

for labor, which arose out of the discovery of gold, precluded the possibility of our carrying out any of our plans in reference to projected enlargements or erections. Mechanics could not be obtained on any terms. We resolved, therefore, to make a vigorous effort to pay off all our chapel and school debts, and, with the assistance of £500, long previously promised by our esteemed General Superintendent, the Rev. W. B. Boyce, towards the reduction of our Collins-street debt, we accomplished our object. But our difficulties are now as great as ever. Wages, brick, stone, and timber are so dear, that it is utterly impossible for us to build with brick or stone, on any such scale as our present wants demand. We have therefore resolved, after much serious thought, to endeavor to overtake the emergency, by the erection of iron chapels. By the "Sydney" steamer will be sent home an order for an iron chapel, to contain from twelve hundred to fifteen hundred, for Melbourne, East; and a large supply of Galvanized and corrugated metal, of which to erect smaller chapels around Melbourne, after our district meeting. But before we ventured to send home this order, we called together several of our friends in Melbourne, and two or three of the places around, and laid our plans before them. The meetings were not large, but £4,118 were subscribed towards the object. Our friends at Geelong greatly need increased accommodation, but have not yet determined upon the particular course they will pursue.

3. Our *Gold Fields*.—I have just received a communication from the Honourable the Colonial Secretary, informing me that His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor is prepared to allow a stipend for a Wesleyan Minister at Balarat, in addition to those allowed for Mount Alexander and Bendigo, if we can appoint one to labour there. We hope to be able to meet this case on the arrival of our brethren from England. Everything, however, con-

nected with this part of our work is precarious in the extreme. A few weeks ago, the general belief seemed to be, that new gold fields, which had been discovered about one hundred and fifty miles from Melbourne, exceeded in richness any locality previously known; and thousands of persons at once moved towards the spot. Subsequent information, however, proved that the new fields were not equal to the old ones, and multitudes immediately returned. Sometimes a valley, that at the beginning of the week is crowded with tents, is, before its close, nearly deserted, in consequence of other discoveries made near at hand; so that our brethren scarcely ever know where to find their members. The Mount-Alexander Plan has on it the names of about twenty local preachers, several of whom preach once or twice every Lord's day.

MORAL STATE OF THE COLONY.

I wish I could write more favourably in reference to the spiritual condition of our Society, and the moral condition of the country; but the state of excitement in which we have been for the past year has been most unfavourable to spiritual prosperity. Melbourne is in a very different condition now from what it was before the gold was discovered. We are resolved, however, to continue to endeavour, by the distribution of tracts, the re-establishment of out-door preaching, and the employment of every other means within our reach, to stem the torrent. I have a deep conviction that if the church of Christ does not do its duty at the present time, the land will become a proverb and a reproach. We, as a people, have a great work to do. May we have grace to do it!

Allow me again to thank you for the prompt and liberal manner in which you have responded to our appeal for help. We are anxiously waiting for the arrival of the brethren. May they have a safe and prosperous voyage to our shores, and be greatly blessed, and made an abundant blessing among us!