

Dedication Service

TO THE MEMORY OF THE LATE ARCHDEACON ALLNUTT.

A simple but most impressive service took place at St. Stephen's Church on Sunday morning last, when the Very Reverend Dean of Ballarat (Dean Tucker) dedicated a beautiful reredos to the memory of the late Archdeacon Allnutt. A plate on the wall near by bore the following inscription—"To the Glory of God in memory of John Charles Parrott Allnutt, Vicar of Portland, 1869-1906, Archdeacon of the Loddon, 1885-1894. The reredos in this Church was erected to commemorate a faithful ministry."

Special lessons were read for the occasion, and in dedicating the memorial Dean Tucker said it had always been the habit of the English Church to remember those who had served it, or by some noble example had advanced Christ's Kingdom, by writing up their names on the building of God, thus adding to the embellishments a splendour in honor of those men who had devoted their lives in the service of the Master. The reredos which they saw before them that day was offered in reverence to God, to be a perpetual memorial to a faithful servant and shepherd of the souls for whom Christ died, believing that the memory of the just was blessed.

In his sermon, which was couched in beautifully simple but eloquent language, Dean Tucker said that some of God's greatest blessings were so apt to be taken for granted that many forgot to thank the Giver of them. To continue human life from age to age by means of the family was a wonderful process, but few stopped to think what it really meant. It would have been just as simple for God to have adopted some other means of creation, but He chose to create the family, with all its love, discipline, and sympathetic assistance. Consider what the family life really meant, he proceeded. Ninety-nine hundredths of the charities and virtues of life arose out of family relationships, and almost everything that was generous and beautiful either in poetry or represented by the brush of the painter was due to family life. Many of our lads who went to fight a few years ago—years that had made and altered us so that we could never be like we were before—had seen magnificent and noble buildings, redolent of history, and many humble but not the less beautiful peasantry homes, but none of these compared with their own family abode. And so the

homes, but none of these compared with their own family abode. And so the thought arose of why it was that God gathered together people in one large family circle. There were two ways in which we could look on a Christian congregation. Firstly, a collection brought together in a common sense of duty, and secondly, because, perhaps, there might be simply a fancy on the part of many to congregate in one common building. Just as there was a common meeting room in every home, so also was the Church a place where the people could gather in spiritual intercourse, without which it would be impossible to be a family other than in name only. In the home was a common room, where gathered together were the medals, trophies and photos in memory of those members who had rendered honor to the family—sons, in many cases, who had given their lives for their country's sake. In just the same way was the Parish Church the place for memorials for those who had been faithful in life and served God, leaving behind an example which had been part and parcel of the spiritual wealth of life. They had met together to enrich the Church by dedicating a memorial to one who had served God, and his neighbors also. For nearly 40 years he had been the faithful watcher and shepherd of Christ's sheep. The preacher quoted the parable of the Good Shepherd, and said that those who knew the late Archdeacon Allnutt recognised in him a faithful pastor, and the thing they loved most was the way in which he cared for each one of his sheep. He thought of their individual difficulties, prayed for each by name, and "cared" for them—and what a meaning there was in that word. "His sheep knew him," and though a pastor might be scorned and his methods ridiculed, when a crisis arrived in a man's life, he knew for whom to send or where to go. Archdeacon Allnutt was one to whom his sheep could appeal, and his name was honored before God that day. "A true shepherd lays down his life for his sheep," and he surely did it for them—that which was the final and perfect result of a man's love, and Australia, who had 70,000 sons sleeping over the other side, knew something of that spirit. "Greater love hath no man than this—that he lay down his life for a friend," and so to die for a friend was the perfect expression of love. The Archdeacon had a genius for loving, and never feared to face affliction. He had a perfect readiness to surrender and give up everything for those committed to his care by Christ, and it was right that a memorial should stand and his name be written on the walls, so that the young ones would be told of a quiet man who spent himself day

so that the young ones would be told of a quiet man who spent himself day by day in the service of others. He was a watchful servant of the Lord, and loved the Bible which carried him along the path to Heaven. They would do well to think of the example he set. He appealed to them as a man of intense love and tenderness, whom they all revered.

As in the morning, there was another large congregation at night, when Dean Tucker again occupied the pulpit and delivered a masterly sermon on the rehabilitation of God's ancient people—the Jews—in the land of their forefathers.

Holy Communion was dispensed in the early morning, when many of the Archdeacon's old parishioners from Casterton, Condah, Wallacedale and other parts of the district were amongst the communicants.

At the morning service the Mayor and councillors of the Borough attended in a body.

A copy of the late Archdeacon Allott's last annual address to his parishioners (February 10, 1906) has been handed to us by one of his many admirers. In it he stated that in the 42nd year of his ministry and in the 37th as

Vicar of St. Stephen's it was found that by reason of his falling health he was no longer able to carry on the work in the way it should be done. He had, therefore, under a sense of duty to God and to the Church, sent in his resignation. It was a joy to him that his successor would find "the lines falling to him in pleasant places." After paying a tribute to the faithfulness and energy of the Church officials (Mr Arthur Bethers, hon. lay reader; Mr W. Hay Ross, warden, hon. secretary and treasurer for over 20 years; Mr Sydney Johnson, leader of the choir) he concluded by saying—"I shall not be free from pain in separating from my beloved people, and my delight in the public services is greater than ever; but in obeying the Providential call to 'rest a while,' my retirement is already greatly sweetened and even blessed by the hope of passing some of the twilight that may remain as an honorary visitor and friend to God's beloved Israel, for I long to see some of them in many cities, if it should please Him to lead me in that way. . . . My love be with you all in Christ Jesus.' Forgive the faults of your affectionate servant and friend—J. C. P. ALLNUTT."