

HOPTON CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, MIRFIELD.

With all the marks of sincerity, the members and congregation of this church yesterday conveyed to their pastor, the Rev. J. H. Best, B.Sc., a hearty welcome on the resumption of his duties after recovery from a dangerous illness, and cordial congratulation on his recent marriage with Miss Emily Reynolds Baines, of Weetwood Lodge, Leeds. With singular good fortune, the pastor's birthday had been unwittingly chosen as the time on which to offer this greeting, and all who joined in the gathering complimented themselves on the circumstances under which they met. The rev. gentleman was ordained as pastor of the church at Hopton a little more than a year ago. Under his charge the various organisations continue in a healthy condition, and his personal influence has been such that a general feeling exists that the call was a most happy one. Prosperous as has been the history of the cause at Hopton hitherto, the future is looked forward to with sanguine anticipations. Not only the Congregationalists of Mirfield, but friends from other churches in the district joined in their good wishes for the welfare of Mr. and Mrs. Best. Four hundred persons gathered in the schoolroom, where tea was provided by the generosity of several lady members of the congregation. While Mendelssohn's "Wedding March" was being played on the organ, they assembled in the chapel, where resolutions expressing their good wishes were unanimously approved. Singing and prayer, conducted by the Rev. Edgar Todd, of Marsden, having been engaged in, Mr. George Tattersfield, of Ravensthorpe, who presided, briefly stated the objects of the meeting.—The Rev. G. G. Waddington, of Broadoaks, Hopton, proposed, and Mr. Crowther Wooler seconded—"That this meeting of the church and congregation acknowledges the great goodness of God on the recovery of their pastor from his late illness, and trusts that his life may be long spared, and that his ministry at Hopton may be useful, happy, and prosperous."—The Rev. W. Gillis, in supporting the motion, said that there was scope for a fruitful and intelligent ministry in that neighbourhood, and he believed they had in Mr. Best one who would step nobly into the breach and do his utmost to minister to the needs of the district. (Applause.)—The resolution was cordially adopted.—Mr. Thos. Patterson proposed, and Mr. J. A. Clapham seconded, a motion of congratulation to Mr. and Mrs. Best on their marriage, and of desires for their future happiness. The latter gentleman remarked that the more extended his acquaintance had been with his pastor, the more he had learned of his good qualities and of his kindly heart. From all they heard of Mrs. Best, she would make Mr. Best a very good helpmeet. She had been assiduous in her visitation of the sick in Leeds, and all present knew how important it was in the Mirfield district—which had a population of about 17,000—that the ministers and their wives should be good visitors. Mr. Best was inclined to do more than his strength would permit, and he trusted that all those connected with the church would extend to their pastor suitable co-operation.—The Rev. E. Todd, a former fellow-student of Mr. Best, supported the motion. He had found Mr. Best beloved in college, because he was universally friendly. He had a high, judicial spirit, also; he was no partisan, and would speak the truth, and do so all the more powerfully if he knew that his efforts were appreciated. (Applause.)—The resolution was cordially adopted, and Mr. F. Baines, of Leeds, responded. He joined with all present in the kind expressions conveyed in the resolution. In Mr. Best they had a pastor who as he was increasingly appreciated would be increasingly devoted to his flock. Mrs. Best knew what it was to carry sympathy to the sick, and also what were the difficulties and needs of a Christian minister's life. If health were enjoyed by the pastor and his wife, he believed the connection established between them and the church would be alike to the happiness of both. (Applause.)—Mr. Samuel Walker proposed, Mr. John Barker seconded, and Mr. Edward Kay and the Rev. Rowland Evans (Baptist) supported, a resolution expressing cordial welcome to Mr. and Mrs. Best, and a hope that the blessing of God would abide with them in all their work at Hopton. Mr. Evans urged his hearers to give Mr. Best their sympathy and support, and thus bear up his hands amid the work he had to do.—The resolution was carried with acclamation.—Mr. Best, who was applauded on rising, asked those present to take for granted that his feelings of thanks for all they had said and done were indeed very great. On behalf of himself and Mrs. Best he thanked those of his own and other churches who had come together to show sympathy with them. Such conduct drew Christians together, and made them feel that they were brothers and sisters in the Lord Jesus.—During the evening anthems were sung by the choir, who were accompanied on the organ by Mr. Fitton.