



CONSECRATION OF THE NEW CHURCH AT ALDERBURY

On Thursday last, being the festival of St. John the Baptist, the new church at Alderbury was consecrated by the Lord Bishop of Salisbury. The day being very fine, there was a numerous attendance of the clergy and gentry of the district, as well as of the inhabitants of the parish and neighbourhood. At eleven o'clock His Lordship, who was accompanied by his chaplains, by the Ven Archdeacon Hony (who represented the Chancellor of the Diocese), and by the Registrar, was met at the gates of the church yard by the Vicar, the Rev. Prebendary Smart, and by a very large number of clergy, in their surplices. The petition for consecration was presented by the Vicar, the Mayor of Salisbury, and Mr. Parsons, Churchwarden, and his Lordship having signified his assent according to the prayer therein contained, the Bishop and Clergy, accompanied by several members of choir of Salisbury Cathedral, proceeded towards the south door singing the 24th Psalm: "The earth is the Lord's and all that dwell therein," &c. His Lordship then proceeded to the chancel, on the north side of which he took his seat, and near him also sat the Archdeacon of Sarum, the chairs for his Lordship's chaplain's and for the Dean of Salisbury being place on the south side of the altar within the rails. The Bishop then commenced the consecration service, after which the sentence of consecration was read by Archdeacon Hony, and was ordered to be enrolled and

preserved amongst the muniments in the Registry. The Rev. Prebendary Smart then read the services of the day, the choral services being performed by Messrs. Stanley, Clements, and Kenningham, and Masters Lake and Stanley, of the Salisbury Cathedral Choir, Mr. J.E. Richardson presiding at the organ. The Communion Service was read by the Bishop of Salisbury, the Epistle being read by the Rev. S. Lear, and the Gospel by the Rev. Prebendary Lear, two of his Lordship's chaplains. The musical services were as follows:- Introductory Anthem, "Enter not into judgement," composed especially for the occasion by Mr. J.E. Richardson, assistant organist of Salisbury Cathedral; Venite, Gregorian Chant; Glorias to the Psalms, Battishill; Te Deum, Boyce in C; Benedictus (by request), Purcell in G; and Anthem, "Prepare ye the way," Wise. This anthem was beautifully executed, and the congregation appeared to be taken by the surprise at the effect produced. The other portions of the musical service were:- Sanctus, Weldon; and Kyrie, Greek. Before the sermon, the 192nd Hymn of the Salisbury Hymn Book – "Christ is the sure foundation" – was sung to the tune of "Tantum Ergo."

The BISHOP OF SALISBURY preached a sermon from the 40th chapter of Isiah and part of the 1st and 9th verses:- "Comfort ye my people; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God." His Lordship commenced by explaining the circumstances under which the text was written. When Isiah prophesied to Hezekiah that the people should be carried away captive into Babylon, these well-known words were uttered in contrast to that prediction. But they also referred to the time when the people were to be restored to their own land through the aid of the great King Cyrus, who was to "prepare the way of the Lord." The Right Rev. prelate then observed that the prophetic eye of Isiah carried him onward to the time of him whose festival was celebrated on that day – who dwelt in the wilderness of Judea, who was clothed in raiment of camel's hair, and who did eat locusts and wild honey – to the man who was the fore runner of one, who was the reputed son of Joseph; who bare record of him who, although he came in the flesh, was the Son of God, co-equal and co-eternal with his Father. These words, then, were particularly applicable to the festival of John the Baptist, who was himself spoken of by the prophet Isiah, as "the voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his path straight." His Lordship then proceeded to show the applicability of the words of the text to the period when John appeared, and then applied them to the circumstances for our Lord's Death and passion, Resurrection, and Ascension, and to his ever living to plead the cause of sinners at his Father's right hand. He then referred to the suitability of the text in reference to the continued influence of the Holy Spirit on the hearts and consciences of men, and to the consolations afforded by the offices of the Church, the comfort of absolution pronounced by the Ministers of the Church, and to the blessings conferred in the reception of the Holy Communion, and the other ministrations of the Church. He also observed that the words of the text applied specially to the circumstances under which they had met on that occasion. the circumstances of the population of the parish were such that it became necessary to erect a new church; and God had put it into the hearts of some among them to carry out this undertaking, in order to afford the necessary spiritual relief to the wants of the people of this parish. It might truly be said the house which had been built exceeded the Glory of the former. At the closing of the old church he had addressed them on that occasion. He had reminded them of their connection with the House of God, and he had told them that the new house never could be to them what the old one was. Their fathers had there worshipped; their children had been there baptised and grafted into the Church of God; and in the churchyard they had consigned their friends to the dust, "earth to earth, ashes to ashes." He had also told them that when they entered into the new house they must do so with fresh purposes and fresh resolutions to serve the Lord, and amend their ways. After enforcing this part of his subject in an earnest and impressive manner on his hearers, his Lordship referred more particularly to the erection of the building in which he was then preaching, observing that it was a good and holy work, but if had not been accomplished without great sacrifices on the part of some of those whose means it was built. The expenses were great, and were not yet covered by the funds, and he trusted that those who were present on that occasion – those who would most profit by the erection of this church, and those who came from a distance – would, by their contributions, assist the Vicar who had himself done so much towards the completion of this good work. His Lordship concluded by solemnly enforcing the great truths taught by the text upon his bearers.

At the conclusion of the sermon, the Bishop descended from the pulpit, and proceeded to the altar, where he read the offertory sentences, during which a collection was made in aid of the funds for re-building the
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church. His Lordship then offered up the prayers of the Church Militant, and the two last prayers of the consecration service, after which the non-communicants having withdrawn, the Holy Communion was administered. We may add that the building was filled to overflowing during the service. The collection amounted to 46*l.* 8*s* 0¼*d.*

At the conclusion of the Morning Service, his Lordship proceeded to consecrate some land which had been added to the church-yard for the purpose of a burial-ground. This land was given by Viscount Folkestone and the Vicar.

A cold collation was provided for the visitors who had been invited to attend the consecration; and a dinner was given to the widows, widowers, and aged poor of the parish, by the principal promoters of the Church, at the School-room.

There was a large attendance of the clergy and laity, and among them were noticed – Sir Frederick, Lady, and Miss Hervey Bathurst, the Hon. Mrs. Fox Strandways and Miss Berners, Mrs. Hamilton and party, the Dean of Salisbury and Mrs. Hamilton, Archdeacon Hony and Mrs. Hony, Mr. and Mrs. Fort and family, Mrs. Lear, Mrs. Montgomery, Mrs. and Miss Hussey, Mr. and Mrs. James Hussey, Mrs. and Miss Duke, Mrs. Longley, Mr. and Mrs. Sampson, Mr. and Mrs. Wilson, Mr. R. Hetley, Mr. Hinxman, Mr. S.S. Teulon; the Rev. Prebendaries Lear, Chermiside and Renaud; the Revds. Messrs. Chatfield, Cooper, Hill, Luard, Cartwright, Hinxman, Tomlinson, Duke, Griffiths, Richards, Robinson, Jenkyns, Morse, Richard and Charles Fort, Ellis, Simms, C.H. Townsend, &c.

The afternoon service took place about four o'clock, the musical service being an introductory anthem, J.E. Richard; Gloria Patri, Gregonian, B flat; Magnificat and Nune Dimittis, Wesley in F; Anthem, "Behold how good and joyful," Whitfield; Hymn before the sermon, "Tatum ergo"; Hymn after the sermon, the 100th Psalm to the Old Hundredth tune. The sermon was preached by the Ven. Archdeacon Hony, from the 8th Chapter of the 1st book of Kings, and the 28th, 29th, and 30th versus:- "Yet have thou respect into the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O, Lord my God, to hearken unto the cry and to the prayer which thy servant prayeth before thee to-day: That thine eyes may be opened toward this house night and day, even toward the place of which thou has said, My name shall be there: that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall make toward this place. And hearken then to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place: and hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place: and when thou hearest, forgive." In the evening a sermon was preached by the Rev. Mark Cooper, the incumbent of Bramshaw.

We will now proceed to point out the architectural characteristics of the new edifice, the consecration of which we have above recorded. The parish of Alderbury, which is situated in the Hundred of that name, is bounded on the east by the Grimsteads; on the west by the Avon and Britford; on the north by Ivy Church and Clarendon Woods; and on the south by the Hundred of Overton. It is mentioned in the Domesday Book as Alwardbury, and as being held by Alward the priest, of the Canons of Lisieaux. The latter was a cathedral church in Normandy, which also held in Wiltshire, at the formation of the Domesday Book, the Manor of (Kingston) Deverill in the Hundreds of Amesbury and mere, and that of Horningsham in the Hundred of Heytesbury. Both these estates afterwards went to the family of Vernon; but this at Alwardbury appears to have passed to the Dean and Chapter of Salisbury, who appropriated it to the support of the Treasurer of that church. In the reign of Edward the First the Dean and Chapter held a third part of the manor, as appears by a passage in the Hundred Rolls. On the sale of church-land in 1647, the manors of Ivy Church and Alderbury were sold. The Earl of Radnor, is at present the Lord of the Manor. The Church of Alderbury belonged to the Cathedral Church of Salisbury early in the reign of Henry the Second, as appears by the confirmation charter of that monarch, witnessed by Archbishop Theobald. The vicarage is entered as a discharged benefice in the King's Book. The chapelries of Pitton and Farley are annexed to the living. The old church was a plain building (rough casted), with a wooden turret, bearing no marks of antiquity. The site on which it stood commands a singularly beautiful view over the valley of the Avon on the opposite eminences. There is a fine old yew tree of immense antiquity in the church-yard. The new church is erected on the site on which the old building stood, and the tower is crowned with a spire, which gracefully rising above the trees in the vicinity of the edifice, forms a

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prominent and picturesque object in the landscape, and the church, which is built of flints, with free-stone dressings, is an elegant and well-proportioned edifice, the style of architecture being the early "Second Pointed," or Decorated. It consists of a chancel and side aisle, in which is the seat of the Lord Folkestone; a nave and north aisle; north and south transepts, in the latter of which are the Clarendon seats; a tower at the north-western end surrounded by a single spire, rising from the apices of four cardinal gables. The south porch is of oak framed from the old timber of the original church. The windows of the chancel are lancet in form, filled with light "Decorated" tracery, and the east window has three lights, over which are trefoils and a sexfoil in a circle. The windows of the south side of the nave are of two lights, divided by a centre mullion, the tracery being in good keeping. On the north side of the church the windows are rather late in style, and there is on that side of the edifice a recessed doorway. The interior of the church is very imposing; the roof is of open timber work, the seats are of stained wood, and the paving is of Staffordshire tiles. The arches of the nave and the archivolts of the doors and windows are ornamented with coloured brick arches of yellow, black, and red. The corbels which support the roof are beautifully carved with floral designs, the effect of which is graceful and pleasing. The large window in the Clarendon transept is filled with stained glass, by Clayton and Bell, of London. It consists of three lights, the centre compartment representing Moses uplifting the Brazen Serpent in the Wilderness, while the other two compartments are filled with people, who are represented as suffering under the affliction of the fiery serpents, but who are looking to the Brazen Serpent for relief. There is another stained glass window on the south side of the church, the subjects of which are the Centurion and Christ blessing the children. This window, which is the gift of Mrs. Smart, the wife of the Vicar, was placed in the church in memory of the father and mother of this lady. Beneath the subjects is the following inscription:- "In memory of Major-General H.A.C. De Berniere, obt. December 16, 1814. Elizabeth, his wife, obt. Jan. 21, 1858. John Henry, their son, obt. Oct. 13, 1809." The pulpit is of Bath Stone, and the fittings, as well as those of the reading desk and lantern, are of Utrecht velvet, with bullions, tassels, and fringe. These were supplied by Mr. E. Roe, of Catherine-street, Salisbury, who also furnished the altar chairs, which were specially manufactured by him for this church. They are of wainscot oak, and are beautifully carved in the Glastonbury pattern, having the monogram of the holly branch and nails. We understand that the erection of this edifice will cost 2800l., a large proportion of which is borne by the Vicar, who has been a most liberal contributor; Sir Frederick Bathurst, Bart., of Clarendon Park, has also contributed largely, together with George Fort, Esq., of Alderbury House. The Parishoners generally have also been most liberal. The chancel was erected at the sole cost of Viscount Folkestone. The designs were furnished by Mr. Teulon, architect, of Craig's Court, London, and the contract was executed by Messrs. Mills, builders, of Egham, Surrey. We understand that the church seats 475 persons.

We may add that the weather was most propitious throughout, and that the sacred ceremonial of the day was observed with due solemnity and thanksgiving, and all present rejoiced in the dedication of a new and beautiful church to the worship of the Almighty.

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