

Coolamon Church.

CONSECRATION OF ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND, COOLAMON.

On Sunday last his Lordship the Bishop of Riverina conducted the ceremony of the consecration of St. Andrew's Church of England, Coolamon. The ceremony was of a most impressive nature, and was an exemplification of the most beautiful feature of the Anglican religion.

Following the Bishop's example it may be well in the first place to call attention to the edifice itself. The building is of brick and of ample dimensions to accommodate the congregation of this district for many years to come. Nevertheless with a view to the future the architect has so designed that a transept may be added, thus providing additional seating accommodation where the chancel now stands. The floor is gradually raised from the chancel to the rear of the church. The altar rails and seats are of polished pine. The ceiling, of polished and varnished pine, is very lofty and artistically decorated with four centre pieces providing the most modern means of ventilation. The windows are of stained glass, which blend perfectly with the general design. The lighting is also of the very best, the latest system of acetylene gas having been installed. Of the furnishings a magnificent brass Lectern, presented by the Rev. Gaster R. W. Holden, will be an ornament to any cathedral.

Without doubt the new church is one of the most happy combinations of artistic purity and simple utility.

The service opened by the congregation singing "Onward Christian Soldiers." His Lordship Bishop Anderson entered the building from the porch and traversed the aisle to the steps of the altar, preceded by the Rev. R. W. Holden bearing the pastoral staff. Mr. R. W. King, senior warden, then presented the petition for the consecration, and his Lordship having signified his assent after mature deliberation consecrated the edifice for the purposes prayed for, setting it apart from common and profane uses for ever.

After the usual ceremony the Bishop delivered a discourse appropriate to the occasion. Seldom has it been the privilege of your correspondent to listen to

so liberal and earnest an appeal to the spiritual aspirations apart from any question of dogma or religious creed.

The congregation comprised members of all denominations, and everything went to show that the kernel of all the Christian doctrines is love. As the preacher put it, the cement essential to the building of lasting spiritual life is a holy love. The ideal man Christ was the embodiment of this essential. Christians therefore have special opportunities for the development of this lasting spiritual life.

His Lordship could not believe that any absolute atheism exists. No one who has really seen the true Christ has ever turned away from Him. Judas Iscariot did not know him or he would not have turned away. Unfortunately, many to-day in spite of our special opportunities have never known the true Christ. Hence arises an attitude of indifference which must have a poisonous effect upon the spiritual principle. The doctrine of Divine Love is contorted to suit this indifference, and a calousness is fostered by the false logic that a God of Love will not mind spiritual failings. The tragic example of the militant author of "De Profundis" but too dearly proved the depth and wisdom of the Bishop's address.

After being present at this ceremony a thinking man of any denomination or religion or no denomination would be happy to admit that churches and creeds are an essential in human development, and few will deny that the Christian ideal is the highest expression in mankind of the spiritual yearning.