

The Australasian Christian Standard.

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."—1 Thess. 5: 21.

PUBLISHED FORTNIGHTLY.

VOL. X—No. 8.

MELBOURNE, APRIL 11, 1895.

Subscription 5/- per annum post free.

Current Topics.

ANECDOTES.—Mr. Reader Harris, Q.C. (says the *New Age*), conducts a very successful evangelistic mission amongst the working classes of Battersea. His bright, hearty services are much appreciated. The other night, in the course of his address, he raised a hearty laugh by the following hit at his own profession. "I recently received," he said, "a most interesting and beautiful book, fully illustrated. It was a price list of a large funeral furnishing company. The recipient was earnestly requested to preserve it for future reference. It showed coffins of all kinds and styles—ancient, modern, Grecian, Roman, Queen Anne—and, not the least important, fireproof coffins, which," remarked the learned Q.C. with a quiet smile, "I suppose are specially intended for lawyers!"

SOME people object to anecdotes in religious addresses," said Mr. Reader Harris, "but I think if I relate one I have heard of a highly orthodox kirk elder I may be pardoned. A wealthy atheist in the north of Scotland had built himself a handsome and massive mausoleum of granite in the neighboring cemetery. Happening to come across the elder admiring the tomb one day, the atheist irreverently remarked, 'I think the Almighty Himself won't be able to lift that.' 'Hoot

mon,' replied the elder, 'ye needna fash yersen, He'll just tak' the bottom oot and let ye doon.'"

COUNT TOLSTOI is one of the most remarkable men of the present day. A recent speaker asked the question:—"Is Tolstoi right?" and answered the question thus:—"Tolstoi, he said, is certainly to be regarded as a prophet in the true sense of the word—a *forth-teller* of the truth as revealed to him. And there is room for such prophets in this age—prophets not only of theory and doctrine, but of practice. We are indebted to the *Daily Chronicle* for keeping us in touch with the thoughts and writings of this remarkable man. Tolstoi is the greatest moral force in Russia. His battle is against injustice and immorality—or rather, unmorality. His "conversion"—as we Methodists should term it—to Christian anarchism was brought about by his witnessing an execution in Paris. Practical proof of his change of views was at once shown by his selling one of his estates for 300,000 roubles, and distributing the amount among his tenants and retainers. The recent publication of Tolstoi's "Reply to my critics" is a deliberate statement of his own tenets, a weird medley of ideas in which he seems to have lost his head but found his heart. They are of a doubtful, unwise, unchristian, and even a dangerous character. His mistake has been to pin his

faith to a single passage, Matthew v. 38, 39. This is his great sheet anchor, the one key which is to unlock the door of the whole system, the doctrine of non-resistance to evil, founded on an unfortunate translation, his literalism leading him to confusion and fanaticism. But notwithstanding the manifestly weak points of his propaganda, Tolstoi stands out as a prophet and an example. The truth when grasped is to be followed at all costs. He is original enough to follow out his convictions at whatever cost to himself. Of how many professing Christians can this be said? Tolstoi takes Christ to be real and his words to be real, and his whole life is a proof of the reality of his convictions."

THE PEACE OF EUROPE.

Mr. W. T. Stead propounds a plan for securing the peace of Europe in the following words:—"Not by voluntary forswearing of use of weapons will the millennium come about. Not by the establishment of an International Tribunal, with authority to issue awards which the disputants will be free to reject, will war be banished from the continent. If ever Europe is able to disband its armies, it will be when the nations of Europe acquire a sufficient degree of confidence in each other to be willing to allow those armies to be wielded as a homogeneous force against any disturbance of the peace. If, for instance, in Europe at the present

time, the Tsar, the Kaiser, the Emperor-king of Austria-Hungary, the King of Italy and the Queen of England, had sufficient confidence in each other, and were sufficiently earnest about maintaining the peace to agree to use their fleets and armies against France, should France wantonly disturb the peace of Europe in order to regain her lost provinces; does any one imagine for one moment that France would ever make the attempt? I am not proposing that any such alliance should be made, I am only putting the case as an illustration. But nothing short of a determination to use fleets and armies against France would restrain France if she saw a good chance of finding Germany isolated and at a disadvantage."

MORAL CENSURE POWERLESS.—Mr. Stead continues:—"The moral censure of the world, the piteous entreaties of the poor of all nations, and the combined prayers and protestations of all the Churches in Christendom, would be powerless to restrain the French Government from grasping at their long-cherished ideal of revenge, unless that moral sentiment, these prayers, protestations, and entreaties could crystallize themselves in the shape of a stern and unmistakable determination to use the whole available forces of the nations that wished to remain at peace against the one nation that wished to go to war. In other words, the Powers that were in favour of law and the established order of things on the continent would then convert their armies into a police force, and that police force would be used for the purpose of maintaining the peace. After one or two demonstrations of the readiness of the Powers to work together, and the willingness of each to subordinate its own views of its own interests outside its own frontier, to the arbitrament of a Tribunal which would be armed, not only with the moral authority, but with the armies

and the fleets of Europe, it would be possible to reduce the armaments of Europe from the present peace footing, which is in reality a war footing, to a peace footing, which would be a very different affair."

OPEN WINDOWS.—Dr. John Hunter of Glasgow, lately preached a sermon and took as his text, a phrase from Daniel vi. 10: "His window open towards Jerusalem." And thus spoke:—"The instinct, which bids the Arabian traveller in the desert to dismount from his horse at noon, and spreading his carpet on the ground, and with face turned towards his holy Mecca, to engage in an all-absorbing prayer; the instinct which bids the French peasants in the famous picture to turn at the sound of the angelus, and gaze reverently at the church steeple in the distance, bathed in the soft radiance of the setting sun—that same instinct bade Daniel choose a house facing towards Jerusalem. A superstition generally has its source in some instinct or need of human life. An error cannot hold men long unless it has some truth in it. You may despise the feeling which made Daniel choose a house facing towards Jerusalem because you may have outgrown it, but it is quite possible you have not outgrown it because you have not grown into it. No one has a right to rail at superstition unless he be himself a deeply religious man, and has been lifted through the symbol to the higher plane of the truth taught in it. The great danger of our age and country is not superstition, but worldliness; not wrongfully placed aspirations, but no aspirations at all; not a Mecca or Jerusalem to which men turn, but no holy city at all to turn to, no windows open except those which face the busy streets." The foregoing words are suggestive, and may be turned to profitable account if we open the windows of our minds and gaze in the direction of Jerusalem. Not as men did in olden days with

longing for the Jewish temple and its worship, but for the Church of the living God—that we may restore her ancient love, purity and power.

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Christian Standard.

(Published every alternate Thursday).

MELBOURNE. APRIL 11th, 1895.

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Publisher's Notices.

Articles for publication (which should be as brief as possible) to be addressed to "Editors, care of A. B. Maston."

Subscription, 5/- per annum, post free, to any part of the world. Remittances should be made to

M. McLELLAN, Manager and Publisher.
251 Swanston-st., Melbourne.

PURITY, PEACE, UNITY, LOVE, POWER.

FIRST PRINCIPLES.

IT WAS our intention when publishing Mr. Balfour's explanation of the difficult passage found in Hebrews 6: 1, 2, in last issue, to take it up and deal with it more fully. This intention we now carry out. We thought the article referred to worthy of consideration as a solution of the main difficulty, although we were aware that exception might be taken to some of the details. Many have found this portion of scripture somewhat difficult, and have been unable to reach a satisfactory conclusion in reference to its meaning, and therefore we thought that anything which would assist in putting them on the right track would not be unwelcome. We believe Mr. Balfour's explanation does this, but perhaps from want of space full justice has not been done to him by the *Expository Times*, from which our extract was taken. Having been put, as we think we have, on the right track, we may now drop

Mr. Balfour and enter into a fuller consideration of the passage.

It would be altogether a mistake to suppose that the writer of Hebrews intended to disparage the first principles of the doctrines of Christ by anything he said. Such an idea would be foreign to his mind. His language is rather that of impatience with the slow progress of the people to whom he is writing. When they ought to have been teachers, they required to be taught *again* "the rudiments of the first principles of the oracles of God." It is as if he had said: "Your Christian maturity demands that you should rise above your present vacillating condition. You would have no hankering after Judaism if you understood the more advanced teaching about the Melchizedek priesthood—that is, the eternal priesthood—of Christ which I am going to set before you. It should be needless that we dwell together on the topics which form the training of neophytes, but rather that we should enter upon topics which belong to the instruction of Christian manhood. The foundation having been laid, there should be no occasion to lay it again; on the contrary, you should be building upon it; let us therefore cease discussing first principles, and go on to perfection." It is evident, then, that the apostle did not intend to disparage first principles; on the contrary, he regards them as the *foundation*, and would simply urge them not to be satisfied with having got *that far*, but to get higher.

The question now arises, what are we to understand by the items enumerated, viz.: "Repentance from dead works and of faith towards God (of the doctrine of baptisms and of laying on of hands), and of resurrection from the dead, and of eternal judgment;" are they six first principles of Christianity, or are they partly Christian and partly Jewish?

In our opinion it would be incorrect to say they were all Christian, for the simple reason that "the doctrine of baptisms" cannot be regarded as a first principle of the doctrine of Christ, inasmuch as there is only "one baptism," and not a plurality. It is idle in this connection to speak of the baptism of John and the baptism of the Holy Spirit, as both were only temporary, the latter being of a very special character, seeing that we have only two instances on record of its occurrence.

We think the solution of the difficulty will be found in a proper regard to the standpoint from which the apostle is looking at the matter. Evidently he regards those to whom he is writing as in danger of falling back into Judaism, hence he warns them in verses 4, 5, 6 of the impossibility of a renewal to repentance so long as apostasy in the direction of Judaism lasts. For *while* [The word "while" given in the margin is, we think, preferable to "seeing" in the text of verse 6.] they are in this state, "they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." It is not here a question of immortality, but of apostatising in the direction of Judaism.

With this, then, before us, we will be in a better position to understand the sense in which the items enumerated in verses 1, 2 are to be understood.

It must be borne in mind that no matter how we regard these items, they do not embrace *all* the first principles of the doctrine of Christ. The foundation truth upon which Christianity is built is not included, hence we are led to the conclusion that those referred to by the apostle are specially mentioned because in some way or other they were questions which came into prominence in regard to their Judaising tendencies, or formed the subjects of much controversy. It is possible

that their *expressions* of loyalty to Christ were all that could be desired, but their discussion and practice of other things were not in keeping with a complete surrender of heart and mind to Him. The elementary education of every Jew embracing Christianity would include instruction regarding the difference between the Old and the New. This instruction once given should have sufficed. Unfortunately there was always a tendency to go backward. Some indeed went so far as to declare that obedience to the law of Moses was essential to salvation. Judaistic teachers would find their way into almost all the churches, and as a result discussions without end, of a more or less subtle character, would prevail. It is possible that Jewish and Christian ordinances somewhat alike were compared, and the validity of the former insisted upon equally with the latter. Hence the protest of the writer of the Hebrews, and his declaration that this state of things betokened spiritual childhood which might eventually end in apostasy.

Every Jew embracing Christianity was supposed to have *repented* or changed his mind in regard to Judaism, and to no longer regard its "dead works" as of any avail. He was expected to realise that "*faith upon God*" was the distinguishing characteristic of the Christian age. He had been clearly taught that the *immersions of the Jewish law* were no longer of any service, that having been immersed into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, other immersions of a religious character were not only superfluous but sinful; that the sacrificing of animals in the Temple and the *laying on of the hands* of the priest as a sign of the transference of sin was making light of the one great and final sacrifice on Calvary—was crucifying the Son of God

afresh and putting him to an open shame; that these were "dead works" of which they had repented, and were separated widely from the immersion and the laying on of hands obtaining in the Christian Church.

This, we think, sets forth in a simple and satisfactory way how the first four items are to be regarded. The fifth and sixth do not present any difficulties. The resurrection and eternal judgment would be much discussed, especially as in the minds of many both events were regarded as being close at hand. The resurrection, both in the Corinthian and Thessalonian Churches, had been the subject of much controversy in regard to, comparatively speaking, minor points, and no doubt the subject of the judgment was also a matter of curious speculation in some of its details. The writer of the Hebrews would have his readers refrain from profitless discussions about these matters, and instead prepare themselves for the reception of other truths which would make them more fit for these great events.

We cannot leave this subject without noting that an important lesson is conveyed, not only to Jewish Christians of early days, but also to Christians of the present time. Now, as then, there are many babes in Christ who are in "need of milk, and not of solid food." Many who by reason of age ought to be teachers still need to be taught the rudiments of the first principles of the oracles of God. Instead of laying the true foundation once and for all and building upon it, they are trying to put some material in it, not found in the plans and specifications of the Divine Architect, and so much precious time is lost and opportunities wasted which might have been utilised in the development of the higher Christian life.

Editorial Notes.

Liquor Laws.—A number of representatives, says the "West Australian," from the various temperance organisations in the colony met, on the invitation of the Council of the Diocesan Branch of the C. E. T. S., on March 11th, in the City Temperance League Hall to discuss the details of the proposed conference on the liquor laws. It was decided to hold such a conference on Thursday, April 25th, and to invite each temperance body to select five delegates from its order to take part in it. It was further arranged to invite the members of both Houses of Legislature to be present at such conference. The schemes so far arranged to be brought forward are as follows:—State purchase, by Mr. F. Illingworth, M.L.A.; local option, by Mr. W. Tralea, M.L.A.; The Bishop of Chester's Scheme, by Bishop Riley; enforcement of present local option clauses, by Mr. John Elliott.

The "Macalister" Correspondence Bible Class.—Bro. Dunn is now prepared to enroll students for the above class. The usefulness of the class has already been abundantly demonstrated by the testimony of those who have availed themselves of the facilities it affords for a thorough study of the Bible. It affords special advantages to those living at a distance, and specially those who are cut off from the sources of information essential to a thorough course of study in the most important of all books. Bro. Macalister, prior to his death, signified his approval of Bro. Dunn's carrying on the work, and as he has acquired all of Bro. Macalister's notes and questions, it is his intention to continue it on the same lines.

Some Particulars.—The object of the class is to give a systematic knowledge of the whole Bible. The method of study is as follows: To read weekly or fortnightly an indicated portion of the Bible; to answer from memory a paper of twenty questions; to forward these for examination, and to revise study, in the light of corrections returned by the conductor, with notes lent for the purpose. **COURSE.**—The Bible is studied in six sections, containing about one hundred and fifty lessons, thus providing a three years course at the ordinary rate. Students may work faster or slower at discretion, may begin at any time, or with any section, and will be received from any of the colonies. The sections are—1. Pentateuch and Job, 26 lessons; 2. Historical books, 33 lessons; 3. Prophetic books, 31 lessons; 4. Poetical books and summary of Old Testament, 15 lessons; 5. New Testament books, 26 lessons; 6. Doctrinal, 19 lessons.

The Synagogue and the Organ.—The expediency of having organ music as an accompaniment to the Synagogue choir on

the first day of the Passover was discussed at a special general meeting of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation held lately. After some debate a motion in favour of the organ was carried. According to the *Age* report, "many old adherents opposed the proposition on the ground that it would lead to still further departures from the traditional forms of Jewish worship;" and sure enough it did, for immediately after a Gentile was appointed conductor, and so this year on the first day of the Passover the choral portions of the service are to be rendered, for the first time in any Jewish Synagogue in Australia, by a mixed choir. If anyone likes to draw an inference from this circum- stance, they are quite at liberty to do so. (Since writing the above we learn that Rabbi Abrahams has refused to give his consent to the use of the organ.)

Atonement.—We have just received a copy of the "Wellington Square Pulpit," containing a sermon by J. D. Thompson on the above subject. We can not say that we agree with the sermon in all its details, but on the whole it is a splendid production. His concluding words are very fine: "Now, I may not have satisfied you. I fall back on what I said at the beginning—Atonement is, after all, a deep mystery. We go, as I said, as far as human reason and analogy will help us, and there we reverently wait. But what does it matter in practice if we do not comprehend all? The chemist cannot define an atom, or explain the building up of a molecule, but he makes his analysis, mixes his compounds, and relies on the result nevertheless. You do not wait before you swallow the physician's prescription until you have scientifically studied the drugs that go to its making up. You do not delay your dinner so that you may first understand the chemie process of chyle and chyme and blood. You altered your watches a few weeks ago in obedience to the 'Standard Time Ad,' though not one person in ten knew the meaning and the reason of the change. You embark upon the great deep, though you are innocent of any philosophy of the tides or of the laws of great circle sailing. Why, then, should you want to wait before accepting Christ's salvation through His suffering for the world's sin until you can read the mystery through and through? The laws of chemistry, of digestion, of astronomy, of navigation, which you trust in the other cases, are not more certain than the great Law of Vicarious Suffering, which is the master law of the spiritual world. It reaches back 'behind the veil,' but on this side there is much you may see and grasp. There are plants in lowly shaded places that never see the actual sun, but they 'guess where he may be,' and climb towards him; and though we may never gaze upon the full face of the Sun of Love—for we would be dazzled by the glare—yet

may we ever feel and answer the attraction of His diffused light. And so I say to-night, as my last word, let the prayer of every heart be—"Give light, O Master and Saviour, but above all give the sense of my sin; give penitence, give faith, give pardon and love. And though the philosophy of the Atonement be dark, let the fact of Suffering Love be bright, and I will take that to my very heart and live by it and for it, as my Father means me to." Amen.

Women in the Pulpit.—Mr. E. H. SUGDEN, B.A., lately preached a sermon on 1 Cor. xiv. 34-35; in which he said:—"It seems clear that the apostle did mean to prohibit the women at Corinth from taking any public part in the meetings of the Church, and that this was his intention is shown by the passage in 1 Tim. ii. 12:—"I permit not a woman to teach." But it must be remembered that these two directions were addressed to Greek Churches and in the first century. They are both local and temporary. It was essential that the Christians should not violate the conventions that obtained in the countries where they lived. Now amongst the Greeks, whether at Corinth or Ephesus (where Timothy was bishop, if a woman spoke in public it was equivalent to professing herself a prostitute. Women were not even permitted to sit at table in their own houses when strangers were present; and to make any public appearance would have been considered by everyone as shamelessly immodest. Therefore, if the women at Corinth had spoken in the Churches, it would have been said at once that Christianity abolished all sexual morality; and that all Christian women were simply harlots. Such a scandal would have been fatal; and the apostle, who was always too wise to provoke needless opposition, properly forbade any such dangerous experiment—dangerous not only to the church but to the woman herself—for when a woman disregards conventional decencies, however good her motives, she puts herself in a grave position of peril." It will be observed that Mr. Sugden pays no attention to Paul's reason given in 1 Tim. ii. 12, 13, 14, 15, which in our opinion lies at the root of Paul's prohibition, while all this talk about woman's position in the Roman Empire betrays an imperfect knowledge of the history of the period under notice. In a previous number of the *Standard* we gave a quotation from Professor Donaldson which clearly showed that women under the Roman Empire, in Apostolic times, were allowed great liberty and held public positions both socially and politically, without incurring scandal. This is corroborated by Professor Hamay who lately spent several years in Asia Minor, particularly in Ephesus, and afterwards gave the result of his researches in a book entitled—"The Church in the Roman Empire" from

which we take the following extract:—"A point which illustrates and is illustrated by the state of society in Asia Minor, is the influence exerted on the Apostles' fortunes in Antioch by the women. The honors and influence which belonged to women in the cities of Asia Minor, form one of the most remarkable features in the history of the country. In all periods the evidence runs on the same lines. On the border between fable and history we find Amazons. The *Mutterrecht* belong to Asia Minor. Under the Roman Empire, we find women magistrates, presidents at games, and loaded with honors. The customs of the countries influenced even the Jews, who at least in one case, appointed women at Smyrna to the position of Archi-Synagogus. It would be strange if the women had not exercised some influence over Paul's fortunes." In view of these things, the real reason of Paul's prohibition should be faced, and the facts of the case not be obscured by reasons which Paul himself never gave, and which are not borne out by the facts, which a more correct knowledge of history has brought to the surface.

Open Column.

THE RETURN OF THE JEWS TO PALESTINE.

J. INGLIS WRIGHT.

† It was with no little interest that I read the editorial note which appeared in a recent issue upon "The Future of the Jews."

This is a subject which must be of vital interest to all Christians.

Is it not written, "Jerusalem shall be trodden under foot of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled?" Every circumstance, therefore, which points to the fulfilment of this prophecy is of the utmost importance to Christians, as showing that the day is drawing nigh when "the Lord will have mercy on Jacob and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land, and the stranger shall be joined with them and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob."

Verily the work of "setting them in their own land" is already well begun, and being rapidly proceeded with.

I append a number of cuttings from various periodicals of recent date, with the object of endeavouring to arouse some degree of attention to this most important subject.

As one writer has well said: "The Jew is God's sign to the nations and

the ages. This sign is growing more significant every day. It is evident that a crisis is fast approaching in the land of Palestine and among the Hebrew people. God said, through the Prophet Zechariah of old, that He would make Jerusalem a burdensome stone to the nations, and the Jews are really one of the heaviest burdens of Continental nations."

Many of our brethren have little or no love for the Jew, and in some cases we do not wonder that it is so. But such a feeling is far from being right or Scriptural. Perhaps the following little anecdote will present the matter in a new light to some of our brethren:—"A gentleman once said to a clergyman, 'I have such a hatred for the Jew that I will have nothing Jewish in my house.' The clergyman rose, and took a beautifully bound Bible from the table, a New Testament from the book case; he then proceeded to take down some pictures from the walls, representing Paul preaching in Athens, Christ's Ascension, and another of the Crucifixion. 'What are you doing?' asked the gentleman, greatly surprised. 'You just said,' replied the clergyman, 'that you would not have anything Jewish in your house. I was just beginning to help you to take away the many Jewish things you happen to have in this room; shall I throw them into the fire?' 'Stop, stop,' said the gentleman, 'may God forgive me for what I said. I never thought of it in that light.'

As New Testament Christians, the fulfilment of prophecy should excite our warmest enthusiasm, and in no case more so than that which, in restoring the Jews to their own land, brings nearer and nearer still that ever blessed hope of the Christian Church during all ages—the return of the Lord Jesus.

"The British Consul at Jerusalem gives some interesting details respecting the present condition of the Holy City. It appears that buildings of various kinds continue to be erected in the vicinity, and the city is far outgrowing its former limits. On its western side houses have been increased so rapidly during the last few years, that quite a large suburb has arisen where formerly there were fields and vineyards."

"Jerusalem has nearly trebled its population in twenty years, but the Jews have increased just fourfold. Out of about 60,000 inhabitants, 42,000 are Jews."

"The history of Jerusalem is a

series of wars. Twenty times has it been besieged, often after capture it has been destroyed, each time it has been rebuilt upon the ruins of the former foundations; so that now the old levels of the ground are from 40ft to 100ft below the present surface. Rubbish and debris fill up the old valleys and water-courses. This is very clearly made evident by excavations that have proved the truth of the prophecy—"Jerusalem shall become heaps."

"Another remarkable prophecy uttered against Jerusalem was by our blessed Lord Himself. When leaving the Temple for the last time—the 'despised and rejected of men' (Isa. liii.)—the disciples drew His attention to the beauty of the stones in Herod's temple. He then replied—'There shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down' (Matt. xxiv. 2). In less than fifty years afterwards that prophecy was most completely accomplished."

"At the capture of Jerusalem by Titus, strict orders were given that the beautiful Temple was to be preserved from damage, and great efforts were made to keep it from injury; but a higher power than the Roman conqueror had decreed its destruction. A chance firebrand, as men would say, flung by a common soldier, ignited the woodwork, and, in spite of heroic efforts to prevent it, it was speedily destroyed. Later on, the stones of the building were hurled over into the valley beneath, and the ploughshare tore up the very foundations. God swept the place with His besom of destruction, wiped it, and turned it upside down."

(To be continued).

Correspondence.

THE PRINCIPLES OF THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST.

DEAR BRETHREN,—At the end of "Current Topics" in the issue of March 28th, are three sentences which require a word of explanation. They are: "So then, the washings and the laying on of hands are not fundamental principles and first teachings in Christ. They are not Christian doctrines at all, nor Christian practices. They are simply the Old Testament rites which stood till the better substitutes should come." If we grant the punctuation of Heb. 6: 1-2, given by Mr.

Balfour, and even his interpretation of the passage, the conclusion contained in these three sentences does not logically follow, unless the words in which it is couched are altered somewhat, or qualified so as not to be too inclusive. Should they not rather read "the washing *here referred to*, and the laying on of hands *here referred to* are not fundamental principles, etc.," and "They do not refer to the Christian doctrines or Christian practices of washing and laying on of hands at all." The washings here referred to could not possibly include the washing of the New Covenant, *i.e.*, the washing of regeneration, the washing away of sins in connection with the ordinance of immersion. For this washing was an institution commanded by Christ, and administered by the apostles to believers both of the Jews and of the Gentiles. So also, the laying on of hands here referred to could not include the laying on of hands as practised under the New Covenant in apostolic times. For this was a Christian doctrine; Jesus taught that the converts of the apostles should "lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." And the apostles laid hands on baptised believers, who then received the gift of the Holy Spirit, and some of these in turn laid hands on the sick and so restored them. It was a frequent Christian practice. So again, not only did the apostles in the church in Jerusalem composed of Jews lay hands on the deacons to appoint them to their office, but the prophets and teachers in the Gentile church at Antioch laid hands on Paul and Barnabas to separate them for the work which the Holy Spirit had called them; and Paul the apostle of the Gentiles ordained elders in every city of the Gentiles where there was a church during this missionary tour; and Timothy laid hands on the elders and deacons in the Gentile church at Ephesus. Therefore *laying on of hands* for appointment to work and office for the church was not a Jewish ceremony replaced by repentance and faith, but part of the doctrine and practice of the early Christians. There is then a washing, as well as a laying on of hands of the New Covenant, which are among the first principles of the doctrine of Christ. And though the divers washings of Judaism, and the imposition of hands by priest or people upon the heads of beasts to be sacrificed at the altars

were done away; the washing of baptism, and the laying on of hands in ordination to office taught and performed after the abolition of all the Jewish ceremonies, were Christian doctrines and Christian practices. And any interpretation of Heb. 6: 2 cannot eliminate these from the first principles of the doctrine of Christ. Whether Mr. Balfour's interpretation should be accepted, I will not discuss at present; it is open to question; but my point is this—the acceptance of it does not in the slightest degree affect the importance or validity of believer's baptism or appointment to office by the laying on of hands. Probably these two ordinances were not in the mind of the writer of Current Topics when penning his last paragraph, and it is to prevent the possibility of a false construction being put upon his words that I write the above.

Yours in the truth,

J. C. VERCO.

[The "Current Topics" in last issue consisted of an extract from the *Expository Times*, with a few introductory words from us. We regarded it in the main as satisfactory, although on some matters of detail we did not agree with the writer. We did not understand the writer to deny that Christian immersion and laying on of hands were first principles. Our "leader" in this issue sets forth our views on the passage.—EDS.]

THE RACES OF MAN.

DEAR BRETHREN,—I was pleased to see that you have ended the correspondence on "The Antiquity of Man," and yet I would fain hope you will insert these few lines. I was exceedingly sorry to read the article of I.E.L., and as sorry to see the supplementary one by M. I have known both these brethren for many years, and regard them both as good men, but their speculations in the two articles referred to I regard as perilously near the boundary line separating the Christian from the ultra-rationalist, who scruples not to believe or disbelieve the words of the sacred oracles just as it pleases him. It may be the two brethren have unconsciously got near the above line, but it is to be deeply regretted. I presume the two brethren will admit that God knows all the truth about the question they have written upon. Paul evidently believed so, for in Acts 15: 18, he says, "Known unto God are all His works, from the beginning of

the world." As God knows all things, is it not well to allow Him to settle the question in dispute? In Acts 17: 26 he does practically settle it. Paul there affirms that God "hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth." If "one blood" means anything at all, it clearly declares that "all nations" "on all the face of the earth," descended from one common parentage, or otherwise it is quite impossible for them to be of "one blood." May not such a statement from an inspired apostle be regarded as absolutely settling the question among those professing to take the word of God as their only and infallible guide? I trust it may do so, and that we may never see the subject mooted again in our religious papers in anything like its recent form.

I am, dear Bretn., etc.,

M. W. GREEN.

[It is so seldom Bro. Green favours us with a word that we feel we cannot refuse him space even though we have declared the discussion closed. In justice to Bro. M. we will allow him equal space for a reply, after which we will not re-open it.—E.D.S.]

Sisters' Page.

"To walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, bearing fruit in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God." Col 1-10, &c.

Communications for this "Page" should be a *limited* size. *Nov. 11th, 23* *Thursday* street, *Alabama*, not later than the *15th* of each month.

EXECUTIVE.

The Executive of the Sisters' Conference held their monthly meeting on the 5th inst. The arrangements for the forthcoming Conference were completed. A letter of greeting was sent to the N.S.W. Sisters' Conference. The addition of two scholars to the church was reported from Doncaster, and two from Swanston-st. school. Next executive meeting, May 3rd. *All representatives are requested to be present at new committees are to be formed.* E.E.H., Sec.

LETTERS FROM MISSIONARIES.

The first missionary letter concerning the greatest missionary and his mission was written by Dr. Luke to his friend Theophilus, concerning the beginning of the doings and teachings of Jesus, for the purpose that his friend might know the cer-

tainty of those things wherein he had been instructed. Such was the success of the first letter that another was written, in which the continuance of the work of Christ in his missionary effort was shown operating through the Holy Spirit in men whom Christ had prepared as world wide missionaries. So then we may say the gospel of Luke, describing the beginning of Christ's missionary labours, and the Acts of Apostles, describing their continuance, are not only the first missionary letters, but the greatest ever written, and should be models of missionary letter writing. How did Paul, the great missionary to the Gentiles and pattern of Christ, seek to impress the results of his missionary labours upon the churches he had established? First, by rehearsing to the churches in his travels all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. What would we have given for a report of these rehearsals! But to-day Paul by his missionary letters touches a thousand hearts, that vibrate with the same tender chord they did at his first utterance. We can say as did Chrysostom, "Paul by his letters still lives in the mouths of men throughout the whole world; by them not only his own converts, but all the faithful even unto this day and all the saints yet to be born until Christ's coming again, both have been, and shall be blessed." His letters are the imperishable part which still remains to us when all that time can destroy has passed away.

What a beautiful thought for us, to look upon Christ as the epistle (letter) of God, or God's missionary letter to us, whereby we might know God who is the fountain of all missionary spirit and influence. "Who so loved the world that he sent (as a letter to be read and known of all men) His only begotten Son, that whosoever should believe (God's handwriting) in Christ, should not perish but have everlasting life." Our Heavenly Father has taught us in this way to expect letters from a distance, hence we should welcome messages from those who in foreign lands are living epistles in our stead to the heathen that know not God, yet are taught of Him by their consecrated efforts. Letters from these dear ones are worthy of being cherished. They come to us fresh and full from the field, familiar with the people and their ways. They give us glimpses of Syria, Persia, India,

Burmah, China, Japan, and the islands of the Pacific, that fill us with heroic sacrifices, and devoted self-denials; above all they express that consecration that "counts all things but lost that they may win Christ." What grand results are often reported! The influence of these letters stir our hearts with the desire to share their labors, and failing the privilege of this we strive to lighten their burdens with sympathetic interest and substantial support. Our prayers should shield them by night and guide them by day, ever cheering them with the promise "That every one that hath left houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or lands for my name sake, shall receive a hundred fold, and shall inherit eternal life." Allow me to use an illustration that may help us in these times.

Let us see to it hereafter that our *deeds* and *letters* are worthy of the gospel we profess.

(Address by Sister A. K. Thurgood at a united missionary meeting during the week of prayer held in the city of Pittsburgh, Pa., 1895.)

The best example of self-denying liberality in the Bible is recorded of woman. The best example of loving service in the Bible is recorded of woman. The best example of conquering prayer in the Bible is recorded of woman. The gift was a widow's mite; the service was the anointing of Jesus with a box of ointment; the prayer was a mother's prayer for a daughter possessed with a devil. Jesus never let fall such words of royal commendation as concerning these three women. Of the poor widow He said, "She hath cast in more than they all." Of Mary He said, "She hath done what she could." And to the Canaanitish mother He said, "O woman, great is thy faith! Be it unto thee as thou wilt."—*Selected.*

Church News.

All matter for this department should reach the Office by noon on Tuesday. But short items arriving by noon on Wednesday will find a place if there is room. Send all news items direct to A. B. Mantou, 525 Elizabeth street, Carlton.

VICTORIA.

MILBURN—On Lord's day evening, 24th March, at the conclusion of the service, two came out and made the good confession.

one being the daughter of our esteemed Bro. Mansell; the other one a person who has been diligently seeking the "Old Paths," being regular in attendance at both our morning service for breaking of bread and the gospel service for some months, besides frequent interviews with the writer and other brethren. This brother is born again from the Romish church. Our prayer to God is that He will keep both faithful till death. They were buried into Christ's death on Wednesday evening, the 27th, and received into fellowship on 31st March, thus making an increase of three for the first quarter by faith and baptism.

April 1st.

J. SELWOOD.

TARADALE.—We had Bro. Park with us on the 24th of March, preaching the gospel, and at the close three came forward and made the good confession, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and Bro. Park baptized them on the following Wednesday night. The same night another young man came forward and made the good confession, and they were all baptized and received into fellowship together on last Lord's day morning. This cheers us up here very much.

H. HUGHES, Sec.

MURAMBIDENA.—The tea meeting and opening services in connection with the church was held on Wednesday evening, March 13th. As the accommodation in connection with the chapel was limited only members and a few friends were invited. About 60 sat down to tea provided by the sisters. After justice had been done to the good things provided, a meeting was held. Bro. Eaton, of the South Yarra church, in the chair, who explained the position of the church. Addresses were delivered by Brethren Blair of Swan-street, Richmond, Kellard, Finger and Hardwell of Hawthorn, Hamill of North Richmond, Gibson of Prahran, Moysey of Cheltenham, and C. Newham. Mrs. McDonald of Cheltenham gave a recitation, and Bro. Moysey a song. The opening services took place on Lord's day, March 17. Bro. Moysey spoke morning and afternoon, and in the evening at 7 Bro. C. Newham preached, in which the distinctive principles that we hold as a people were clearly set forth. All the meetings were well attended, and we hope in the near future to see some results from the seed sown.

J. G. BARRETT.

HORSHAM.—We intend to (v) holding our annual gathering, or Conference, on Good Friday, in the Temperance Hall, when we expect a good number of brethren from the churches in the district. We invite all brethren and sisters who can make it convenient to come or they may attend something good. Our morning meetings are still fairly well attended. Preaching is still held every Sunday evening by our local brethren. Bro.

F. P. Morris, from our Baptist brethren, has spoken at several morning meetings and preached in the evening with much interest. Bro. M. is a good, earnest worker for Christ, and the cause here is much helped by his services.

J. GOULD, Sec.

SOUTH YARRA.—The writer has occupied the platform here on the last six Lord's day evenings. Last Sunday night we were rewarded by the first confession during this time. A lady, who has been attending our meetings for some time, came nobly forward and confessed Christ. She was formerly connected with the Salvation Army. We are looking for more.

March 27.

THOS. HAGGER, Sec.

CHELLENHAM.—The church anniversary will be held on Sunday and Monday, April 28th and 29th. Will brethren and sisters in making their appointments please remember this, and come. One made the good confession to-night, a son of Bro. Jas. Judd.

April 7.

DUNEDIN.—Since I reported last, we have had the pleasure of seeing another young lady, a daughter of our Sister Harrison, make the good confession. I had the pleasure of burying her (with the one mentioned in the last), in the grave of baptism in the creek, before a large assemblage of on-lookers, on the following Sunday afternoon. We have also received into our fellowship one from the Baptists. We are erecting a Baptistery, which will prove a great assistance to the work. The secretary's name, which I forget to mention in last, of the Sunday School is Sister Maud Harrison.

E. T. GRANT.

WEST AUSTRALIA.

FREMANTLE.—Since my last report, we have been cheered and delighted with an increase to our ranks of two sisters and one brother, who have carried out the Saviour's Divine commands and became obedient through baptism. One was a daughter of our dear Sister Hawkeford, whom we were very happy to welcome. Our much respected and beloved Brethren Pallott and Symons have been elected deacons of the Church meeting here. They have both been doing service to the cause with good addresses and sterling Gospel sermons. Brother Jensen has been doing active work in the Church, and has been invited to preach in Perth next Lord's day, which he has accepted. Our meetings are increasing, the hall in which we meet, being packed every Lord's day evening. We are badly in want of a building of our own, and live in hopes of having one ere long. The Sunday School anniversary took place 1st Lord's day, and a social was held on Monday evening, which passed off very successfully, and a happy time was spent. The chair was

occupied by Bro. R. Redman of Perth, and it is needless to say, it was in good hands. Bro. W. Wilson of Melbourne, has arrived, and is going to preach for us on Lord's day evening, so we are all looking forward to a treat. We hail with delight a Brother in our midst from over the sea, who can preach the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Bro. Baldwin who is down from Coolgardie with fever, but who, I am delighted to say, is better—reports some happy meetings up there among the Brethren and Sisters on the Gold fields. We trust their number may be increased and the Church spread. I had a letter from Bro. P. Longbottom, who is at present on the Murchison goldfields, and in it he tells me he has conducted several services up there, so the joyful news is being spread abroad in this Western land. In future you will have the glad tidings of the Cause from our worthy Brother Thomson who is taking over the secretaryship, which I am obliged to give up through want of time. With Christian greetings,

March, 1895.

S. BLOXIDGE, Sec.

:—:

NEW ZEALAND.

WARKWORTH.—We have been encouraged by a visit from our Bro. F. W. Greenwood, who preached four Sundays for us and also held meetings during the week. We all appreciated our brother's visit, being stimulated to further efforts by his plain, practical talks. Although there were no confessions during his visit, we believe his way of rendering the gospel will bear fruit. So we labour on in hope; one sows, another reaps, but all praise is due to God. We wish Bro. G. success in his new scene of labour, which I believe is Oamaru, and hope the brethren will work cordially together for the good of the cause.

March 29.

J. A. P.

WANGANUI.—We rejoice to say that since last report one brother has put on Christ in His own appointed way and has been received into fellowship. Last Lord's day we had the pleasure of receiving two from Petone. There has been another change in connection with our Sunday School. Bro. Hadfield has had to change his residence, having gone to Palmerston N. Bro. Vine, late of Dunedin, is now superintendent, and under his management we anticipate good results. We have received amongst us Sister McKenzie by letter from Hobart, but recently from Sydney.

Feb. 11.

Geo. P. PERSELL, Sec.

KAITANGATA.—About two months have elapsed since writing you, and during that time it is our pleasing duty to chronicle that four have been added to our number by faith and obedience, three of whom we still have with us, the other having been transferred to the Dunedin church. They were

the wife and two daughters of our Bro. H. Wilson, and also the second daughter of our Bro. and Sister Rogers. Our Bro. Way, of Dunedin, paid us a passing visit and delivered two addresses to fairly good audiences on his return from the Mataura church. The church is sending to the General Conference, which is to be held in Dunedin at Easter, one delegate; also to the Sisters' Conference, which is to be held at the same time and place, one delegate. We trust that an encouraging and profitable time may be spent thereat, that may result in the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom. Besides the young Christian's class on Wednesday nights, another class has been started on Lord's day afternoons at two o'clock, in the form of a Bible class, at which all may attend. So far it has been encouraging. Bro. Donaldson has charge of it. All other meetings are about the same as when last reporting.

March 27.

A. ROY, Sec.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

Two elderly people confessed their faith in Christ, on Sunday, March 31st, at Queenstown.

Mr. and Mrs. Hunter, of Sydney, en route to England, were able to break their journey for a couple of days here, and renew the acquaintance of their many friends and receive numerous wishes for a safe and happy voyage.

The Committee of the South Australian Sunday School Union held their usual monthly meeting in the Grote Street vestry, last Monday evening, March 18th. Owing to the unavoidable absence of the president (Dr. Verco), the worthy vice-president (Bro. W. Matthews), presided over a very fair attendance of delegates from the various schools. After a hearty vote of thanks had been passed to the teachers of the Henley Beach Sunday School for the pleasant social we held there on Feb. 23rd, the question of providing a division at the next examination for the teachers to compete in (which was deferred from last meeting), was then fully considered. All the schools in the meantime having been requested to find out how many of their teachers would be likely to enter if such intention was carried into effect. Some of the schools intimated that in all probability a fair number would represent them, and it was deemed sufficient inducement by the Union to make this extra division.

The same three examiners (Brethren Dr. Verco, J. C. Dickson, and T. J. Gore) were again chosen to set the questions, &c., with the addition of another brother, so as to have one for each division.

The subject is to be the second quarter's lessons of the International series for both scholars and teachers, comprising very im-

portant lessons from the New Testament, the study of which ought to serve as an incentive to both scholar and teacher. The date of the examination has been fixed to take place in October next, the particular day to be left to the discretion of the examiners.

The half-yearly interchange of teachers having been altered to March and Sept., instead of Dec. and June. This will take place next Lord's day afternoon, 30th inst., at all our schools, as arranged by our executive, and we trust that it will be as fully enjoyed and appreciated by them as formerly, and that many of our scholars may be won for King Jesus.

QUEENSTOWN.—The work is still in progress although none have confessed for some time past. Still our meetings are well attended. We are not by any means faint-hearted, because we have our Lord's promise that His word shall not return unto Him void. We are expecting at any of our meetings some may come out. We were very glad to have with us again our beloved Bro. J. Verco, who has been on a short visit to some of the country churches. He said that though he had been away from us he had been at the work, and as the outcome he had had the pleasure of baptising a young person in the River Murray, and added "because there was much water there." We pray our Father's blessing may follow him in his work, and that he may have the same pleasure very often. We also had the pleasure of having Bro. W. L. Johnston Lord's day evening, March 16th, and Dr. Verco, March 17th, who preached the grand old gospel in all its beauty to a hall nearly full, many strangers being present whom we have never seen at our meetings before. God grant that the seed may have fallen in good ground and bear much fruit to His glory. We also had Bro. J. C. Dickson a few weeks ago, so that Queenstown brethren cannot find words to thank the various brethren that have helped to make a success, but the reward will come in that great day. R. HARRIS.

NORTH ADELAIDE.—On Sunday, the 31st March, under the auspices of the Sunday-school Union, we had the pleasure of listening to Mr. Wilson, of Queenstown, and Mr. Jno. Anderson of Grote street. As usual, it was made the occasion of a reunion of the separated portions of our school, Mrs. Henderson's large class of over forty women spending the afternoon with us. Our two speakers easily enlisted the attention and interest of all as they spoke of the things of God, and expressions of pleasure were heard afterwards at their visit.

HINDMARSH.—There has been little of importance to report for some time past. Since last writing Bro. H. D. Smith has taken his annual holiday, and has now re-

turned all the better for the change. Part of the time was spent with the W.C.T.U. in camp at Wool Bay, and the remainder at Bro. Malhouse's, Norman Villa. In each place there was plenty of sea breeze and other advantages, in return for which no doubt his influence was given on the right side of the momentous questions considered.

We have to thank Brethren Davis, of Benthamst, Anderson, A. T. Magarey, and Mr. Hone of the Baptists, for their valuable services in supplying Sunday evenings. The other services were conducted by the local brethren.

We are sorry that Bro. J. Taylor has sent in his resignation as one of the leaders of the singing. Bro. T. will be married shortly, and will be living away from the district; consequently will not be able to continue his good services, which have been always of an unassuming character, willingly and efficiently performed. The church will miss him very much.

On the 31st inst. a few brethren and sisters—in all met for the commemoration of the Lord's death in the house of our aged Bro. Lee, of Thebarton. Our brother is now very infirm with age, being 88 next birthday. The time was sweet and refreshing. This service will be continued at least once a month, and we shall be glad to see any of the neighbouring members of the Church of Christ present, first Sunday in the month at 3 p.m.

There have been no additions lately, but two young lads confessed Christ a week ago. We are expelling some who have been attending the meetings for some time to obey their Lord in the ordinance of baptism shortly. We have had some very interesting and profitable conversations with them on the subject. Things are quiet, but we feel the work is progressing on the whole.

The local Foreign Missionary Society held its quarterly meeting on Wednesday evening last. The Christian Endeavour Society from Grote street took the meeting, presided over by Bro. H. D. Smith. Sister Jones and Bro. A. Verco sang two solos very nicely. Sister Tenkins, Brethren G. Smith, F. Manning, A. Manning and Ewins gave suitable addresses. The Society have about £28 in hand, some of which was contributed by the Y.P.S.C.U. for the keep of a boy in India. We had a good meeting. Mar. 22. A. G.

KILMORE ST., S. A.—On March 17th, in the Chapel, Mr. Alfred Temple and Miss Mary S. Allen, were married by Mr. J. C. Dickson. The place was almost full of friends. With them went Miss Bessie. On Lord's day morning, March 24th, the three deacons previously elected were appointed to their office by the laying on of hands. After the second hymn, the brother chosen by the Church to make the appointment,

said a few words in explanation, and then offered the commendatory prayer appropriate to the occasion, and after laying his hands on the heads of the deacons with a suitable word for each officer, he announced the hymn 755, which was sung by the whole congregation. The induction proved very solemn and impressive, and it would be not unwise for churches which have not hitherto practised this method, to think about the matter. Compared with hand-shaking, it stands about on a level with immersion in contrast with sprinkling—both as to authority and to effect.

NANTAWARRA AND DALKEY CHURCHES.—A month ago I had a short run to the North, in the Nantawarra and Dalkey districts. It falls to the lot of preachers, occasionally, to perform a beautiful ceremony and one which always *draws a good house*, when two lives are, for the future, blended in one. Who does not like to witness a marriage? People in town or country will come to the chapel or private house, and so they they did at Nantawarra Chapel on the last day in February.

While up there I embraced the opportunity of preaching two evenings at the Chapel. Anyone who visits this district will have become acquainted with that veteran in the Cause—Bro. J. G. Cosh. I do not mean that our brother is an exceedingly old man, for he is not, but he is one who has worked very faithfully in the Cause these Bro. Cosh has been building an Hydropathic Hospital, and but for a severe accident through falling from the scaffolding, would have the building finished ere this. But our brother is progressing, and hopes soon to be well again. Bro Cosh speaks in kind remembrance of a visit of Bro Selby, who, with his wife, spent a few days at his house. Anyone who knows Bro Cosh and who has been at his home, will be able to testify of his hospitality. He says he would like Bro. Selby to come up again.

The work in connection with the church has been of late an uphill one. Through bad seasons many of the farmers in the north have been compelled to sell out and go to other parts of the colony or one of the other colonies. Thus the church has not materially increased of late. Bro. J. P. Seymour has been, until the beginning of the year, laboring with them; but they have had to part with him, not being able to support him. It is a serious loss to the church not to have a man who can devote his time to the preaching. While up there I had the pleasure of talking with a man who is near the kingdom, and who is desirous of obeying the Lord.

At Dalkey the church is very much helped by such men as Brethren D. Finlayson, Hammond and Saltmarsh. Bro Saltmarsh is just on a visit to the home of his son-in-

law, D. Finlayson, but wherever he goes he assists as much as he can. I spent one night with the church at Dalkey, and met many of the brethren. I spent a very pleasant evening at the home of Bro. Finlayson, who lives at Owen. Both these churches are looking forward, as also is Balaklava, to a visit from our travelling evangelist, Bro. D'Nesi, who is at present helping the church at Port Hope.

March 25. J. C. DICKSON.

NEW SOUTH WALES.

ENMORE.—We have much pleasure in noting the fact that the cause of Christ in this district is moving steadily on. Since last report nine have made the good confession and have been baptized into Christ.

April 8. C. A. R.

TASMANIA.

DRAM CREEK AND PORT ARTHUR DISTRICTS.—Have much pleasure in reporting progress. At Impression Bay have held good meetings, also with Bro G. Spaulding have held a meeting at Long Bay, nine miles distant, the State School being allowed us for the purpose. We are about to start another outpost at Carnarvon, the original Port Arthur settlement, the room kindly being given us for the purpose by Sister Blackwood, being one of the original officers' quarters in the "dark days." We trust that the light of the blessed gospel will shine in to the hearts of those who will hear it, that it may prove the "power of God unto salvation" to many, believing it.

At Dram Creek the meetings are held in a building which has been utilised for the purpose, pending the erection of our new meeting house. The tenders have been called for, and one has been accepted, the price being a little under £150. The building will be about the same dimensions as the late one destroyed by fire. It will be floored with pine throughout, and in addition will contain a neat cement hip-roof and fittings complete. Three months have been allowed the contractor wherein to finish, and he will make a start very soon. Have held some good live meetings, in the respective homes of our brethren, our only regret being that 9 p.m. seems to arrive so soon to terminate them. "Brethren, pray for us."

April 4. W. DONALDSON.

OUR NEWS BUDGET.

The church at Mildura has been cheered by two more additions by faith and baptism. Bro. M. W. Green, of Adelaide, will preach in Swanston-street chapel next Sunday night.

Meetings at Murrumbidgee keeping up well. One decision last Lord's day evening, Bro. Newham preaching.

The church at North Melbourne has extended an invitation to Bro. McCrackell to labour with them in the gospel.

We are sorry to hear of the death of Sister Paterson, wife of Bro. R. Paterson, Yungala S.A. We sympathise with our esteemed brother.

The report of the Victorian Missionary Committee shows that during the year there were 411 baptisms in the churches in Victoria, 262 added by letter, 35 baptised believers, 19 restored, or a total of 257. The losses have been 975, leaving a decrease of 218, or a total present membership of 5186.

The losses may be partially accounted for in the fact that the churches in the Corowa district have become associated with the New South Wales Conference, while the great exodus of population from Victoria, (80,000 having gone from Melbourne alone) will partly explain the rest.

Financially, the year ended better than was expected. There is a debit balance of £38 13s. 11d. At one time during the year things looked very dark, but as usual it has come out in a fairly satisfactory manner.

Just why the churches participating in the Church Aid Plan in and about Melbourne cannot be led to pay the small expenses in connection with the working of the scheme has not yet been explained. It may come to light some time or other.

Just what the committee would have done without the aid of the sisters is not very clear either, as they collected no less a sum than £127 towards the amount of the general fund. Thanks to the sisters.

The three churches showing the highest number of baptisms are Swan-st, Richmond, 54; North Melbourne, 38; Brunswick, 25. Lygon-st. follows with 22; South Yarra, 21; Collingwood and Prahran with 20 each; Kyabram, 18; and North Fitzroy with 17.

Clause 5 in the Executive Committee's Report reads as follows: "As our beloved president, Bro. Lawson, is about to visit the 'old country,' it is considered a very fitting opportunity to convey our fraternal greetings to the members of Churches of Christ in Great Britain through the Annual Meeting to be held in August next. We therefore recommend that a suitable letter be handed to Bro. Lawson for presentation to the British Annual Meeting, and that he be deputed to convey the congratulations and fraternal regards of the Victorian brotherhood to our brethren in Christ in Great Britain. We sincerely wish our brother much happiness during his projected tour, and hope that he will have two pleasant voyages—one going and the other coming back; and that he will return to Victoria in renewed health to enable him to continue his valuable services so freely given to the Victorian churches.

The scholars in the Chinese Class gave a tea and entertainment to teachers and friends in the Lygon-st. chapel last Tuesday evening. There was a large attendance, and a very good programme was successfully given, the principle items being rendered by the Chinese scholars.

Last Sunday morning at Enmore five were received into fellowship who had been immersed the previous Wednesday evening, and in the evening three more came out for Christ.

The Year Book will be published again this year, as last. The book will be out soon after the close of the Conference, and those desiring it may order now. Price, 6d. by post, 7d.

Copies of Dr. Verco's "Mistakes About the Bible" may be had at the Austral Publishing Co., Melbourne. Mr. E. W. Cole (formerly Petherick & Co.), Adelaide, and the same firm in George-street, Sydney.

We are glad to hear that Bro. A. M. Bryden has secured employment in Auckland, and that he and his family are liking that city very much indeed. We know that he will not be idle in that city in the Lord's work.

Bro. H. E. Tickle, who has been sojourning for the good of his health in South Africa, has returned to his home in England. He has much improved in health, but fears he will be unable to remain long in England.

The Victorian Conference Picnic will be held at the Agricultural Show Grounds, Heidelberg, a few minutes' walk from the station, on Easter Monday. The show grounds have been secured, as in the event of rain there will be shelter.

We are glad to be able to announce that Bro. Smith, M.L.A., is so far recovered as to be able to go into the country. For a few days it was thought almost impossible for him to recover, but now it is hoped with a little care that he will soon be right again.

RESPECT HOME SUNDAY, MAY 5th.—If the 71 churches who so generously took up collections last year for the Home will do so this year, and their noble example inspire others to do the same, the £70 arrears now burdening us will be removed and leave us something in hand. We are full of hope that this will be done. J. & L. PITTMAN.

We are requested to call attention to an addition to the advt. of the Prahran College, notifying that the second term commences on Wednesday, April 12th. This is a good time for intending pupils to join the classes, though those enrolled during the currency of a quarter are only charged from date of enrolment. We are pleased to hear that the College has made a very successful start.

We notice Bro. Selby's rejoinder in the last issue of the *Banner*, but do not deem it necessary to discuss the question any further just now. When Bro. Pittman is through with his articles we may have something more to say. In the meantime we content ourselves by stating that we are pleased to have Bro. Selby's assurance that our remarks did not call forth his series of articles on "Gold and the Gospel," as it removes a load from our conscience.

Visitors to the Conference should not fail to attend the lecture on Monday evening by Bro. Selby, entitled "The Story of the Bible in Monument and Manuscript," illustrated by 90 Limelight Pictures of Egyptian, Assyrian, Hebrew, Roman and Grecian Antiquities. These slides have been prepared under the supervision of A. B. Mason. They illustrate many of the most recent discoveries in Biblical Archaeology. Doors open at 7.30 p.m. Commences at 8 p.m. Admission, 5pence.

The church in Swanston-street, Melbourne, gave a farewell meeting to Bro. C. G. Lawson, prior to his departure for the "old country." Bro. F. G. Dunn filled the chair, and addresses were delivered by Bro. Mooney, Ewers, W. Forbes, Dick, Martin, Smedley, Craigie, B. J. Kemp, and J. A. Davies. The latter, on behalf of the church, presented Bro. Lawson with a handsome "travelling kit." During the evening the Lygon-street choir gave some very nice selections of music.

We are sorry to have to announce the death of Bro. William Liney at the early age of 31 years. He had not been a member of the church very long, but had proved himself very useful as a teacher and preacher. Recently his occupation caused him to remove with his family to Korit. There a form of tumor developed and he went to Warrnambool and underwent an operation, from which he never rallied. We deeply sympathize with his young wife and other relatives in their great loss.

VICTORIAN CONFERENCE ARRANGEMENTS. *Thursday*, 8 p.m., Temperance Demonstration; speakers, T. W. Glover and S. Mauger. *Friday*, General Conference, 10 a.m. Home Mission night, 7.30 o'clock. Addresses by M. Wood Green, of South Australia, and others. *Saturday*, General Conference, 10 a.m.: Educational, Sunday School and Foreign Missions. *Saturday* night, 7.45, cantata, "Cloud and Sunshine." *Sunday*, Conference Sermon at 11. "Christ and His Church," J. Pittman. *Monday*, picnic, show grounds, Heidelberg. *Monday* night, Educational lecture, by Bro. Selby. *Tuesday*, 8 p.m., Sister E. McCoughtry, "Imitators of God." A good time is expected at all these meetings.

We have received from our old friend, G. T. Walden, now of London, a copy of the minutes of Conference of the Christian Association of Great Britain, held at Southport in October last. The Christian Association is composed of churches supported, or partially supported, by the American Foreign Missionary Society. G. T. Walden is secretary, and there are now 13 churches in the Association, with a membership of 1855, and 1806 scholars in the Sunday schools. They have church buildings, with seating capacity of 4000 and valued at £22,300. The secretary explains that the

returns are somewhat incomplete, so that the above must be taken approximately.

Bishop Thornton of Ballarat objects to skirt dancing as a means of assisting to raise money for church purposes. He also gave a homily on straight out giving. He said:—"This parish has a high character to maintain, and all I ask for is to consider at this holy time, in the presence of an awful cross, and in remembrance of your patron saint who died for his Master, whether the coming of your new, young, earnest and devoted vicar may not be a fit epoch in your history to organise some regular method of united straight out giving by all, according to their means, which may make it needless for a church that stands so high as this among the churches of Ballarat to enter into ceaseless competition with amusement mongers for the purposes of gain, and to limit secularities of your parish life in general to things which will serve as first object to improvement and edification. Oh, we cannot possibly be too careful of furnishing, however innocently and unintentionally, the least semblance of an occasion of stumbling to the world."

A writer in the *Missionary Review of the World* is of opinion that one result of the calamitous war at present being carried on in the far East will be wider openings for the advancement of the gospel in Korea, China and Japan.

A Bible in the Chinese language was presented to the Dowager Empress of China on the occasion of her sixtieth birthday, for which Her Majesty graciously expressed her thanks, at the same time promising to read the holy book.

Ingersoll says men of sense do not now believe in Christianity. Mr. Gladstone says that during the last forty years he has been intimately associated with sixty of the leading intellects of the world—those whom men regard as in the first rank of ability, and that of these fifty-five have been sincere and consistent Christians, and that the other five have been respecters of Christianity. He testifies that his own faith grows stronger as the years multiply. We wonder how much Ingersoll's verbiage would be curtailed if he should really set limits of truthfulness to his statements.

Some person in Sydney has been studying the attendance at the churches and theatres in that city. On Saturday evening, Jan. 19, he found that there was an attendance of 20,778, or an average of 2,392 at nine of the places of amusement, while on Sunday evening, Jan. 20, the nine principal places of worship had 5,620, or an average of 624. The biggest attendance at a place of amusement was 8,000, at the circus; while the largest attendance at a place of worship was at St. Mary's R. C. Cathedral, where 3,000 were present.

A copy of the New South Wales Conference reports has just reached us. We notice an increase in numbers, viz. 84; total membership, 1,287. There have been 107 baptisms during the year. Corowa is this year included in their districts. Finances seem to be in a satisfactory state. Receipts, £25 14s. 11d.; expenditure, £23 16s. 10d.

A little Welsh girl was the indirect means of starting the British and Foreign Bible Society. The girl's name was Mary Jones. She had set her heart on having a Bible, so she saved up her halfpence and tramped 35 miles to buy it. The preacher from whom she bought it started thinking. A meeting was held with a view to starting a society for sending bibles to Wales. "If for Wales, why not for the world?" it was said; and so the British and Foreign Bible Society came into existence.

SISTERS' CONFERENCE, Victoria.

The acting president, Sister Huntsman, presided and gave us some words of cheer in her opening remarks.

Sister Davis, of North Carlton, gave the welcome greeting. Sister Ewers responded on behalf of visiting sisters. We were pleased to welcome Sisters Howard (Gomboyoonby), Little (Auckland, N.Z.), Bullivant and Black (Mount Barker), Houchin (Bendigo), Parmenter (N.Z.), and Scourie (Buninyong).

The correspondence included letters from English sisters, one from Sister Ludbrook, N.Z., and Sister Pallott, Fremantle.

Executive Report showed the work of the sisters in moving on. 14 meetings have been held, with an average attendance of 26. Nineteen churches are represented on our Executive. Three sisters have not missed a single meeting. The sisters have collected exactly the same amount for Victorian Mission Fund as they did last year, viz. £47. The N. S. Wales sisters were congratulated on their "forward" movement, and the fact of Dunedin sisters holding a Conference mentioned.

Treasurer's Report showed we had expended £4 9s. 6d., and had a balance in hand of £4 18s. 24d.

Sister Schofield read Sunday School Report, and had reported 55 scholars joined churches from schools. Sister Hall read report of Sunday School visitation, showing that good work was being done in our schools.

Docey work was reported upon by Sister Pittman, and included reports from Ballarat, Swanston-street, Prahran, North Carlton, Sydney (N.S.W.), Emure (N.S.W.), Grote-st. (S.A.), Unley (S.A.), and Kermondost (S.A.).

Sisters Ewers and Petty rendered a duct, "Ruth and Naomi."

Sister Forbes read Prayer-meeting Report, showing we have sisters prayer-meeting at North Carlton, Emure, Brighton, Malvern and N. Fitzroy. Other churches failed to send reports.

Sister Prior read the Temperance Report.

Hospital Report showed five sisters are engaged in Hospital Visitation.

Sister Maston read the Obituary Report. A large number of our elder sisters have been called home. The solo, "Resignation," was feelingly rendered by Sister Petty.

Rescue work reported by Sister Pittman. Our Sister C. L. Thurgood was appointed permanent honorary president. The ballot showed: Acting president, Sister Pittman; vice-presidents, Sisters Huntsman, Maston, Ewers, and F. M. Ludbrook; secretaries, Misses Hill and Dewar; treasurer, Mrs. Walker. The roll call was answered by representative reports from 22 churches. Inter-colonial reports were received from Auckland (N.Z.), Grote-st., Unley, Dorcas, Kermondost (S.A.), Freemantle (W.A.), Gympie, Brisbane (Q.). Greetings from New South Wales Sisters' Conference.

The President's annual address was a "Loving Retro-pect" of sisters' work in Melbourne.

Miss M. Benson recited very eloquently "The Bride's Outfit." Mrs. Maston read A Kodak View of a Missionary Meeting, which was written by Miss Frost of Hurda. Our sister also read Missionary Report, telling of the work done by our various Mission Bands.

Practical papers were given by Sisters Ewers, "Service" and Pittman, "Prayer."

Miss Rometach read the Endeavour Report. Twelve Societies reported, with a reported membership of 323. Miss Pittman sang "Our Daily Bread"; Miss M. McGregor, "There is a Green Hill Far Away."

The new officers were then introduced, and the following resolutions proposed by Sister Huntsman, and with the singing of hymn 729, and prayer by Mrs. Huntsman, the meeting closed.

RESOLUTIONS:

1.—Resolved—"That this Conference send grateful thanks to the officers of Swanston Street for the use of the Lecture hall every month and the Chapel for one Missionary meeting. Also to the Lygon Street officers for the use of the Chapel for the Sisters' Conference."

2.—Resolved—"That this Conference send special thanks to the editors of *Standard* and *Pioneer* for the help they have given to our work by publishing our reports, thus helping to encourage others to do something for the Master."

3.—Resolved—"That we as a Sisterhood will band ourselves together and in the strength of the Lord, try to do more effective work for Christ."

LOVED ONES GONE BEFORE.

BRYANT.—The residents of Bream Creek and adjacent districts received a severe shock on the afternoon of Monday last, April 11, when it became known that about 12 o'clock a.m. of that day the fourth child of Sister Bryant, named Vera, aged 6 years, was killed instantly by the upsetting of a bullock dray, caused by the bolting of the team of bullocks. The particulars are as follows:—Mr. Bryant had been returning from a journey, and the little one with others of the family ran down the road about half a mile

to meet him, and he, wishing to give them a little pleasure, lifted the children into the dray, and just when about to enter the opening into the paddock and close to the house the bullocks bolted. The dray coming into contact with the end of the log fence, capsized, and falling on little Vera killed her instantly. One little one escaped with a bruised back, another with a finger nearly broken, while the head of the baby was much injured by falling on the head of an axe which was in the dray. We laid little Vera away in the Bream Creek Cemetery on the Wednesday following, the remains being followed to the grave by a large concourse of the residents on foot, horse, and in vehicles. We deeply sympathise with the bereaved parents, who are grief stricken at the loss. May this sad event be sanctified to them, and impel them nearer to the cross, that in their sorrow they may realise what a true friend they have in Him who wept with Mary and Martha. "We loved thee well, but Jesus loved thee best. Good-night."

Bream Creek, W. DONALDSON.
Tasmania, April 4th, 1895.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

VICTORIAN MISSION FUND.

Bro Jno Carr, 10/-; M. L. Duncan, Poverty, N.Z., 4/8; Church, Lillimur, 10/5; Kanaka, 10/5; Bro. C. Edwards, 15/-; Church, Cheltenham, 10/6; Collingwood, 10/8; Malvern, per Sister, 5/-; Bro. G. Templeman, per C. G. Lawson, 7/6; Bro. G. A. W. Mott, 10/-; Bro and Sister Kenwick, Hobart, 7/6.
357 Swanston-st., W. C. THURGOOD,
Melbourne. Treasurer.

RESCUE HOME.

Thankfully received:—The Cambrian Society, 1/-; Mr. R. Butler, per A. H. Maston, 10/4; Miss W. Smith, Elphinstone, 10/6; Prahran Branch, W. C. T. U., 10/-; Mr. Bogle, Kangaroo, 5/-; Mrs. Hart, Lygon-st., 10/-; A Friend, Malvern, 10/-; Miss Richardson, per Mrs. Thurgood, 5/-; Mrs. S. O'Brien, Maryborough, Q., 1/-; Mr. J. Thompson, Kanaka Missionary (marriage fees), 1/-.

MACALISTER FUND.

Church at Ryabram, 4/-; Mrs. Hart, 5/6; W. J. Sharp, Wilby, 6/-; J. T. Paul, 10/5; Mrs. W. Hunter, Sydney, 1/-; A Sister, North Fitzroy, 10/-; Church at Yarraville, per M. Marlett, 12/-; Church at Birchhill, per Bro. Goudie, 1/- Total, £4/18/6.

SUBSCRIPTIONS RECEIVED.

With thanks:—F. Welch, G. A. W. Mott, H. Curtis, J. A. Wilson, J. Hindmore, 5/-; F. Morris, 2/-; J. Germain, 5/6; Kenwick, 7/6; Tissot and C. A. Ball, 20/-; R. Hartness, 30/-.

MALCOLM McLELLAN, Manager.
351 SWANSTON-ST., MELBOURNE.

Printed by the AUSTRAL PUBLISHING CO. LIMITED, 518 Elizabeth-st., Melbourne, and published by W. C. THURGOOD, 357 Swanston-st., Melbourne, for the Australasian Christian Standard Newspaper Co. Limited.