

**ISLE OF THANET GAZETTE AND THANET TIMES**  
**6<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 1925**

**BIRCHINGTON BAPTIST CHURCH**  
**INAUGURAL SERVICES**

Whit-Sunday witnessed the first Sunday Services at the new Baptist Church, Birchington, which were conducted by the Rev. Bryan Marshall (Minister of the South London Tabernacle). There were some 70 friends present at the morning service. The proceedings opened with prayer and praise. Rev. Marshall preached a thoughtful sermon on the text from 2 Chronicles ii., 5, "And the house which I build is great; for great is our God above all gods." The preacher said that the idea of greatness had no relation to external measurement, but rather the chief value in the service of God was the spirit and quality in which all true work was done. The new building stood for the greatness of the faith of the pioneers in their witness of the truth of Christ in Birchington. It was a great adventure, and marked a new epoch in the history of the Baptist cause in Kent.

At the evening service there was a full attendance. Rev. Marshall again gave a very fine address on the character of Barnabas, as defined in Acts., ii, 24, "Holy Spirit and of faith.," the Communion Service fittingly concluded the activities of a very happy day.

On Monday, the public opening of the church took place. The weather was everything that could be desired. Baptist stalwarts from the neighbouring towns of Ramsgate, Margate, Broadstairs, Herne Bay, Canterbury and Whitstable gathered about the entrance at 2.30pm., when, after a short invocatory prayer by the Rev. Percy A Clements, of Margate, Mrs Cooper, wife of the indefatigable secretary of the church (Mr W H Cooper) was called upon to turn the key and declare the building open for the glory of God in the name of the Blessed Trinity.

The interior of the building has been tastefully decorated in a colour scheme of green, and the platform and side vestries artistically arranged with a background of black and red curtains. The floor is covered with green linoleum, and all the woodwork is made of pitch pine. The baptistery is provided beneath the platform. The whole interior gives the impression of comfort, utility, and a sense of restfulness suggestive of worship and prayer.

The Rev. John Lewis, of Crawley (ex-Moderator of the Kent and Sussex Association), preached a very eloquent sermon at three o'clock, taking for his text Numbers, vi., 24, the great high priestly blessing contained in the well-known words, "The Lord bless thee and keep thee." Rev. Lewis referred to this passage as one of the early evidences of a man's knowledge of God, being founded upon the basis of friendship of God with man, and constituted the real background in man's experience of God and all that is connoted in that word "blessing".

The Lord's blessing suggested three main ideas – preservation, provision and peace. Man's deepest needs are met in God's blessing. The new building in

which they met that day stood as an emphasis of this great ultimate fact, and would stand in the days to come as a monument to the goodness of God. Yet there was something more than these early glimpses of man's awareness of God. In the New Testament we had the final revelation of the blessing of God, and in the face of Jesus Christ we saw transfigured the complete glory of the Father, full of grace and truth. With all our modern discoveries and interpretation of the ways of God, we shall stretch out hands of faith and hope and feel in God our eternal home.

At the close of the service the friends adjourned to the Public Institute, where they were all catered for by Mrs Dimmock for tea, at which about one hundred persons sat down.

The evening meeting was under the chairmanship of Mr John H Dean of Sittingbourne, who spoke encouraging words to the leaders for the new cause. The audience filled the building and overflowed into the vestry. Scripture was read by the Rev. H G Long, of Whitstable, and prayer was offered by the Rev. John Lewis. The chair was also supported by the Rev. H A Serres, M.A. (Vicar of Birchington), the Rev. D Walker of Broadstairs, the Rev. R Watson of Birchington, and the speakers. Apology for absence was received from the Rev. F C Bryan M.A. of Herne Bay, who was unable to attend, owing to recent illness.

An address was delivered by the Rev. J T Castle of Broadstairs (Moderator of the Kent and Sussex Baptist Association), who urged the friends to carry on their church work upon strictly spiritual lines.

The Rev. Thomas Hancocks spoke of various causes which had grown from small beginnings to important churches. He brought the best wishes of the Baptist Church at Ramsgate and a cheque for £20.

The Rev. Percy A Clements of Margate, who is the honorary pastor of the Birchington Church, reviewed the history of the Baptists of Birchington, and said the present building was the successor of two other buildings. He brought greetings from his church, and also a cheque which made their offering up to £21.

He spoke of the importance of honouring the Lord Jesus Christ in all their services and engagements, and said the promise was, "I will make the place of my feet glorious." Such glory would not be in any material beauty, but rather in the regenerate lives and sanctified characters. He concluded by expressing thanks to all who had contributed in any way to the success of the gatherings.

Much credit is due and thanks are expressed to the architect (Mr Hugh Miller), and to the builder (Mr Edmonds), both of Birchington, for the beautiful and commodious structure now opened for public worship. The Vicar brought the meeting to a close by pronouncing the blessing.

The total proceeds of the opening services reached £5918s 10d; thus reducing the debt on the building to £376 1s 2d.