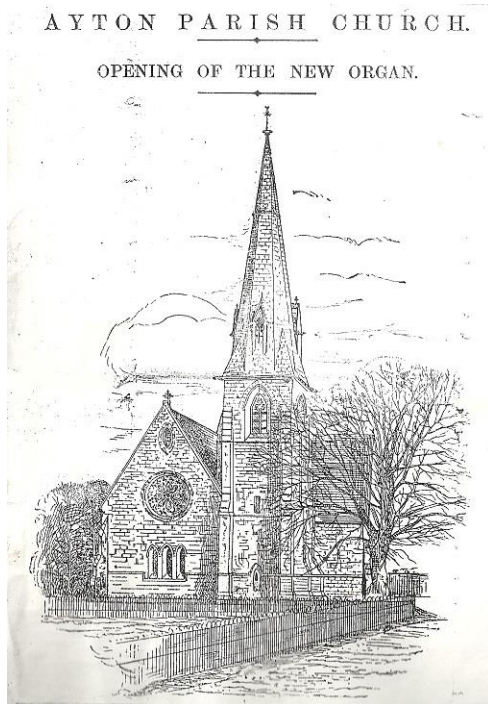


AYTON PARISH CHURCH

OPENING OF THE NEW ORGAN



The latter portion of this century has seen many wonderful and remarkable changes, and probably none of these has made greater progress than the introduction of instrumental music into places of worship. It is not very long ago that any proposal to supercede the orthodox leader of psalmody in a Presbyterian Church by a harmonium or organ would have been counted rank desecration of the sanctuary. Indeed, there are some people who are opposed to the innovation and who refuse to worship in a place where "the kist o' whistles" is in use. Such persons, however, are in a very great minority, and few now will be found to oppose the use of an organ or a harmonium in the congregation to which they attach themselves. It is rather the reverse, and congregations now vie with each other as to which shall have the finest instrument. There is no denying the fact that the music of a church is a very important factor. Its introduction has been attended with the greatest possible

success, and in these days when there is so much talk about non-church going, we might suppose that had instrumental music not been a part of the service the attendance at places of worship might have been even less than is sometimes the case. Bright singing is attractive, and when it is accompanied on an organ or a harmonium it is even more so, and often serves to make more endurable a long theological discourse. There are few churches in this district which have not moved with the times, and some very handsome instruments have been introduced. Ayton Parish Church, which is perhaps one of the prettiest structures in the county, has for some years been in possession of an American organ to help the service of praise, but the congregation some time ago was seized with the very laudable ambition to supplant this by a superior instrument. To place an organ in a church requires money, not always a very plentiful commodity in a country congregation. Our civilisation has taught us various ways of obtaining it. Bazaars seem to hold first place amongst the churches when the current coin of the realm is required either to clear off some debt, or do something for the edifices. It was a bazaar the Ayton Parish Church congregation arranged to have in order to provide the cost of the new instrument they proposed introducing to their pretty place of worship. It need only be said here that this was held last autumn, and was a great success, a sum of over £1000 being raised. Once the money was in hand, arrangements were rapidly pushed forward, and contracts were made for the necessary work. The building of the organ was entrusted to the well-known firm of Messrs Forster and Andrews, Hull, who have now completed their labours.

The most convenient place for erecting the instrument was found to be immediately in front of the north window where the pulpit stood. Thus some slight structural alterations were necessary. The

pulpit was removed a little to the east into the chancel, and now commands the church better than before. The choir seat has also been altered along with the platform. The original platform has been divided and the portion set aside for the choir has been railed in, whilst the remaining part has been reserved for the communion table and baptismal font. The organ itself has had to be divided so as not to conceal the handsome stained glass window in the north of the church. The great and swell organ are placed in the left or bass side while the pedal organ is on the right or treble side. The great double open diapasons, to a height of 16 feet, on either side, form the centre front and the great eight feet organ forms the return towers towards the window on .....The height of the centre pipes on either side is about 18 feet. These stand upon a heavy impost moulding which is nearly eight feet from the floor. The total height of the organ is thus about 36 feet. The case work is made of the best yellow pine, stained and in harmony with the wood colouring of the church. The decoration of the front pipes is chaste, there being nothing loud or gaudy about them. No attempt is made here to compete with the high colouring of the window, the nice modest decoration combining beautifully with that of the interior of the church. The pedal organ is entirely wrought by the most improved tubular pneumatic pipes, which also act upon the Great Double Open, Great Open, Great Gamba, and the Swell Leiblich Bourbon of the lower octave. The blowing apparatus is of the most approved pattern. The main bellows and hydraulic engine are entirely underneath and are fitted by Messrs Malvin and Sons, Glasgow. There is also an independent hand blowing arrangement, which can be used without connecting or disconnecting any of the machinery. It is complete in itself, the wind passing from the engine bellows to the main bellows by an automatic slide valve. The whole instrument and its accessories are of the most complete order, and the work reflects great credit upon Messrs Forster and Andrews, the builders, whose labours will, we have no doubt, be highly appreciated by the congregation. The specification of the organ (which was approved by Dr Martin, St Pauls Cathedral, London), is as follows:-

#### GREAT ORGAN

1. Double Open Diapason	Metal	16'	56 pipes
2. Open Diapason	Metal	8'	56 pipes
3. Stopped Diapason	wood	8'	56 pipes
4. Gamba	metal	8'	56 pipes
5. Dulcian, (base from No. 3)	metal	8'	44 pipes
6. Principal	metal	4'	56 pipes
7. Harmonic Flute	metal	4'	56 pipes
8. Twelfth	metal	2 ¾'	56 pipes
9. Fifteenth	metal	2'	56 pipes
10. Trumpet	metal	8'	56 pipes
			Total 548 pipes

#### SWELL ORGAN

11 Leiblich Bourdon	wood	16'tone	56 pipes
12. Open Diapason (lower notes open wood)	metal	8'	56 pipes
13. Hohlflote (closed wood bass, rest triangular	wood	8'	56 pipes
14. Salcional (closed metal bass)	metal	8'	56 pipes
15. Voix Celestes (undulates with No. 14	metal	8'	44 pipes

16. Gemshorn	metal	4'	56 pipes
17. Piccolo	metal	2'	56 pipes
18. Mixture	metal	--	168 pipes
19. Horn	metal	8'	56 pipes
20. Oboe	metal	8'	56 pipes
			Total 660 pipes

#### PEDAL ORGAN

21. Open Diapason	wood	16'	30 pipes
22. Bourdon	wood	16'tone	30 pipes
			Total 60 pipes
		Overall TOTAL	1268 pipes

23. SWELL TO GREAT

24. SWELL OCTAVE

25. SWELL TO PEDALS

26. GREAT TO PEDALS

Three double-action Composition pedals to GREAT and three to SWELL.

The total cost of the organ and necessary alterations will amount to something like £800.

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#### FAST DAY SERVICE

Thursday last being the Fast Day a special service was held at Ayton Parish Church at 11 o'clock forenoon. There was a good attendance and the Rev. Mr Macdonald of Swinton officiated, Dr Crooke, Reston, presiding at the organ. This was the first occasion on which the new instrument had been used at a service. The bellows were operated by hand in consequence of a burst in the main pipe supplying the water for the engine. In the opening voluntary, "Chorus of Angels," *Scotson-Clark*, Dr Crooke shewed much discrimination and proved himself a capable player, his introduction of the Voix Celestes with the Salcional producing a very fine effect. The service was as follows:- Psalm 130, Prayer, Paraphrase 30. Reading of Scripture – St John, 1<sup>st</sup> chapter, portion beginning at 29<sup>th</sup> verse; and also in Revelation, 5<sup>th</sup> chapter. Hymn 49. Prayer. Reading of Scripture – Exodus, 12<sup>th</sup> chapter and first 14 verses. Hymn 158. Sermon. Hymn 319. The closing voluntary was the "Processional March" by *Scotson-Clarke* to which Dr Crooke did every justice, imparting some very delicate touches

The Rev. D.D. MACDONALD delivered an earnest and impressive sermon, taking as his text, the words from the 7<sup>th</sup> verse of the 5<sup>th</sup> chap. Of the 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians – "Christ our Passover." The following is a summary :-

Placing ourselves at the point in history, when the Passover was observed as we find it recorded in the scriptures, let us try to get at the idea, which the ceremony was intended to illustrate. It was a great object lesson intended for all men, and for all time. Hence it was meet and fitting, and only right that in the arrangement of this object lesson every detail in it should have the fullest and the greatest care. He purposed to bring before them as briefly as possible the divine symbolism of the Jewish Passover. Christ was *in the Passover*. First of all they read in the book of Exodus that the lamb to be used for the Passover must be "without blemish." The best that the shepherd's fold could give was to be the type of the best that God could give. It did not matter how poor the fold might be in itself, the lamb selected must be without blemish. The Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son, is recognised, even in these days of doubt to have been a man in whom there was no sin. He was without blemish. The next point was that the lamb was to be taken out "from the sheep, or from the goats." Christ was a man like unto ourselves in appearance and nature. A mist of wonder gathers round the memory of the man Jesus, and this often tends to obscure Christ's humanity; but God intended that as His Advent was so should Christ himself be – meek, lowly, simple. Had the Lamb of God been different from other men in his appearance, had he been like some other heavenly visitant we need make no doubt that we would have heard of it. But had He been different in appearance from men the little children would not have gathered round His knee in love and confidence – they would have fled from Him; and men would have been startled as they looked at Him, and the villagers of simple Nazareth would have been affrighted. Christ, however, was like unto ourselves; and had we met any of the villagers of Nazareth and inquired about Jesus, the answer would have been that He was the son of Joseph. Nor was he different from us in His nature. He slept and waked; He loved and mourned; He pondered and grew greatly wise. He tasted life in all points, yet without sin. He experienced disheartenment, bereavement, temptation and struggle, doubt and despondency, and tasted life in everything short of sin. All this was intended by God and ordained. To tell us that Jesus' excellence was no more than the excellence of one who was the flower and crown of humanity is not enough. It might be enough for some, but he (the preacher) made bold to say that it was not enough for his hearers. The Unitarian's Christ was nothing more than man. Jesus, however, was not only the noblest man, was, at the same time God. He was the wisest teacher and philanthropist, the son of God. This was no accident. God intended it to be so. It was deemed necessary that the Redeemer of Israel should be like unto His fellow-men in appearance and in nature. They might remember that Jesus was taunted because of this, and it was what might have been expected, judging from our intercourse with our fellow men; but it is infinitely more important to note that Jesus knew this, and was prepared for it. Did it not magnify the dreadful sin of that nation, and that village of Nazareth that they were blinded by passion and so prejudiced by ignorance and worldliness as to heap contumely upon one with so glorious a mission, so heavenly an escort, and so Divine an origin?

Coming to the third point of analogy between the old and the new, Mr Macdonald said that the same persons who had taken the lamb out of the fold were to slay it in the evening. The type of Christ must die violently and of set purpose and publicly. That Christ died in this way we all know, and the world also knows that in the multitude of huzzas that greeted him as he entered Jerusalem, were heard the voices of those who connived of His death. His death was no matter concealed from the world – He died publicly. And he died in the evening. It was in the evening that the paschal lamb was slain; when man's daily work, good or bad, was done; when the

shadows of the night were gathering; and when toil-worn men and weary women were coming in to wait for the morning of a new day. And it was when the world was waiting, and when its sorrow was loudest voiced that Christ came and dispelled the gloom. Conceive the case of a man who makes nervous haste to start in the morning to fulfil some important engagement, let it be the most important undertaking of his life. He rises betimes and prepares at considerable discomfort to himself. It is God's wisdom that he prepares; and should it not be accounted nothing short of madness for a man to make no preparation for the life that is to come? Further the Passover was for a memorial; it was to be a memorial "for ever" and the Christian communion was to be a memorial "for ever."

Within the wall girding the church where he preached in Swinton there was in the graveyard a tombstone seldom looked upon by those who passed to and fro. The stone marked the spot where the remains of a young British officer were interred. That officer came to the village more than 60 years ago, but nobody knew what his errand was. During his sojourn at Swinton he contracted fever and died somewhat suddenly. The tombstone today is all that tells the passer-by that the remains of that young officer lie there, possibly far away from home and friends. It is a memorial. But the Communion is more than that – more than something to keep an event in memory. Unto what shall I liken our memorial? There is nothing in the whole wide world with which I can compare it. God the infinite is in it, the soul never dies in it; but in our poor and imperfect way of speaking, we can only say that our Communion is a memorial. But it is to be kept "an ordinance forever." The Christian conception of the Communion was very solemn; and he was afraid that even ministers might get into slipshod ways of looking at it, and thinking about it. He himself pleaded guilty to this. Alas, he knew that there were those who went to the Communion ceremony, and paid very little heed to it. The Christian conception of the Communion, he repeated, was awfully solemn. Mr Macdonald went on to speak of those who had in former years sat at the Lord's table. They had risen at the touch of the hand unseen, and at the bidding of the voice unheard by those who were left. Others came and filled their places, but they, too, must soon rise. The world, with its wonders, was ever rolling on; and those were coming forward now would in due season pass away. Why would a man not be solemn? Why should the preacher not be solemn? The very rafters and walls of their church seemed to speak to them of those who were gone. God alone knew how soon those remaining would have to follow. They might be removed very swiftly; the candle of life might go out for any of them in a moment when it was least expected. The call might come in the middle of their work snatching life and breath away; but the man who had made careful preparation would be ready for that. The great Dr Bengel was once asked how he would like to be called of God; and the answer was "At my work." The call might come to some of them when they were weary and feeble, and forsaken; it might come when they were lonely and old -let them keep their feast in haste, in a Godly haste, which will never interfere with our serenity of mind, but on the contrary, will bestow the peace and tranquillity we so much need.

## ORGAN RECITAL

In the evening an organ recital was given in the church by Mr Charles Bradley, organist and choir-master at South Leith Parish Church, assisted by Miss Maconochie, Edinburgh, and Mr Wm. Wood, Berwick. There was a large audience.

The Rev. J. J. M. L. AIKEN said that to-night they were met to put the copestone on a work which had engaged the attention and the interest of the congregation for the last two years. They now saw the fruit of their labours. and he hoped it would be a lasting monument of the zeal and progress of the congregation, which during the eleven years he had acted as their minister had been bound together in sympathy and affection. Although, personally, he was very much gratified at the result of the work as now completed, still in the cup of joy there was mingled a certain amount of bitterness, because at least three of those most anxious in the preparation of the work were no longer with them. He would wish to acknowledge the diligence of the tradespeople, and the courtesy and care of the representatives of the building firm. He also desired to thank Mr Bradley and the other friends from Edinburgh and Berwick who had assisted in the vocal part. of the programme. He concluded his remarks by requesting the audience to refrain from applause, and to allow the organ to speak for itself. The programme was as follows:-

100 <sup>th</sup> Psalm		<i>Old Hundreth.</i>
Prayer		Chairman's Remarks
Overture	"Occasional Oratoria"	<i>Handel.</i>
	(a) Andante in G	<i>Batiste.</i>
	(b) Andante in F	<i>Hely.</i>
Solo	"With Verdure clad" Miss McConochie.	<i>Haydn.</i>
Sonata No. 2 in C Minor		<i>Mendelssohn.</i>
Song	"Nazareth" Mr William Wood.	<i>Gounod.</i>
Evening Prayer		<i>H.Smart.</i>
Largo		<i>Handel.</i>
Solo	"Come unto Me" Miss McConochie.	<i>Handel.</i>
Adagio form String Quartet		<i>Spoehr.</i>
Offertoire	"Sur Deux Noels"	<i>Guilmant.</i>

Song	“The Plains of Peace” Mr William Wood.	<i>Barnard.</i>
March	“Athalie”	<i>Mendelsohn.</i>

Mr Bradley is well known as a capable player, and his familiarity with the monarch of the choir would have elicited frequent marks of approbation had it not been for the request printed on the face of the programme desiring the audience to refrain from applause, and to which the minister also had been careful to call attention. There were times, however, when one felt the impulse to encourage the player in the conventional way pretty strongly. His technique was admirable, and his power of combining striking and appropriate effects remarkable. The power of the instrument and its range of expression were fully demonstrated. The congregation of Ayton Parish Church now possess an organ of which they have every reason to be proud. In the construction of it Messrs Forster & Andrews, Hull, have exercised very great care, and introduced some of their latest developments in organ mechanism. Their work is, as might have been expected, worthy of the great name they have earned during their 50 years' experience in the trade. Some have expressed the opinion that the organ is too powerful for the size of the Church. This, however, is not the case, and may probably have arisen from the fact that Mr Bradley frequently employed in the fortissimo passages the fullest volume of tone, evidently with the object of shewing that the instrument would meet all the demands likely to be made upon it. We were very pleased to hear the voice of Miss McConochie again. Her phrasing in “With verdure clad” (Haydn) evidenced refinement of taste, and the runs were very smoothly executed. She has a sweet soprano voice of good quality and of such delicate organisation that in our opinion she ought to avoid the tremolo. Her interpretation of “Come unto Me” (Handel) was a finished and artistic effort. It is but fair to notice that her position being so close to the organ tended to detract somewhat from the effect of her solos. Mr William Wood, a pleasant bass, gave very good renderings of Gounod's beautiful song. “Nazareth,” and Barnard's " Plains of Peace.”

#### NOTES

The original or pre-Reformation chapel or church of Ayton was connected with the Priory of Coldingham. In the History of the Priory we read that - “The Church was a cell or dependency attached to our monastery, and its advowson was vested in the Prior and Chapter of the Monks. It was probably founded soon after the institution of the Priory, though the first notice of it made in the chartulary is in a deed granted upwards of a hundred years later. The names of its chaplains occasionally occur, but as little or nothing is known of their history, their insertions appear unnecessary. The first of them whom we have met, with was *Robertus Parsona capelloe de Ayton*, who must have held office between the years 1166 and 1232, being the period during which the individual, whose charter he attests, flourished. The last of its chaplains under the old system seems to have been John Home, who, on the 6th May, 1554, subscribed a contract entered into by Sir Patrick Home of Ayton, and his kinsman, Wm. Home of Prendergust. Like the greater part of our old ecclesiastical edifices, the chapel was built in the form of a St. John's Cross. The present Church stands upon the foundation of that part of its walls which constituted its nave. The eastern wall of the chancel, and the south wing of the transept, constructed of square hewn sandstone, and clothed

with a beautiful mantel of ivy, are its sole remains. The interior of the transept has, in more recent years, been employed as a burial vault by the family of the present proprietor. Its window, with its circular arch, and massive mullions, affords a fine specimen of the intermixture between the Saxon and Norman styles of architecture, introduced into Scotland during the twelfth century."Of course, the "present Church" alluded to above is the old Parish Church, now in ruins. The foundation stone of the Church, into which the new organ has just been introduced, was laid on 8<sup>th</sup> September 1864 by Mrs Mitchell-Innes and Miss Mitchell-Innes, Ayton Castle; and the design of the building is after the English Gothic of about the fourteenth century. Before the congregation decided to have a new Church, the old one was beginning to show unmistakeable marks of decay. It was in this old Church, now in ruins. that the Rev. George Tough preached from 1813 till 1842. He passed away in August of that year; and in October the Rev. Daniel Cameron was presented with the charge, and was inducted the following April. Mr Cameron came from Glasgow - and at first intended to have followed the legal profession. After being licensed he did good work as a missionary in Glasgow, and the fact that he was successful in bringing together and establishing a new congregation at Bridgegate is a sufficient proof of his energy and ability. He was duly ordained to the *quoad sacra* Church of Bridgegate, and ministered there until he received the appointment to Ayton parish. Mr Cameron laboured at Ayton until his death. His last sermon was delivered on the 16<sup>th</sup> April, 1882, and he died on the 22<sup>nd</sup> May of the same year. His successor was the present pastor, the Rev. J. J. M. L. Aiken.