

THE GARDNER MEMORIAL CHURCH, BRECHIN.

LAYING OF FOUNDATION STONE.

SPEECH BY DR CAMPBELL, M.P.

Yesterday afternoon the interesting ceremony of laying the foundation stone of the Gardner Memorial Church at Brechin was performed by Dr J. A. Campbell of Stracathro, the Parliamentary representative of Aberdeen University, and one of the most prominent laymen of the Church of Scotland. The church is situated in St Ninian's Square, quite close to the Brechin terminus of the Caledonian Railway Company, and is therefore a prominent and striking object to visitors. The main outlines of the building are already well defined, and the work has made considerable progress. The edifice is to a large extent the outcome of the generosity of the late Rev. Alexander Gardner, minister of the second charge of Brechin, who left the entire revenue of an estate belonging to him, for the purpose of being applied to the formation of a new congregation and maintenance of a minister. The capital sum thus left amounted to about £7000, and the late Mrs Milne, Moorbank, and her daughter, who is one of the trustees under the bequest, generously added a further sum of £7000, which is now applied by the trustees to the erection and endowment of the new church. Plans of the building were prepared by Mr John J. Burnett, of Messrs Buraett & Son, Glasgow; and a handsome structure of the warm, red stone of the district is the result. The most striking feature architecturally of the building is a massive square tower, facing St Ninian's Square, which connects the hall and vestry of the church with the main elevation in Damaore Street, and which is at right angles to the square. The church itself consists of a nave 49 feet long by 24 feet wide, seated for 305 worshippers, an aisle 72 feet long by 20½ feet wide, seated for 208, and at the tower end there is a gallery, reached from the vestibule, which will accommodate 87, this bringing up the total accommodation to provide for 600 sitters. An open corridor, or cloister, connects the hall and vestry wing with the church. At the end of the nave the floor is raised for the communion table, pulpit, and choir, a low parapet dividing them from the rest of the nave. Beyond a slightly richer treatment of the stonework of the roof, however, there is nothing to break the view of the full length of the nave. The entrance to the church is through an open porch fronting St Ninian's Square, and the baptismal font is placed in a recess in the aisle immediately at the side of the entrance door. The hall connected with the church is 46 feet long, and is seated for 162 persons. The session-house is 21½ feet long by 18 feet wide; and the vestry is commodious, and is furnished with all modern conveniences.

At half-past one o'clock in the afternoon all was ready for the ceremony, and the memorial block was placed in position. Among those invited to the platform, in addition to Dr Campbell, and most of whom were present, were Captain Carnegie, Forebank House; Mr John Steill, S.S.C., Brechin; Mr Macdonald, town clerk, Arbroath; Dr and Mrs Duke, St Vigean; Mr and Mrs W. S. Adamson, Careston Castle; Rev. John A. and Mrs Clark, Brechin; Rev. Robert and Mrs Paisley, Brechin; Mr James and Mrs Stewart, Edinburgh; Miss Milne, Moorbank; and Provost and Mrs Vallantine, Brechin. Most of the members of the Brechin Presbytery and the local kirk sessions were also present. A printed order of service of an appropriate character was provided and adhered to. In the middle of it the ceremony of laying the stone took place. First of all a sealed casket containing copies of the local newspapers, coin of the realm, &c., was deposited in the cavity prepared for it. Mortar was then spread on the bed of the memorial stone, and Mr Paton, the senior partner of the firm of Messrs R. Aikenhead & Sons, the builders, presented Dr Campbell with a very handsome silver trowel with ivory handle, and bearing Mr Campbell's arms and motto. It bore the inscription—"Presented to James Alexander Campbell, Esq., B.L.D., M.P., on the occasion of his laying the memorial stone of the Gardner Memorial Church, Brechin, on the 25th day of August, 1897. Presented by Messrs Robert Aikenhead & Sons, masons of the work." Dr Campbell having with his silver tool deftly given the finishing touches to the spreading of the mortar, the memorial stone was lowered into position; and then with a mallet Dr Campbell completed the work by giving several vigorous strokes to the stone. The rest of the service, in which Rev. Dr Duke, Rev. Mr Clark, of the Cathedral, and Rev. Robert Paisley, East Church, took part, was then proceeded with. Mr Adlington, organist, led on the harmonium, and the choir of the Cathedral assisted. After the last hymn had been sung,

Dr Campbell, who was received with applause, and the circumstances under which they had met, and the ceremony at which they had assisted, possessed no ordinary interest. The church of which they had just laid the memorial stone was, as they were well aware, to be erected and endowed by a legacy of the late Rev. Alexander Gardner, one of the parish ministers of Brechin, supplemented by a munificent contribution by two ladies—the late Mrs Milne of Moorbank and her daughter, who were members of Mr Gardner's congregation and his personal friends. [Applause.] As to the bequest of Mr Gardner, it was dictated by his knowledge that some church extension in connection with the Church of Scotland was called for, in Brechin, the Cathedral and the East Parish Church having congregations too numerous for the seat-holding capacity of that building. [Applause.] As to the contribution of Mrs and Miss Milne, it was dictated by the desire that the new church should be a worthy memorial of one whom they had so highly esteemed as their minister and their friend. They all regretted extremely that Mrs Milne was not spared to see that day, and to see the beginning of the building in which she took so much interest in anticipation. This new structure, as they even now could judge from the beginning of it, and as they had every confidence, from the reputation of the architect, Mr Burnett, and their knowledge of what he had done in other places, would be an ornament to Brechin. [Applause.] They welcomed it for what it would be as a building, but they welcomed it more as a memorial of the late Mr Gardner. Those of them who were members of the Cathedral congregation could recall how diligently Mr Gardner laboured there for nearly 50 years—how much devotion he showed in his ministerial work, how conscientious he was in the discharge of pastoral duty, and how able, faithful, and impressive he was as a preacher. Those of them who were outside the congregation remembered him, as they all did, as a man of singular dignity of presence, a man of culture and of scholarly tastes, and one who took an active interest in every charitable, educational, and social movement in Brechin calculated to promote the benefit of the people. It was most fitting that his memory should be perpetuated by a special church and ministry, and he might say that if anything were required to add pathetic interest to his legacy, it was the remembrance that his later years were saddened by domestic afflictions. Now, in the prospect of the addition of a new church to Brechin, with certain endowments for its ministry, he did not confine his congratulations to the members of the Church of Scotland. They, no doubt, had a special interest in that occasion and in that new church, but he believed that friends belonging to other churches would rejoice with them. The same gospel essentially was preached from all their pulpits. The strengthening of the evangelistic appliances of one church ought to be, and would be, welcomed by other churches who were engaged in the same work. The work was for them all, and the work required them all; but that new edifice had, in his estimation, a special interest of another kind—for the people of Brechin and for the Church of Scotland primarily, but for others as well. He felt that it summoned them all to a new undertaking. It removed a hindrance out of the way of a much-needed public work—the restoration of the old cathedral. [Applause.] It was acknowledged on all hands that the cathedral as it stood at present was not a credit to any of them. It was discreditable to the Church of Scotland, one of whose cathedrals it was; it was discreditable to the cathedral congregation who worshipped in it, and it was not creditable to Brechin, where it was the most conspicuous building. Now, it required restoration to make it worthy of its history and its position; nay, it required restoration if for nothing else than to make it worthy of standing beside the round tower.

[Applause.] But what did restoration mean? It meant for one thing the removal of the galleries, and what did that mean? It meant a considerable reduction of the seat-holding capacity of the church. To all serious proposals hitherto to see about the restoration the invariable objection was found in the problem how the large congregation, now accommodated, was then to be provided for. It was obvious that to restore the cathedral meant also having an additional church somewhere, and, now, might not this new church solve that difficulty? [Applause.] Did not this new church, presented to them as a gift, without any one of them except one lady having spent a shilling of their money upon it, give them an opportunity of setting themselves to the restoration of the cathedral? [Applause.] That object had, it was true, a first claim upon the congregation and upon the members and friends of the Church of Scotland in Brechin and neighbourhood; but he was quite sure the heritors of the parish would not be backward in helping forward a work of that kind. But he misjudged the people of Brechin very much if they would not, irrespective of denomination, give a helping hand to that work for the credit of the ancient city. [Applause.] To return from that digression, he congratulated all present on the work accomplished that day and the prospect it opened to them of seeing a beautiful church erected for the worship of God and the preaching of the everlasting gospel; and he concluded in the words used in the order of service, "Here let true faith, the fear of God, and brotherly love ever remain." [Applause.] He had only in one word to express his thanks to Mr Gardner's trustees for the honour they had done him, first by asking him to take that prominent position that day. He had also to return his sincere thanks to Messrs Aikenhead, the builders, for the beautiful trowel, which he should preserve as a most pleasant souvenir of a very important afternoon. [Applause.]

The proceedings were closed with the benediction pronounced by Rev. R. Grant, Stracathro, and before the company separated a cordial vote of thanks was passed to Dr Campbell, on the motion of Dr Duke, for his admirable address and for performing the ceremony in so able and excellent a way. Luncheon was afterwards served by Mr Pirie, Commercial Hotel, Brechin, in the hall of the Young Men's Christian Institute, Dr Campbell and members of Presbytery and others being present. Rev. Dr Duke presided, and Rev. R. Paisley was croupier. The health of the Queen and Royal Family were cordially drunk to. In proposing the Presbytery, the chairman referred with great satisfaction to the remarks of Dr Campbell at the laying of the memorial stone, as to the necessity of the restoration of the cathedral. Its claims, he pointed out, were not merely local, but national and historical, and they appealed to Scotland. [Applause.] Rev. Mr Clark and Rev. Mr Paisley responded. Provost Vallantine, in complimentary terms, proposed the health of Dr Campbell, who in business, in public life generally, and as a son of the Church, was an example to them all. [Applause.] Dr Campbell, in responding, expressed gratification at the cordial reception of his words as to the restoration of the cathedral, and urged that the work should be prosecuted, pointing out that there was nothing in the cost of restoration itself to alarm those who were really interested, and also that with the erection of the new church the difficulty as to what was to be done with the cathedral seat-holders was now solved. [Applause.] The health of Miss Milne and of the chairman was then cordially pledged, and the proceedings terminated.

SALE OF WORK AT ELLON.

Yesterday a supplementary sale of work for the purpose of raising funds for the extinction of the remaining debt—about £60—on the improvements of Ellon Free Church and manse was held in a marquee in the Cricket Park. There was a large and varied display of fancy and useful articles artistically laid out on stalls presided over by ladies of the congregation. The opening ceremony was performed by Mr Alexander Keith of Pinnedden, who was introduced by Rev. A. H. Reid. Mr Keith said it gave him very great pleasure to be present that afternoon and take part in the opening ceremony. The object of the sale was two-fold—in the first place it gave them a fresh opportunity of possessing some of the beautiful articles adorning the stalls, and in the second place he hoped it would provide the Improvement Committee with sufficient funds to complete all the work they have at present in contemplation. He thought the minister and congregation should be congratulated on what they had already accomplished. The manse has been renovated and beautified at considerable expense, and the church had been made to assume quite a different aspect, both inside and outside, from what it had two years ago. It was now what every church ought to be—a model of elegance and comfort. The ladies of the congregation had to be especially congratulated on the energy and enterprise they had displayed in getting together so many handsome and useful articles, and also on the success which attended their efforts in this direction at the bazaar held last year. Mr Keith said it must be a great gratification to the congregation to see so many friends of other denominations giving them their countenance and support. [Applause.] Since friendship was highly appreciated, it was a sign that the much-desired union of all the Presbyterian Churches was not very far distant after all. [Applause.] It was very gratifying to them all, now that the churches in Ellon were all in good order and fully equipped, having ministers of considerable ability, to see that there was no sign of the spiritual welfare of the town and district being neglected. He would not detain them longer but ask them again to show their liberality by patronising the sale of work, which was for a good and noble cause. He had much pleasure in declaring the sale open. The sale was well patronised during the afternoon and evening.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

Foula Island.

SIR,—Some of your readers will doubtless remember that about five years ago the islanders were in great destitution owing to failure of crops and the fishing industry, and that large sums of money were then subscribed by kind friends in the south for their relief. The undersigned would be much obliged if all subscribers to said fund will communicate with him, stating the amounts subscribed by them and the dates of their subscriptions.—Yours, &c.,

ANDREW ROBERTSON.

Foula, Shetland, Aug. 21, 1897.

The Timmer Market.

SIR,—For how many more years will our civic and police powers persist in holding the Timmer Market on Castle Street? In years gone by it was a people's market, and, like enough, the area of Castle Street sufficed for the attendance; but now that the area has been much encroached on (cabmen's shelter, underground lavatory), the town's population greatly increased, and the attendance the entire juvenile population, the result is a seething, heaving, squeezing mass, in an area utterly unfit to accommodate such a multitude. When some children get squeezed to death, or a stall of toys gets set on fire in the midst of a densely packed throng, then our big-wigs will begin to blame themselves for their folly in allowing 50,000 children to squeeze into a space fit only to hold 500. This terrible crush must come to an end sometime; and I say: Shift it to the Links, for any sake, before some terrible calamity happens. Let to-day's gathering be the last on Castle Street. Yours, &c., W. TWICE.

Aberdeen, 25th August, 1897.

Scarborough, following the example of Yar-mouth, is about to erect a revolving tower.

THE NEWCASTLE RAILWAY COLLISION.—The report of Colonel Addison was issued from the Board of Trade yesterday morning upon the collision that occurred at the Newcastle Central Station on July 10. Colonel Addison says the responsibility for the occurrence rests entirely with the driver Copland.

A TERRIFIC EXPLOSION.—On Tuesday night three puddlers were working in the Phoenix iron-works at Hamilton, when a large mass of iron, which they had taken out of a furnace at white heat and placed on an anvil, suddenly slipped off into the water of the trough, causing a terrific explosion. Portions of the soft iron struck the men. All three are seriously injured.

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