

ASHTON MEMORIAL CHURCH.

The foundation-stone of the Ashton Memorial Church (Bible Christian), was laid at Stirling East on Wednesday afternoon, May 1. The weather was all that could be desired, and there was a large attendance. At 3 o'clock the pastor, the Rev. J. Dingle, having given out a hymn, the Rev. R. Long engaged in prayer. The Secretary to the Committee (Mr. S. Davie), then read the following document, which was to be enclosed in a bottle with copies of the *Register* and *Advertiser* and placed under the stone:—"Ashton Memorial Church, Incorporated by Act of Parliament. This stone was laid by James Gibson Ashton, Esq., of Brompton, in the Province of South Australia, at the request of the Committee, in memory of his beloved father, the Rev. James Ashton, four years pastor of this circuit, many years a minister of the Bible Christian connection, and four years Chairman of the South Australian District, on Wednesday, May the first, one thousand eight hundred and seventy-eight, being the forty-first year of the reign of Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria, and the forty-second year since the establishment of this Province; Samuel James Way, Esq., Chief Justice, being Acting-Governor of the Colony of South Australia during the temporary absence of Sir William Jorvois, Her Majesty's representative; the Rev. T. Hillman being President of the South Australian Bible Christian Conference. The sermons preparatory to laying this stone were preached by the Rev. Jas. Way, on Sunday, April 28, one thousand eight hundred and seventy eight, in the 74th year of his age; the 54th of his ministry, 28 of which have been spent in South Australia. The first sermon preached in the adjoining church was by the Rev. Jas. Way. The design of the church is by D. Garlick, Esq., of Adelaide, Architect; the contractor being Mr. Richard James Burnett, of Stirling East; amount of contract, £1,175 8s. Committee—J. Dingle (pastor), W. Lewis, W. Radford, F. P. Knight (Treasurer), J. T. Rogers (C.S.), W. Scott, S. Davie (Secretary)."

The Secretary then read the following address to Mr. Jas. Ashton, eldest son of the late Rev. Jas. Ashton, who had been asked to perform the ceremony:—"Dear Sir—We the undersigned, on behalf of the Church and congregation worshipping in the Bible Christian Church, Stirling East, most cordially welcome you this day into our midst to lay the foundation-stone of a new Church, to be designated the Ashton Memorial Church, in memory of your beloved father, the Reverend James Ashton, who for many years laboured in word and doctrine in this and other Circuits throughout the colony. That this may be a memorable day to you and all who witness the completion of the noble edifice of which this is the first stone, and that your valuable life may long be spared to assist in this and other Churches in disseminating the Word of Divine Truth, and that your dear partner and family may also receive with you every blessing temporal and spiritual, is the earnest prayer of yours in Church-fellowship, J. Dingle (Pastor), W. Lewis, W. Radford, F. P.

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After Mr. Ashton had declared the stone well and truly laid he delivered an address, in which he spoke of the pleasure it gave him to take such a prominent part in the ceremony. He referred to the life and work of his father, to his piety, self-denial, devotion to his great work, and his general acceptability as a minister. He concluded by saying that he hoped that the building when completed would be a great blessing to the neighbourhood.

Mr. D. Garlick also made a few remarks. Contributions were then laid on the stone, after which the Rev. T. Piper delivered an address on the polity and doctrines of the Bible Christian Church. The Rev. T. McNeil concluded the proceedings with prayer.

The new structure, which is to be erected by the side of the old one, will be in the Gothic style, of local freestone, with cut stone dressings to doors and windows, and quoins, &c. Neatness combined with economy has been aimed at in the design. The church will be 55 feet long by 30 feet wide, and 21 feet high to the internal cornice. The ceiling is to be wagon-headed and rise 3 feet in the centre, and is to be plastered, and relieved with moulded wooden ribs and cornices. The principal gable will be surmounted by an appropriate bell-turret, and in this gable there will also be a

large three-light window, which will give a relief to the front elevation. The seats, lobbies, and reading-desk are to be of Kauri pine, with Huon pine panels, which will have a very pleasing effect. Ample provision has been made for ventilation, both in the ceiling and through the window-sills. The windows are also provided with hopper ventilators. Provision has also been made for the erection of a vestry at any future time. At 4.30 a public tea was held in the old chapel. The attendance was the largest there has been on such an occasion at Stirling East during the 21 years the old chapel has been standing. In the evening a public meeting took place. Mr. J. Dunn, sen., presided, and addresses were delivered by Mr. J. Ashton, the Revs. J. Dingle and R. Long, and Messrs. T. McNeil and R. Kelly. The total receipts for the day in cash and promises amounted to £240.