NEW BAPTIST CHAPEL, AT LEICESTER

This spacious building has just been completed in Belvoir street, Leicester, for the Particular Baptist Church and congregation hitherto assembling in Harvey-lane Meeting House—a place famous as the theatre of the early ministries of Dr. Carey, and as the scene for so many years of the pastoral labours of the eloquent Robert Hall. During the time of Mr. Hall’s ministry, the Harvey-lane Chapel had repeatedly undergone enlargements to accommodate the increasing numbers who were attracted, not more by the brilliance of his intellect, than by the genuine piety and Christian zeal of that talented divine. Since that time, not only have these augmented numbers been sustained by his successor, the Rev. J. P. Mursell, but even still further enlargement of ground and building, obtained at considerable cost, have proved inadequate to the full accommodation of all who were anxious to attend. It was, accordingly, resolved to erect a still more commodious building, where, if possible, ample room should be afforded for its stated services, and for free seats to the public, and the eligible and central site in Belvoir street was fixed upon.

The new Chapel is from the design of Mr. Joseph Hansom, Architect of the Birmingham Town Hall. It is circular in plan, with galleries and the other fittings peculiar to that religious body. The mode in which the light is admitted, though somewhat novel as applied to places of worship, is found to be highly efficient, and to produce a very agreeable effect. The disposition of the seats leaves but little room for preference. The main Chapel will accommodate about 1,500 persons. There are also a Lecture room and School-room. Dr. Harris has observed that he never saw a Chapel so beautiful; never met with one so easy to speak in; nor one in which the congregation presented so beautiful a prospect as this did, from its architectural arrangements.

The Chapel was opened for public worship on the 18th inst. The services were commenced by a prayer meeting at seven o’clock in the morning, at which a large proportion of the congregation were present. At eleven o’clock, the congregation again assembled, when the chapel was densely crowded in every part. Arrangements had been made by the Midland Railway Directors for special trains from the stations on their line, the result of which was manifest in the vast audience now congregated, amongst whom were visitors from all parts of Leicestershire, from the surrounding counties, and even from Yorkshire, &c. &c. The Rev. J. P. Mursell having performed the introductory part of the service by prayer, &c., Dr. Harris, President of Cheshunt College, and author of “Mammon,” ascended the pulpit, and delivered a most eloquent discourse from the words of the 17th verse of the 7th chapter of Job.

A collection having been made, which amounted to £112, the Rev. T. Mayo of Winstanley, Independent minister, concluded the morning’s service with a most impressive prayer.

In the afternoon, a public dinner was provided in the New Hall, by Mr. Beeson, of the Railway Inn, to which upwards of three hundred ladies and gentlemen sat down. Dr. Legge having asked a blessing, the repast, which was a cold but excellent one, was served up in good style and with the polite attention by the manager. After the cloth was drawn, Mr. Mursell addressed the meeting, and briefly recapitulated the reasons which had more immediately led to the erection of the new Chapel, and read a list of subscriptions by the congregation, from which it appeared that £2,000 had been already subscribed. It was calculated that the new edifice could cost a trifling over £6,000. Mr. Mursell urged on those present to continue their liberality, and he had no doubt that £1,000 more would be raised by the opening services.

The meeting was subsequently addressed by Drs. Harris, Cox, and Legge; the Rev. J. Edwards, of Nottingham; E. Stevenson, of Loughborough; J. Toller, of Harborough, &c.

In the evening, an admirable and appropriate sermon was preached by Dr. Cox, from the words, “This is none other than the House of God, and this is the gate of Heaven.” The chapel was again full, and, lighted up with gas, presented a brilliant appearance. Upwards of £80 was collected at the close of the service. The total of collections was £70. It is computed that at the principal service upwards of 2,000 persons were present, and many hundreds crowded in the upper gallery.