

Ayton Old Church

PROCEEDINGS IN CONNECTION
WITH THE MINISTERIAL JUBILEE

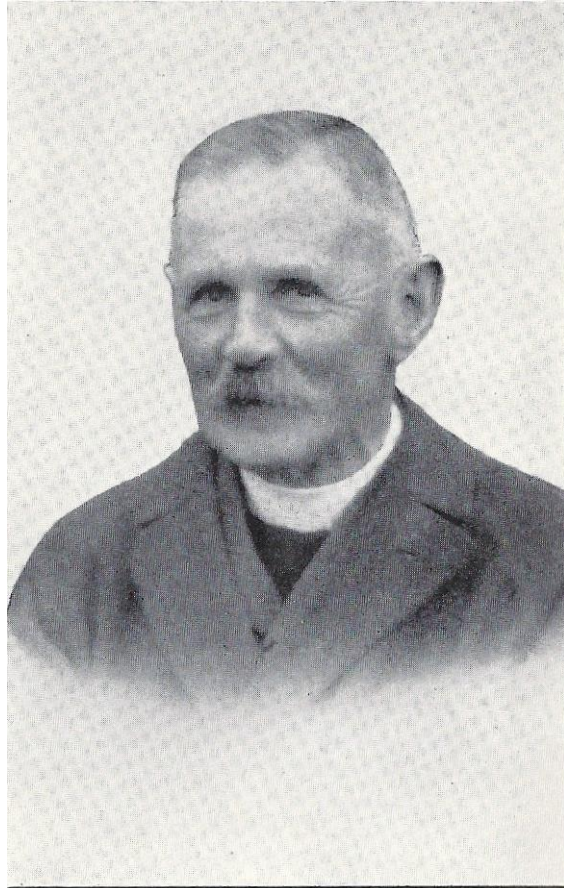
of the

Rev. J. J. MARSHALL LANG AIKEN
V.D., M.A., B.D.

ST ANDREWS DAY, 30th NOV. 1932

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1933



REV. J. J. M. L. AIKEN, WHO CELEBRATED HIS JUBILEE.

AYTON OLD CHURCH

JUBILEE of REV. J. J. M. L. AIKEN

To mark the Jubilee of the Rev. J. J. M. L. Aiken as Minister of Ayton Old Church, a social gathering was held in Ayton Public Hall on Wednesday evening, 30th November 1932. This proved to be a memorable gathering, fully 600 people being present, every available inch being taken up. Great enthusiasm marked the whole proceedings, and presentations were made to both Mr Aiken and his sister, Miss Aiken. The hope was expressed that he would live to see his Diamond Jubilee.

Among those present were :

The Rev. J. J. k. L. Aiken,

Miss E. E. Aiken,

Mrs Avery (sister),

Mr Norman Avery (nephew),

Miss Avery (niece),

the Rev. J. Ritchie, Gordon, Moderator of Presbytery ;

the Rev. H. M. Lamont, Coldingham;

the Rev. J. Scott Morrison, Houndwood;

the Rev. J. Maclaren, Jedburgh;

the Rev. Thomas Porteous, and

the Rev. Alexander Russell, Edinburgh;

the Rev. J. Paul, Ayton West;

the Rev. H. P. Reid, Whitsome, Clerk Presbytery;

the Rev. J. A. Cameron Legerwood, Clerk of the Synod of Merse and Teviotdale ;

the Rev. T. Allan, Paxton;

the Rev. J. T. Serymgeour, Ladykirk;

the Rev. J. M'Kechnie and Mrs M'Kechnie, Edrom;

the Rev. D. D. F. Macdonald, Swinton;

Mr Ian Macdonald, Nigeria;

the Rev. J. A. R. B. Muir, Foulden;

the Rev. D. W. Mackay, Bunkle;

the Rev. D. S. Leslie, Hutton;

Dr W. M. Gillespie, Tweedmouth;

Sheriff Bu-ru-Murdoeb, Balabraes;

Mr and Mrs T. P. Doughty, Ayton;

Mr A. G. Doughty, Lauder;

Mr D. B. Doughty, Ayton;

Mr and Mrs Millican, Harelaw;

Mr and Mrs C., Jegg, The Maines, Chirnside;

Major Ainsworth Wilson and Mrs Wilson, Ayton ;

Mr and Mrs J. J. Rankin, Ayton Law;

Mr and Mrs J. D. Smith, Peelwalls;

Mr and Mrs Martin, Bleachfield;

Mr and Mrs H. D. Fraser, Schoolhouse, Chirnside;

Mr A. Brown, Coldingham, and formerly of Chirnside;

Mr Fotheringham, Schoolhouse, Ayton;

Mr N. W. Willins, Royal Bank, Ayton

Mrs Pyle and Miss Wilson, Paxton;

Miss Stuart, Secretary of the Woman's Guild, Ayton;
 Mrs Conely, Acharn, Aberfeldy;
 Mr R. Dalgetty, Shettleston, Glasgow;
 Mr Johnston, Whitecross, Coldingham;
 Mrs Burgon, Eyemouth;
 Mrs W. Hume, Houndwood;
 Miss Joan Brown, Western Infirmary, Glasgow;
 Mrs Lugton, Belford;
 Mrs Scott, Balerno, Midlothian;
 Mrs Purves, Cairncross, Reston;
 Mr Wm. Lothian, Edinburgh;
 Miss Barker, Berwick-on-Tweed;
 Mrs Elliot, Chirnside;
 Mrs Hogg, Ord;
 Misses Jeffrey, Glasgow;
 Mrs Bell. Springbank, Ayton;
 Mrs Martin, Chirnside;
 Mrs Martin, Duns;
 Mrs T. T. McCrow, Edinburgh;
 Mr G. W. McCrow and Mr J. W. S. McCrow, Edinburgh;
 Miss Mackintosh, Health Visitor, Duns;
 Mrs Blackie, Duns;
 Mr and Mrs William Lindsay, Singapore, and Mrs Lindsay, Prendergust;
 Miss Speedie, Chirnside;
 Misses Milne-Home of Paxton;
 Miss Stirling, Houndwood;
 Mrs Stevens, London, late of Ayton Cocklaw;
 Mr and Mrs Alick Tait, Coldingham;
 Misses Hossick, Schoolhouse, Hutton;
 Mrs Hilton Millican, Lumsden, Coldingham.

The proceedings opened with a service of tea, and the ladies had spared neither time nor trouble in preparing for this most important part of the evening's enjoyment. Tea was expeditiously served to the large gathering, and was greatly appreciated by everyone. Mrs Spratt, Ayton, acted as Convener, and was helped by the following ladies:

Mrs Steele, Mrs Telford, Mrs Martin, Mrs Anderson, Mrs Browne, Miss Allan, Miss Watt, Mrs Edminson, Mrs Mair, Mrs Willins, Mrs Hardy, Mrs T. P. Doughty, Mrs J. Wood, Mrs A. H. Christie, Mrs W. Lugton, Mrs J. Christie, Mrs Inglis (PostOffice), Miss Fender, Mrs Smith, Mrs Lindsay, Mrs W. Aitchison, Mrs Phillips, Mrs J. Anderson, Miss Gladstone, Mrs Ainsworth Wilson, Mrs Geddes, Mrs Shed, Mrs A. Dalgetty, Miss Dalgetty, Mrs Johnston, Mrs Greig, Mrs T. Armatage, Mrs Armatage, Mrs Leys, Mrs J. Aitchison, and Mrs Swanston.

The platform was beautifully decorated with hot-house plants, cinerarias, coleus, and solanums, kindly lent from Ayton Castle Gardens.

HOPES MORE THAN REALISED

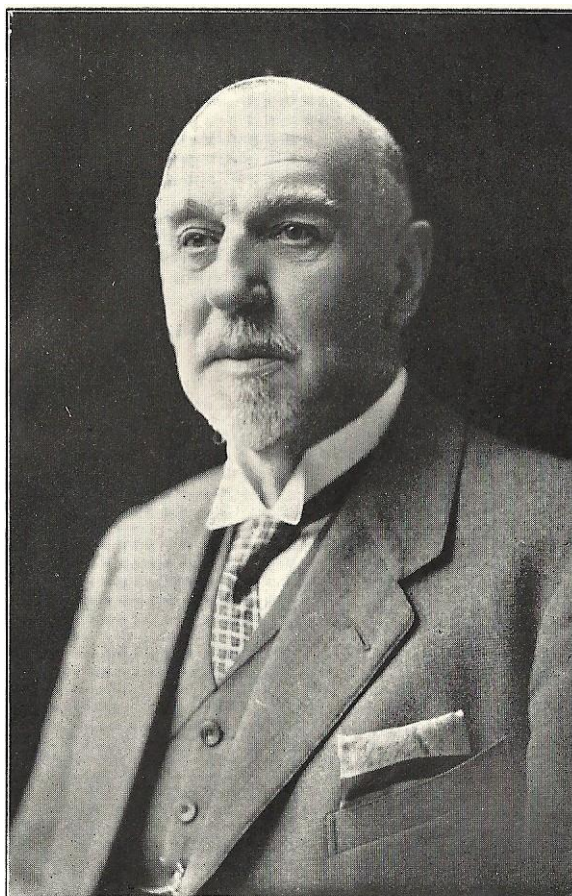
As convener of the congregational committee, Major Ainsworth Wilson intimated

that as soon as they launched the idea of a presentation to mark Mr Aiken's jubilee their hopes had been more than realised, as they little expected to receive such a large number of letters from friends in all parts of the world giving expression to sincere regard for him. Among these were apologies from Mrs Cowan, Yetholm; Dr A. P. Sim, Edinburgh; the Rev. J. B. Garvie, Chirnside; Mr Mitchell-Innes of Whitehall; Principal Cairns, Aberdeen; Sir Christopher and Lady Furness, Netherbyres; the Rev. T. R. Thompson, Greenlaw; Mrs Ross Hume of Ninewells ; the Rev. J. L. Douglass, Eccles; and the Rev. G. S. Jeffrey, Longformacus.

CHAIRMAN'S REMINISCENCES

Bailie T. T. McCrow, V.D., D.L., J.P., Edinburgh, who presided, remarked: " I cannot but regard it as a great honour that I should have been invited to preside on this highly interesting and, indeed, joyful occasion, when we are met to celebrate Mr Aiken's ministerial jubilee, an event which will be memorable in the annals of this parish. At the same time I share the regret which you will all feel that our dear friend, Mr Doughty, has felt himself unable physically to undertake this duty, which was his privilege as senior member of the Kirk Session, and I feel sure that you would wish me to convey, to him our fullest sympathy in what I know to be for him a very keen disappointment.

"At this point I would say to you that I know my duty sufficiently well not to detain you at any great length with my remarks, and I hope that what I have to say may not be considered inappropriate to the occasion. But first let me acknowledge the great kindness I have met with in coming back to Ayton for this event, which, I confess to you, has made me feel, even at this moment, almost like the young man I was in 1882.



BAILIE T. T. McCROW, WHO PRESIDED.

"To proceed," continued Mr McCrow, "let me say that on turning my thoughts to this occasion I found myself visualising the parish as I knew it even beyond that remote date. And what a flood of memories! My mind travelled back to the laying of the foundation-stone of the New Parish Church in 1864, which, as described in the Jubilee booklet, presented a charming picture. I remember seeing the ceremony quite well. I recalled many of the better-known people. First the Laird and his gracious Lady, Mr Aiken's predecessor, and the ministers of the other two churches, the two doctors, the firm of lawyers, bankers, farmers, men in business, teachers, Robert Mennon, the poet, a worthy man, and last, that conscientious public servant, Robert Grieve, the postman, all of whom in their respective spheres and various capacities served their day and generation. I remembered my school-fellows and our haunts with Mr Moffat, the factor, somewhere in the background, and also several of the episodes which to me now appear somewhat humorous, in the everyday life of the village."

Continuing, he said: "There was not then that unified system of local government which we have to-day, but due mainly to the generous interest of the lord of the manor, the late Mr Mitchell-Innes of Ayton Castle, the village was much in advance of its neighbours in cleanliness and other respects. It was also a busy centre, supplying many of the requirements of other places in the district, but now, perhaps, with new and increased facilities, both for travel and transport, it may have lost something of its importance. Be that as it may, to me it is still the same dear old place, my native place, and to borrow a line from Goldsmith:

"The loveliest village of the plain."

Again, and it seemed but yesterday, I saw our young minister in my mental picture as he stood in the pulpit of our beautiful church, not without some timidity, I imagine, yet with high purpose in his soul, to deliver his first message to a large and expectant congregation. In these fifty years which have come and gone since then, we have witnessed a long procession of men, women and children passing across life's stage, but we are happy to-night in the knowledge that there are still many throughout the parish, though unable to be here, as well as in other places of the homeland and in far-off corners of the globe, who, realising how much they owe in their lives to Mr Aiken and his ministry, are remembering him this day with deepest gratitude and are in full accord with us in our jubilee celebrations.

"From what I have said," he continued, you will have gathered that I was a member of the church at the time of Mr Aiken's induction. I was likewise a teacher in the Sunday School for some time afterwards, prior to taking up residence in the parish of Chirnside and later in the city of Edinburgh after many years. But the separation was more apparent than real, as I have had many opportunities of meeting with Mr Aiken in these bygone years, on occasions as brother officers in the old Berwickshire Volunteers, and my respect and admiration for him have been increased with each and every experience. It is you, however, the parishioners of the present day, who of your own knowledge, and from what you have learned from others who have passed on, can best testify to Mr Aiken's unremitting labours throughout these long years, striving always to fulfil his high mission in the spiritual uplift of the people. Alike in the Sabbath-day services of the church and in the Sunday School, to which he has given special care, he has sought prayerfully and with earnest exhortation to present the claims of Him whose servant he is.

"And now, sir," concluded Mr McCrow, "as Chairman of the meeting, I warmly congratulate you on having reached this day in the course of your ministry, verily a day of thankfulness and great joy vouchsafed to few, and I pray that the blessing of Almighty God may abide with you in your continued labours, and at eventide may you experience much joy and comfort in the remembrance of many tokens of affection from your congregation and others, and likewise of this public testimony that your work in this place has been well and faithfully performed."

"THIS ABERDEEN PAN"

The Rev. H. M. Lamont said that it was a peculiar privilege for him to take part in the Jubilee celebration. He wished to pay a personal tribute to Mr Aiken, his dear friend for thirty-four years. He also conveyed the good wishes and congratulations of the Priory Church, Coldingham, where Mr Aiken was esteemed by all, and hoped that the goodwill which had so long prevailed between the congregations at Coldingham and Ayton might continue. He also congratulated the members and adherents of Ayton Old Church on their loyalty to and appreciation of their minister, adding that to his mind these had meant more to Mr Aiken than any gift he might have received or could receive. Fifty years ago Ayton congregation had elected him to be their minister, and as time went on they felt drawn to him and so got the best out of him and made the long ministry profitable.

"Mr Aiken has done his duty by you," continued Mr Lamont, "and you have done your duty by him ; and so with minister and people united in love and loyalty and with the Divine blessing on it, the ministry could not be other than a happy and prosperous one. I congratulate you all heartily."

Mr Lamont thought that Mr Aiken had two qualities that had bound his congregation to him - first of all his humanity. He had seldom come into contact with anyone who

touched life at so many points as he did, nor anyone who had found so much to interest him as he. When he had seen him fitting so easily into any company, he confessed that he had sometimes wondered which of the moods through which he passed was most congenial to him. The second quality was his youthfulness. "Mr Aiken is young in mind and spirit as well as in body," added Mr Lamont. He also added that recently he purchased a little book, and the dedication contained the following words "How old are you?" with the reply: "I am seven years old," and following this were the words: "Then I write my book for you." "How old are you?" queried Mr Lamont. "I am seventy years young," Mr Aiken could reply.

"For," added Mr Lamont, "Mr Aiken had retained a remarkable freshness of mind and spirit as well as of body, and wherever he goes he radiates sunshine, and whether in the pulpit, the Presbytery, or the home, he infects others with his buoyancy and charm. May this Aberdeen Peter Pan - this seventy years young man, this impersonation of juvenility be long spared among us.

"Mr Aiken stands to-night on a high peak of his ministry, but he has come along a winding road, and such a gathering as this to-night raises memories of old friends and helpers he has known at each stage of the journey. Some of them have been removed, but others have taken their places, and now at this fiftieth stage, we meet here to-night to greet him, and to congratulate him on having as staunch a body of office-bearers and of members as ever he has had. I see here in this great gathering, past and present, and boys and girls, I hope to be future members of Ayton Old Church. And I rejoice with you most heartily in common joy and thankfulness as we think of old friends of Ayton Parish Church who are now in other lands and who may be thinking of us to-night, because is not this St Andrew's Night, and wherever Scottish people are gathered their thoughts are turning to the old home, to the old church?"

PRESENTATION TO MR AIKEN

At this stage of the proceedings Mr James Inglis made the presentation to Mr Aiken, and in doing so said: "I do not propose to praise Mr Aiken as our minister and friend: he has been known to us all for many years, and his good work and kindly deeds, known and unknown, speak for themselves and are the best witnesses of his work. Anniversaries come and go and receive a certain acknowledgment and meed of praise, but a Jubilee is an event in the life of a minister which calls for more than passing notice. This large gathering is eloquent testimony of the importance of the occasion, and also an indication of the affection and esteem in which our minister is held. Unfortunately there are few here to-night of those who welcomed Mr Aiken fifty years ago. Time has mellowed us all, and we are happy to find him hale and vigorous and, to all appearance, going strong.

"I regret, as we must all regret, the absence of Mr Doughty, the senior member of the Kirk Session. He was amongst those who welcomed Mr Aiken fifty years ago, and, you will agree, no one could more fittingly have spoken for the congregation on this occasion.

"My acquaintance with Ayton covers a much shorter period, but is long enough to testify to the happy relations which have always existed between Mr Aiken and his flock. I have been asked to convey to you, sir, very imperfectly, I fear, the hearty congratulations of the congregation and the parish on your attaining the unique distinction of fifty years' service, and their sincere wishes for continued good health and happiness in your work here. I have to ask your acceptance of this wallet, the gift of the congregation and a wide circle of friends, as a token of their esteem and regard for you as their minister, and in appreciation of your kindly interest and service in all

that pertains to our church and parish. I have much pleasure in handing you this wallet, and with it the card bearing the following inscription:

"Presented by the congregation of Ayton Parish Church, and former members and friends, to the Rev. J. J. Marshall Lang Aiken, V.D., M.A., B.D., on the occasion of his jubilee as minister of the parish, in token of their affectionate regard and esteem.- 30th November 1932."

“THEIR HALLOWED MEMORY

When Mr Aiken rose up to reply he was received with loud and prolonged applause. Speaking under great emotion, he said that he had hoped that they would have had with them that night one who had extended to him the warmest hospitality and who had presided over their Woman's Guild-Mrs Thomson. Four days before she passed away a message came from her sick-bed intimating that her affection and best wishes would go with him always. "I still seem to realise her presence," added Mr Aiken," and that of other friends who have passed from sight, but who wished me well and helped me greatly. Their hallowed memory I gratefully salute," he added, drawing himself up and saluting in soldierly fashion.

Mr Aiken also called to remembrance others whose thoughts were with them, but who, through age and infirmity, were unable to be present in their midst, in particular Mr J. T. S. Doughty, senior elder. "To them I extend my sympathy, and hope that for them at evening time it may be light."

"I did not require this presentation to assure me of your goodwill," continued Mr Aiken. "I have had it all the time, and may have traded upon it to cover up some of my delinquencies. Those kind thoughts from Australia, Rangoon, Bermuda, Mexico, Canada, and Massachusetts tax my power to find words to express my feelings. Would that I could reveal the thoughts that rise within me, for they are deep, true and lasting! I came among you as an untried youth, gifted to some extent with a power of speech and judgment, but with comparatively little knowledge of the ways of men. I was a stranger in a strange land when I came, but I can recall the welcome extended on the night of my induction, when, jaded and solemnised by the religious service of the forenoon, I came into this same hall and was heartened to go on my way."

AIKEN JUBILEE PRIZE FUND

Mr Aiken said he also recalled a similar gathering in the hall twenty-five years ago, when they celebrated his semi-jubilee, and on that occasion some unknown sympathiser made provision for all the children of the congregation taking part in the ceremony, and added: " I am proud to intimate that to-night another such-it may be the same-has put within my power the means by which prize books will be supplied to the Sunday School years after I have done with it. 'The Aiken Jubilee Sunday School Prize Fund' is the title of this benefaction, and I take this opportunity in public to thank most gratefully the generous benefactor." Mr Aiken said that he would also like to express indebtedness to their zealous and indefatigable Session Clerk, Major Ainsworth Wilson and, likewise, to his dear friend and neighbour in Coldingham, for the jubilee souvenir book that had been published. He hoped that fifty years hence it might be the means of testifying to the good feeling that subsisted between these two parishes on the Border as far back as the year 1932.

TAKE A HOLIDAY

Returning thanks for the generous gift, Mr Aiken confessed that he was a sufficiently canny Scot to wish to open the wallet and find out whether all Mr Inglis had spoken

was in accord with fact. After doing so, he added: "I cannot express my feelings for the moment: for you have taken the breath from me! I do not know how I shall be able to repay you, nor to what use this gift should be put. I think that, to start with, it might be expended on a holiday when you would have a change as well as I, and I undertake that on Sunday week I shall not be here. That is one day at least, when a new voice will be heard and, I hope, a fresh message will be brought home. That must be the earnest of a longer holiday when the weather seems more tempting."

I ROMPED HOME

Mr Aiken then recalled that in the year of the Indian Mutiny he first saw the light, being born at Ruby Cottage, Aberdeen. Though his coming was no doubt regarded as a blessing by his father and mother, it was in some ways inopportune, because at that very time they had no minister in their church, and his baptism, as well as that of other fifteen candidates, was held up till an appointment could be made. He held in his hand a note that had been addressed to his mother by Mr Lang in regard to this baptism ceremony, and which mentioned him as his namesake. In later years, after Dr Lang had become one of the luminaries of the Church of Scotland and Principal of the University of Aberdeen, he expressed to him his fear that the name John Marshall Lang might have proved rather an incubus to him, but he thought that he had owed something to it, as he fancied it was because of that name that he had been included in a list of six candidates to preach for Ayton Church. "The election took place in October," added Mr Aiken, "and I romped home. I wish to say to you," continued Mr Aiken, "that during these fifty years I have given you the best in my power. It may have cost me a good deal in shoe-leather, but in return I have received your confidence and kind consideration.

"Now that the evening shadows are stretching out I make this request: that you deal gently with me, now no longer a young man, as was Absalom, but an aged disciple, yet your servant for Jesus' sake. I thank you all from the bottom of my heart."

PRESENTATION TO MISS AIKEN

A presentation of a handsome upholstered easy-chair was then made to Miss Aiken by Miss Stuart, the Secretary of the Woman's Guild, this being a gift from the members of the Guild. In doing so, Miss Stuart said: "Miss Aiken, the Woman's Guild and friends wish you to accept this chair in the hope that you will use it and rest in it. As Secretary of the Guild, I have very much pleasure in presenting it to you, together with this card of dedication:

"Presented by Ayton Parish Church Woman's Guild and friends to Miss Ellen E. Aiken, on the occasion of Mr Aiken's jubilee, and to mark their love and esteem. - St Andrew's Day 1932."

Mr Norman Avery replied on behalf of his aunt. His uncle came to Ayton in 1882, and he came into the world a year later. He paid his first visit to Ayton at the age of four years, and he had hardly ever missed a year since then in taking a holiday at the Manse. "I know, therefore," he added, "something of what Miss Aiken has done in the parish and in the Manse." He thanked them all very sincerely on behalf of his aunt for the gift and, amid applause, put Miss Aiken in full possession of the gift by seating her in the chair. For some minutes the audience cheered and cheered again in appreciation of Miss Aiken, who appeared to be very much affected by such a demonstration of affection.

After the presentations, the audience, led by the choir, sang “The Lord bless Thee and keep Thee.”

PRESENTATION FROM THE PRESBYTERY

The Rev. H. P. Reid, Clerk of the Presbytery of Duns, then made a presentation of a case of pipes to Mr Aiken, on behalf of the members. He did so in humorous fashion, remarking that it was not the custom of Presbyterians to crown their saints with a golden halo, still less to give them a Pontifical blessing; but he expressed the hope that with the gift Mr Aiken would crown his own head with rings, and, as he blew them in the air with the reek curling overhead, he would think of his friends in the Presbytery of Duns.

Led by Mr Reid, the whole audience then stood and sang lustily “For he’s a jolly good fellow.”

OVERWHELMED

Mr Aiken admitted that he was over-whelmed by this wonderful demonstration. “All I can say,” he added, falteringly, “is that I have tried to do my best.” He then said that there were two remarks which he had omitted, and which had also been omitted from the jubilee book, though he did not mean to imply that the editor was in any way to blame for that. The first was that during the fifty years public worship was only once intermitted in the Parish Church, and that owing to his sudden indisposition. “And, secondly, I wish to say that during all those years the Manse door has never once been closed against the wayfaring man and the enquirer. I wish to acknowledge the good hand of God upon me and also the efficient and loving management of those who shared my home.”

Humorously Mr Aiken added that in regard to the gift of his brethren he was a little shocked to think that members of the Presbytery, who were expected to set an example, could so tempt a brother on the downward path. He was, however, pleased to think that men whom he had known for such a long time in the Presbytery had found something in him worthy of recognition.

PRESBYTERY’S CONGRATULATIONS

The Rev. J. Ritchie, Gordon, Moderator of Presbytery, said he had been commissioned by the Presbytery to convey hearty congratulation to Mr Aiken on the happy occasion of his jubilee. Mr Aiken had had, no doubt, many other happy occasions in his life, but he must have been an exceedingly fortunate man if he had not also experienced the other side of life. He was a very modest man and might think that some of the speeches had done him more than justice, but he assured him if any such idea had entered his mind his modesty had led him astray.

“The Presbytery of Duns are proud of Mr Aiken, and we honour him because he has so consistently upheld the dignity of his office, and because he has so well preserved the traditional association of the Church of Scotland with culture and scholarship.”

DIAMOND JUBILEE HOPES

I should like to submit to him a proposal which I hope he will consider,” added Mr Ritchie. “This is an age of record-making and record-breaking, and anyone who makes a record or breaks a record achieves immortality. Mr Aiken had now a chance

to win further glory. The jubilee of a minister is not unknown, but the diamond jubilee of a minister is unknown; and the Presbytery of Duns cherish the laudable ambition that Mr Aiken will live to set up a new record and attain his diamond jubilee. It is the ardent hope of the Presbytery of Duns, and also of the Parish of Ayton and the Church as a whole, that Mr Aiken will have another ten years of distinguished service.”

CONVICTION OF DUTY

The Rev. A. Russell, Edinburgh, said he was very glad to take a humble part in the jubilee celebrations of Mr Aiken. He could not go as far back as some of those present, but could go back at least to the year 1904 - twenty-eight years ago - when he came to Burnmouth, and when he first met Mr Aiken. He was proud of their friendship, which had grown stronger as the years went by. “I don’t know anyone,” added Mr Russell, “in the ministry or anywhere else who has a deeper conviction of what his duty is than Mr Aiken.”

MISS AIKEN’S PART

Mr Russell said he was very glad that they had associated Miss Aiken with the presentation. “I know the Manse at Ayton well. I know its atmosphere of peace and quiet, and I am sure that it is to Miss Aiken you owe your minister’s strength to go on all these years, because she has watched over him daily and has taken care of him.”

NO BETTER NEIGHBOUR

The Rev. J. Maclaren, Jedburgh, recalled that twenty-five years ago, when he came to Ayton West Church, he followed, on the day of his induction, the custom of shaking hands with the congregation at the church door. After all the congregation had left, a dark-haired man came up and shook him by the hand and said: “Heartly good wishes for your work in Ayton.” That man was Mr Aiken. And ten days later he was himself on the platform at Mr Aiken’s semi-jubilee celebrations. He recalled how well they had worked together in Ayton; how he had never had a refusal from him when asked to do duty for him; how he used to take him into the Manse garden and tell him the botanical names of all the flowers (“which I straightway forgot”). He also recalled the sadness of the war years, when so many of their young men went away to fight, and also his conferring with him on the 11th November 1918, in making arrangements for a joint service to celebrate peace. No one had been a better neighbour to him than Mr Aiken. He congratulated him and also the congregation of Ayton, and hoped that he might labour in Ayton for many days to come.

SWINTON’S CONGRATULATIONS

The Rev. D. D. F. Macdonald, Swinton, in his own inimitable manner, also added his congratulations to Mr Aiken and to Ayton congregation. Quoting from Shakespeare’s *As You Like It*, he thought that an appropriate description of Mr Aiken could be found in the lines:

“Though I look old, yet am I strong and lusty;
For in my youth I never did apply
Hot and rebellious liquors in my blood;
Nor did with unbashful forehead woo
The means of weakness and debility;
Therefore my age is as a lusty winter,
Frosty, but kindly.”

SPRY YOUNG PARSON

The Rev. Thomas Porteous, Edinburgh, said the jubilee of Mr Aiken recalled to him very vividly the first time he caught sight of him, and that would be forty-nine and a half years ago come next April. He was just out of his Divinity course, and was asked to go down to Berwick to take duty there. On his return journey by train he noticed a spry young parson walking along the road between Burnmouth and Ayton, and said to himself “That is the young Ayton minister.” When the train passed Ayton, which was looking so beautifully picturesque, he said to himself: “Mr Aiken is a lucky dog! - the lines have fallen to him in pleasant places.” Afterwards he came to Berwickshire, and in connection with their ministerial club enjoyed the fellowship of Mr Aiken and found him one of the best fellows he had ever met. Since going to the city of Edinburgh, he always told young candidates in the ministry that they should try to get a Berwickshire parish. There were three reasons why he did so: first, because the people in Berwickshire were not too exacting; second, because the people were so frank; and third, because they were so loyal. Mr Porteous illustrated each of his three reasons with humorous experiences of his own after settling at Gordon. He had spent thirteen years on the Borders, and during that time delighted in the friendship of Mr Aiken.

AYTON WEST’S GOOD WISHES

The Rev. John Paul, Ayton West Church, added congratulations to both Mr Aiken and to Ayton Old congregation on his own behalf and also on behalf of his congregation. Since coming to Ayton he had found in Mr Aiken a genuine and kindly friend.

MUSICAL PROGRAMME

During the evening a delightful programme of music, drawn up by Mr David Macdonald, Berwick, the organist in Ayton Old Church, was thoroughly enjoyed, and if the audience had had their way each and every item would have been encored; but the Chairman very tactfully pointed out that the programme was scheduled to time. Appropriately to St Andrew’s Day, the songs selected were almost entirely Scottish. Accompaniments were played by Miss Barker, Berwick, who was the first organist that Ayton Church had after a musical instrument was introduced. For ten years Miss Barker was the faithful organist in the Church, and she covered the distance one way at least each Sunday on cycle from Berwick. She was specially mentioned in the vote of thanks.

The programme was as follows: song, O’ A’ the Airs,” Mr McKinley, Kirkcaldy; song, Miss McBain, Chirnside, “ Ae Fond Kiss “ ; song, Mr Inglis, Edinburgh, “ For You Alone “ ; reading, “ The Chair-man’s Remarks,” Miss Skelly, Berwick; song, Miss Gullen, Ayton, “ My Ain Folk “ ; song, Mr Inglis, “ My Love is like a Red, Red Rose “ ; song, the Rev. D. S. Leslie, Hutton, “The Wee Cooper of Fife “(encore, “The

De'il's awa' wi' the Exciseman “); violin selections, the Rev. D. D. F. Macdonald, accompanied by his son, Mr Ian Macdonald.

Votes of thanks concluded a memorable gathering, these being proposed as follows: “Our Visitors,” Mr J. D. Smith, Peelwalls; “The Artists,” the Rev J. Paul, Ayton; “The Chairman,” Mr T. P. Doughty, Ayton. To conclude, the Rev. J. Ritchie pronounced the Benediction, after which the company sang a verse of the National Anthem.

TRIBUTE TO CHAIRMAN

Mr T. P. Doughty, in his vote of thanks, paid a tribute to the Chairman who, he said, was one of Ayton's most distinguished sons. “In the letter I received inviting me to undertake this duty,” added Mr Doughty, “it was indicated that I had been selected on account of the long friendship of my father and myself with our friend in the chair. It is the case that he is one of my father's oldest friends, and for my own part I cannot remember a world without T. T. McCrow in it. Much water has flowed down the River Eye under Ayton Bridge from the time when, as a village boy without influence, he left his native place to make his way in the world, until the present time, when he stands before us as one of Scotland's most successful business men, and one who has received civic honours from Edinburgh, the capital city of our little country; but I am safe in saying that during all that time he has never forgotten his native Ayton.”

Turning to the Chairman, Mr Doughty said: “I have no doubt, sir, that if you were asked the direct question you would tell us that your affections are divided between Ayton and Chirnside, where you passed many useful years of your life “- the Chairman indicated his assent - “but all the same I think your main affections are with your native place. Some few months ago I was walking up with our friend here from the Churchyard, where we had been attending the funeral of one whose family had long been staunch supporters of Ayton Auld Kirk, and he told me that what I could hardly credit, and you will have difficulty in believing when you look at him, that he can go so far back that he not only remembered the former church here, but that when he was a boy at school it was his delight, when the school came out in the afternoon, to run down to where the present church was being built and play among the masons and hewers with their chisels and mells. And so, when I heard that our friend had been selected to preside over this gathering, I thought that no more appropriate selection could have been made, for has he not left his mark - his chisel mark on the sacred edifice itself ? And now ladies and gentlemen, will you join in giving a hearty vote of thanks to the Chairman, and will you please make it so hearty that he will understand that it is not only a vote of thanks for conducting this meeting, but an invitation - no refusal will be listened to - to take the chair again on the occasion of Mr Aiken's diamond jubilee.”

The Chairman returned thanks in a few kindly words.

THANKSGIVING SERVICE

On Sunday morning, 3rd December, a special service of thanksgiving was held in Ayton Old Church, this taking the form of a children's service, the young people being gathered together in the centre of the church. The Rev. H. M. Lamont, Coldingham, conducted the service, and there was a good congregation.

TO REMEMBER THE JUBILEE

As a memento of the jubilee celebrations, the Rev. J. J. M. L. Aiken presented to each of the Sunday School scholars, as well as to the teachers, organist and church officer, a copy of the Revised Church Hymnary, on the occasion of the visit of Professor H. R. Mackintosh, D.D., Moderator of the General Assembly, who, at his request also, handed to each member of the Kirk Session a copy of his own work, *The Highway of God*.