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THE BISHOP OF MANCHESTER AT EDGESIDE

The Bishop of Manchester on Saturday, consecrated the new church of St Anne, Edgeside, Newchurch-in-Rossendale. The building is pleasantly situated on the brow of a hill commanding extensive views of the Rossendale Valley. It has been erected from designs prepared by Mr Thomas Bell, architect, Burnley and Nelson, and is of the Early English style of architecture with geometrical tracery, consisting of nave under one span of roof, chancel, organ-chamber on the south-side, clergy and choristers' vestries on the north side, north porch, and south west tower 100ft high. The principal entrance is at the west end, where two large doors have been provided, over which is a large circular window with a quatre-foil tracery, which being the principal light shows prominently from the roadway. The church is built of stone, faced with Yorkshire parpoints and Catlow Ashlar dressings. The chancel has an apsidal end, and is furnished with two sets of choir stalls. The adoption of the single span for the roof was on account of economy in construction and as also affording clear space uninterrupted by pillars. The vestibule, chancel, and sacrarium are tiled, and the aisles are paved with oak parquetry, for the purpose of warmth and deadening the sound. The whole of the open benches are of pitch pine, varnished. The pulpit, reading desk, and choir benches are of oak. The pulpit, which rests on a stone base, was the gift of the young men connected with the Sunday school. The font is of Caen stone, with marble shaft, the gift of the ladies of the Sunday school. The altar cloth is the gift of the Misses Rushton. The fabric was not quite completed for the opening ceremony, part of the floor being unlaid, the vestries unfinished and the windows only partially filled with glass. The bishop and clergy robed in the adjoining schoolroom. Among those present were the Rev. Canon Tonge, Rev. W. Champneys, Rural Dean, Rector of Haslingden; Rev J.B. Philips, Rector of Newchurch, Rev J. Cross-Jones, Vicar of St Anne's, Edgeside (the new church): Rev F. Hall Lockett, Vicar of Lumb; Rev. A. Philips, Vicar of St. John's, Bacup; Rev. J. M'Cubbin, Vicar of Christ Church, Bacup; Rev J.G Howarth, Vicar of Tunstead; Rev. J. Sylvester, Rawtenstall, Rev. R.W. Hay, Haslingden; Rev. J. Howard senr., Vicar of Goodshaw; Rev. S.W. Salt; in charge of St. James's Waterfoot; and Rev H.W. Jones, Ramsbotton. The service was fully choral throughout, the choir being surplice. The bishop was assisted by the rural dean, the Rev. J.B. Philips, Rev. F. Hall Lockett, and the vicar (Rev. J. Cross-Jones). The sentence of consecration, which was read by Mr. E.P. Charlewood, the bishop's secretary, set forth that the church had been built by voluntary subscription, and occupied 179 square yards of land, given by Captain Charles Patrick of Clough Hall (sic). A sum of £4,300 had also been placed with the diocesan board of finance of Manchester to be held by such board, under the direction of the bishop, for the endowment of the church, such sum to be increased to an amount sufficient to make up £45 per annum, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners being expected to meet the grant with a similar grant. Captain Patrick had also given 970 square yards of land as a further benefaction for the purpose of providing a parsonage for the minister of the church, the patronage to be vested in the bishop of the diocese and the trustees of the church. The new structure contains 462 sittings, to be free and unappropriated for ever. The cost of the church has been £3,300. Hymn books,

prayer books and hassocks are also provided free for the use of the worshippers. The licence for conducting divine service in the old national school has been revoked.

The Bishop, preaching from the 14th verse of the 9th chapter of St. Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians, said he was sure it must be a disappointment to those who had so liberally promoted the building of that church – as it was to himself – to find it in so unfinished a condition that day, and it was for that reason that he had thought that certain sentences with regard to the completion of the church in the sentence of consecration might well be omitted. If he had known the church would have been scarcely completed, he would not have fixed the day for the consecration so early. However, it was a very fine day, or they might have felt the consequences. He wished that architects and contractors would feel that there was a moral obligation in promises made in these matters, and that there would be something like an effort made to fulfil them. The endowment of the new church was very inadequate. It was always easier to build a church than to endow it. Both required an effort, but the effort to build a church was made once for all, and the money was raised, not, perhaps, without difficulty, but it was raised. He was afraid, however, that Church people did not think so much about the support of the clergyman as they ought to think, yet the living of the clergyman was a matter of some importance. It was true that in the early ages of the Church a great apostle like St. Paul and an evangelist like Apollus, were not ashamed nor was it thought any discredit to them when they came to a new church like that at Corinth, where, instead of being a burden to the disciples, they worked at their trade. St. Paul was a tent maker, a business of some importance in the East. Yet, in writing to that church, he pointed out that the Lord had ordained that those who preached the gospel should live of the gospel. With regard to the endowment of the present church £1,300 had been raised, which it was hoped would be increased to such an extent as to produce £45 per annum. That amount it was proposed to offer to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, in order that they might be able to add a like sum, the interest of which would raise the total to £90 a year, commencing from the 1st of April next. The seats of the new church were to be free and unappropriated for ever. He was glad of that, believing it to be a right principle, but it put out of the way the means of supplementing the income of the minister by pew rents which obtained in many places. However, there was the offertory left to them which might be taken after every service, or fortnightly or monthly, as they might determine, and he hoped they would not think such offertory a burden to them, but would subscribe liberally and give as God had prospered them. He would also urge the churchwardens to observe the old law, and not spend money upon the church until they had got it, though he found that the very opposite course was generally pursued by Lancashire churchwardens. The pieces of land which they had heard mentioned in the sentence of consecration would also be offered to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, in the hope that they would be able to meet it with a sum equal to its value. This was for a parsonage, for which he deemed £1,500 or £1,600 quite sufficient. He must, as bishop of the diocese, express his gratitude to those who had taken the principal part in bringing the church towards completion. With regard to the recent metropolitan revelations, though he knew that there was a good deal of

vice in England, he had not thought there was quite such a terrible amount of licentiousness among us. But they must not imagine that it existed only among the rich and titled classes; it existed among the lowest classes as well as the very highest, and it was tainting the very air we breathed. The spirit of God could only dwell in pure hearts, and only the pure in heart could see God. It was no use blinking our eyes to the fact that there were manifold divisions among those who wished to be called the followers of Christ. This was the result of religious freedom, but he would rather have religious freedom than the dogmatic slavery of a particular church, though it was a fact that our religious differences were a stumbling block to the progress of religion and put difficulties in the way of Christian missionaries. A heated and excited time was approaching in this country. We should soon be in the throes of a general election. Party feeling, he knew, had run very high in Rossendale. He was told that the Church people were all on one side and the Nonconformists all on the other. He thought the time had passed for quarrelling in politics, and we ought to take a higher view of our obligations as Englishmen. The country was passing through a very critical time; the future was very dark, and we should not mend matters by taking up party cries which we did not half understand. He hoped they would endeavour to be friendly when the election came. There would, of course, be differences of opinion – some would be Conservative and some Liberal – but when the contest was past let those differences be forgotten. Holy Communion was afterwards administered. The offertory realised upwards of £100. There is still a deficiency in the building fund of about £500. In the afternoon there was a procession through part of the parish of the Sunday school children, followed by a tea, and in the evening a sermon was preached by the vicar.