

THE
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"JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF."

A QUAIN old writer once said: "Were the highest heaven my pulpit, the whole host of the redeemed my audience, and eternity my day, Jesus alone should be my text." So by the phrase at the head of this article Paul fixes attention not on some system of theology, not on some doctrine about Christ, but on Jesus Christ *Himself*.

One of the most hopeful signs of the times is the prominence that is being given to the person and character of Christ. The infidel and pseudo-scientific attacks on Christianity have resulted in a closer study of the four Gospels, by friends and foes of Christ alike, and Christianity has gained much by the search. The best and highest criticism admits the historical accuracy of the four Gospels. We do not ask were these books inspired, but are they true. Honest historical criticism declares that these Gospels contain facts of history. The life there portrayed once lived. We have His words and works recorded in simple, homely language. Thus we have the very best material for forming a knowledge of Him. The Gospels are the history of a life. All admit that that life was blameless. The bitterest enemies of Christianity have never charged Him with sin. The challenge, "Who convinceth me of sin?" has never been taken up. All hostile religions admit the moral and spiritual greatness of Christ. He whom we love, and trust, and serve, is recognized by all as the highest, noblest, purest, the only perfect Being that ever lived. His name is above every name.

Jean Paul Richter speaks of Him as "the holiest among the mighty, and the mightiest among the holy." This is the strength of our religion. The character of Christ is the best evidence of the genuineness of Christianity.

We cannot too strongly emphasize this truth. We cannot give Christ *Himself* too conspicuous a place in our thought and theology. All the doctrines of our religion, all our hopes of future blessedness, rest on the foundation, Jesus Christ Himself. Religion is not belief in a system. It is love for and obedience to a person. It is not believing doctrines about Christ, but loving faith in Christ Himself, that saves.

Christ made religion to consist in attachment to Himself. He did not frame a system of theology. He wrote out no thirty-nine articles, no Westminster confession, no Nicene creed. He simply said to men, Follow Me. Learn of Me. He Himself was His own great theme. I am the way. I am the light. I am the life. I am the truth. Come unto Me. Follow Me. Abide in Me. The great-

est question of discipleship was, Lovest thou Me?

Let us give heed to these simple Gospel truths. Let us again make love for Christ and obedience to Christ the test of discipleship, the basis of fellowship. Let loving union with Christ by faith and love, be the bond of union amongst us as Christians and Congregationalists. We are one in Him. We look to Him as Saviour, Teacher, Friend, and King. Let it be clear to all men everywhere, that this, and this alone, is the bond that unites us in Christian fellowship and Christian work. Personal love to a personal saviour is the heart and essence of true religion, is the strong and only possible bond of Christian union.

EDUCATION OF THE BLIND.

OUR Provincial Institution for the Education of the Blind is situated at Brantford. From Mr. Langmuir's report it appears that during the year ending 30th September, 1878, this establishment afforded accommodation and instruction to 175 pupils. The number in attendance in the preceding year was only 148. This increase necessitated enlarged accommodation; and accordingly a new wing has been added to the building and a separate dwelling house built for the principal. So far as practicable, the pupils are taught all the branches usually taught in the ordinary Public Schools, such as reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, history, English literature, etc.; and, in addition to this, special care is taken to put them in possession of some useful art, such as is possible for persons in their condition to practise, and by which they can earn a livelihood after their educational course is finished. It appears that, during the year, 27 pupils were receiving instruction in the manufacture of willow ware; 49 were being instructed in the use of sewing machines; 27 were engaged in the manufacture of socks by machinery for the public institutions of the Province; 63 received daily instruction in hand sewing; and 80 were taught hand knitting and fancy work. During the last two or three years special attention has been given to the development of the musical talent which many of the blind are found to possess in a very high degree. The work of this department is now carried on by three resident teachers and a monitor, and by two non-resident teachers. The number of pupils receiving instruction in vocal music was 83; while 53 were taught in the various kinds of instrumental music, and 23 were studying musical notation. It is expected that some at least, perhaps many, of these pupils will afterwards take good positions as professional musicians; and the Inspector recommends that a good pipe organ should be introduced for the instruction of such pupils as show an aptitude for that class of music, with a view to preparing some of them to be organists in churches.

OBITUARY.

THE LATE REV. JOHN DURRANT.

This venerable servant of God, and minister of His Gospel, quietly passed away to his rest, on the 21st of February, after an illness of four years and a half, at the advanced age of eighty-three years. Although, in consequence of his having been so long laid aside from active ministerial life, Mr. Durrant was but little known to the younger members of our churches, his many years of service in our Canadian pastorate make it fitting that he should not pass away from our midst without some brief notice of his life and labours. From members of his family, and the Rev. H. Hughes who preached his funeral sermon, we have learned the following particulars of his early life:—

Mr. Durrant was born in the town of Brighton, England, July 2nd, 1796. Having been converted to God, in his fifteenth year, through a sermon preached by that remarkable young minister the Rev. Thomas Spencer, of Liverpool, he first became a member of the Countess of Huntingdon's chapel in that place, where he was actively engaged in a Young People's prayer meeting, the Sabbath School, and in a singing class. Being possessed of great natural musical gifts, at the age of seventeen he was chosen leader of the choir, and soon afterwards became reader of the Liturgy and Church Service, an office which he held for three years.

Several ministers who officiated in the chapel at Brighton urged him to give himself to the work of the ministry. He accordingly began a course of reading and study, under the direction of several of these gentlemen, with a view to entering the Countess' College when his apprenticeship was completed.

For three years he employed his Sabbaths in preaching the Gospel in neighbouring villages, walking often from twenty-five to thirty miles on the Sabbath and holding three services.

At the end of this term he became despondent with respect to the ministry, went into business in Portsea, and tried to give up all thoughts of ministerial work. This he was not able to do, however. Business did not prosper; he was still drawn towards the Lord's work, and after a few years he gave up business, and returned to Brighton. The Rev. R. Stoddart wrote him urging him to relinquish secular pursuits altogether, telling him he was persuaded that he was fighting against God, and that he was being chastened for his obstinacy in opposing the clear intimation of the Master's will in past days.

A vacancy occurring in Shoreham, six miles from Brighton, Mr. Durrant went to supply the pulpit there, and afterwards became the pastor of that people, being ordained by the Rev. Messrs. Winchester of Worthing, and Robert Stoddart of London. There he laboured for ten years, when clouds and darkness again came over him, and he resigned his pastorate, and taught music, in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, where his success was such that he had at one time as many as 5,000 pupils.

At this period, the thought of coming to Canada, which had been latent in his mind for many years, revived, and he sought an engagement, with that view, in connection with the Colonial Missionary Society. He was referred by its Secretary to the Rev. Mr. Roaf, who was then the Society's agent for Upper Canada, with whom he corresponded, and as the result, he came to this country in 1843, settling first in Asphodel, as the successor of the late "Father Wheeler," who has so recently entered into rest. After nineteen months of arduous labour in Asphodel, where he suffered many hardships and privations, he was advised by the Missionary Committee to relinquish that field, and occupy Newmarket. Thence he removed successively to London, about 1848; to Stouffville, in 1852; to Southwold, in 1860; and the next year to Stratford, which was his last pastoral charge, and which he voluntarily relinquished, under a sense of his growing infirmities, in 1867.

We can do no more, in the space that can be devoted to this notice, than thus briefly chronicle the names of the churches to which our departed brother minis-