



Old Church in course of removal from Hereford Street to Oxford Terrace.

beginning of 1871—hence the present “Diamond Jubilee,” which ought in strictness to have been celebrated on February 17th.

But union without purity is not strength; a second pastorate of several years ended in exposure and shame, worth recalling at this distance of time only to give point to the ancient warning: “Whoso breaketh an hedge, a serpent shall bite him.” It was a weakened and sorely-tried congregation that in 1876 addressed itself to the Chrysostom of the English Baptist ministry in search of a pastor. “The members of the Church at present”—they wrote—“number about 120. The Church permits members of other Christian bodies to partake of the Communion with them. The Church has been built about eight years; has been recently thoroughly renovated; will accommodate about 400 persons; is entirely free from debt . . . The City of Christchurch with suburbs contains a population of 14,000 or 15,000 persons, and is rapidly increasing. The Church would prefer a gentleman somewhat advanced in years (but would wish to leave it to your judgment) . . .”

Charles Haddon Spurgeon was then at the height of his powers: he was not yet embroiled in the conflict and misunderstandings of the Downgrade Controversy; his school of prophets was multiplying his influence. Penge Tabernacle, for instance, had enjoyed the ministrations of one outgoing student, by name Charles Dallaston, and wrote Mr. Spurgeon to

that effect: their letter and the Christchurch letter seemed to answer each other. The student was called into the study, and asked if he would accept the vacant pastorate. On prayerful consideration he did so, proceeded to Ipswich to be married, and before the end of October boarded the good ship Waipa at Plymouth with his bride.

“The Church would prefer a gentleman somewhat advanced in years,” so the cautious Deacons had written. Mr. Spurgeon had made skittles of that proposal. “Single if possible” continued their specifications. Mr. Dallaston had a plan worth two of that. So in January, 1877, good Mr. Simmons, who had chaired the church union meeting six years before, and been first to sign the letter of invitation, proceeded with his wife to Lyttelton to welcome Mr. and Mrs. Dallaston. That night in Hereford Street chapel a prayer meeting was held, presided over by Mr. Cornelius Chidgey. Those present were Messrs. Simmons, Purdie, Clark, Foweraker, Cooper, Martin, Lawrence, and Hewit, with their wives, Mr. Oxford, Mr. Mander and Miss Chidgey. The prayers offered were earnest, the spirit of thankfulness convincing. Soon the strangers felt at home, seeing around them a company of true yoke-fellows for the work of God’s Kingdom. “We preach Christ crucified” was next Sunday’s text, and so began what was destined to prove a vital and fruitful ministry. Of the Pastors’ College students as a whole it might be said that, like



MR. S. R. INGOLD,
Late Secretary.

their teacher, they “used great plainness of speech”: add to this in Mr. Dallaston’s case a voice of bell-like charm, a happy command of apt quotations, a great respect for the clock, and a contagious energy, and the human factors in his success are in part revealed.

True, his nearest ministerial colleague was the Revd. J. Upton Davis, in Dunedin, and as yet there was no through train-service. But all around there were signs of interest and development, a spirit of “followership” without which the best leadership is in vain. Within six weeks of his arrival Mr. Dallaston presided over the opening service of the Baptist Church at Lincoln, where that grand old man Mr. Thos. Pannett had laboured with others. In May, 1876, appeared the first number of the “Canterbury Evangelist,” a quarterly magazine, which a year later altered its name to “Canterbury Baptist,” precursor of the “N.Z. Baptist.”

The Preachers’ Plan of 1877 embraced Christchurch, Lincoln Road, Lincoln, Greendale, Dunsandel, West Melton, Yorktown, Oxford, Oxford West, South Malvern, Sheffield: its preachers were J. S. Clarke, J. W. Sawle, J. Hill, G. Johnston, H. Williams, G. Holland, R. Pole, A. Wright, C. Eunson, A. C. Truscott, T. W. Adams, J. Simpson, J. Efford, J. Allen, W. Waters, R. Binstead (who published the magazine) and the Rev. C. Dallaston (who soon took over the editorship).



MR. A. CHIDGEY,
Late Treasurer.

From the outset Mr. Dallaston’s ministry was blessed. At the first church meeting over which he presided sixteen new members were admitted. A mid-winter lantern lecture on “Mr. Spurgeon and His Work” crowded the chapel to the doors. In twelve months’ time the anniversary tea was held in Old St. Paul’s Church, which on various occasions was kindly placed at the disposal of the Baptist congregation. Once Mr. Dallaston had to preach in St. Paul’s itself to the combined congregations, the other minister falling suddenly ill, and found himself somewhat embarrassed, for the text on which he had prepared his discourse was Exodus xi., 7: “The Lord doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel”—which under the circumstances lent itself to unauthorised applications!

Early in 1878 plans were discussed for purchasing more land and enlarging the Hereford Street Church, but they were rejected when it was found that £800 would seat only 87 more persons. On May 22nd, 1878, the Pastor reported having seen Mrs. Moore, the owner of half an acre near the Madras Street bridge, for sale for £1,325. The purchase was authorised: thirty-seven trees were felled, and much grubbing and filling in was done. Within twelve months the chapel was removed to the new site, spending a week-end in the Square en route, to the amusement of passers-by. Hardly had it been re-erected when an