



NOTES ON DEANE CHURCH, LANCASHIRE.

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RESTORATION

OF

❖ DEANE ❖ CHURCH. ❖



AS many persons are now inquiring into the past history, architectural style, and present condition of this old building, one of the few remaining in Lancashire, I venture to offer a brief sketch of how the Church has assumed its present form, which may not only interest, but also prove a guide as to the lines which any true Restoration should follow.

1. The *original* Church of Deane, of which traces now exist, was Early English. The Tower, the fine North Door, the Pillars, and the pointed Water Table (showing the pitch of the ancient roof), are practically, with the Aisle Windows, the only remains ; but the Windows and North Door are so covered over with cement that all details are obliterated, yet a partial removal of plaster reveals a very fine Early English Door, with a moulded hood.

2. *The present Church*, excepting the above, may be referred to the 15th Century, when the present Arches of the Nave were raised. The Clere-storey added, surmounted by the present fine open-pannelled Oak Roof, resting on Grotesque Stone Corbels, containing about 50 tons of oak and 250 panels. It is quite possible that the ancient, high-pitched Roof, as was frequently the case, included the Nave and Aisles in a single span. The old Buttress showing the *pitch* can now be traced in West Wall, South of Tower. The old Western Wall would have borne traces of the old Roof still, but it was rebuilt in 1833. The Water Table of old Roof was brought to light four years ago, with the little Door, (*vide* sketch, last page) into the Roof above Tower Arch. *The Side Aisles* of this period appear (from an old drawing in my possession) to have retained the ancient steep pitch, and, in 1833, appeared like, *leans to*. *The Chancel* (formerly pointed) with its present perpendicular windows was re-built, and, like other Chancels of the same style and date, is a very short—15 feet long, and floor level with the Nave, as Standish and Ashton. No alteration of any consequence appears to have taken place again *till* the *present century*.

3. *In 1833 the Church* assumed its *present form*. The large populations of Farnworth, Westhoughton, and Halliwell with Little Hulton, along with the existing parish, required increased church accommodation. Instead of new churches, the present galleries were added, and involved a very

serious alteration in the structure and style of the old Church, which Transepts, if erected, would have obviated. In order to get *head-room* for the Galleries, the Aisle Walls were raised about 10 feet, and the present heavy and inconvenient galleries added, which are low, and prevent both seeing and hearing in and under, to a great extent. The West End, or Choir Gallery, hides the noble Tower Arch and the architectural effect of that end, and also projects over and darkens a fourth part of the Nave ; thus two-thirds of the ground floor accommodation is rendered defective by Galleries. To get light into the Galleries, a *second tier* of windows was added, but these windows are in no particular style ; to have copied the long East End Windows of the Aisles, which are ancient, would have been infinitely better, though more costly. Instead of new Stonework in the Windows and Doors, if considered really needed, Cement was put on, which *obliterates* all style, and has resulted in the hopeless *decay* of the stone, so that new stone work for Tracery of Windows *may* be necessary in the Chancel Windows, which, being large, are exposed to strong winds, &c. The Stonework, where tested, is weather-worn but quite sound, excepting damage through rough chiselling and plaster. *The Capitals of the Pillars and Arches, &c.*, were chopped away in preference to altering the Woodwork of the Pews. The present Chancel Reredos was also added, which does not agree with the Windows, and the whole interior of the Chancel Walls was brought forward to join on

to it. The Chancel Floor was raised, and any old stones and brasses covered over ; and, if a Sedilia existed, that is hidden away also. As about this date a "*Scare*" existed about the Roof *falling in*, it is *possible* that the alterations in the Roofs of the *Side Aisles* may have weakened the Nave Walls and caused them to bulge out ; but this may have been older. Bolts were then driven through the wall and wall beams, which still exist, and go to show that the roof has *long been* in a *dangerous condition*. The fine, large, Ancient Porch gave place to a squat one of 5 feet in length, and quite out of character with the building. (See Standish Church, near Preston.) The Stonework of Pillars and Arches were *Painted*, which led to their decay, and was costly, as well as bad taste in a Church. This paint was removed by the present Vicar and Churchwardens. Canon Girdlestone put in the East End Window by subscription, and the beautiful light tracery and mouldings of Chancel Windows was plastered over, which was a very great error of judgment, as can be seen to-day. About 1858 a few interior alterations of pews, etc., took place, and paint was added, as at present. About 1875 the Clere-storey Windows were *Re-glazed*, and the usual Cement process adopted, the stone apparently being rough-chiselled to receive it. The consequence is that the Stonework of the Clere-storey is all hidden, and the process of decay going on. I believe that the Stonework of the Clere-storey Windows were, and are, sound, only weather-worn and venerable, and that there was no need

for this Cement, which is sure to cause decay of the Stonework. At present they might as well be brick—no joints are visible, and now would be a good time to remove the plaster and show their tracery and mouldings.

The Restoration Scheme is very modest. (1) We propose to put on a new roof, using, if possible and desirable, all the existing timber. The Corbels supporting Roof are all gone, more or less, and need renewal. The work will be an exact re-production of the present fine old Oak Roof, both in material and moulding, adding such precautions against future decay, as wide experience in similar cases suggests. (2) Internal alterations include removal of West End Gallery, and bringing the Organ into Eastern Bay, North Aisle, and cutting out this and the opposite Gallery Bay in South Aisle, over the Hulton Pew ; Re-pewing the West End of Church, converting the base of Tower into a Baptistry, with Screen ; a Door opening thence into the Vestry, Re-glazing the (West) Tower Window, &c. (3) The Chancel is now only 15 feet long, and, to obviate taking from the centre of the church any space which would shorten it, it is proposed to add as much to the Chancel as will afford 12-feet stalls for the Choir, according to the universal practice now ; or an Organ Chamber could be built, opening through North Chancel Window (bottom). As the East Window requires renewal, to an extent at present unknown till the plaster is removed, this would be a good time

to push back the East End Wall and Window, and re-build it exactly as at present. The Side Windows of Chancel, now reaching up to the East End Wall, would then appear with a wall of 8 feet in width, *at either side*, and, therefore, look well from interior. A Crypt could be made under the Chancel, if required, and would have Diocesan approval. All the Square Pews to give place to Open Benches, at the cost of Mr. Hulton, who will also contribute one-tenth of total expenditure, if scheme is carried out.

The rough chiselling resorted to preparatory to cementing is a feature so common here and in other churches that I may give as an instance the richly-moulded North Door Jambs. Here one "member," or moulding that would not allow a flat surface to the plaster was deliberately knocked away, and other stonework, more or less, will be found treated after the same barbarous manner. Thus, the weather-worn outlines of doors, windows, and arches, which add interest to, and prove the antiquity of, the building, instead of being religiously preserved, are too often thoughtlessly obliterated, or their decay hastened, particularly in coarse sandstone, by being smothered over with plaster, and deprived of atmospheric influence.

All that is truly characteristic of the classic age of Church Architecture, refined and educational, has been lost to the present generation, whose veneration will be deepened when it is restored to what their forefathers saw it.

If we consider this edifice as a *Witness for God*, then its present decay cannot fail to appeal to devout minds. If, as the *House of Prayer*, then everything that divides a congregation, obscures sight or hinders hearing, should be removed, and Galleries had no place in the *original* Church, and can only be vindicated by positive need of space. However, the Church re-seated, without Galleries, will accommodate about 800, and as we have three Services every Sunday, will provide 2,400 sittings, all of which would be good, and thus the draughts from Gallery Doors, and the *noises* which are so disagreeable, would be avoided. However, Deane Church is generally considered as a kind of Mausoleum, under whose sacred shadow repose so many that we love ; yet this Church bears scarcely any trace of Loving Remembrance in its structure, when there is so much scope in the Windows. Such Monuments, I venture to think more suitable, more permanent and God-honouring than what can be seen in every Churchyard. A legacy of even twenty pounds a year to be spent only on the *original* structure would be the greatest boon, and would guarantee its preservation for all time.

I place these facts and opinions before the public to enable them to arrive at the truth. I do it without fear or favour, believing that not only Deane, but many other parishes, may benefit by their perusal. Those who now have the guardianship of Deane are most anxious to know the truth ; and, having discovered its true architectural characteristics, what is truly

original, ancient, and true, will gladly sacrifice any preconceived notions in order to remove what is out of style and taste, and to restore it to its original purity. Let any one look at the parts of Doors and Windows from which the plaster is removed, and they will, I am sure, agree with me.

If you will give us the money, advice and sympathy, this fine old building will be preserved a monument, not only of the most stirring period of our history, but also of the practical interest of the present generation in one of the few remaining ancient churches left to our care. Don't drive us to *cheeseparing* and *economy*. Why should not a few persons undertake the seven Bays of the Roof—one each? The Internal Alterations, as to Galleries and Pews, will cost about £300. Could not some one build a Porch like that at Standish? The floors want repairs and windows tracery. The Chancel could be improved by a moderate sum. Sir C. Tempest, I believe, will act with his usual kindness, as will others whom I don't venture to name.

H. SHERIDAN PATTERSON,
VICAR.

Deane Vicarage,
October 30th, 1883.



