

Short address on the
life and ministry of Bishop Jacob
at the unveiling of a monument
at the Cathedral of St. Nicholas
Newcastle

THE BISHOP JACOB MEMORIAL.

On Tuesday, December 5, prior to the half yearly meeting of the Cathedral Chapter, a handsome Mural Tablet to the memory of the late Bishop Jacob was unveiled by the Right Honourable Lord Armstrong, in the North Quire Aisle of Cathedral. The Memorial is of Caen Stone with a carved border, framed in Hepton Wood fossil stone, surmounted by a Mitre and the arms of this diocese, and those of the late Bishop. The inscription reads :

"In ever - thankful memory of Edgar Jacob, D.D., scholar of the two St. Mary Winton Colleges at Winchester and Oxford. Born November 16th, 1846. Died March 25th, 1920. Vicar of Pertsea, 1878 - 1903. Bishop of S. Alban's 1903 - 1919.

"Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord'." The Cathedral Chapter was represented by the Bishop (who dedicated the Memorial), the Vicar of Newcastle, the Archdeacon of Northumberland, Canons Quick, Jeffery, Beot, Holland, Nicholson, Mangin, Davis, Robertson (formerly Chaplain to Bishop Jacob), Richmond, Jackson, East, Osborne, McGonigle, Moran, Hicks, (E.B.), Williams, and Falla. Bishop Hernby was present as well as other Clergy of the Diocese, and some friends of the late Bishop.

Canon Stephensen represented the Durham Clergy, and Rev. E.D. Clark acted as Chaplain to the Bishop of Newcastle.

Lord Armstrong in unveiling the Memorial, said:

My Lord Bishop , Ladies and Gentleman,

I feel I cannot adequately express to you how greatly I value the honour of having been invited to unveil the beautiful tablet, erected to the memory of my old and reverend friend, Bishop Jacob, our tribute of love, and veneration to one who for seven eventful years guided the affairs of this diocese with conspicuous wisdom and success.

They seem to me to be in his great mental and spiritual qualities, his remarkable powers of administration, his wide sympathies, the great kindness of his nature in combination with that rarest of gifts , a full measure of sanctified common sense.

I should like to add as a personal note that during the whole time that he was here he always extended to me the warmest friendship and most helpful advice and encouragement, which he continued almost to the end of his life, as the last letter I received from him was only a few weeks before his death , and I shall always cherish his memory with affection and gratitude.

When we pass in review the life of Bishop Jacob , and call to mind his intense devotion to the Church, his untiring efforts for her welfare, we may truly assign to him a place among the great leaders who from the earliest times to our own have illuminated the history of our Northern Church.

In reference to the Bishop Jacob Memorial it is interesting to know that when the late Bishop paid his first visit to Newcastle as a youth in 1863, he was shown over St. Nicholas, to which he was to come years later as its Bishop, by the Rev. Canon Henderson, D.D. formerly Archdeacon of Northumberland, who at that time was Curate of St. Nicholas' with Vicar Moody. Friends of Dr. Henderson will be pleased to know that he is at present residing at Tynemouth with his son, the Vicar of Holy Saviour's and his many friends will wish him a restful and peaceful time after his long and faithful service to the Diocese.

I have been asked, in connection with our ceremony to-day, to give you a brief sketch of Bishop Jacob's life, although nothing that I can say could describe his life's work more concisely or more accurately than the beautiful words of the text inscribed on the tablet:- " Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord."

I am, nevertheless, glad to do so, on such an occasion as the present, for as Shakespeare said " Praising what is lost makes the remembrance dear,"and in tracing the various steps in Bishop Jacob's life, we cannot fail to see the picture of one endowed above his fellows with mental and spiritual gifts, whose whole life like that of the Prophet Samuel of old, was dedicated to the service of his Lord and Master.

Bishop Edgar Jacob was born at Crawley Rectory, near Winchester, on November 16, in 1844, and was the son of Philip Jacob, Arch-deacon of Winchester and Canon residentiary, his mother being the daughter of the Rev. and Hon. Gerard Noel, who was also a Canon of Winchester, and so his earliest years were passed amid the highest and the best Christian influences. He was educated under Dr Moberly, at Winchester, the alma mater of many who have risen to high distinction in various walks of life, and from there gained a scholarship at New College, Oxford, taking a first class in classics in 1867.

He was ordained a deacon in 1868 by the celebrated Samuel Wilberforce, then Bishop of Oxford, and afterwards Bishop of Winchester, whose son, Ernest Roland, he was destined to succeed as Bishop of this Diocese. He remained near Oxford for three years as curate successively of Taynton, and of Witney, thus gaining valuable experience in the working of country parishes.

after a very short time here, he was invited to go out to India as domestic chaplain to Dr Milman, Bishop of Calcutta and Metropolitan of India. The call had irresistible attractions for him, for in the first place he was fired with zeal for Missionary enterprise and secondly members of his family had rendered notable service in India. His experience there had a marked effect on his spiritual development. He saw in India how the Missionaries of various denominations were able to fraternize much more than their brethren at home, and how the Bible Society at which for a long time High Churchman had looked askance, made no distinction but helped all impartially. The lessons thus learnt in India can be traced all through his subsequent career, in his recognition of the duty of the Church to the Heathen, and of the duty of Churchmen to non-conformists, and I may add of the call for more brotherly love between all congregations of Christians scattered throughout the world.

The death of his Bishop at Rawal Pindi in 1876, brought his Indian career to a close, and he returned home to become examining Chaplain to Dr. Harold Browne, Bishop of Winchester, and also took charge of the Winchester College Mission in South London which had been established as a Memorial to Bishop Wilberforce.

In 1878 he accepted the living of St. Mary's Portsea, the Mother Church of Portsmouth, where some of his greatest ministerial work was done. There he found a dilapidated church in the midst of a spacious churchyard, and church life at a low ebb. He set to work with immense energy and devotion to revive and extend the work of this large parish, and his efforts here have become historical in the annals of the church. The Parish became the centre of a great church work.

He had under him a large number, I might almost say a community of curates, who lived with him and who were animated by his zeal. Great care was taken with the services, especially those for men, while the ritual he encouraged was reverent and restrained.

The success of his work at Portsea made a deep impression , and he was appointed Honorary Canon of Winchester, and chaplain in ordinary to H.M. Queen Victoria. In 1896 began that part of his career with which many here are familiar, and on the translation of Bishop Wilberforce to Chichester he was appointed second Bishop of Newcastle.

It is not too much to say that he quickly won the hearts of his North Country flock, and as years went by, his heart was more and more wedded in love and sympathy with them. They appreciated his earnest eloquence, coupled as it was with incessant and practical activity, and hard-headed business qualities.

How great was his hold on the Diocese is shown by the fact that though nearly 20 years have elapsed since he left us, we have today unveiled a memorial of our love for him.

His chief works in Newcastle outside his ordinary work as a Bishop to which as is common knowledge he gave unceasing attention were: (1) the classification of the status of the different benefices in the Diocese, which was in a very chaotic condition. This difficult work was admirably carried out., (2) the Institution of a hostel for training candidates for Holy orders, to which he gave the closest personal interest; it is unfortunate that since his time it has been found impossible to keep the Hostel open. And lastly the appointment and partial endowment of the Cathedral Chapter, which proved to be a very difficult task, and few could have done what he succeeded in doing. As it was he nearly succeeded in getting his whole scheme through for a full Cathedral establishment, but at the last moment it was balked in this by factious opposition in the House of Commons. I sincerely trust, however, that now that the church has more liberty we may live to see the coping stone put on Bishop Jacob's work by the completion of the Cathedral establishment.

importance to the church arose , and the need for one of his ripe experience and great powers to be within reach of Lambeth was strongly felt, and a very pressing request was made to him by the Archbishop of Canterbury that he would allow himself to be translated to S. Albans, vacant by the death of Bishop Festing. This proved to be one of the greatest sacrifices he could be called upon to make. Devoted to the people of the North, and his work here with an uncommon devotion, it was a great wrench to give it up, as well as a great pecuniary sacrifice, the emoluments of St. Albans being £2,500 without a house, compared with £3,500 and a house in Newcastle, while the work entailed more exacting physical strain.

In Newcastle he had a more or less compact Diocese of 175 benefices and some 300 clergy. S. Alban's then consisted of 630 benefices mostly poor, and 900 clergy. " A hopeless Diocese" as he called it, but he set to work with his characteristic energy to straighten things out and eventually succeeded after years of work in carving the See of Chelmsford out of S. Albans, raising the necessary endowment by immense personal efforts. But his life's work was nearly done, and he had for some time felt his physical strength failing, though his mental powers were unimpaired , and at his visitation charge delivered at S. Albans, Cathedral on June 16, 1919, he announced in a touching farewell message his intention of laying down his bishopric on completing his 75th year, and of devoting his remaining strength to that missionary effort that had always been his greatest interest in life, and for which he made more than one journey to U.S.A., and one to Jamaica, while he took a prominent part in many important missionary conferences and was the chairman and the chief inspiring force of the great Pan-Anglican Congress in 1908. Accordingly in December 1919, he retired to Winchester where he passed quietly away on March 25th, 1920, in his 76th year. We may well consider in what lies Bishop Jacob's claim to remembrance and the secret of his great influence that he wielded.