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VISIONS OF THE CHRIST.



Jesus and a "Sinner."

J. PITTMAN.

"He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted."
—L. 61: 1.

She sat and wept beside his feet, the weight
Of sin oppressed her heart, for all the blame
And the poor malice of the worldly shame
To her were past, extinct, and out of date.
Only the sin remained—the leprous state—
She would be melted by the heat of love;
By fires far fiercer than are blown to prove,
And purge the silver ore adulterate.

She sat and wept, and with her untressed hair
She wiped the feet she was so blessed to touch;
And He wiped off the coiling of despair
From her sweet soul, because she loved so much.

HARTLEY COLBRIDGE.

A momentous day in Christ's ministry—a
day full of deeds of might and mercy—is
drawing to a close. A Pharisee, named
Simon, invites the Nazarene to eat with him.

His motive in doing so is not above suspicion, for he omits to minister to him some of the common courtesies of hospitality. The guest, on entering the home of his host, divested his feet of his sandals. Water was provided for him to wash his feet, so necessary after a journey in sandals. The host received him into the guest chamber with a kiss, and at the same time anointed his head with sweet, fragrant ointment. These marks of cordial welcome are neglected in this instance. Does Simon intend a slight? Does he wish to show his contempt for the lowly Jesus? or is it to show his own superiority? Jesus notes it; and is he not grieved, not for himself, but for Simon?

For the present, however, he lets it pass. He meekly bears reproach that his great mission of mercy be not hindered. "He will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax."

The table is in the centre of the spacious apartment. At its head and on both sides are ranged couches for the guests to recline

upon, with their feet outwards, while partaking of the meal. A large space is left between the couches and the walls, so that anyone can pass in. An Oriental's house is at all times open to strangers. The laws and customs of hospitality permit free admission to anyone desirous of witnessing the feast.

As the meal is eaten there enters a woman who is known as a "sinner." She stands behind the dust-soiled feet of Jesus. She bends over them. Then hot tears fall from her eyes. His feet are bathed with them. Still lower she bends, till her loose tresses cover those precious feet of her dear Lord, and she makes a towel of her hair and wipes off the moistened dust. Still lower she bends, till her lips press upon them. They are not withdrawn. She is encouraged to give full vent to her emotions. She kisses and kisses them again and again. Then, withdrawing from the folds of her dress a box of costly ointment, she breaks it, and over those sacred feet she pours its rich contents, and the room is filled with sweet fragrance.

She is a "sinner." She has lived a life of shame. But she has heard the precious words that fell from the lips of the Great Prophet. She has seen his deeds of love and mercy. The ice in her heart has melted. Faith has stretched out the hand of pleading. Self-reproach, sorrow for sin, and self-loathing are swelling in her soul to bursting. She cannot restrain her feelings longer. The flood of repentance is poured over the Saviour's feet.

She is a "sinner." A notoriously bad character! Who would like to be seen in her society? Who would like to have any dealings with her? Would not her very touch defile? What will people think and say when they know the facts of this story? Will not Jesus sink in their estimation? Will not his character suffer in their eyes?

Simon is filled with self-righteous indignation. He would expel her but for the defilement of her touch. He scorns the Nazarene as a fraud or a vile fellow. One or the other he must be, and if one then both.

She is a "sinner;" but Jesus is the Saviour. He comes "to seek and to save the lost." His mission is "to set at liberty those that are bound." His spirit rejoices within him, for here, at his feet, is a "sinner," believing, penitent, humble, seeking pity and mercy and pardon.

Propriety, policy, prudence, self-respect; these are human thoughts but not divine. They are far away from the mind of Jesus. His delight is in saving and blessing, and he does so with God-like benignity and fulness.

This "sinner" is with us to-day. The religious world, as a whole, look upon her as did Simon the Pharisee. She is despised as an outcast, shunned as a pestilence, neglected

as a reprobate. She is let alone to die in her sins, and be buried in a suicide's grave. She is incorrigible and past reform. This is the settled judgment of thousands who bear the name of Christ, and hope to meet him in heaven. Did they but know that beneath the degraded exterior there is a heart that kindness and gentleness and sympathy can touch and win to a higher and better life they would think differently of her. Let Jesus speak and act again, through his disciples, as he did towards this sinner, and the same sweet response will follow. Not in every case nor in the majority of cases. Many another "sinner" had watched the Lord. Many another had eaten and drunk in his presence; but his pure life and saving words had no effect upon them. What then, if only this woman—this Magdalene as she is reputed to have been—was touched and reclaimed, would the dear Master think his work in vain? As he uttered those words of mercy in her ear, heaven's high arches rang with the joyous praises of ten thousand thousand angel voices. "For I say unto you that there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth more than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance."

We have here a many-sided object lesson. First and foremost is that Jesus came to save the most abandoned and sinful of men and women; and as his disciples we should count it a joy to "lift up the fallen." Then we are warned to guard against the spirit of the Pharisee, counting ourselves righteous and despising others. Another lesson is, that our love to Christ will be commensurate with our sense of unworthiness. As regards our standing before God, "there is no difference." We all alike owe a debt that we can never pay. But all do not understand how deeply dyed in sin they are. But our love will be proportionate to the measure of our sense of sin forgiven. Job before his trial was a good man, and he was conscious of it, but after his trial he said, "Now mine eyes seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." We also learn from this narrative something of the divinity of Christ. Simon "spake within himself, saying, 'This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him, for she is a sinner.'" Simon little thought that Christ's all-seeing eye was watching all the workings of his heart. Not only did he know all about the poor creature at his feet, but he knew Simon's inmost thoughts also. Truly God is in this place! Then the lowly carpenter's son assumes the great prerogative of Deity when he says with ineffable tenderness, "Thy sins are forgiven"; "thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

Thus this "sinner" is set before us as a reproof when we count any sinner beyond the reach of the gospel or too deeply dyed in sin to bring to repentance. She is set before us also as an illustration of the all-embracing love and compassion of God in Christ. If she is really the Magdalene of the gospel, according to a very old tradition, she is set before us as a bright and shining example of the Saviour's Word. "She loved much, because much was forgiven."

The Essayist.

They read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.—Nehemiah 8 : 8.

Our Work and Influence.*

Read by R. Burns (Unley Church), at Churches of Christ Conference, Adelaide, September 11, 1900.

AN UNPARALLELED MISSION.

The mission of the Church of Christ on earth is the grandest and noblest that was ever entrusted to man. Rightly considered, the work is infinitely more important and far reaching than can be accomplished by all merely human agencies, however commendable, combined. It is in no sense opposed to any outside movement aiming at the betterment of the race; indeed, it is the inspiration of all true advancement. It alone takes an all-comprehensive view of man's nature—temporal, mental, spiritual, immortal—and provides the wherewithal for the purging away of dross, the satisfying of all needs, and the pledge and the means to the fulfilment of our loftiest destiny. To be a member, an honest, earnest, soul-fired member, of the Church of Jesus Christ on earth is the highest honor that can devolve on a man or a woman. We hear men refer with gratification to the offices of honor they hold in masonic lodges, friendly societies and other organizations. These are good things; but they are not to be placed side by side with the unparalleled honor of having one's name inscribed on the indestructible Book of Life, and the privilege of being called to serve in some way in that society of which the Grand Master is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, the Architect and Maker of the Universe—a society in which every member's work is scrutinised by the all-seeing eye, and is tested so as by fire. Education, science and politics are noble subjects, but they deal only with certain phases of the life and requirements of that marvellously complex creature man, and affect only the brief and uncertain tenure of his life in this little world. The revelation of God, and of our relationship to him, both with respect to time and eternity, must ever challenge the supreme attention of the vast majority of thoughtful people. To the deep, wailing cry of every soul in its serious moments after a God and Saviour, science

[*In fairness to all concerned we must say that no resolution was passed at the late South Australian Conference, asking for the publication of this essay. The essay was forwarded by Bro. F. Pittman, who while disagreeing with some parts of the essay thought it would do good to publish it. We give it a place for several reasons. 1. Because of much wholesome truth which it contains. 2. In the interests of fair play. THE CHRISTIAN is not a party paper, though it must be distinctly understood that we hold certain great truths for which we contend. 3. In the "lobbies" at the conference it was stated that we were afraid to publish the essay. We are afraid to publish nothing but falsehoods; but it must be distinctly understood that THE CHRISTIAN is not going to allow its pages to be filled with what it believes to be error. In our leader we state as clearly as we know our objections to those parts of the essay with which we disagree.—Ed.]

is dumb. What matters it to the hungry soul, searching after grounds of hope and striving to reach a higher moral level, from what or from whom we descended, if death is to end all? Our interest as men lies not so much in the past as in the living present, and in the future to which that present is leading us. And the glorious Church of Jesus, with his own life and words in its heart and mind, goes to a sin-stricken, bewildered, ignorant, darkened world with truths instinct with vitality and bright with sunshine from the eternal throne, bestowing freely the knowledge that can at once enlighten the understanding, satisfy the soul, and change and uplift the life.

CUSTODIANS OF TRUTH.

Do we sufficiently realise, brethren, that this treasure of knowledge is in earthen vessels, that we are the custodians of the truth as it is in Jesus, and that if we fail in any measure in carrying out our mission, we are neglecting the holiest of privileges? What is the object of this Conference but to receive the spirit of consecration, to add fuel to the flames of our zeal, to make us not wiser, but more determined to do our work well; above all, to bring us to a frame of mind and heart that will enable us to receive in fuller measure the gracious gift of the Holy Ghost, whose temple we are? Are we enduring hardness as good soldiers? Are we exercising courage and unflinching energy in the face of difficulties, and, it maybe, of disappointments? Do we count it a joy to labor or to suffer a reproach for Christ? Are there among our church members men and women who, from indifference, indolence, a false sense of modesty or from other reasons, give practically none of their time, talents, money or prayers for Christ's kingdom? Are there Sunday School teachers who go to their tasks half-heartedly or unwillingly, and who think little of staying away from their classes at times for trivial reasons, leaving the superintendents the disagreeable duty of impressing into service miniature youths and girls? Many Australians went to the war in South Africa with imaginations fired with pictures of glorious victory and splendid achievement. In their later letters home they tell how the glamor has departed, and how they are wearied and sick of the long, hungry marches, the toilsome night watches, the proneness to disease, and the frequent impossibility of meeting the foe in fair and open combat. And are there not many Christians who are ready to enjoy the emotional upliftings that attend hearty religious worship, particularly at special seasons, but who weary of the ordinary tasks which must necessarily be performed week by week, year in and year out, and which, after all, are the only real test of fidelity and abiding enthusiasm?

PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL.

Our chief work is to preach the gospel. Our buildings, churches, chapels, or whatever we may please to call them, are meeting places for worship, and the services of prayer and praise must ever be the delight of those who love God. In them we approach, as assemblies of believers, the throne of the heavenly grace, and are fed with spiritual bread, and drink from the well of living water. Yet as churches, the work of faith-

fully presenting gospel truths to needy men and women must occupy the first place in our thoughts. Unhappy church, where the brethren meet for their own special benefit and gratification on the Sunday morning, and then, assuming that they do not need to continually hear the gospel story, remain at home during the rest of the day, and leave the chief burden of the evening evangelistic service to the preacher. Unhappy Christians who feel not responsibility and know not the joy of helping, by their presence, their sympathy, and their unceasing supplications to extend the kingdom. "The Lord sent me," wrote Paul to the Corinthians, "to preach the gospel." Some Christian communions are disposed to place the ritual of praise first, which accounts in some degree for the maintenance of costly choirs, and the construction of lofty buildings, designed to give tone to the music of massive organs rather than to provide the necessary acoustic properties for a preacher's voice to be clearly heard by everyone present. We can admire the architecture of grand cathedrals, but we cannot conceal our pity for the congregations who, instead of receiving solid instruction and comfort from God's word, have too often to be content, apart from repeating or reading liturgical prayers, with listening to indistinct anthems and gazing at painted windows. The ignorance, superstition, and idolatry of the middle ages, and which still abound on the continent of Europe, are mainly traceable to a criminal refusal to publish abroad the unadulterated truths of holy scripture, and a conspiracy to substitute for the exposition of God's word ceremonial observances, calculated merely to gratify the senses. We want, and always shall want preachers—men full of zeal for God and humanity—men who are deep, reverent, humble students of the Bible—men who, gifted with sanctified common sense, know how to rightly divide the word, giving due and proper weight to every part of the revelation it contains, comparing scripture with scripture, so that their hearers may be wisely instructed in the great things of God.

We are not concerned in providing pleasant Sunday afternoons for the people, nor in giving musical evenings on Sunday. We have something better to do than to drag our neighbour's sheep or ass out of the pit on the Sabbath day. Our duty to the unregenerate is to preach Christ crucified. In the light of scripture, we see all men under sin, under condemnation, fallen, lost, hopeless without Christ. We turn a deaf ear to the specious philosophy which flatters human vanity by representing that very little is wrong with man, but that much is awry with his surroundings. If we cannot draw congregations by soul-stirring presentations of the great doctrines of human guilt and the perfect holiness and all-conquering love of God, as exhibited in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, we had better confess that we are unworthy and unfitted for the task God has given us to discharge.

The reason for our existence is so clear and positive that we must most jealously guard against any deviation from the straight path. We must not, for example, be tempted into permitting our churches to be made the vehicle for advancing any political or social propaganda. We want neither "labour

churches" nor "capitalist's churches," neither "conservative churches," nor "liberal churches," using those words in a political sense. We cannot, as organised bodies of believers, countenance movements which pertain to the sphere of debatable politics. Do not misunderstand. Christians ought to be deeply concerned in everything that affects the righteousness of the nation, and the good government and betterment of the people. Indirectly, too, the churches must have a most beneficial effect upon public life and conduct. But woe betide the preaching of the cross of Christ, if our platforms are made a place of party controversy. History and present-day experience emphatically condemn such practices. The New Testament, our charter book, shows how Christ himself had again and again to resist the cunning efforts of men to turn him aside from his great purpose of saving and regenerating the race, and to devote himself instead to satisfying Jewish national and private ambitions. Had we been Jews and lived in his day, we too, should doubtless have been eager that the nation should cast-off the Roman yoke; we can sympathise with the Jewish people on that matter, and yet Jesus refused to give the slightest encouragement to what seemed a laudable patriotic aim. The silence of Christ and his apostles on all such questions is an eloquent warning to us to rigidly avoid the error of allowing the preaching of the gospel to be trammelled and weighted by considerations affecting the aspirations of political partisans. The mission of the church of Christ is to all men, and in preaching the need of a Redeemer, we know no differences, for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.

THE GOSPEL IN PUBLIC LIFE.

Our religion must, as it already does to some extent, permeate, purify and exalt all departments of public life and activity, and Christian principles must, as they already do, vitally affect man in his relationship to his fellows, socially and morally. What but the Bible taught that there is no respect of persons with God? That all men—Jew and Gentile, Greek and Barbarian, bond and free—are alike under the law of sin and death, and must come to Christ for deliverance and justification? The doctrine of human equality, and what we know as the golden rule killed slavery, apart from any express condemnation of it. The ordinance of the Lord's supper is from this point of view a beautiful testimony to the fact that God ignores the social barriers which vain man is prone to erect, and that the terrible institution of Caste, which is such a formidable hindrance to Christianity in India—or anything bearing the faintest resemblance to that fearful stagnating influence—can never use its iron hands to enchain and enthrall a free Christian society.

Again, our churches in emphasising the need of strict adherence to apostolic teaching and practice, declare that there is no warrant for the arrogant assumption that some men can have a divine right or a humanly-bestowed right to lord it over God's heritage. One is our Master, and all we are brethren. True believers are all kings and priests. Jealous of the pure teachings of the New Testament, and appreciating and enjoy-

ing, as we are bound to do, the glorious liberty wherewith Christ makes his people free, we join with other free churches in vigorously and righteously denouncing the vile and unwarrantable claims of the Sacerdotalists, and unflinchingly and constantly defend, as one of the priceless possessions of our faith, the right of every man to approach God, through our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, without the intermediation of priest or pope.

RELATIONS TO OTHER CHURCHES.

The work of the companies of Christians who wish to be known simply as "churches of Christ" in South Australia, is not carried on in a spirit of unholy rivalry towards other communions, but is complementary to their labours. We are firmly convinced that God has given us a special mission, and that for its performance it is necessary that we should stand in some sense separate from others. Recognising the evils of sectarianism and the prevalence of mistaken or false teachings relating to certain scriptural facts, we plead for a return to apostolic practices, and for the abandonment of all humanly constructed systems of religious practice or doctrine which are not founded wholly and unmistakably on holy writ. We acknowledge one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and believe that our open-minded acceptance of the New Testament teachings, under the guidance, and with the help of the Holy Spirit, would lead to union, if not uniformity, and make the church of Christ on earth a power that all the forces of evil could not withstand.

We do not contend for a visible merging together of all the evangelical churches, under a compromise, requiring each to give up something for the sake of unity. We do not think it possible that real union could take place, except on purely scriptural foundations. It is inconceivable that there should be a satisfactory combination of all believers, unless they hold a standard of faith and practice that all accept as strictly in accordance with the New Testament and the will of God. If union were attained on any other basis, it would involve sacrifice of principles that would tend to internal looseness and weakness, causing the growth of worse evils than those we now deplore. May the day never arrive when the Christian churches would sink their principles merely for the sake of making the greater impression on the outside world by appearing to be one vast corporate body. Union might be brought about by indifferentism, but it would produce only a miserable travesty of St. Peter's ideal of the church as an elect race, a royal priesthood, a people for God's own possession.

WITNESS FOR BELIEVERS' BAPTISM.

The position we take in regard to believers' baptism, we believe to be founded on God's word. It is painful to know that we are sometimes accused of illiberality, but that charge must not deter us from fulfilling our mission in witnessing to an important truth. Our brethren, the Baptists, for the sake of extending their membership, admit on their rolls persons who not only do not accept the doctrine of believers' immersion, but who, indeed, may never have been the subjects of the symbol of baptism in infancy. The result is that our friends are not in the

position that we are in to bear testimony to the whole truth as delivered to the saints. Young people entering the Baptist church, and seeking light, find some of the members advocating the ordinance while others ignore it. The church is divided. Some of the most influential and estimable members make it a rule to absent themselves from the services at which baptisms take place, and in some cases a constant care has to be exercised lest the feelings of these good people should be wounded by a too frequent or explicit reference to believers immersion. The Baptists are losing their power as witnesses. For these reasons it is most desirable that we should preserve our standing ground, so that we may consistently and without fear of giving offence to our members, bear direct unequivocal testimony to the truth we have learned, and not permit ourselves from any sentiments of false charity, or desire for popularity or gain, to enlarge our borders by placing on our rolls those who, however much they may love the Lord, have not opened their eyes to the beauty and rightfulness of baptismal obedience.

NO BIGOTS.

Though we are compelled to stand in some sense apart, we are righteously grieved when the charge is made that we are claiming any superiority over others. Our aims are high, but we realise that we are erring, faulty servants, and though the faith on which we stand is an immovable rock, we are weak and poor exponents of it. Like the churches to whom Paul wrote, we are continually in need of reproofs, warnings, exhortations. How feeble and inadequate, brethren, is our performance of duty. God knows that we need to be baptised with the Holy Ghost and with fire, so that we may be able, as wise master-builders, to erect on the sure foundation gold silver and precious stones that shall endure the tests of the great day of the Lord's appearing. God forbid that we should ever be guilty of the dreadful sin of self-satisfaction, or of pharisaical content with ourselves because we have been led to take the position we occupy.

REMOVAL OF MISCONCEPTIONS.

Doubtless we are constantly liable to be misunderstood, and it is our duty to clearly state our plea so as to remove misconceptions. Some years ago an earnest worshipper of the Church of England, with whom I was staying for a few days near Melbourne, showed signs of being hurt because he said I belonged to a body who arrogated to themselves the title of The Church of Christ. I think I convinced him that he was in error, and that all we desired was to return to New Testament practice and to worship God without reference to creed or ecclesiastical names. He admitted that he himself professed to belong to the Church of Christ, and I, recognising him to be a sincere believer, had the pleasure of worshipping God with him. I then felt, as I have often done since, the need for rigid care on our part lest we should magnify over much those points on which we differ from others. We must open our eyes to facts. If we are to exercise a growing influence on behalf of true union and the acceptance of our plea, we must renounce everything akin to bigotry

and aloofness. There must be no tendency to belittle the work of other believers in Christ. On this question you will, I know, forgive me for saying that I am afraid numbers of our brethren are disposed to take up an attitude in regard to the observance of the Lord's Supper that finds no warrant in scripture. It is an axiom of law that in all cases where severe penalties are imposed the prosecution should prove the charge right up to the very hilt. On that principle, we ought to be able to produce the strongest and most unmistakable statements from the scripture in support of our stand if we attempt to exclude from the Lord's table any persons who sincerely believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. It has always been a matter of regret to me that in the breaking of bread we do not invite all believers to join us. The ordinance is the Lord's. It is his table, not ours. He invites those who love him to remember him, and by partaking of the bread and wine to show forth his death. The gathering at the table is not for the purpose of catechism, but simply and solely to meet the Lord—and he, we know, is ready at all times to meet those who seek after him. Any attempt to place a fence around the Lord's table detracts from the significance and beauty of the ordinance, and tends to cause divisions of a most lamentable kind. On a question of this sort we had better trust our hearts rather than our heads to give the correct answer. Throughout the world there are many millions of believers who have not been baptised, as we understand the word, and yet who regularly attend at the Lord's table and meet the glorious Christ there. These brethren of ours in the great church universal are proclaiming the Lord's death, are advancing the Gospel cause and are living to God's glory. Let us thankfully acknowledge this as a fact!

PERILS FROM MISGUIDED ZEAL.

There is, as we learn from God's Word, a continual danger of Christians, from motives which may be unexceptionable, being the subjects of misguided zeal—such zeal as is injurious rather than helpful to Christ's cause. Witness the proposal of James and John to call down fire from heaven on the Samaritans who had insulted their Lord, and the intolerance of the disciples in forbidding a man who walked not with them from casting out demons in Christ's name. Our Lord's replies on these occasions need to be constantly borne in mind: "Forbid him not. . . . For he that is not against us is on our part." Let us beware, brethren, lest by our impatient zeal we place stumbling blocks in the way of those who are seeking after Jesus, and excite prejudice against the Gospel. Our mission, as towards other Christian communions, is after all only destructive in a comparatively minor degree. Along most of the road we co-operate with them, for we preach and believe in the same Lord, and are soldiers in the same army, and by and by shall reach the same heaven, and sing in sweet harmony at last the same glorious song.

In this connection we must deplore the common habit of emphasising points of difference rather than of rejoicing over the vastly more important points of contact between ourselves and the great body of

evangelical workers; as also the unfortunate tendency to talk as though, because we profess to have adopted the teachings of the New Covenant, we have therefore reached a position of finality, and are qualified to sit in judgment upon others who perhaps have actually made more progress in the more difficult phases of Christian experience than we have done. Is it not possible that an extreme attitude towards what we denounce as sectarianism may itself be an obnoxious form of sectarianism? While we contend for our principles, we need to be impressed with the fact that the present work of the Holy Spirit, in whose gracious dispensation we live, plainly indicates that we ought, as things are, to move on the lines of the far-reaching Christian love, meekness and patience. The spirit of controversy has been indulged in overmuch. Men have not been won to Christ by disputations between believers; they have rather been repelled in perplexity or in disgust. There is still a deplorable disposition among Christians to condemn, without hearing, those who differ from them, and to magnify their own views of what is right. Many of us possibly are blameworthy in this respect. Ought not we, who make so great demands upon the patience of our Master, to learn patience and charity from him? How unfortunate and cruel our words are apt to be at times. In a recent number of the *Australian Christian* I saw a paragraph in which a correspondent expressed the belief that any person who had read a certain publication without being thoroughly convinced of the correctness of Christian baptism and submitting to the ordinance was wilfully sinful—or words to that effect. Such remarks as these are most regrettable, and do great damage; and, unhappily, they are not rare.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND CHRISTIAN LOVE.

God forbid, brethren, that the waters of baptism should ever be used to cool the love and kindness with which we should regard our fellow believers in Christ. God forbid that we should lay undue stress on the importance of either of the Christian ordinances, and so become sacramentarians. Although we stand for the plea of primitive Christianity, we can thank God for the glorious work he is accomplishing through the agencies of our evangelical brethren among the Baptists, the historic Church of England, the Congregationalists, Methodists, Presbyterians and other bodies. With the beloved Apostle Paul we can each one say, "What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached, and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice."

Brethren, let us go on with our work in simple trust that the Lord who is our righteousness will own and bless it, and individually realising the progressive nature of the Christian life—that it is from grace to grace, from strength to strength, from glory to glory. We have stood out for Christ, and in preaching the sublime mysteries of his incarnation, his cross and passion, his precious death and burial, his glorious resurrection and ascension, we rely not on the wisdom of this world, nor on persuasive words of human eloquence, but on the presence and power of the Holy Ghost. We

glory in the evidences of the Spirit among and baptising with fire and energy men and women in all organisations whose central object is to proclaim Christ crucified. Looking around on the world we see alongside the marks of darkness a craving for more spiritual light, and a longing among those who love the Saviour to know him better and to serve him more zealously. For many hundreds of years the church in the world has been torn and mangled by false professors, ambitious ecclesiastics—men who merely used religion as a lever wherewith to win for themselves political and worldly power and gain, and men, too, who while they honestly sought the truth, did so in such a blundering manner that they placed difficulties rather than helps in the way of others. In the fierce strifes and amid the dark clouds which have been engendered by the introduction of political and philosophical subjects into the religious sphere, the beauty and attractiveness of the living personal Christ have been obscured, and wranglings over creeds and catechisms have too often been substituted for the presentation of plain gospel truth in all its fulness, and the making known to weary sin-sick souls of the blessed facts connected with the life and death of our Lord, and the attitude of his infinitely loving heart towards those who seek after him. In those days, thanks in large measure to churches such as those to which we belong, there has been a brushing away of the huge piles of cold and hard tradition and accumulations of controversy which had rendered the path towards the light so hard to travel. The demand is "back to first principles!" "Back to Jesus Christ." "What would Jesus do?" These are glad signs for which we humbly thank God. The world may be getting worse, the powers of evil may be putting forth greater energy and exercising more astute cunning than ever before—I believe they are—but never before among the seekers after truth have the character and person of our Lord been so well understood, or more deeply adored and revered. And the Great King, the head of the church, is to-day walking amidst the golden lamps, and the eternal spirit who proceeds from the Father and the son, is to-day softening the hearts of believers and quickening their faculties and enthusiasm for the splendid mission they have to perform. And as we draw nearer to Christ, we who are believers find that we are drawing nearer to one another—that the asperities and barriers which divide the true children of God, vanish away. Conscious of the all-subduing love, patience and tender consideration with which the Master regards all those who love him in sincerity, we, too, who form the Associated Churches of Christ in South Australia, learn to love all who love him, and to realise that the basis of true Christian union is that which he laid down on the night of his betrayal, when in the spirit of prophecy and gracious exhortation, he declared, "this is my commandment, that ye love one another even as I have loved you. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye love one another."

Vol. 1 of McGarvey's Class Notes, deals with The Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges, Ruth and Job. Vol. 2, with 1 Samuel—Nehemiah. Vol. 3, with the Four Gospels. Price 10/-; by post 10/6.

Biographical.

A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches.
—Proverbs 22: 1.

Life of Elder John Smith.

On Monday, the complaints of Lulbeugrud were formally taken up. One after another of his opponents arose, and, waxing warm with zeal, boldly asserted that the New Translation was not the word of God. The Moderator sat upon his chair, gathering warmth and strength for the final blow. When each less distinguished brother had spoken, he called some one to preside, and descending to the floor, closed the argument against the translation by saying that he had never seen the book, and never wished to see it. "But Elder Waller," said he, "did right when he burnt it to ashes." That elder, it seems, after comparing the translation with the common version, had burnt it in January.

Smith at last gained the floor. The love of truth and of his brethren, mingling in a heart chastened by recent affliction, and humbled by a sense of loneliness, made him eloquent. Having replied to the charges, and rebuked the unkind spirit that had assailed him, he turned in conclusion to a certain elder that had declared the King's version to be the only word of God, and asked whether he really meant to say it.

"Yes," said the elder, bravely, "I said so, and I still say it."

"How long, my brother," said Smith, "has it been since the king made his translation?"

"I don't know," said the elder, defiantly ignorant.

"Was it not about two hundred and twenty years ago?" asked Smith of the clerk, who, perhaps, had read more than his brethren.

"I believe it has been about that time," he replied.

"Then, is it not a pity," continued Smith, "that the apostles left the world and the church without any word of God for fifteen hundred years? for, as these intelligent citizens around me know, they wrote in Greek, without the least knowledge of the language into which King James, fifteen hundred years afterward, had their writings translated! But, if nothing is the word of God but the King's version, do you not, brethren, pity the Dutch, who have not that version, and who could not read one word of it, if they had it?"

His remarks produced a fine impression on the minds of the people that crowded the house. In fact, the manifestations of sympathy for him were unrestrained, and some disorder ensued. Excited by the fact, which could not be disguised, that the verdict of the people was in his favour, the anger of his opponents waxed hot. Some scowled upon him; and one, unable to bear it any longer, suddenly sprang to his feet. He gnashed his teeth, and stamping the floor, exclaimed:

"Brother Moderator, I can not stand it! I would rather die than be run over in this way by a Campbellite!" and he shook his orthodox fist in the Campbellite's face.

Smith, who had, during the whole of this extraordinary scene, preserved a kind and tranquil temper, turned this last indiscretion to the benefit of the cause.

"Brother Moderator," said he, dispassion-

ately, "I came here to defend myself against charges of wrong-doing, that, I feared, might affect my usefulness, if they are not refuted. I have stood for two days before you, alone, and, accused by all my brethren, trying, in the very presence of an overwhelming opposition, to vindicate an humble name from the charge of infidelity to the truth I love. But, friends," said he, turning to the audience, "if this is the fruit of that Spirit whose influence in conversion I am charged with denying, then do I plead guilty to that charge. For, whether such a spirit as this is from God or not, I leave you all to judge."

Fifteen or twenty of the more influential brethren now withdrew to consult together, requesting the Association to remain in session till they returned. They concluded that John Smith was too good and great a man to be spared from the church, and too wise to fall away into any dangerous heresies; and that time should be allowed him for reflection. They agreed, therefore, to recommend that the whole matter be laid over for one year, feeling assured that by that time the heresy of Campbellism would be forgotten, and Smith would return to the faith of his fathers.

The Association, without debate, adopted the suggestion; they added, however, a protest against any translation of the scriptures except that which was in common use, and they advised the sister churches to do likewise.

They then adjourned, to meet again at Lulbeugrud, on the fourth Saturday in July, 1828.

(To be Continued.)

A Higher Critic In Trouble.

J. H. Coffey

A Critic was seen with the Bible in hand,
In search of how God made the sea and the land,
The valleys and mountains, the plains and the hills,
The lakes and the fountains, the brooks and the rills,
He stook for a station, a high roosting place,
From which to look Deity square in the face,
And seeming his glory and majesty shine,
He said, "I am like God, and just as Divine."

"In Genesis where I am reading just now
I learn all about the then and the how
God handled all tropes, with a wonderful skill,
Rolling metaphors up, as well as down hill;
'Twas a wonderful sight to see him perform,
And to stir up these figures into a storm,
And when the storm ended, we then knew the plan,
How God twisted metaphors into a man."

"The man thus created, fell into a sleep,
Resembling death's slumber, so silent and deep,
God took out a rib, perhaps with a knife,
And made out of it, for the first man a wife.
But now begins trouble! our figures all end
As the hearts of the two, in tenderness blend,
All metaphors vanish, and tropes are in vain,
Since Eve became mother, and bore a son, Cain."

"Allegorical talk begins to look flat,
In fact, I'm not certain, just where I am at,
For the logic of facts before me now stands,
And stoically offers its cold icy hands,
I shudder to take them! and yet it is best
To leave doubtful matters forever at rest,
For the logic of facts, will compel me to say,
God's Story is True, when I mingle with clay."

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The Leader.

Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths.—Jeremiah 6: 16.

"Our Work and Influence."

The essay on "Our Work and Influence," written by Bro. R. Burns, and read by him at the last South Australian Conference, will be found in another part of this issue, and our readers are requested to give it their careful attention. For the most part it has our cordial approval, and it is a matter of regret to us that we feel called upon to express dissent to any portion of it. There is so much that is good in it, that we would gladly have been spared the necessity of offering other than entirely favorable criticism. As it is, the fact that we have given the essay a place in our columns, places us under the obligation of pointing out its main defect, lest our silence upon the matter should be wrongly construed. The defect alluded to, we may say at once, is the essayist's advocacy of what is generally known as "open communion." For a very long period none of our brethren, publicly, at any rate, have ventured to come forward as advocates of the practice. By almost universal consent the Churches of Christ in Australasia are against it, and have been so during their entire history. It may be, however, that in some quarters, this agreement has only been a seeming one, and the essayist is expressing the views of more than we think. If so, there is all the more reason that the question should receive attention, even if in so doing there should be a certain amount of controversy. For this we are not responsible, inasmuch as the responsibility rests upon those who propose to alter the existing order of things. No intelligent man could make the statement, that a practice which was generally regarded by the brotherhood as vital, had "no warrant in scripture," without expecting to be adversely criticised. Bro. Burns being an intelligent

man, and of ability into the bargain, must have been prepared for this when he gave his essay the publicity it now enjoys. It is possible, however, that such criticism may be offered in a friendly spirit, and as far as we are concerned we desire only to "speak the truth in love."

Before entering into any defence of our position on the communion question, we will consider some of the arguments used by the essayist in favor of open communion. (1) He tells us, in the first place, that "it is an axiom in law that in all cases where severe penalties are imposed, the prosecution should prove the charge right up to the hilt." This may be true enough, but its precise bearing upon the matter in hand is not quite clear. The case under consideration is not so much a violation of law as non-compliance with it. It is a case of a person seeking a certain privilege without having observed the conditions which the law requires in order to its enjoyment. In all such cases the penalty is self-imposed. And as our brother has appealed to an axiom of law, it may be as well to remind him that the axiom which is relevant to the matter in hand is that no person is entitled to the benefits of a given law until he has complied with its conditions. It may also be observed that the onus of proving that the conditions of the law have been complied with, rests with the person claiming its privileges. (2) We are at a loss to understand in what way the statement that "The ordinance is the Lord's. It is his table, not ours," helps the open communion side of the question. So far as we can see, it makes distinctly against it. If the table were not the Lord's, but our own, we could ask to it whomsoever we pleased, but being his, we are only at liberty to ask those who have complied with the conditions specified by him. The position of the church in the matter is that of a guardian or trustee. The church is the steward of the manifold mercies of God. As a trustee she is bound by her deed of trust, and must discharge her stewardship in the terms of that trust. It is an axiom in law that a trustee shall be held unfaithful if he fail to discharge his obligations, and the church's obligation in this matter is only to invite those guests who have obeyed the conditions laid down by her Lord and Master. The argument contained in the statement, "the table is the Lord's," as affording proof that the unbaptised may not be excluded from it, is valueless, as it proves too much. It is the Lord's, just as the church is his, and yet who would say that the church has no voice in reference to the admission of those seeking membership. (3) It is urged by the essayist that "Any attempt to place a fence round the Lord's table detracts from the significance and beauty of the ordinance and tends to cause divisions of a most lamentable kind."

The only kind of fence that has any right to be put round the Lord's table is the one he has put there himself, and, that he has put one there is beyond question. This in itself, has not been the cause of division, but the breaking down of the fence undoubtedly has. This may truly be said to have "detracted from the significance and beauty of the ordinance." (4) Again, we are told "that throughout the world there are many millions of believers who have not been baptised, as we understand the word, and yet who regularly attend at the Lord's table and meet the glorious Christ there." That there are many millions of earnest devoted souls in the world serving Christ to the extent of their knowledge, is true enough, but that fact ought not to cause us to be worse than they in serving him under the limit of our knowledge. In that glorious day when we shall all stand united, without a creed or human tradition to divide us, they will be the first to say, "Brethren, you were right, you understood the word better than we did. You were right to be faithful." (5) We agree with the essayist in deprecating any exhibition of "misguided zeal." Doubtless, in this respect some harm has been done by sincere and earnest brethren giving expression to their ideas on the subject of baptism in relation to the Lord's Supper in a crude and needlessly offensive manner. This, however, is no argument against the position itself—it only indicates a needed reform in the way of expressing things. It does not appear to us that the position we take on the communion question demands that we should forbid others, who are not in entire agreement with us, working in the name of Christ. As a matter of fact we have not done so: on the contrary, we rejoice in all the good work accomplished. But in so far as their work is not in harmony with the will of God, to that extent the saying of our Saviour is also true, "He that is not with me, is against me."

Having looked at the points advanced by the essayist in favour of open communion, we may now look at others which tell in the opposite direction. For unconsciously, he has said some things that tell very forcibly against the position he has assumed on the communion question. For instance, in the paragraph under the heading of "Custodians of Truth," he says, "do we sufficiently realise, brethren, that this treasure of knowledge is in earthen vessels, that we are custodians of the truth as it is in Jesus, and that if we fail in any measure in carrying out our mission, we are neglecting the holiest of privileges." It is immaterial to our argument that when he wrote the above, the idea of the communion question was not immediately before him. We take it simply as a general declaration, which, if applied to one principle of the Christian system, is applic-

able to all. It applies to faith, it applies to repentance, it applies to baptism—the one equally with the other, and as custodians of these truths, “if we fail in any measure in carrying out our mission, we are neglecting the holiest of privileges.” It is because we believe this statement of the essayist to be true, that we cannot accept open communion. Inasmuch, as its acceptance involves a surrender of what we believe to be the truth. Again our essayist surrenders his position on the communion question, when he speaks of our churches emphasising the need of strict adherence to apostolic teaching and practice. It is on account of our strict adherence to apostolic teaching and practice that we reject the idea of open communion. As churches, the position we assume is, that we will only invite to the Lord's table such as were invited in the days of the apostles. To do more or less than this would be a departure from the Christianity of the first century, and would go a long way to make our plea null and void. It is, however, in the paragraph under the head, “Witness for Believers' Baptism,” that we find our essayist making the most telling points against the practice of open communion. He says, “the position we take in regard to believers' baptism, we believe to be founded on God's word. It is painful to know that we are sometimes accused of illiberality, but the charge must not deter us from fulfilling our mission in witnessing to an important truth. . . . For these reasons it is most desirable that we should preserve our standing ground, so that we may consistently and without fear of giving offence to our members, bear direct unequivocal testimony to the truth we have learned, and not permit ourselves from any sentiments of false charity, or desire for popularity or gain, to enlarge our borders, by placing on our rolls those who, however much they may love the Lord, have not opened their eyes to the beauty and rightfulness of baptismal obedience.” Here, it is rightly maintained that we are called upon to be witnesses for believers' baptism. That we should bear unequivocal testimony to this truth. The thing that puzzles us, however, is how the writer of these sentiments could be an advocate of open communion. What kind of witness is being borne to believers' baptism in the consent to ignore its necessity at the Lord's table? What is a church roll, that a person who is permitted to enjoy the highest privilege of the church in the Lord's supper, may not have his name inscribed thereupon? What kind of logic is it that grants the higher privilege and refuses the lesser? On what authority can we ignore a divine command on the one hand, and be sticklers about an act of penmanship

on the other? Surely, a brother who sees so clearly in one direction will not be long in seeing clearly in the other also.

And now let us very briefly summarise the reasons why we cannot accept the practice of open communion. They are as follows:—

1. That we accept the New Testament as our only rule of faith and practice, and open communion is not found in it.
2. That the conditions of pardon found in the New Testament, involve faith, repentance, and baptism, and nothing less than the conditions of pardon can be the conditions of fellowship.
3. That there is but “one baptism,” viz:—Immersion in water into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
4. That this “one baptism” is found in the unity of which the Holy Spirit is the author, and which we are exhorted to maintain.
5. That in order that this unity should be reached it is necessary that believers baptism, as the “one baptism,” should be proclaimed as the only one on which unity is possible. All agree that immersion is right, but all do not agree that substitutes for it are. This position is stultified in receiving the unimmersed at the Lord's table.
6. That in recognising substitutes for baptism at the Lord's table, we do not bear testimony to believers' baptism, but declare that in the highest privilege of the church it is non-essential.
7. That the table is the Lord's, but placed in the care of the church, which is only at liberty to invite to it such as have put on the Lord Jesus Christ in baptism.
8. That all churches, such as the church of England, Presbyterians, &c., insist on what they call baptism as a pre-requisite to communion. In this they are consistent, and bear unequivocal testimony to baptism as they understand it. Immersionist churches practising open communion, are not thus consistent, for they declare, in effect, that baptism is not a pre-requisite to communion. With this summary before us, it only remains to be urged, that in the defence and maintenance of our principles, that we exercise the utmost courtesy. In bearing witness to believers' baptism as a pre-requisite to communion, anything in the shape of a rude police supervision is to be deprecated. In our view the clear enunciation of our position, from time to time, will, as a rule, meet the requirements of the case. If more is wanted, a personal explanation at a suitable time, and given in the proper spirit, will be attended with beneficial results. We believe it is possible for us as religious organisation to maintain our position intact and without the surrender of a single principle, without imperilling the salvation of a single soul outside our communion. The great law of responsibility according to knowledge, gives

us boldness to make this declaration, as it also compels us to live up to the full measure of the knowledge we ourselves possess.

Editorial Notes.

In fundamentals, Unity; in incidentals, Liberty; in all things, Love.

British Annual Meeting.

The annual meeting of the Associated Churches of Christ in Great Britain and Ireland was held in Liverpool in August, and judging from the reports was very successful. The Church Conference proper was preceded by a Temperance Conference and public meeting, at which the importance of Temperance work was emphasised. It is twenty-two years since the last Conference was held at Liverpool, and in that period the churches have increased from 120, with a total membership of 6166, to 180, with a membership of 12,000. The Foreign Mission report of the work among the Karens and Talaings, of Burma, was encouraging. Sixteen had been baptized. A new school-house is being erected; 2000 copies of the Gospel of John had been received, and arrangements made with the British and Foreign Bible Society for the translation of the Book of Psalms. Two able young men were preparing for the foreign field—one to take charge of the industrial, and the other general missionary work—and they will shortly be sent to Burma. The Sunday School report showed 1462 teachers and 13,258 scholars, an increase of 99 teachers and 81 scholars for the year; 302 scholars were added to the churches by faith and baptism. The weekly church paper, the *Bible Advocate*, has a circulation of 3850 copies. A number of papers were read during the Conference on themes of interest and ably discussed. In connection with the annual meetings a Sisters' Conference was also held, at which Mrs. Ludbrook, from Melbourne, was one of the speakers. All the reports were hopeful and encouraging. In addition to this association, there is also an Annual Conference of Churches of Christ conducted more on American lines, and associated with the American Missionary Society.

The Kaiser's Sermon.

The Emperor William of Germany has commenced preaching. His first sermon, delivered on the *Hohenzollerns*, was from Ex. 17: 11, in which after describing the scene in Rephidim with Moses, Hur and Aaron on the mountain top, while the battle raged below. He applied the lesson to the war in China, and urged all at home to pray for the success of the Germans on the battle field,

and finally led in prayer that the "God of battles" would prosper their cause. The sermon has been printed as a tract and distributed among the soldiers in China. Commenting on this, the able writer, "Amicars," in the *A.C. World*, says, "to some this kind of preaching and praying may sound strange, but it is manifestly on the part of the Kaiser, sincere. He believes in God as the God of battles; he believes in fighting as a sacred duty to God and the Fatherland; and so he prays for victory and for the presence of God. When Mr. Kruger spoke and prayed in this way, some people could only call him a 'hypocrite' and a deceiver. Who will venture to call the Kaiser a hypocrite? Both look at things frankly and constantly in Old Testament light, and so they speak as they do. Their words do, I admit, sound strange when placed alongside the Beatitudes; but then, no commander-in-chief has ever proposed to circulate among soldiers the Beatitudes of Jesus. The Kaiser thinks and speaks as the Britishers act. How comes it that his words jar on our ears?"

Baptists and Baptism.

Our brethren of the Baptist variety in Australia are experiencing some trouble over the vexed question of "open membership." Something very like a split has occurred in West Australia, several churches which favor restricting membership to the baptised, withdrawing from the Union. In South Australia also there is considerable friction on the subject, while in Queensland a large church has sent in its resignation to the Union in consequence of the basis of membership having been altered to receive an open membership church. Many churches called Baptist certainly keep the ordinance from which they receive their distinctive name practically in the background. But this is not the case with all. The writer spent a couple of hours recently in a Baptist Union meeting, and listened to a paper on Evangelisation. The discussion which followed side-tracked off on to baptism, and we heard more said about the ordinance in that meeting than we have heard in all the conferences of those called disciples of Christ, that we have attended, put together. One brother deprecated engaging an unbaptised evangelist, as "he could only preach half the gospel." Another condemned united evangelistic meetings on the ground, that Baptists engaging in them "could not preach the truth." Another contended amidst applause, that the preachers work in the conversion of sinners "was not completed till he had put them under the water," while yet another told of a worker in another body who applied for baptism, but whom he declined to immerse until, as a result of two hours' talk, he

decided to leave the church he was associated with, and so on, and so on. No one raised a voice in dissent, and the unanimity of sentiment was quite remarkable. Talmage says that the most impressive prayer for holiness in one of his prayer meetings was offered by a horse jockey, but it would be unfair to conclude that these brethren spoke so strongly on the importance of baptism because they felt they or their churches were weak on this point. It was quite a hearty meeting, and when the discussions was over they adjourned for lunch, at which fraternal greetings were received from representatives of their Pædo-baptist brethren.

Sunday School.

Then were there brought unto him little children.
—Matthew 19: 13.

LESSON FOR OCTOBER 28.

The Prodigal Son.

LUKE 15: 11-24.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"I will arise and go to my Father."
—Luke 15: 18.



This parable is closely related to the preceding lesson both in Luke's record and in point of time. It was spoken in the province of Peræa, east of Jordan, late in the year A.D. 29. This parable is perhaps one of the best known of all the parables. Its familiarity has robbed it of its full significance. The parable is given to show God's compassion for sinners and his readiness to forgive the penitent. A certain man, presumably the Heavenly Father, had two sons—one the Pharisee, self-righteous and proud, the other the publican and sinner, the shamed and penitent. The younger demanded his share of the goods that were to fall to him. He desired independence, the first step in all sin. Having received it, for God will keep no son against his will, he leaves the home life and home love, and takes his departure into a far country. The second step on the road of sin is to turn one's back on God; and the third is to tarry in the land of sin—the far country. Forgetfulness of God may be well taken as the far country. Even though in a far country the Heavenly Father still watches over the prodigal. Famine, want

and disaster may be taken as God's messengers of love, for providence, though hard, frequently directs a man's mind to God. The resolute life brought its own recompense—a bitter sorrow. When he had spent his all; when he had exhausted all resources for pleasure to satisfy his soul, famine and starvation stared him in the face. To keep bare life itself in, he joined himself to a citizen of that country, who sent him to perform the most hated of all duties to a Jew, viz., to feed swine. There is no doubt that sin will lead a man to perform the most degrading and humiliating of employments. Brought face to face with want, a servant to a foreign master, and a feeder of swine was too much for him to bear. Such a condition created a desire for home and home life. After all, he found no satisfaction away from home, and now he determines to arise and go to his father, confessing his sin and willing to take the most menial position in his Father's house rather than stay away any longer. The secret of his repentance is in the fact that he left his old life with all its associations and returned to his father. On his return he found a forgiving father, who had been waiting the penitent's return. The welcome was of the most cordial and compassionate nature. No questions were asked. Commands were given to clothe him with the best robe, and to reinstate him once more as a dutiful and loving son. Great was the rejoicing. The preparation for his reception is a wonderful manifestation of the willingness of God the Father to accept any penitent wanderer who returns back to his rightful sonship again.

JAS. JOHNSTON.

From The Field.

The field is the world.—Matthew 13: 38.

Queensland.

NOTES.—My sixth Lord's day in the northern colony was spent at Marburg, speaking there three times. The meetings were not so well attended as might have been. It is astonishing on what slight account some brethren will absent themselves from the Lord's Table, and so grieve and dishonour the Saviour, who died for them. In the afternoon we drove to Rosewood to baptize the youth who confessed Christ on our previous visit. There was a nice gathering, and we hope that some others present will soon yield themselves to the Christ.

After lecturing at Mt. Walker and Thornton, our last Lord's day in Queensland was divided between Mt. Whitestone and Ma Ma Creek, speaking four times. At the former place we fellowshiped with the brethren, and at the latter place we addressed the Sunday School, the church and the world.

It surprised me that so many of the West Moreton churches use intoxicating wine at the Lord's Table. Let me suggest that they adopt the plan of some other Queensland brethren, and in the season make some grape jelly and mix a little with water each Lord's day. That will certainly be "the fruit of the vine," safer than the fermented liquor, and surely more truly symbolising the purifying, life-giving blood of the Redeemer. And one other suggestion—as a symbol of a whole Christ and of the one body—a small whole loaf instead of a slice of loaf.

My hearty thanks are due to Queensland brethren for their generous hospitality and for facilitating my movements in various ways. It would be invidious to mention names where all have been so kind. I hope some day to re-visit the churches. May God's blessing rest upon them!

A. M. LUDBROOK.

GYMPIE.—Bro. E. T. Ball had the great pleasure of baptizing the two sisters and the little boy spoken of last, who with two other sisters from Eel Creek, who made the good confession, and there and then were all buried with Christ, and, symbolical of the Resurrection, rose again to walk in the newness of life from this 1st October, 1900.

A. H.

BRISBANE.—The two young ladies who came forward and confessed Christ a few weeks since were honored by Bro. Denham on Lord's day, September 27th. At a church meeting held recently it was decided to engage A. R. Main for a period of twelve months, on the completion of his present engagement.

A. S. W.

New Zealand.

AKELAND.—Yesterday morning we extended the right hand of Christian and church fellowship to a sister who was immersed a week ago. In the evening our hearts rejoiced over two decisions for Christ. One nobly came forward during the singing of an invitation hymn and publicly confessed her faith in Christ. The other intimated her desire at the close of the meeting. We thank God for the attractions of his gospel and these evidences of its powers. We pray that all our young sisters may adorn the teaching of Christ. On 12th September our annual Bible School tea entertainment and distribution of certificates won at the examination, took place. Last Wednesday our annual church tea was held, both meetings were enjoyable and successful.

T. J. BULL.

South Australia.

HINDMARSH.—Yesterday saw the 45th anniversary of the church here. Bro. H. D. Smith was with us in the morning, and gave a beautiful address from Isaiah 41: 10. In the evening Bro. Keay, from the Glenelg church, preached from the words, "Christ is all in all." We were glad to hear our brother, who evidently has a great future before him. There were five candidates for baptism last Wednesday evening, three of whom were received into fellowship at the morning service yesterday.

A. C.

NEWWOOD.—Our church anniversary services were held yesterday, and splendid meetings were the order of the day. In the morning we spoke to a large gathering of members and friends on the subject "after twelve years." In the evening the chapel was full to overflowing, vestries and all, and Bro. Gore delivered an impressive address, at the close of which one confessed Christ. One more decided for the Lord at the after meeting of the Endeavour Society. Our meetings will be continued on Thursday next.

A. C. RANKINE.

GRACE STREET, ADELAIDE.—We had the pleasure of receiving into our fellowship this morning a son of our esteemed Bro. and Sis. Trott, who was baptized last Wednesday evening. At our gospel meeting last Sunday two made the good confession, and are to be immersed next Wednesday. We started a class for Chinese in connection with our Sunday School this afternoon, and had seven scholars present. We have a large case packed with garments, etc., which our Foreign Mission sisters are sending to Miss Thomp-

son, India, by mail steamer next Thursday. At our quarterly meeting of the Sunday School teachers last Thursday the election of officers took place, all being re-elected. We were very reluctantly compelled to grant an indefinite leave of absence to our esteemed Sister R. Tonkin, of the young ladies' Bible Class, owing to ill-health. We hope and trust she may soon be able to be with us again. We considered the advisability of adopting the series of First Principle Lessons.

Oct. 8.

M.

BALAKLAVA.—The Annual Conference of Northern churches was held at Balaklava on Wednesday, October 3rd. The meetings were not so well attended as previously, several counter attractions being responsible. The papers, as well as the discussions thereon were very instructive and interesting. The following is the programme:—**MORNING SESSION:** Bro. J. Selwood, chairman; Consideration of John 11, led by J. Selwood; Paper by J. G. Cosh, on Giving; **AFTERNOON SESSION:** A. L. Greenshields, chairman; Paper by T. J. Gore, Church Discipline; Paper by D. Wilson, The Ministry of Angels; **PUBLIC MEETING** in evening, R. Harkness in the chair. Addresses: T. J. Gore, Order in the Truth of God; J. Selwood, What is the church of Christ.

Oct. 8.

W. T. S. H.

CAREW.—Our annual meetings have been an unqualified success. A. W. Connor spoke to full meetings on Lord's day, morning and evening. Wednesday, splendid tea, and in the evening a grand meeting; house full, and a considerable number unable to get seats; the time being profitably spent. Thirteen have been added to the church during the year, 3 by letter and 10 by immersion, 6 of the latter from the Sunday School. The brethren of this district have presented the church with a very nice desk Bible, in memory of our late Bro. J. Spoteswood. The debt on our chapel has been reduced to £20. H. Leng, being with us at the Wednesday meetings, stayed over the week, visiting and publishing the truth. Sunday, had a profitable meeting for worship, and in the evening preached to a full house, when one young girl made the good confession, and will be immersed this evening.

Oct. 8.

R. K. S.

New South Wales.

COROWA.—On September 18, a concert and coffee social, under the auspices of the Corowa Christian Literary Society, was held in the Tabernacle. The building was packed. The building was nicely decorated for the occasion. Mr. H. Hughes, president of the society, occupied the chair, and a splendid programme of seventeen numbers was gone through. Refreshments were provided on a liberal scale at the conclusion of the programme, and a very enjoyable and successful entertainment was brought to a close with "God Save the Queen."

WILLIAM H. ARGAN, Secretary.

BROKEN HILL.—We are still hammering away in more senses than one. Good attendance at gospel meeting last night. Further receipts to Building Fund:—Carew £2; Hoteo North, N.Z. £1; Port Albert, Auckland, £2; Alma, S.A., £5.

Oct. 1.

W. H. W.

Victoria.

S. S. U. REPORT.—Visited Prahran school, and found them in very good order—a marked improvement in the singing; also the classes were much more attentive and gentle. The school is conducted in a large building at the back of chapel, and two Bible classes are taught in the chapel itself. Only about 24 infants in a room that could seat 100! The average attendance (146) is about 20 under my last

visit; but a good teaching staff, also a morning school of 42, with 7 teachers.

Oct. 7.

M. R. H.

HAWTHORN.—Our mid-week meeting is large. Last Thursday two came out and confessed, and were baptized last night. Bro. Palmer himself interviews all candidates, and instructs them fully. I may say that we have already had 30 of our high aim of 100 souls for Christ during the year.

Oct. 8.

M. R. H.

Here and There.

Here a little and there a little.—Isaiah 58: 10.

One lad confessed Christ at Polkmet on October 7th.

Two additions by faith and baptism at Kerang East.

Two additions by faith and baptism at Mumble Plains.

On September 30th, two were received at North Fitzroy by faith and baptism.

Protracted meeting at Horsham commenced October 8th with a full house to hear the gospel.

Fine meeting at North Melbourne on Sunday. One baptism, the wife of Bro. W. Wyatt, of Meredith. Geo. T. Walden informs us that at Enmore on September 23rd there were two confessions and on September 30th two more.

Good meetings at North Richmond on Sunday evening; a young man confessed Christ and was baptised the same hour.

We spent last Lord's day with the little church at Meredith. The day from a weather standpoint was not exactly ideal, but we had delightful meetings both morning and evening.

Our Victorian Sunday School Union Annual Picnic is arranged to take place this year at the BURWOOD BOYS' HOME. All friends please take note for this event on November 9th.

A protracted meeting will begin at North Melbourne next Monday evening. Bro. T. Hagger will do the preaching. The presence and prayers of brethren from sister churches is solicited.

R. J. Clow reports that last Sunday morning at Balmain Street, Richmond, the two baptised the week before were received and at the close of his address in the evening three others made the good confession.

The Austral office was honored last week with a pleasant call from Bro. and Sister Wm. Burford, of Adelaide, S.A. Bro. Burford is on his way to Sydney to attend the Tariff Congress about to be held there, and Mrs. Burford is with him for a rest.

We much regret that our issue of September 27th was exhausted before quite all our subscribers were supplied. Will any of our agents or others who may happen to have a spare copy or more send to us at once. We would consider it a great favor.

A special meeting of workers in our Sunday Schools is being arranged for, to take place at an early date, for the consideration of "SYSTEMATIC GIVING" by our schools for DEFINITE OBJECTS, but for various reasons it will not be held this month as intended. Full notice of same will appear in this paper later on.

R. G. Cameron says:—"The Austral Publishing Company has just issued another useful and interesting little book bearing the title THE WAY. It is similar in design to PURE GOLD, though not so large a book, and its purpose is to preserve in more permanent form than the pages of a newspaper, some of the best articles that have appeared in the AUSTRALIAN

CHRISTIAN in recent months. It is good reading, and the right kind of book to loan to interested friends." Paper 6d, Cloth 1/-, Post Free.

A brother in Fremantle, W.A., writes:—I believe the AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIAN is destined to become great in the dissemination of the glorious truths of the gospel throughout the Federated States of Australia. Always eagerly looked for in Fremantle. God bless your efforts.

Cheltenham Sunday School celebrated its anniversary last week. On Thursday evening the usual tea-meeting and school entertainment was given in the Temperance Hall. Bro. E. T. Penny, the superintendent, presided, and after a few remarks, in which he expressed pleasure in seeing so large an attendance, called upon Nellie Brough, who recited "A Little Girls' Speech," in which she bade everybody welcome, especially those who had paid for their tickets, and intimated that if any were dissatisfied with the evening's entertainment, they could "ask for their money back," but at the same time assured them that they would not get it. Clifford Organ made his first public appearance and told us about "A Discontented Lobster." Then followed an action song by a number of little girls, who had been well trained by Misses Judd and Brough, then a song by the school, after which Fanny Woff sang "What Do the Bells of the Steeple Say?" very nicely. Charles Brough was the next performer. He told us of a boy who "whistled," he was evidently the kind of boy who preferred whistling to crying, or grumbling, but if he could whistle better than Charlie did, he was a clever fellow. A boy who can stand before an audience of 300 people and whistle several well known tunes, without a glimmer of a smile or the faintest sign of a breakdown, possesses a degree of self-possession that should serve him in good stead in the world. Addie Fairlam next amused us by telling some of the things that "Aunt Tabitha" did not do when she was a girl, then Minnie and Emma Organ sang a duett "Tired" very nicely, after which the boys' Drum and Fife Band under the conductorship of Bro. Ernest Pittman and accompanied by George Clayton on the Cornet, played a selection in good style. After that, Cyril Woff told of the troubles of the household "When Ma is Away," and Maud Murray sang the praises of "My Dolly." Another song by the school, followed by a recitation by Laurie Daff entitled "Two Horses," and then we had a treat in a Violin and Piano Duett by the Misses Bruton and A. Woff. Another action song was followed by recitations by Annie Judd, Ernest Flander, and Hilda Penny all nicely given, but we were unfortunately unable to hear the titles of the pieces. Another selection by the band, followed by an elaborate piece in which the following young ladies took part, Maggie Organ, Ivy Woff, Ada Organ, Minnie Organ, Bertha Judd. The next item was a recitation by Willie Bodsworth, and then "Ted" Fisher, who, judging by the applause with which his name was greeted, is a general favorite, vastly amused the audience by giving a boy's account of a Sunday School Picnic, in a manner that fully justified the deafening applause with which it was followed. Recitations by Ruby Daff, and Laura Woff, another selection by the band, and then Emma Organ told of a boy "Who Swallowed a Cupful of Mustard" which we imagine he would find a rather warm dose, and Alice Redstone contributed the last recitation "The Rejected Volunteer." More singing, and music by the band, and the meeting closed in the usual way.

New South Wales Conference.—R. Steer, Secretary, 25 Perry-st., Marrickville, Sydney. Geo. Arnott, Treasurer, 30 Point Piper Road, Paddington.

Obituary.

To live is Christ; and to die is gain.—Phil. 1: 21.

CASTLE.—On Lord's Day, Sept. 9th, Edward Castle fell asleep in Jesus. Bro. Castle was baptised by W. S. Houchins at Mystic Park, and united with the church there. He was a regular attendant at the meetings and a generous supporter of the church. At the beginning of this year he removed to Kyabram, and when well enough met with the church there to remember his Master. For some months prior to his death he suffered much pain.

"Deep waters crossed life's pathway,
The hedge of thorns was rough."

He bore it all with great patience. We shall never forget his words, uttered in a feeble voice, while life was fast ebbing away. Three times he repeated "I am perfectly satisfied." He loved the Christ, who ever satisfies our heart's longings. His remains were interred in the Tongate cemetery, Bro. Hagger conducting the service at the grave. We commend to our Father in heaven his wife and loved ones who remain, and trust that they may follow his example and find in Christ comfort and peace. W.B.

Coming Events.

Observe the time of their coming.—Jeremiah 8: 7.

OCT. 14 & 16.—Petersham Anniversary, Sunday and Tuesday. Tea (sixpence) and Public Meeting. Don't miss it.

OCT. 15.—Burwood Boys' Home Annual Demonstration. High Class Concert, Monday, October 15, 8 p.m. Artists:—Miss Fanny Lyndhurst, Miss Nellie McClelland, Miss Ethel Benson, Miss Annie Cook, St. Paul's Cathedral Quartette Party, Messrs. W. F. Wyatt, A. J. Pallett, F. Drake, and H. Rofe. Admission, 1/-; Reserved Seats, 2/-.

OCT. 21 and 23.—Surrey Hills Sunday School Anniversary. Good singing by the children.

OCT. 21, 23, 25.—Christian Sunday School, Lygon-st., Carlton: 37th Anniversary. Sunday, Oct. 21st: Address in afternoon at 3 o'clock; Flower Service at 7 p.m., Special Address by W. C. Morro, B.A.; Subject, "The Glory of the Cross." Tuesday, Oct. 23rd: Grand Entertainment at 7.45 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 25th: Service of Song, "Only a Wolf." Tea: Children, 9d.; Adults, 1/-.

OCT. 28th & 31st.—North Richmond Church Anniversary. Sunday afternoon, 3 p.m., in the chapel; 7 p.m., Town Hall, Bridge Road. Wednesday, tea in chapel, 6.30 p.m., tickets 6d. Public meeting, Town Hall, 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 26—

Bring your bikes, your relations, there is room for them all.

At the C.C.C. Concert in the U.F.S. Hall: And inform all your friends, your acquaintances tell. Good songs and recitations, good music as well: The "Reserved Seats" one shilling, the others but half.

So "come one," "come all," and enjoy a good laugh, "Chetwynd Cricket Club," North Melbourne. W. McCance, Secretary.

Acknowledgments.

The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts.—Haggai 2: 8.

RESCUE HOME.

Received with thanks:—
Church Ballarat East £0 14 0
Devoted 0 10 0
Mrs. Bowring, Collingwood 0 5 0
Mrs. Oliver, Fernhurst 1 0 0
Mr. T. H. Brooker, M.P., Hindmarsh, S.A. 0 10 0
J. A. and E. Davies, 3 3 0
Mr. F. P. Duncan, Poverty Bay, N.Z. .. 0 10 0
"N.P." 1 0 0
"A Friend," Prahran 0 2 6

J. PITTMAN, Armadale.

VICTORIAN MISSION FUND.

Church Port Fairy ..	..	..
" Horsham ..	..	..
" Polkemmet ..	..	..
" South Yarra, per Sister Craig ..	..	..
" Meredith ..	..	..
" Prahran, per Sister Bryan ..	..	..
" North Fitzroy, per Sister Forbes ..	..	..
" Swanston Street, per Sister A. R. Lyall ..	..	..
Bro. and Sister H. Lyall, per Sister A. R. Lyall ..	..	..
Bro. R. Campbell Edwards ..	..	..
B.A., Wedderburn ..	..	..

J. A. DAVIES, Treas.,
"Milford" Church-st.,
Hawthorn.

M. McLELLAN, Sec.,
233 Drummond-st.,
Carlton.

MARRIAGE.

FAIRBROTHER—DUCKETT.—On 27th September, by T. Hagger, at Wedderburn, Albert Edward, son of R. Fairbrother, of Bendigo, to Annie, third daughter of G. Duckett, of Wedderburn.

SILVER WEDDING—CHARMAN—DARBY.—On 19th October, 1875, at church of Christ, Prahran, David Charman, of Eummering to Elizabeth Jane, widow of the late B. T. Darby Esq., of London. Present in dress, Brookdale, Emerald.

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