove to be a dangerous kind of thing, for they will make the stone to cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber, to answer it. I hope they will do so, and frighten both the parson and the people. God grant it may be so, if they preach anything contrary to that truth by which alone a sinner can be saved. The box having been placed in the cavity,

Mr. BUTT said,—I have been requested, on behalf of the Committee of the Building Fund, to present to our respected minister, Mr. James Wells, a silver trowel for this occasion. The trowel bears this inscription:—

"Presented by the Committee to Mr. James Wells, on the occasion of his laying the foundation-stone of the New Surrey Tabernacle, October 17th, 1864."

Mr. WELLS, having accepted the trowel, proceeded to spread the mortar therewith, and the stone having been lowered to its position, and properly adjusted with square and mallet, he said,—In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, I pronounce this stone laid. May God bless thousands of souls within the walls of this building when raised.

Mr. JOHN FOREMAN, of Mount Zion Chapel, Dorset Square, addressed the meeting. He said,—Christian friends, I am here to-day in the same spirit with which I met my Christian brother, Mr. Wells, to form this church, and to give him his pastoral charge, between thirty and forty years ago. I have been lately thinking of that day, and about what have been the issues of that day. I think I said at that time that no one could tell what the issues of that day might amount to. It was a step taken, and what God would make of it we must wait for future years to show. This day tells us something of what God has done. And I was

thinking about this stone, and I thought, What shall we call this stone? Well, I thought of David calling or entitling some of his Psalms, "A song to call to remembrance," and others he calls "A song of degrees," and I thought there were not a few things—some painful, perhaps—nothing to boast of respecting ourselves, nothing to complain of respecting the Lord, but much to be thankful for in the conduct of his providence and grace concerning this church and our beloved brother. I think there are many things this day "to call to remembrance."

Then, in the next place, brethren, we may call this a stone of degrees. I recollect the little place where we met to form this church. It was in Princes Street, I think—a very little place and very few people. My old friend, George Francis, was there, and Mr. House, of Clement's Lane. Neither of them would act, but they said if I did the business they would sanction it, and I did so as well as I knew how. When I consider the little few—that little, obscure beginning, and what the thing has now arrived at, I think, brethren, we may write on this stone, "A stone of degrees." And the thing is not yet finished. The chapel is being well filled in the Borough Road, but that place is not large enough, so here is another to be built, and, as our brother Wells said, what the future increase will be we cannot tell.

Then, brethren, I am thinking of a third name for this stone, and that is, a stone of help. If Samuel raised that pillar, and wrote upon it Ebenezer, saying, "Hitherto the Lord hath helped us," can this people say less? Take them individually, is there one but must acknowledge that they have been in a thousand ways helped—helped to believe in God—helped in patience to bear their afflictions—helped in industry to acquire the things belonging to this life, while they have been helped to live upon the fruit of a Saviour's labours, with regard to the life to come. Hitherto the Lord hath helped you as a church, and may God write his helping presence upon this stone, and upon the building to be connected with this stone.

There is another idea—one name more for this stone, and that is Galeed; for I think, as our brother hinted, it should be a stone of witness. The truths of God have been preached by our brother; he has not been twisted and turned about by the wind; he has not sought more respectability than the truth might bring him—he has not studied Madam who does not like election, nor Miss who objects to predestination, nor my lady and her daughter who do not like baptism. He has not been so accommodating as to make nothing of one of God's ordinances, and an ideal of another, to please any one. The doctrines which he has preached I had held and preached for years before he began, and the doctrines he has preached I preached because I loved them, and I love them still; and I love him because he loves the same doctrines that I do, and the same Saviour that I do, and because he preaches salvation to be an emanation from the wisdom of God, maintained faithfully, and, as far as mediation required, executed most blessedly, and made known to the heirs of salvation by the Holy Spirit. I say, Go on, brother Wells; you cannot do better than you have. I sometimes have said, when I have seen men twisting about, If they cannot do with the truth of God, they cannot do without it. They have done pretty well as far as outward things go, they had better leave well alone. But they have thought it would be more genteel, and that it would be the means of gathering round them some of the respectable classes,—for I never heard of a man changing his opinion for a washerwoman or a pauper in the church; it is always for a gentleman or a lady, or some one who could help their temporal advantage. My brother has not acted thus. I say, Keep on, brother Wells. I say, Brother Wells, keep your stall if you don't take a penny. Honesty, if I have no success,

and a good conscience, will be my downy pillow, by the blessing of God, when I come to die. I have nothing to boast of. If I am an honest man I have nothing to boast of. If God has made me so, I am the greater debtor, and so is brother Wells. We have jogged along together for more than thirty years, and I hope we shall continue to do so for many years more. I have for many years preached to others, and I am very careful not to speculate; for, being a very poor man, if I were to speculate and lose one bargain it would ruin me. Therefore I carry on business with the little property I have—that is, I preach that for the salvation of my fellow-sinners that God has made the salvation to my own soul—I preach that which God has made the gospel with power to my own soul. And so has brother Wells. He and I never went to school to learn from men what to preach as God's truth. We have both been experimental as far as God gave us the light of life. We have had wants and fears, and he has quelled them; we have had foes, and he has subdued them; faults, and he has forgiven them; wants, and he has supplied them, and thus we have lived to prove what the truth is, and have preached that which we have proved to be the truth without fail.

Brethren, I have nothing more to add. Let this stone be as I have said,—first, a stone to call to remembrance; secondly, a stone of degrees, when you look at the footsteps along which God has taken you, and when you anticipate what he will do for you in the future; and thirdly, let it be a stone of help, for “hitherto the Lord hath helped you.” There is not a Christian man or woman here who has travelled a few years in the Christian life, but might very justly, and without injury to themselves, lay a good thank-offering on this stone, and say, “To God's glory and honour be it spoken, hitherto he has helped me, and let this stone witness for me my deep sense of his great goodness.”

The hymn beginning—

“All hail the power of Jesu's name !”

having been sung, Mr. Wells pronounced the benediction, and the proceedings in the ground were thus brought to a close, by many donations and purses being placed on the stone.

EVENING MEETING.

Upwards of 1,400 friends, with many pastors from other churches in town and country, assembled to tea in the Surrey Tabernacle, Borough Road, every part of which was closely packed. After tea Mr. James Wells, the pastor, presided, and the proceedings were introduced by singing the hymn—

“Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,” &c.

Mr. J. S. Anderson, of Zion Chapel, Deptford, offered up prayer, and the hymn was sung,—

“Grace like a fountain ever flows,
 Fresh succours to renew;
 The Lord my wants and weakness knows,
 My sins and sorrows too;”

after which—

Mr. J. A. JONES rose and said,—My dear brother, beloved deacons, and members, the Lord be with and bless you and the congregation generally. I

return thanks to him that he has spared me to be with you this day. With regard to what has been done this afternoon, the Lord only knows what will result from it; but it appears to me that he stands pledged to own and bless wherever the gospel of his grace is proclaimed and preached. This appears to me to be a large place; there are many people here now. I am amazed; and I bless God that I can own to the amazement with blessing him that the language has been, "The place is too strait for us; give place, that we may dwell." In pondering over the importance of the proceedings of this afternoon, I thought to myself—I thought—"Why, dear me, what a deal of money this place will cost!" And I felt that it was a source of great thankfulness that the Lord had given a liberal heart to the people, so they have done a great deal; and I do hope and trust they will not leave off doing till all is done, and that it may be declared, "We want no more money." And then I wouldn't have mentioned that, but I was led to think what a great cost was the price of the church of Christ, the building of mercy. And the Lord didn't call upon man for any, for he himself provided the whole of the cost. Oh, sirs, there was large ability, there was everlasting love in it; there was an eternal choice of salvation in it; and there was Christ, a glorious person, a spotless humanity; and he himself, in a certain point of view, paid the ransom price for the whole of the building, and every son and daughter of mercy already bought and paid for, and there will be no money required to be returned. And if the Lord Jesus Christ had not finished his work, the Holy Ghost would have had no work to do; for his work is the result of Christ having finished his work. "I have finished the work," says Christ, "which thou gavest me to do."

I bless God to-night that I am here; and though, perhaps, nature's pride might move me to say what I am about to say—and I almost question whether I ought to say it,—yet I can say that for fifty-six years and upwards in the gospel ministry, I don't know that I have changed a hair's breadth in all that time. I think I could as cheerfully preach the first sermon now as I did more than fifty-six years ago, and I think it would agree with the last sermon that I preached at our little Jireh. But, my dear friends, what shall I say? I must speak a little in relation to the circumstances of this day. Well, friends, Solomon, upon the erection of the temple of old, says, "Will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain him; how much less this house that I have builded?" My highly esteemed brother Wells, and every one of the ministers of the everlasting gospel, if they had not believed that the Lord would come down, and that he would cause the place to be glorified, so that the priests could not stand to minister, because the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord,—if they hadn't believed that would have been the result, I don't think that they would have been there this afternoon; and I am sure a waggon and a thousand horses couldn't have dragged me there if I had not surely believed that God would own and bless it, that many may hear, and fear, and turn to the Lord. And then if you ask what may be my prayer for the occasion, I would refer you to the 29th verse of the 8th chapter of the first book of Kings:—"That thine eyes may be opened toward this house night and day, even toward the place of which thou hast said, My name shall be there: that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall make toward this place." And the Lord the Spirit is the inditer of the prayer; he is the drawer forth of the prayer, and he is the hearer and the answerer of the prayer. I have read the prayer, and here I have the answer:—"And the Lord said, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication, that thou hast made before me: I

have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put my name there for ever ; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually." What it is—for the eyes and the heart of our God to be on his church and people, only the Lord himself knows. It was only last Monday four years that the stone was laid of the chapel of Jireh, where I now am. Your esteemed friend, my highly valued brother Mr. Wells, was present ; and oh, sirs ! I would say as much as I could say, but I can't say half a quarter of his say upon that occasion. But I have brought it just to retort a little. I like to retort sometimes, you know, especially when there's a good opportunity. Well, now, what did he say ? He said, "We live in a day when we do need decision." And I believe—and I think it without any sort of eulogy—I believe, my heart and soul believes, that if there is a man that is fast decided for truth, James Wells is that man. He is as decided as I am, and he can't be more so ; therefore I like him. He says, "We are to stand fast in the truth ; don't waver, don't give up a hair's breadth." As great Dr. Gill says, "If you would retain anything, give up nothing." No, not a jot nor a tittle. We are to stand fast in the truth. And then he again says at my stone-laying, "What I contend for is doctrine ; and this," he says, "it is that has sustained our brother Jones, and brought him to what he is." But oh, dear ! I can't, or I would say all that is here ; my mind and heart would say it. Come, then, I will retort, and then I will close up with this part of the subject. And what he said of me I will bring it back to him again. I believe in my soul that he is that man. What did he say ? Why, he said of me that my mind was as young as ever ; that's my business, not his. I say it of him, mind, "I do not believe that he ever loved the truth more than he does now." Now that's my mind upon the subject.

It appears to me that the Lord having said, "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone," and so on, I as much believe in the election of every mystic member forming that building as I believe in the choice that the Father has made of the Son of his everlasting love. Why, Christ himself says, "I have loved them as thou hast loved me ; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them." Can't go farther than that. Oh yes ; "and I in them." Christ in you, that you may have the love of God shed abroad in your hearts.

Friends, I must close. I am glad the Lord has spared me to be here to-day. I have been at the laying of the foundation ; I have no idea, nor do I think it at all likely, that I shall live to see the topstone laid, and the building completed. But, depend upon it, that's a precious scripture, "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house, and his hands shall finish it ; and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it ;" grace arising from the foundation, running up through all the superstructure, and reaching the head or top stone of mercy. My friends, more I cannot say ; only may the Lord be with you ; and when the time is arrived that the place is erected, may it be your mercy to find, as the word has it, that the feet of the priests couldn't stand to minister, because the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord.

MR. WELLS : We all feel indebted to our venerable brother for his presence and for his excellent address. We have a goodly number of ministers here ; we are proud to see them ; we should like so to arrange for each to speak. I made my speech this afternoon out of doors, and I therefore need not detain you. And the ministers, of course, this evening, the subject they have in hand will be simply the gospel ; the furtherance of the gospel, the advantages of the furtherance

of the gospel, and the spiritual and temporal means by which those ends are reached.

The secretary will now read the report of the Building Committee.

The Committee have much pleasure in laying before the subscribers and friends the result of their first year's labours. In the erection of a new building matters of vast importance have been brought under consideration, which have been discussed with calmness and care. The difficulty of obtaining land for such a building was found to be very great, and after using every means to purchase a site in localities considered desirable, the thought of a freehold was with regret abandoned. Our attention being directed to the plot of land in Wansey Street, Walworth Road, five minutes' walk from the Elephant and Castle, a public meeting was held on the 4th of July, when it was resolved that immediate steps be taken in order to obtain a lease. A proposal was made to the Fishmongers' Company, and, after several negotiations, a lease has been obtained for a term of 99 years. We should have given the preference to the site in the main road, as at first suggested, but fears were entertained lest the noise from the traffic would interfere with the services of the sanctuary, the road being much narrower at the corner of Prospect Row.

Your Committee selected as their architect Mr. Edgar P. Loftus Brock, of 37, Bedford Place, who, with the Committee, visited several recently built places of worship, in order to obtain every information before the preparation of plans, which were, after various alterations and suggestions, unanimously adopted.

After the public meeting held on the 22nd of August, your Committee felt they were in a position to commence operations, and applied to a number of builders, fifteen of whom delivered in tenders; and, after careful consideration, the lowest was accepted, being that of Mr. J. W. Sawyer, of Dulwich. We hope both the architect and the builder will have all that wisdom needed in completing the building to the entire satisfaction of the subscribers and friends.

The building will be in the Italian style, and will have a portico of six Ionic columns. There will be a large vestry at the side, with convenient vestries for the minister and deacons; accommodation will be provided for about two thousand persons; the walls will be of white brick, and solid stone dressing. The building internally will be 89 feet by 64 feet; the total outside length, including vestries, will be 135 feet. The cost is estimated at over £8,000. It is intended to complete the work within twelve months.

THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

To Cash Received from September, 1863, to September, 1864.

	£	s.	d.
Subscriptions and Donations	3,406	6	9
Collection at Two Public Meetings	73	1	0
Profits of Two Tea Meetings	41	11	4
Collection after Sermons by Mr. Wells	65	15	0
Interest received from Bankers	80	3	3
	<hr/>		
	£3,666	17	4
In addition—Promises, some of which are to be paid on the laying of the Foundation Stone	1,486	0	0
	<hr/>		
Making a Total of	£5,152	17	4

FUNDS.

Our collectors, the ladies, have devoted their time and attention in obtaining donations, and in carrying out the plan of weekly and monthly subscriptions, varying from a penny to twenty shillings per week, in a most praiseworthy manner. We cannot speak too highly of their labours. We sincerely thank them, and would press upon them the word of divine truth—"Be not weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap if we faint not."

In reviewing the history of the year, the interest in the object, the unanimity with which the proposal has been received, and the cordial support given for its accomplishment, have far exceeded the most sanguine expectations, not only of the Committee, but of the whole body of people. May we not humbly say, as a church and congregation, What hath God wrought? We dare not stop. Difficulties have arisen, difficulties as we go on we expect; but our motto shall be, "Faith laughs at impossibilities, and says, It shall be done."

We feel this a suitable time to set up a fresh Ebenezer to the praise and glory of our covenant God; for on the 19th of this month the church will have existed thirty-four years. How strikingly has the word of the Lord been fulfilled in our history!—"Though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end shall greatly increase." Another cause for gratitude is the continuance of the pastor in health and vigour of mind—strong to labour, and a desire to be more useful in the service of the Lord. Many, very many, have been the testimonies of usefulness in awakening sinners, dead in trespasses and sin, to a sense of their condition; while those who have believed, through grace, having experienced times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, continue steadfast in their profession.

"Let such stupendous acts of grace
For ever be adored,
Which prove to man's self-ruined race,
Salvation's of the Lord."

Our present place of worship was erected, twice enlarged, and paid for, through the instrumentality of the ministry; and now we have every reason to believe that the Lord is speaking to his servant as he did to Solomon,—*"Take heed now, for the Lord hath chosen thee to build an house for the sanctuary. Be strong, and do it."*

We have now commenced a building which we hope will be completed, and stand as a monument when the present church and minister are around the throne of God. Our prayer is that it may prove the birthplace of many precious souls. We shall still need the sympathy and help of those who have already subscribed, and earnestly commend the object to those who have not yet assisted, in remembrance of all the mercies and lovingkindnesses the Lord has bestowed upon the minister, the church, and the congregation, through the period of thirty-four years. *"We, thy people, and sheep of thy pasture, will give thee thanks for ever; we will show forth thy praise to all generations."*

"Wake our souls, thy God to praise,
Raise thy Ebenezer, raise;
Write thereon (thy fears forego),
God hath helped us hitherto."

Mr. WELLS: I am sure you must be exceedingly pleased with such a report as this, and it is very gratifying to be owned by our venerable brother Jones in the way which you have heard. He has been so many years on the way, that I think if we were a body of empty professors he would have found us out long before now; but he really owns us as belonging to the same family with himself, and, as I said just now, you must be exceedingly pleased with the report our brother has read, sanctioned by the committee and deacons. It is perfectly wonderful that we should be, at the end of twelve months, actually in possession of £5,000 towards the £8,000.

Now when we first set out, I anticipated preaching at a great many chapels, knowing the good feelings and the readiness of churches and ministers to assist. But there are several reasons why I have since declined that course; not because the ministers were not willing, because the ministers that are present, many of them, kindly

offered me the use of their pulpits at any time suitable; indeed, I met with every kindness, and I do not recollect meeting with one refusal; but it appeared that it would subject me to more labour than I could very well manage. I can tell you it is no play to come here of a Sunday morning, as I did yesterday, and preach to a chapel full of people, and then go to Woolwich in the afternoon, and then come here in the evening. I can tell you of a Monday I sometimes feel rather Mondayish. And so I thought if I endeavoured to preach at so many places it would prove too much for me, and so I thought it was not exactly well to put the rushlight out just yet if we could help it, until you can get something like a vital lamp in the place thereof. And, therefore, I feel towards those ministers who kindly offered me their pulpits just the same as though we had availed ourselves of that privilege. We are exceedingly pleased to see so many ministers here to-night that have always shown us the greatest respect, which I hope ever to show them. And I am sure we are all proud to see our tried and honoured friend Mr. Foreman here. He will now address you.

Mr. JOHN FOREMAN, of Mount Zion Chapel: Christian friends and Mr. Chairman, our friend Jones, I think, has said enough for both him and me, because we are so much of the same sentiment, that I have only just to say that what he said I believe, what he has said I feel, his desires are my desires, his reflections mine. And I cannot but congratulate the people, and my esteemed friend Mr. Wells, on the successful proceedings of this day. I have been thinking, dear friends, that four-and-thirty years ago this church was formed; and I do not forget that it was my lot to form this church, and to give what we commonly call the ministerial charge from these words, "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down; why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?" which was Nehemiah's remark. And I well recollect some of the remarks I made. I told our brother that the Arminians would want him to come down a little, and the Fullerites would want him to come down a little, and perhaps Mr. Wesley's followers would want him to come down a little, mixed communions, and various sorts and creeds, would want him to alter a little, not to be quite so stingy. And I said, "No; you see here, my brother, here is an example for you,—'I am doing a great work.' It is a great work to be employed in the ministry, and then, in addition to the greatness, when the Lord is pleased to call many, and bless many, and feed many, and comfort many, and gather, and collect together, and unite such an assembly as this, is not that a great work?" Now I rejoice to see this assembly, when I consider from what a small beginning it has arisen.

Well, if it was man's work, here is a something for man to be proud of; but as it is God's work, here is plenty of scope for gratitude without boasting, and for joy in the Lord without pride. We are all measured men, and we cannot go beyond the measure assigned us. Let us make the best use we can of that measure, and not be discouraged because a larger measure is not assigned us; nor yet try to enlarge our measure by adding anything to the principles of truth. I thank God our brother has not had recourse to that to increase his measure, and I pray God to keep younger ministers than my brother and myself from adopting such measures for enlargement. If we cannot make our way and advance by the truth, we shall never do without it. If we take God's truth, we take what we may expect his approbation upon; if we take God's truth, we take what he has approved of. Why is it that the Lord has so blessed this church? Why is it that there is now so large an assembly? Because the minister has taken God's truth with him. Whatever the means are of attracting them, and so long as they are got into the chapel, and under the sound of the gospel, who can tell but what some word may be sanctified to bringing them under the influence of God's wisdom?—who can tell? Ah, if a man happen to say something extraordinary, it buzzes about, "Well, I should like to hear that strange fellow." And they go, and discover what stranger fellows by far they themselves are as sinners in the sight of God. How often has God taken advantage of our little peculiarities to vindicate the honour of his name, make bare the arm of his power, and reveal his salvation to objects that never knew it before! Well, then, we rejoice that our brother has stood firm, and that his ministry has been so successful.

And so our enemies have not gained it all their own way yet. Ah, if we could but get rid of that old Jones, and that Foreman, and that Wells, and another or two, we should get on very well then. I don't know that; I don't know that. A minister may be considered to be of one generation; but a church collected

and planted by the hand of God through his instrumentality may be of several generations. Ah, it will take some time to wear out this generation of those who through our brother's instrumentality and under his ministry have been brought to know the truth. And I hope that there will be yet numbers added to this number, so that it will plague the devil all the more when James Wells is gone. The worst of it is, he has left such a numerous offspring. I do wish that our brother may have all the comforts that he needs in that truth with the knowledge of which God has blessed him; that while he is preaching to others, while he is breaking the bread for others, he himself may find a morsel; that while he is pouring out the wine, his dear Master may say, Come, James, take a sip yourself. There is nothing like the truth, friends; let us hold fast the truth. I have had offers of three times the salary, but then I must alter a little; you must not dwell upon election; you must have a little mixed communion. There is a lady or two, and a gentleman or two, they do not like baptism, they cannot understand it, and we feel sorry, because they are our chief supporters. But, friends, I never could, in the sight of God, get over this; if I turn away from God's truth, how much cause have I then to hope that God will abide with me? That was one idea. Second, however small my loaf is, God can make it large enough for me and my family. Third, however large my loaf is by any sort of misstep that I can take, he can make it less than it is. Thus, then, friends, no fleshly considerations can move the man that is vitally acquainted with the truth. May the Lord in mercy prosper you, and may this day be a sign that all the *hypers* are not quite dead, and that all the strict communionists are not gone out of the world, and that the devil is not going to have it all his own way, however cunning he may be, and however religious a garb he may assume.

God bless you, and make your way prosperous. I have no doubt you will soon get all the money you want. I remember an instance of the kind where they had had a large outlay, and they had got about £1,700 that had remained for some years. Well, at last they began to talk about it, and one said, "I don't like this debt to be hanging over us;" and another said, "No more do I;" and others the same. Well, they set to to make quarterly collections to get rid of the debt; and they collected £400 a quarter for four quarters, and then that left about £100. "Well," said one, "we won't be plagued with that;" I will pay it out of my own pocket." And so they got rid of the £1,700. Well, I have no doubt that if when the new chapel is built there is a debt upon it, some of you will soon get out of temper with it, and kick it out of doors.

But perhaps you will say, Ah, but you take precious good care not to promise that Mount Zion will do anything. Well, friends, either before the chapel is finished, or after it, I shall be very glad for our brother to come and preach for me, and I preach for him, and he make a collection. But whenever I come I shall expect a collection too; therefore you give me a collection, and our people give him a collection, and then we will put them both into one purse.

Mr. Stringer gave out the 134th hymn,—

"Treasures of everlasting might
In our Jehovah dwell.

The Chairman said,—I am sure I speak the feelings of the deacons, of the committee, and of the members of the church and congregation that usually assemble here; I am sure I speak their feelings as well as my own when I say that as the meeting goes on, and address after address is made, we feel highly honoured at the presence of so many excellent and worthy ministers of the everlasting gospel, and we feel highly honoured at the presence of many of their respective and respected members and hearers with us this evening. And I do not see why any of us should be puffed up for one against another. If I hear one minister more profitably than I do another, it does not follow that I am not to pray for the other, and to love the other, and to honour the other, and to esteem him; and to remember that if he is not my minister, he is the minister of some of my brethren and my sisters in the Lord. And if we have gifts, we have them distributed to us as the Lord is pleased to bestow them upon us.

Our respected friend and brother, Mr. Drawbridge, from Rushden, Northamptonshire, will now address the meeting, and after that the collection will be made. And there are friends here this evening from other churches; it is a good oppor-

tunity for them ; they will not get the opportunity again. We should like you all to have some bricks in the New Surrey Tabernacle.

Mr. C. DRAWBRIDGE, of Rushden : Mr. Chairman and Christian friends,—This, to me, is one of the most important spots on *terra firma*. I remember some years ago meeting with our brother Wells, and he said, “ You are in London, can you give us a sermon ? ” I said, “ What night ? ” He stated ; I came. My father was here ; he heard ; he walked with me down the New Cut, and he laid his hand upon my shoulder and said, “ My dear boy, I have realized to-night what my heart has longed for and prayed for. You can tell it wherever you go, that God has heard the prayers of both your parents before you were born ; and now in the name of God go forward, for God is with you of a truth.” Now this is the special hand of God’s sovereign providence at work. And when I came here at first, under the *onus* of pressure of business in the City, the Borough, I used to undertake to instruct certain children (it was on the site of this building) on a Lord’s day morning, before the service commenced ; and there I should have liked to remain to this day. I like teaching little children much better than grown-up people, because—I was going to say something, but I won’t. And while I was there talking to these little folks, God was pleased to own and bless the Word to the hearts of two of my class, and I went and saw them to the porch of heaven ; they died triumphant in the Lord, blessing his holy name for his mercy to them. And I recollect upon this spot, when I was almost impaled in my feelings by being persuaded to stand up before a house-full of people to expound the word of God. One reason was, because I was so full of business in the world, that I had no time to throw my mind and heart upon the study of the word of God as I could have wished. Now the Lord was pleased to move me upon this spot to open my lips to his praise ; and I believe I shall never forget to all eternity the hallowed feeling with which God was pleased to come down upon my soul while dwelling upon the glory of the love of Jesus for Martha and Mary and Lazarus. The warmth of heart that was then inspired by the Holy Spirit has been kept up for more than forty years, and I have, by the good hand of God, been kept in the same circuit of work for forty years ; have never been off the wheels, never laid up once by sickness ; and I have had the pleasure of standing before hundreds and thousands of people in the proclamation of God’s gospel in that time. And our brother Wells has been kind enough to come down and look at the old spot where we have been labouring and toiling for years. And we have now accomplished the paying off of a debt of nearly £2,000 ; when we see January next, if God spares our lives, we shall only have £100 to get towards that, and all done without appeal to others, but within our own circle. And this is what I like to see. Our God has the silver and the gold in his own possession. And if some of us were to go away to-night convinced that Queen Victoria had adopted us, why, we should have a chariot and four out to-morrow morning, and say, “ Go to the Comptroller of the Household for the expense.” Why ? Because the Queen has adopted us. And so, if the Lord has adopted us—if he has chosen us in Christ Jesus to salvation, why, the whole world is subjected to the saints. There is not a proud, unregenerate man, but what owes all that feeds his pride to the existence of the church of God ; for it is for the elect’s sake that the world is preserved, otherwise it would vanish like the baseless fabric of a vision. But while the church of God remains she is the salt of the earth ; while the church of God is the salt of the earth, that has its savour ; for Christ says, “ If the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned ? it is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dughill, but men cast it out.” That church, being adopted of God, has an immediate claim upon the divine riches of heaven, of which Christ is the great Almoner. He has all the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him bodily, and out of that fulness you that are called of God, ministers and people, receive, and grace for grace ; not grace for sin, but grace for grace ; grace given to you in Christ by God the Father, corresponding with the grace revealed by the Holy Spirit ; these two happy consequences meet in the new heart, and make it break forth in the ebullition described in the Canticle, “ Ere ever I was aware my soul made me as the chariots of thy willing people.”

We read that, when the disciples were contending among themselves as to which should be greatest in the kingdom of heaven, Jesus took a little child, and set him in the midst, and said unto them, “ Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” And is it not so, friends, that we are here to-night as children in their nonage ? Not

one of us has attained his majority; we are at school, we are under the care of the best teaching; we are under the eye of the most watchful and intensely loving Father; we have an elder Brother, who is the very brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person; who has ascended to heaven, where he ever liveth to make intercession for us, and because he lives we shall live also. And by-and-bye, when the days of our pilgrimage below are ended, and we appear with him in glory, then shall we attain our full and perfect manhood, for we shall be like him when we see him as he is.

I am truly pleased, friends, to see the success of your efforts towards the erection of a new chapel. I knew right well that the hand of God would appear; that the arm of the Lord would be made bare. I would say to you to-night, God speed you in your work, and may his blessing richly descend upon your pastor, your deacons, your church and congregation. And I feel as sure as that I stand here, that you will easily surmount that which to some may appear a difficulty—namely, in getting all the money that you require. And I do rejoice in seeing so many of those present who are engaged, as I am, in the proclamation of the truth, "Behold, how good and pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" And when your new chapel is completed, may many, many precious souls be gathered together to listen to the proclamation of the glorious gospel, and be partakers of that blessing that maketh rich, and addeth no sorrow.

Now, friends, the collection will be made, and I trust that you will all give liberally.

The meeting then joined in singing the 321st hymn,—

"Hark how the blood-bought hosts above
Conspire to praise redeeming love,"—

the collection being made at the same time.

The CHAIRMAN said,—We have not time at this meeting to notice the labours of the Committee, nor to acknowledge in form the labours and perseverance of the collectors, the ladies. That will be, of course, at a future time, when we get on a little farther. And it would be unreasonable for us to be much longer before the meeting separates. Our friend and brother, Mr. Palmer, of Homerton Row, and Editor of the *Voice of Truth*, will now address you.

Mr. PALMER: Christian friends, I shall not occupy your time more than a few minutes. I did not come here to make a speech; I came here, and I went to the ground where the foundation-stone of the new chapel has been laid, for the purpose of making a record of the whole transaction in the *Voice of Truth*. I did so from this motive; it is a transaction of very great importance.

I will just tell you what my thoughts were in relation to coming to this place as I said, with a view, first of all, of making a fair report of what this day has been transacted in relation to the Surrey Tabernacle people. I consider that the laying the foundation-stone of so large an edifice, connected with a publication or ministry of divine truth, is one of rare occurrence. I don't know that there is a chapel in London or in the country, of such dimensions, appropriated to the ministry of divine truth. And I also came to see what would be the feelings of people in the country in relation to it; and I am very glad to see that, after all, the *hypers*, as they are called, are not yet become extinct, there are a few still. And I am glad to see that this transaction has excited and called forth an interest in the country. We have a token of this in the presence among us of our friend Drawbridge. Why, I knew him when he went to Rusden; he preached in the chapel that I had been preaching in before him, before he preached in the one where he now is. I am very glad to see him here on this occasion, and also other friends from the country. I am glad, too, to find your minister, my friend and brother, Mr. Wells, in such good health and good spirits. I am sure this must have been a day of great interest to him, and that he, and the people with him, must look back upon in future years with feelings of humility, and gratitude, and thanksgiving unto God. It is pleasant to trace the histories of some of God's people. In the report I hear it stated that this church first began some thirty-four years back; our brother Foreman was at the formation of it, and the present minister was the minister of the newly formed church. The number of members now constituting the church is very large numerically considered. God has greatly blessed his labours by gathering crowds around him; and I am glad to find that this capacious place (for it is a capacious place)—that so capacious a place as this should be too small for the numbers that wish to wait upon his

ministry. I heartily wish him many years of great success in the work of the Lord. He will go to his new place, I trust, in the fear of God, with a desire to maintain his truth, to set forth the great and deep things of God, and to maintain in his ministry an unflinching faithfulness, so that at the end of his days it may be said by the great Master of assemblies, and the great Master of all his servants, "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

One remark more. I am very pleased to have seen so many brethren in the ministry present to-day. I am glad that they have felt so great an interest in the matter as to come to the place. They have many of them left now, but it is pleasant to see our brethren gathering around us to give us their sanction, so that we feel we do not stand alone. They are underproppers, and we are glad of such underprops as these; they serve to encourage us, to strengthen us in our weakness; and whatever there may be owing to their instrumentality, we are glad of it, while we know the great Efficient is the great God and Father of all mercy. I leave these reflections with you, joining in the many congratulations which have been made this evening in relation to the people, the church and congregation here, and in relation to the worthy pastor. I pray that Almighty God may pour out his blessing in great abundance upon the people, the church, the congregation, the deacons, and the pastor; and may great grace rest upon the whole Israel of God.

Mr. JAMES WELLS: One thing I would say at the close. Though I have a deep feeling in every department, if there be one thing that I feel this day more than another, it is the greatness of my responsibility, the solemn position I occupy, and the great grace I shall need to enable me so to fill that position as to finish my course with joy, and leave, as it has been suggested, hundreds of you savingly acquainted with the truth, to bear up and testify of the same when I myself shall be no more. Our good friend Mr. Peat will now close the service with a word of prayer.

Mr. PEAT having offered up a prayer, the meeting separated.

The amount received from donations, promises, and also various sums and purses laid upon the stone, with the collections at the service, amounted to £600.

Post Office Orders or Stamps will be kindly received by the Treasurer, Mr. JOHN CARR, 20, Lawrence Lane, Cheapside, or by the Secretary, Mr. E. BURR, 3, Denmark Terrace, Cold Harbour Lane, Camberwell.