

M. E. Judd
May 2nd 1957





80th Anniversary
SOUVENIR

HISTORY
of the
Church of Christ
CHELTENHAM
VICTORIA
Australia



1857—1937



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By

J. ERNEST ALLAN



80th Anniversary

MAY 2 & 3, 1937

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Church Anniversary Services

LORD'S DAY, MAY 2.

11 a.m. Worship and Lord's Supper.

President—*Bro. Geo. Organ.*

Preacher, *Bro. A. W. Connor*
(a past member).

3 p.m. Past and Present Scholars Bible School.

Superintendent—*Bro. H. Brough.*

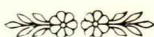
Speaker, *Bro. R. T. Pittman, B.A., Dip. Ed.*
(a past member).

Reminiscent Talks.

5 p.m. REUNION TEA.

7 p.m. Evangelistic Service.

Preacher, *Bro. S. H. Mudge*
(a past minister).



MONDAY, MAY 3, 8 p.m.

RE=UNION SOCIAL in School Hall.

Chairman—*Bro. J. E. Allan.*

Speaker, *Bro. T. R. Morris,*
Vice-president of Conference.

Reminiscent Talks.

J. ERNEST ALLAN, Minister.

F. E. J. SMITH, Secretary.

1857—1937

Outline History of the Church of Christ, Cheltenham.



WHAT a debt the present owes the past! As we view Melbourne, we realise what a glorious heritage is ours, because of the labours of the hardy pioneers. They blazed their way through virgin forest and laid the foundations of a noble, material city. Amongst those pathfinders were many Christ-loving souls, who were laying the foundations of a spiritual city which hath its foundations in God.

They were a rugged and a royal race,
Who sought not ease, but for a place
Where they might seek and serve
Their age, and might secure, preserve
Their heritage to us, who share
The increase of their love and care.

They kept the faith, and left to us in trust
Treasures of truth that turn not into dust;
They glimpsed the glory that shall be
When by the gospel all shall be made free.
They caught anew the vision of the Christ,
They sought and served and sacrificed.

—Charles Blanchard.

Within 17 years of Batman's landing on the site of Melbourne, members of the Church of Christ were settled in the bush country of South Brighton, and were laying foundations of our cause in the district. The following brief history is an effort to recall the labours of our spiritual forefathers. Many names of members will be mentioned, a large number of whom have entered the rest that remaineth for the people of God.

Pioneering for Christ in the Bush.

A young couple, Bro. and Sister James Keir, left Crossfields, Scotland, in the year 1848 for the new country, Australia. Landing in N.S.W. they spent some time there, then migrated to the new colony of

settlers in Melbourne. Eventually, in 1850 or 1851, they selected a site on Nepean Road, South Brighton, for their future home. Denied the privilege of worship with those of like convictions, they observed the Lord's Supper by themselves; but in 1856 they united with Bro. J. Ingram in the Melbourne church—their names are 42 and 43 on the old church roll. About the end of 1857 the seed sown earlier began to take root, and from then on we hear of the humble beginnings of the Church of Christ in the community.

The Value of Literature.

Our first church paper, "Melbourne Medley," edited by Bro. R. Service, played a part in the foundation of the South Brighton church. One day a Mr. J. Organ picked up a fragment of the paper on the main Melbourne road; he became interested, and purchased all the copies on sale at one shop. Bro. Service used to visit the market, and Mr. Organ introduced himself. This acquaintance led to the visit of Bro. R. Service to South Brighton to deliver temperance addresses, but he also preached the gospel; one listener, Mr. T. Penny, confessed Christ, and was baptised in St. Kilda bay by Bro. H. G. Picton. Soon afterwards Bro. and Sister Keir and Bro. Penny assembled regularly to observe the Lord's Supper and hold gospel meetings.

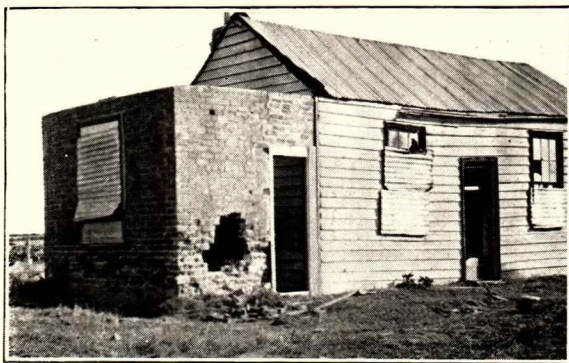
A Growing Company.

In May, 1858, Bren. Organ, Potts and King were added by obedience, and a Bro. Thos. Walker, of Chesterville, also met with the little group. Bro. Dr. Kidner often visited the church at Bro. Keir's home, and in an old letter, August, 1858, describes what was probably the first baptismal service at Munday's Beach, when Bro. Keir immersed three sisters. Since that memorable day hundreds have obeyed the Lord in baptism. Bren. H. G. Picton, S. H. Coles, T. G. Burt, S. Kidner and D. Willder, of Melbourne, greatly assisted the little church in those pioneering days, and in the words of Bro. Cole,

“helped to plant the Rose of Sharon in the rural district of Moorabbin.” The very early pioneers were Bro. and Sister J. Keir, Bro. and Sister T. Penny, Bro. and Sister J. Organ, Bro. and Sister Potts, Bro. and Sister King, and Bro. Thos. Walker. We honour their memory to-day.

The Old Chesterville Church.

Bro. and Sister Thos. Walker, from Mollington, Chester, England, settled in Moorabbin (often called



Remains of First Chapel.

Chesterville Road, opened 1859 or 1860.

South Brighton) in 1852. The district became known as Chesterville. Bro. Walker held services in his own home, as had been his custom in England, and the Lord's Supper was observed prior to September, 1857, when Sister Walker died. Like Bro. Keir, he associated himself with Bro. J. Ingram, and became a charter member of the Prahran church. Thus these brethren were faithful sowers of the seed of our faith in their own district first, then assisted to sow elsewhere.

An Old Church Home.

A dilapidated building in Chesterville Road, near Wickham Road, is all that remains of our first

chapel. A published statement gives the opening date as May 1, 1859. An old resident affirms a chapel was there in 1860, and services were conducted by Bro. T. Walker and others. It was known as "Walker's Church." This place was the spiritual birthplace of many souls. Some names are left on record, viz., Ruse (2), Sears, Fairlam, Brough, Cameron, Allen, LePage, Meeres, Perry, Monk and Holdsworth. Many descendants of both the groups at Bro. Keir's home and Chesterville are in active membership at Cheltenham and other parts. The late Pro. S. H. Coles leaves this record: "Meetings were held in Chesterville for a few months in Farmer Allen's barn, also in Bro. Walker's home, and for a time a building belonging to Bro. Ruse, but eventually the brethren put up a building of their own." Bro. Coles speaks of Bro. Walker thus: "He was well read in the scriptures, and able to exhort with fervour and impressiveness; his conversation was spiritually helpful, and his public addresses were energetic and inspiring."

In due time the brethren meeting at Bro. Keir's united with the cause at Chesterville, and for many years the united forces witnessed for Christ. The church was known by three names—South Brighton, Chesterville and Moorabbin. In subsequent references it will be called Chesterville. Men like Bren. Keir and Walker teach the present generation a lesson in loyalty to the old paths of the Restoration Movement.

Seekers After Truth.

While the seed of truth was taking such firm hold in the north end of the district, the hand of God was shaping the spiritual destinies of two men at Beaumaris, at the south end. These men, Bren. H. Hilliar and S. Judd, like the Bereans of old, "searched the scriptures daily." This was toward the end of 1857, and continued for six months. I quote Bro. S. Judd: "After six months' study they (Bren. Hilliar

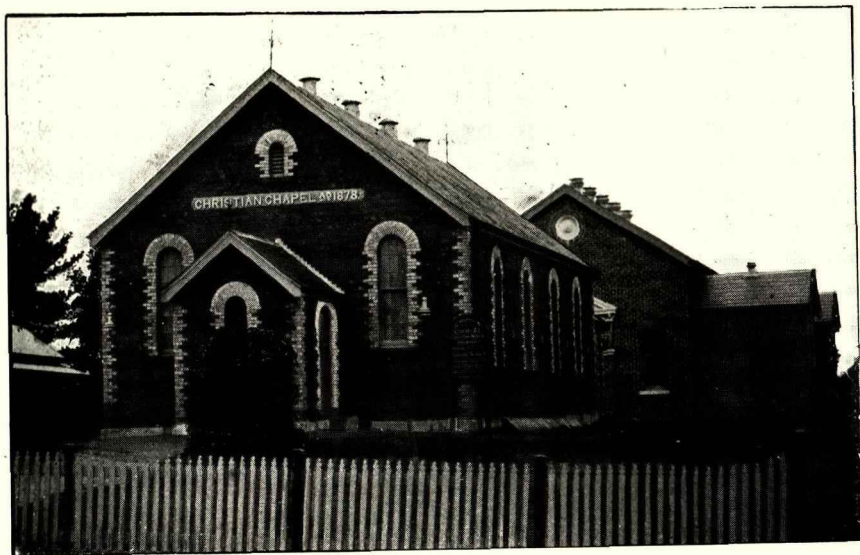
and S. Judd) came to the conclusion they ought to be immersed, and that they should meet together every Lord's day to break bread. Not knowing anyone holding similar views, they applied to the Rev. Mr. Collins, Baptist minister at Brighton, to instruct them, being convinced of the scripturalness of immersion. We were baptised by Mr. Collins, Bro. Hilliar in March and I was immersed in June, 1858." Soon afterwards Bren. Hilliar as preacher and Judd as singer commenced open-air services in Beaumaris. A farm dray was used as a pulpit. People were greatly interested and converts were made.

A Bayside Baptismal Service.

Once again that fine pioneering preacher, Bro. S. H. Coles, rendered great service. He describes the first baptismal service at Munday's Bay of the Beaumaris effort thus: "The meeting was held on January 30, 1859, when nine were baptised (by Bren. Hilliar and Coles) from Chesterville, and Bro. and Sister Charman, Bro. R. Judd, and Sister Rees, who, with Bren. Hilliar and S. Judd, formed the nucleus of the Beaumaris church. Great interest was manifested by a large crowd which assembled to witness an unusual sight." A verse of the hymn sung on that historic occasion is of interest—

"Fearless of this world's despising
We the ancient path pursue,
Buried with our Lord, and rising
To a life divinely new."

On April 3, 1859, thirteen were baptised, amongst the number being Sister Moysey, mother of Bro. G. B. Moysey, one of our great preachers in early days. Six joined the Beaumaris group and seven came from Chesterville. These united baptismal services paved the way for a union of the churches in later years. The first meeting of the Beaumaris church was held in the home of Bro. and Sister Charman, corner of Charman and Balcombe Roads, in January or March, 1859.



The Present Chapel.
Erected 1878.

Hearing Our Plea for the First Time.

Prior to the formation of the church Bren. Hilliar and S. Judd visited the church at Bro. Keir's. Dr. S. Kidner presided and preached on "Primitive Christianity." This was the first time the two brethren had heard a statement concerning the Church of Christ. Bro. S. Judd says: "We went, we heard and were delighted. It was just what we wanted, and coincided with our belief. In our hunger for truth it was like a little heaven on earth." With the establishment of the church at Beaumaris rapid progress was made, and soon it was necessary to erect a chapel.

The Chapel on the Corner.

A new era in the history of the church commenced when Bro. W. Ruse donated a block of land on the corner of Charman Road and Patty Street. In 1860 or 1861 a chapel was erected in the bush. Splendid congregations assembled to hear such able preachers from Melbourne as H. G. Picton, S. H. Coles, H. S. Earl, M.A., G. L. Surber and J. W. Webb. Many were added to the saved, and the cause grew rapidly. A mission by Bro. H. G. Earl, the eloquent American evangelist at Lygon Street, created wonderful interest, and many confessed Christ. In 1866, the chapel was doubled in size, and often it was crowded to capacity. Baptismal services were held at Munday's Bay, and a great interest was always created in the mind of the community.

Early Bible Schools

The possibilities of early training of the children were not forgotten by our worthy pioneers, and at Chesterville in 1859, and Beaumaris in 1863, Bible Schools were commenced by the brethren. In due time the church gathered a rich harvest of young folk, who were well grounded in the principles of the Brotherhood; many are still in active service for Christ at Cheltenham.

Union of the Churches.

After existing for several years as separate congregations (at least twelve), the two churches united, and Beaumaris became the centre of worship. This union brought together two fine groups of stalwart pioneers. We cull from various sources the following names of some brethren and sisters associated with the Beaumaris church, viz., Judd (6 brothers), Charman, Hilliar, Rees, Moysey, Fisher, Ruse, Bodley, Hayes, Penny, Meeres, Chambers, Organ, Keir, Parker, Bosworth, Martin, Bruton, Brough. The church was assisted in its preaching services by Bren, Walker, Ashton, Proctor, Diver, Burt, Dunn, Lawson, McGregor, Service, Hilliar and W. Judd.

The Bethel on the Hill.

Stage four in the evolution of this historic church began in 1875. Bro. W. Ruse reports: "The church has taken the Mechanics' Institute, Cheltenham, for Lord's day evening proclamation, it being more central for the district. Bro. W. H. Martin, evangelist, preaches with great force." In due time a definite step was taken by securing ground in Cheltenham, and in 1878 a fine brick chapel was erected on one of the most prominent sites in the district. As one views the fine buildings to-day, one is greatly impressed with the vision of those far-sighted pioneers. They believed in growth, and made ample provision for it.

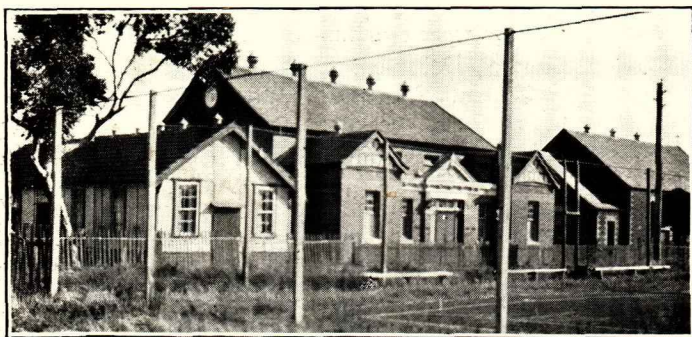
Laying the Foundation Stone.

A newspaper report is of interest. "Southern Cross," June, 1878: "The foundation stone of the new chapel for use by the Disciples of Christ, meeting at Beaumaris, was laid on Monday, the 3rd, at 3 p.m., by Mrs. Charles Brough. The site chosen is on rising ground immediately behind the P.O., and facing Chesterville and Melbourne Roads. The bricks will be taken from a brickyard in Chapel Road." (Now Bro. M. Daff's property.—J.E.A.) Then follows a detailed description of interior and exterior, finish, etc., and concludes thus: "When finished it

will be another ornament to the rising village of Cheltenham."

Facts About the Chapel.

The cost was £865. Only £300 was borrowed, and within one year £100 was repaid. In addition, material and labour, carting, etc., were donated, the value being over £50. The sand was carted from Bro. Bruton's property, Latrobe Street. The architect



Kinder and Primary Halls, Bible School Hall and Chapel.
Portion of the Tennis Courts in the foreground.

was Bro. J. Brough, and the builder Bro. Evans, of Ballarat. Time has demonstrated that both brethren were conscientious and competent men, for the fine old chapel of 59 years is a monument of honest workmanship. As an expression of appreciation the church presented a beautiful address to Bro. J. Brough. All the officers attached their signatures, viz., Bren. W. Ruse, J. Organ, G. Hayes, J. Judd, R. L. Judd, J. Fisher, E. T. Penny, J. Keir and A. J. Hayes.

Opening the New Chapel.

December 8, 1878, is a memorable day in history of Cheltenham church, for it marked the opening of the new chapel and permanent home of the church. Wonderful enthusiasm marked all services, the community sharing with the church the joy of the occasion. One report reads: "The largest religious

services ever held in Cheltenham." Bro. Dr. Porter, returned from U.S.A., preached at 11 a.m. and 3 p.m., his morning subject being, "The Promises of God, the Foundation of the Christian Hope." It was a great message for a great occasion. Over 400 attended the evening service, when Bro. G. B. Moysey, a convert of Bro. H. S. Earl at Beaumaris, commenced his first ministry with marked success, for the crowning glory of the day was the confession of thirteen souls. A fine choir assisted to make the opening day a great spiritual experience.

On Monday, December 9, about 500 sat down for tea at the Mechanics' Institute, and at 8 p.m. a public meeting was held in the chapel, when Bren. W. Ruse presided. Enthusiasm again prevailed, and the speakers, Bren. G. B. Moysey, Hindle, J. Colbourne and T. Porter, gave of their best to an attentive audience. "They referred to the fine building, and urged the church to be as ornamental and useful as the new chapel was likely to be." This historic occasion is within the memory of many members who still worship in the building.

Church Officials.

Five secretaries have rendered efficient service for the church, viz., Bren. W. Ruse, W. Meeres, R. W. Tuck (over 40 years), L. Hutchinson and F. E. J. Smith now in office. Competent treasurers have also contributed fine services, such as Bren. E. T. Penny, W. H. Barnett and F. W. Martin (for many years), and Bro. S. Hayes, the present treasurer. In addition to descendants of members already mentioned, the following brethren associated with the early days of the present work appear on old records: W. H. Barnett, W. Woff, C. Daff, M. Gouldthope, H. Foreman, G. Roberts, E. and O. A. C. Green, S. Chandler, G. and S. Clayton, J. Butler, C. F. McDonald, A. Moloney, W. Smith, W. Bumpstead, W. Lowe, A. Huxtable. When mentioning names of brethren we include the names of their wives who were members.

The Work of the Sisters.

The church has always been blessed with a fine company of "Mothers in Israel," many sharing the joys and struggles of pioneer days, at South Brighton, Chesterville, Beaumaris and Cheltenham. No one can compute the magnificent contribution of life and service rendered by godly sisters in every stage of the church's progress. The sacrificial spirit of the past is reproduced in the sisters of to-day. At present the sisters serve Christ in various ways, i.e., the Mission Band (Sisters A. E. Lewis, Pres.; M. Judd, Sec.; S. Hayes, Treas.); Dorcas Society (Sisters J. E. Allan, Pres.; M. Judd, Sec.; F. Judd, Treas.); Snowball Society (Sisters L. A. Adams and S. Hayes, Leaders; F. Brough, Treas.).

Building for Youth.

As already mentioned, the church always valued the Bible School work. So substantial was the growth of youth interests, a forward move was made when a splendid brick hall and class-rooms were erected at a cost of £850, exclusive of much voluntary labour, carting, etc. Bro. C. Fleming McDonald was the architect and supervisor. Amidst much enthusiasm Sister Mrs. R. W. Tuck laid the foundation stone on April 2, 1902, and the building was opened the same year. The name of Tuck is indelibly imprinted upon the life of church and Bible School through the long years (over forty) of service rendered by Bro. R. W. Tuck. The hall has been a wonderful asset to the youth work of the church.

The kindergarten work demanded separate accommodation, therefore another forward step was taken in 1920, when a hall known as the "E. T. Penny Memorial" was erected. Bro. E. T. Penny rendered signal service for the church and Brotherhood, especially in youth interests.

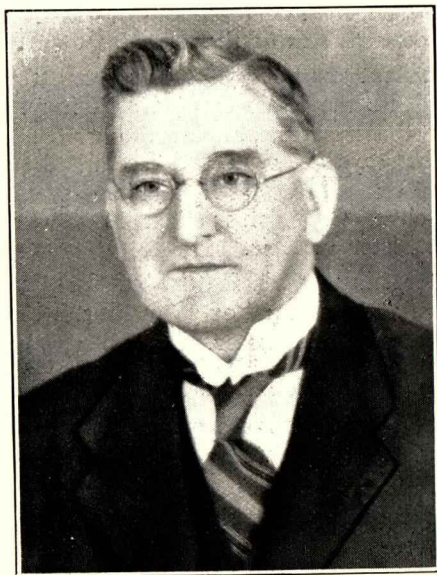
Still the clamant call for room and better equipment was heard, this time in the interests of the



Elders and Deacons, 1937.

Back.—G. Brough, W. Neil, L. Thomas, E. Brough, A. Daff, R. Barnett, W. Follett, M. Daff (Auditor).
Front.—E. A. Le Page (Elder), H. Brough (Elder & B.S. Supt.), F. E. J. Smith (Elder and Sec.),
G. Organ (Elder), E. Mansfield (Chairman), S. Hayes (Treas.), W. Hayes.

Primary Department. Once again the church responded, and in 1936 enlargement was made of the existing kinder hall, and to-day two separate halls under one roof serve these highly efficient and well-equipped departments. The halls are considered to be some of the best connected with our Melbourne



J. Ernest Allan.

churches. On March 7, 1936, these halls were opened by Sister E. Allan, kindergarten leader. It is worthy of note that Cheltenham has always placed great value on youth work, especially that of the Bible School. Bro. T. Walker was superintendent at Chesterville and Bro. W. Ruse, the first superintendent at Beaumaris. Other leaders were Bren. R. Judd, C. Brough, E. T. Penny, R. W. Tuck, F. Chipperfield, and H. Brough at present in office. Secretaries who have served and supported the leaders are Bren. R. W.

Tuck, S. Collyer, A. Walton and A. Daff, the present secretary. The office of treasurer has been filled by R. Judd, W. Follett, C. Daff, and the present holder S. Hayes. The kindergarten leaders have been Sisters A. P. Wilson, S. H. Mudge, E. Martin, A. Brooke, A. Wylliams, E. Allan and V. Butler, the present leader. Sister E. Allan is the Primary leader. A fine band of teachers ably assist the leaders in all departments of the school.

An excellent group of young people, mostly young men, constitute the Bible class, which is mainly conducted by the members, under the guidance of the preacher. Essays are read and free discussion is encouraged. Its officers are: Chairman, K. Allan; Chairman-elect, C. Adams; Secretary, Theo. Daff; Treasurer, Sister F. Keir.

An interesting youth feature of forty years ago was a drum and fife band of 38 members. Bro. E. W. Pittman was the bandmaster. In addition to its many functions for the church and Bible School, it was often used by outside interests, and on one occasion appeared at our Conference gathering.

The Ministry of Praise.

Early records bear testimony as to the place and power of song in the life of the church. We have mentioned Bro. S. Judd's work as singer, when open-air services were held in Beaumaris in 1858-59. All down the years the spirit of praise has been linked to the ministry of evangelism. We place on record the work of conductors who have helped, viz., Bren. R. and J. Judd, G. Daff, E. Green, G. Clayton, Sister I. Whycross, Bren. J. Simpson, F. Chipperfield, C. Judd, A. Mitchell, Val. Woff (just retired after 3½ years' service), and J. Y. Buckley, the present leader. These leaders have been splendidly supported by talented choirs. Sister P. Daff is the present secretary. Several organists have ably assisted in the ministry of music. The church remembers with grati-

tude the services of Sisters R. W. Tuck, E. Daff, E. Chandler, V. Page, V. Woff, I. Whycross, A. Anderson, F. Brough, the present organist. In recent years a piano has been used in the church services. Sisters Val. Woff and W. Woff render faithful service as pianists.

Preachers Who Have Served.

From old records we cull some names of past preachers who are affectionately remembered by the church: Bren. A. H. Bryant, T. H. Bates, W. T. Clapham, H. Goodacre, J. P. Wright, C. Moore, W. H. Martin, W. Stevenson, G. B. Moysey (two terms), J. Pittman, M. W. Green, W. Judd, J. Strang, H. Mahon, T. B. Fischer, A. P. Wilson, S. H. Mudge, P. R. Baker, G. P. Pittman, D. Wakeley, A. Brooke and J. E. Allan, preacher since 1934. It is interesting to note that Bren. G. B. Moysey and W. Judd were converts in the early days at Beaumaris.

We pay a tribute of praise to the wives of the preachers; they played no small part in the success of their ministries.

The late Bro. F. G. Dunn, editor of the "Australian Christian" and a great teacher of our movement, delivered his first address in the Beaumaris church, and for some months was the regular preacher.

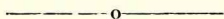
Brotherhood Service.

Old Beaumaris church made a great contribution to home evangelism when it sent into the ministry such brethren as G. B. Moysey, W. Judd and R. G. Cameron, who laboured in various States. Cheltenham is also the spiritual birthplace of Bren. A. W. Connor, preacher at Doncaster; R. T. Pittman, B.A., Dip. Ed., teacher at the College; and J. Lewis, preacher at Dandenong. Sister Nurse L. Foreman, of our Indian mission field, gave her life to Christ at Cheltenham. We are proud of what these workers have done and are doing for the Brotherhood at home and abroad.

to His name and to the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of the church. We humbly thank our Heavenly Father for His loving care and bountiful blessings, which have been so liberally bestowed upon the church.

Our sincere prayer is that the rich heritage left by the beloved pioneers will be an inspiration and an incentive to those of the present generation to be faithful in their service for Christ, as they face a new era of church history which leads on to the centenary.

“Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him all people here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host,
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.”



IN order to secure a fairly accurate account of past events for this brief history, old records, letters and church periodicals were searched, private papers examined, many old residents and descendants of pioneers were interviewed, with the result that much data was collected. Our limited space forbids more than an outline of the past. We have striven to be faithful to information received, but we realise the possibility of errors, omissions and names placed in wrong order of sequence; if worthy names have been omitted and important events overlooked, etc., we crave your forgiveness.

We place on record our indebtedness to all who have so willingly assisted in the collation of data, especial thanks being due to Mr. W. P. Fairlam, grandson of Thos. Walker, for ready assistance in searching old records and private documents.