

# CANADIAN DISCIPLE



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## Mr. Butchart Celebrates Centennial

The name of Reuben Butchart has been well known among Disciples in Canada for many years. All who know him are particularly happy to honor him at this time, as on April 22, 1963 he celebrates his one hundredth birthday.

Mr. Butchart was born, raised and lived most of his life in Ontario, and through the years has been chairman, journalist, historian and poet.

From childhood he has been associated with the Churches of Christ (Disciples), and has been active in the life and witness of the church in all areas, phases and departments of its life. He was deacon, and elder, and in 1948 was honored with the rank of Elder Emeritus by the Hillcrest Church of Christ (Disciples). He was active in the provincial work and served as Secretary of the Ontario Board of Cooperation from 1914-27. He was among the founders of the All-Canada Committee and was its treasurer from 1926-1929. He was also the first editor of the "Canadian Disciple".

Journalism has been a life-long interest of Mr. Butchart, and his career in this field has included service with both secular and religious journals.

From 1885 to 1906 he was associated with the late Edmund B. Shepard, son of a pioneer preacher of the Churches of Christ, founder of the Toronto Saturday Night which became an influential Toronto weekly. He had an important part in the establishment and growth of this paper.

For a year (1907-8) Mr. Butchart served as accountant with the Christian Board of Publication, St.



REUBEN BUTCHART

Louis, Missouri, but at the end of the year followed the urge to return to his home-land. He joined the staff of the Canadian Courier, a weekly journal of public opinion, and here he contributed both his literary and administrative talent.

Meanwhile he was turning to religious journalism. In 1897 he was responsible for the beginning of a National periodical for the Churches of Christ (Disciples),—"The Christian Messenger". He was editor and manager of this paper on a voluntary part-time basis until 1922 when this paper merged with the Maritime weekly "The Christian", and became the "Canadian Disciple".

Mr. Butchart was the first editor of the "Canadian Disciple", a position which he held until his retire-

ment in 1929. The "Canadian Disciple" had by this time won a firm place in the hearts and minds of the Church people in Canada.

The history of religious groups in Canada, especially the history of the Churches of Christ (Disciples) was another of Mr. Butchart's interests since early manhood. His research which began in an informal way led to his writing the following publications: "A Flame of the Lord's Kindling" — a history of women's organizations among the Churches of Christ (Disciples); "Old Everton" — an account of one of our Ontario pioneer churches; "A Primer of Disciple History", and "The Disciples of Christ in Canada Since 1830".

There were also numerous shorter articles published at various times in periodicals. Another accomplishment was the publication of a book of poems "The Lyric Flute" in 1928, and "A Second Testament of Collected Verse" in 1938. These are poems on a wide variety of topics—Nature, Religion, Patriotism, Literature and History. The following are three of his poems.

### IN APRIL

In April —

Was it then our Lord was given  
To hang on the rough rood tree?  
How could such colour be?  
Did no warbling thrush  
The hammers hush  
That April?

In April —

Can there live a cruel thought?  
So remedial a thing  
Is the lilting air of Spring:  
When the first bird song  
Holds the heart for long  
In April.

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# Reuben Butchart Celebrates Centennial

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In April —

How could they nail those hands?  
O Calvary's air was sweet!  
How fit it were, and meet—  
A black cloud's breath  
Shrouded His death,  
In April.

In April —

'Tis then the flowers awake,  
With the sun, the wind and the rain  
Conspiring against death and pain:  
To put down wrong  
Life thrills to the song  
Of April.

In April —

'Tis then the soft rains fall;  
Breath comes sweet in the spring;  
Yet all unwavering,  
Love bore all blame,  
On that rood of shame,  
In April.

## HYMN FOR THE LORD'S SUPPER

What treasures of Thy love are  
stored  
In this Thy table, gracious Lord;  
Where hungry souls by faith are  
fed  
With later manna, heavenly bread.  
Here no degrees, here none are  
least  
At this Thy great memorial feast;  
And worthy they to share a part  
Who willingly come with contrite  
heart.

Partaking of this bread and wine,  
We realize their gracious sign;  
For while we this in memory do,  
Thy broken body comes to view.

We take these symbols from Thy  
hand  
And thank Thee for Thy blest com-  
mand;  
Nor sweeter token could there be,  
Than doing this, dear Lord for  
Thee.

Oh hear us Saviour, while we pray,  
And feed our fainting souls today;  
Make us to know, help us to prove  
The wondrous meaning of Thy love.

## NINTH HOUR MIRACLE

Prone one lay by the Gate Beauti-  
ful,  
Asking an alm's mite, from the  
dutiful.  
No pence Peter had: list to his  
talk;

Son, rise up, Jesus bids ye walk.  
Who heeds this Voice, nor bids it  
gone,  
Slowly may rise, swiftly walk on.  
One step to faith, from faith to  
power;  
Heed ye the call: this is your  
hour!  
Helpless men wait, begging for  
crumbs;  
God's least gift to man, true Bread  
becomes.

With Mr. Butchart's keen interest  
in historical research it is not sur-  
prising that he was a founding mem-  
ber of the Disciples of Christ His-  
torical Society of Nashville, Tennes-  
see. He also served on its Board  
of Directors.

In Ontario he received an Honor-  
ary Life Membership of the Wellin-  
gton County Historical Research So-  
ciety, and later became President of  
this organization.

Our continued congratulations and  
best wishes to Mr. Butchart on this  
centennial anniversary, and his life  
of Christian witness and service.

We trust the many friends who  
are readers of this publication which  
owes much to Mr. Butchart will take  
time to send him a word of greeting  
on this happy occasion. His address  
is 86 Callender Dr., Guelph, Ontario.

—I. M.

## AN APPRECIATION

Reuben Butchart has been my  
friend, for a life-time; and he was  
my father's close friend when both  
were young men. "R. B." — as we  
have always known him, has been  
newspaper man, reporter, business  
manager, editor. To many, his fame  
rests solidly on that monumental and  
prodigious Canadian historical vol-  
ume — "The History of the Disciples  
of Christ in Canada Since 1830."

What a job of disciplined patience  
and persistence that book of 674  
pages of Canadian church facts re-  
presents. I can recall some of the  
years of endless correspondence he  
pursued to write those pages.

But to one who has never met Mr.  
Butchart, his varied work and even  
that book of history just do not re-  
veal the man.

To know him, really, you should  
meet him in his study-library. Slight  
of stature, almost giving one the im-  
pression of physical fraility (but he  
is celebrating his one hundredth  
birthday this month!) Reuben But-  
chart gets into your heart with that

twinkle in his eyes. He has a gentle  
courtesy. He is whimsical with his  
kindly humor.

His luminous mind is stored with  
the lore of years of reading and  
writing. If you were to talk to him  
about books you would find him con-  
versant with 'Alice in Wonderland'  
and equally familiar with the Bible  
— and 'all the literature between'.

If you are an artist you will find  
Mr. Butchart an artist in apprecia-  
tion of drawing, of painting; and the  
collectors interest in the lore of  
woodcuts.

But you will find the real "R. B."  
in poetry and especially in his own  
poetry. He will modestly admit to  
the authorship of the 'Lyric Flute'—  
a book of poems, which brought him  
wide acclaim. His love of music  
found expression in the flute, which  
he plays with considerable more skill  
than the amateur. It was his love  
of the flute which inspired his Poem:

"Low,  
Breathe low, my flute,  
Lest all my soul be mute  
And slow.  
The lyric strains of thy clear  
voice  
Make all my singing soul rejoice—  
— a long poem of rare beauty  
from which these few lines are tak-  
en.

It is in church, however, where  
you will learn best to know and love  
this friend. My earliest remem-  
brance of him, when I was a little  
boy, was his 'way' at the commu-  
nion. Of course I could not under-  
stand what he said when he prayed;  
but his gentleness captured my boy-  
ish heart.

He has always been the soul of  
reverence, yet his merriment has  
lightened many a church problem.  
His love of the beautiful worship  
has inspired not a few preachers to  
be satisfied with nothing less than  
the best in sermonising.

You will find in our friend "R.B."  
a complete absence of greatness, un-  
less you remember the use of the  
word in the Bible: 'Thy gentleness  
hath made me great'. His love of  
the church is constant, joyous, re-  
verent. His memory is stored with  
God's word. It would be a delight  
for me to introduce you to him.  
After you had spent an hour with  
him, you would envy my good for-  
tune of knowing him for a life time.

Hugh B. Kilgour



## Heard Around the Church

by Hugh B. Kilgour

**Question:** "Please tell us something about brother Reuben Butchart's memorial service. We knew nothing of his passing until about a week after he was gone. We have heard that he made certain requests of you about the conduct of the service. Would you feel free to tell us about these requests. So many friends who remembered him on his one hundredth birthday in April, felt that the passing of this dear friend and the memorial service should be marked as an event to remember in the life of our Canadian churches."

**Answer:** It is a privilege to tell of some of brother Butchart's requests about what he called "the last drama of life." The service was held in Hillcrest church. He wanted it there. He had spent his life there in the church's service. He and I had carried on a correspondence over a period of three years. He had made specific suggestions. I had asked him if I might quote some of his poetry in the memorial service. At first he gave reluctant consent; then, later 'cancelled that permission' — and asked that the poetry of the Bible be used only — and in the most poetic version — the King James. He wrote; "The Bible is the 'Book - of - the - month', the Book of the year — and the Book of all life." He asked: "When you read the scripture, please read it clearly, slowly, beautifully. Include these words: "When this mortal shall have put on immortality;" — and these: "My peace I leave with you." — His modesty asserted itself in his request, gentle and whimsical: "When you speak of me, speak sparingly. I admire the British habit of understatement. Avoid too many words. Delete the adjectives (like the good editor he was). Omit Capitals." Brother "R.B." witnessed to his lifelong faith in his master in these words: "Think of me, not as a saint gone home, but as a sinner saved by wonderful grace of my Creator and Redeemer;" and "this deponent now steppeth down and maketh room for others; and retires with love in his heart for all who acknowledge the Lordship and Saviourhood of Jesus Christ our Lord." He asked for the Hymn "When I survey the wonderous cross." These simple requests indicate the gentleness of our friend. He was quiet, modest, unpretentious; yet forceful with a

strength that we had scarce realized until he was gone.

He asked that John Newman's benediction might close the service: "O Lord, support us all the day long of this troublous life, until the shadows lengthen and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over and our work is done — then, of thy great mercy, grant us a safe lodging and a holy rest, and peace at the last, through our Lord Jesus Christ —Amen."

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AUG.-SEP. 1963

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# "Canadian Disciple" *Week* Begins **January 9**

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REUBEN BUTCHART, Editor

Dear Brethren:

In the "Canadian Disciple" you have an unique, incomparable organ of Expression, Information and Inspiration for our Cause.

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FOR IS**

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CANVASS IN  
EVERY CHURCH  
WITH THE  
SUBSCRIPTIONS  
TURNED IN  
SOON

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