

OPENING NEW PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, SWANSEA.

[FROM A CORRESPONDENT.]

The opening celebrations in connection with this church were held on Wednesday and Sabbath last, May 30 and June 3. The first service of dedication was held on Wednesday afternoon at 3 o'clock, being conducted by the Rev. J. Scott, of St. Andrew's, Hobart. The building was crowded to overflowing on the occasion, every available seat being occupied. After the preliminary part of the service, consisting of hymns, suitable readings from the Old Testament, and a dedicatory prayer, the preacher chose for his text Psalms 45, v. 11, "He is thy God, and worship thou Him." He began by saying that the services of the sanctuary are the means designed by God to raise our thoughts to Himself as the great object of all worship. We have no authorised standard by which to shape severely the sequence of the various parts of which public worship is composed. These parts are, however, prayer, praise, the reading of the Scripture, and the administration of the Sacrament, together with the preaching of the Word. True worship is the direct communion of man with God. In speaking on the subject of the public worship of God, he directed attention, first, to the place where it is rendered, then to the parts of which it consists, and finally pointing out its true purpose and the benefits which flow from engaging therein. On these points, the preacher dilated at length, and in the course of his remarks he expressed the hope that the new building would help to stimulate the pastor in his work, as well as prove a means of blessing to those who from time to time should gather within its walls. The discourse was listened to attentively throughout, being appropriate both to the special occasion, and appropriate also as an exposition of scriptural doctrine, regarding the meaning and nature of the worship. After the usual subsequent exercises, the service was brought to a close. A special collection was taken up on behalf of the Building Fund, which realised £6, which, together with £1 10s from contributions forwarded, brought the total amount to £7 18s.

On the evening of the same day a tea meeting was held in the Council-chamber in connection with the same event. The room was crowded on the occasion, and the space was not sufficient to accommodate at one time all who sought admission. The means of furnishing forth the feast had been kindly given by numerous friends throughout the district, and no failing either in quantity or quality was visible. The abundance of the supply indeed was remarkable, considering the prevailing scarcity of the materials which usually go to the preparation of the things suitable for such an event. As the tables had been carefully prepared and tastefully decorated before-hand by the ladies of the district, everything went off smoothly and successfully during the evening, and the guests apparently appreciated the occasion thoroughly. The tea was followed by an evening's music, the songs and pieces being interspersed by speeches from the Revs. J. Scott and Alex. Doctor, in which the humorous and the practical were combined. Mr. Doctor referred specially to the evils of intemperance, and Mr. Scott imparted

of intemperance, and Mr. Scott imparted some interesting information about Tasmanian prospects in the way of agricultural extension and settlement which he had gathered in a recent journey to the N.W. Coast. The evening's programme was not a lengthy one, as so many events had been crowded into the day; but the various songs and pieces seemed very much appreciated, and the interest was sustained to the close.

Before the meeting broke up, the Rev. W. W. Craig, minister, took occasion to refer briefly to the wants in connection with the erection of the Church. He remarked that that evening was just a few days within a year since the time they had first decided on building a church, so that he thought they had reason for congratulation and thankfulness that things had prospered so well with them. He also said that he thought it only right and fitting that he should return thanks to all who had contributed to making the present event such a success, to his fellow ministers who had come so far to be present, to the ladies who had assisted so liberally and willingly with the tea, and to those also who had assisted in making the evening concert a success. The meeting broke up shortly after 9 o'clock.

On the following evening the remainder of the goods supplied for the tea meeting were disposed of by means of a sale, when £5 was realised. The proceeds of the previous evening amounted to £9 2s.

On the following Sabbath evening the Rev. Alexander Doctor, of Bothwell, conducted the service. The church was again well filled. He chose for his subject Ezekiel 33 chap. v. 110, and in the course of his sermon he pointed out specially the willingness of God for the salvation of men. This, he said, was shown plainly in revelation, and in providence, even the circumstances of their surroundings being a proof of the same. His discourse was impressive in its earnest appeals that all might turn from sin to God. The attention of the audience was closely held until the close of the sermon. This service successfully concluded the opening celebrations in connection with the new church. The whole sum collected amounted to about £23.

The church building itself is a wooden structure with a porch and vestry, strongly and substantially built, and capable of seating about 120 persons. The inside arrangements are neat and comfortable, the seats and wainscot are of blackwood, the pulpit of cedar, and the plastered walls stained a light colour, so that the general appearance of the interior has a warm and pleasant effect. The whole reflects credit on those who have had the work in hand; all the more as everything has been done by a contractor and workmen who belong to the place. The contractor is Mr. A. Gemmill, of Swansea. The bell, which is a well-toned one, weighing 511b., is the generous gift to the church of Messrs. Kennedy and Sons, of Hobart. The warm thanks of the Presbyterians of Swansea are certainly owing to the many kind friends who, far and near, have lent so great and so willing assistance towards the furtherance of this work which has just been completed.