

Ayton Parish Magazine

APRIL 1938

Minister

The Rev. DAVID A. HODGES, M.A., B.D.

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Session-Clerk—Mr Francis R. Leys, Hillburn.

Treasurer—Mr William D. Marshall, Ayton.

Organist—Mr David MacDonald, Mus. Bac., Eyemouth.

CHURCH REGISTER

Holy Baptism

"Of such is the Kingdom."

Mar. 6. William Raymond, son of Mr and Mrs William Allan, High Street.

WOMAN'S GUILD

The members of the Guild are invited to a Social Evening and Whist at the Manse on Thursday 21st April at 7 P.M. Will all who are able to accept this invitation please let Miss Christie know by Saturday 9th April?

HOLY COMMUNION

Holy Communion will be celebrated on Sunday 24th April at the Morning Service. In order to avoid confusion it should be noted that those who desire the individual glasses should sit in the pews on the north side of the Nave (village side), from the Organ to the West Gallery.

PRESENTATION TO ORGANIST

The members of the Choir were the guests of Mr MacDonald at a pleasant Social Evening held in the Mission Hall on Friday 18th March. Advantage was taken of this opportunity to present the Organist with the hood and gown of the degree of Bachelor of Music, for which he had recently qualified. In making the presentation on behalf of members of the Choir, the Kirk-Session, and other friends, the Minister referred in appreciative terms to Mr MacDonald's valued services to the Church extending over a period of seventeen years, and wished him continued success in this work. The robing ceremony was duly performed by Mrs Robert Anderson. Thereafter Mr MacDonald thanked members for their handsome gift and appealed for a continuance of that loyalty and co-operation which had been extended to him in the past.

CHURCH RENOVATION SCHEME

During recent months, by direction of the Kirk-Session, copies of the Sketch Plan and Report submitted by the "Advisory Committee on Artistic Questions" have been circulating throughout the parish. Also in recent issues of this Magazine a careful summary of the main proposals has appeared. It would seem, however, from questions asked at the Congregational Meeting, that there is still some misunderstanding as to the occasion and the significance of the Report.

It might be of advantage to set out briefly some matters of practical importance which have engaged the attention of the Kirk-Session.

(1) The possibility of adding, on the vestry side of the Church, a small hall in harmony with the present building, to meet the needs of the Woman's Guild, the Kirk-Session, the Choir, and the Kindergarten Department of the Sunday School. This proposal has since been set aside in favour of (2).

(2) Alternatively, a large Vestry, or Choir Room, to meet all of the above needs, except the first-named.

(3) Some provision for accommodating hats and coats in the Church.

(4) A more suitable position for the Choir. The present position is obviously unsatisfactory from every point of view.

(5) The desirability of using the Chancel for its proper purpose, viz., the celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Communion. The occupant of this part of the Church has expressed a strong desire that this beautiful and striking feature of the building should revert to its rightful use.

(6) The unsatisfactory state of the natural lighting, which makes it necessary during the winter months to use the gas-lights during the Morning Service. Factors contributing to this are the sombre tones of the woodwork, the heavy quality of the window-glass both ordinary and stained, and the presence of the gallery, no longer required for the needs of the parish.

(7) The antiquated system of gas-lighting, which is felt by many to be inadequate and quite unworthy of such a beautiful interior. It was considered that the possibility of installing electric light at some time should, at least, be carefully investigated.

(8) The inconvenient location of the pulpit in relation to the congregation, a fact, perhaps, not generally appreciated.

(9) The cloister pew, which at the request of the occupant is used for the Minister's Bible Class, is not directly accessible from the main body of the Church. By a simple arrangement, at trifling expense, this defect could be overcome, and the cloister made available for additional uses.

(10) The unsatisfactory arrangements at Holy Communion, whereby a large section of the congregation does not directly face the Table.

It soon became clear that these matters are all bound up with the more general question as to the suitable arrangement of the Church interior for the purposes of Divine Worship and the celebration of the Sacraments. It will be readily granted that this is a question which can only be decided by experts who have the necessary knowledge and experience to enable them to give a wise and informed judgment.

A further fact should not be overlooked. Although we are responsible for its proper maintenance, this building does not belong to us. It is vested in the General Trustees of the Church of Scotland. Any alteration or addition to fabric, furnishing, or equipment has to be approved by the Consulting Architect to the Trustees, who has the power to veto any ill-considered ventures in this direction. To save us the unnecessary trouble of entertaining proposals, even of a minor nature, which would never be approved by the Architect, the services of the "Advisory Committee" are freely available.

The Kirk-Session decided, very wisely, to seek the guidance of this Committee, and had the great privilege of a visit from Sir D. Y. Cameron, R.S.A., LL.D., and the Rev. Millar Patrick, D.D., than whom there are none better qualified for this task. In view of extravagant statements and ill-informed criticisms we judged it wise to give members an opportunity to study the report for themselves, so that there might be no doubt as to its substance.

We are now left in no doubt as to what can be done, and what cannot be done in our desire to make this handsome building more suitable for its appointed purpose. We may, of course, rest content with things as they are. That is entirely for the congregation to say. But if we are to do anything, even in minor details, it must be directed towards a progressive realisation of the completed plan set before us for our guidance. We must either stand still, or go forward. We cannot go back.