

the urgent necessity of the separation of the non-criminal, or of those entering on a career of crime, from the society of the confirmed criminal class. The painful fact was elicited that in many if not most of the country gaols there were no facilities for this needful separation. Strong things were said on this point, but there was, there can be, no exaggeration, even in the strongest expression.

A valuable paper was contributed by the assistant lady superintendent of the Mercer Institute. She is perfectly correct in her opinion that short terms of imprisonment are powerless to effect the desired reclamation of the vicious. This is also a question that calls for immediate attention.

One other special point was made, and the good work done by the Prisoners' Aid Association enforces the recommendation, that kindred societies for the care of discharged prisoners and helping them solely in a manner that will enable them to help them to step from their dead selves to better things. Here is a field for good doing that will be fruitful in blessed results.

#### PETITION FOR AN AMENDMENT OF THE CIVIL LAW OF THE SABBATH.

SIR,—Will you permit me through the columns of THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN to call the attention of Presbytery clerks and all friends of Sabbath observance, to the petition now being printed and circulated, and which will be in the hands of Presbytery clerks forthwith, for distribution throughout the congregations of the Church for signature. Joint action has been agreed upon, and an amendment of the civil law of the Sabbath is to be asked for. Prompt action is necessary as regards getting petitions signed, and forwarded to Ottawa. As a rule it is desirable that each petition be sent to the member who represents the constituency from which it comes, to be by him presented to the House. The reason for this is so obvious that it needs no explanation. The sooner the petitions are forwarded the better. The Assembly's Committee hope that it is only necessary to call attention to the Assembly's directions to Presbytery clerks in this matter, Appendix p. 164.

W. T. McMULLEN,  
Woodstock, Jan 25th, 1884. Joint Convener of Committee on Sabbath Observance.

P.S.—The petition is to be signed in duplicate—one to the Commons and one to the Senate.

#### AUGMENTATION OF STIPENDS.

In reply to some questions that have been asked regarding the envelopes furnished for the purpose of making contributions for the Augmentation Fund, I may state:—

1. That the envelopes are intended for *this year's* contribution only, and no contributor is understood to be pledged to give the same amount annually.
2. Contributions made by envelope are intended to be put into the collection plate, or sent to the treasurer of the congregation, and to be forwarded, by him to the Rev. Dr. Reid, Toronto.
3. It is very desirable that contributions should reach Dr. Reid, at latest, early in March, so that the committee, which will meet about the end of that month, may know on what basis to make payments for the half year ending 31st March.

Toronto, 26th Jan., 1884. D. J. MACDONNELL.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT.—Rev. C. E. Amaron acknowledges with thanks, the sum of \$10 for the Ditchfield French Church, from a friend in Fergus, Ontario, whose name he cannot make out.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.—Rev. Dr. Reid has received the following sums for schemes of the Church, viz.: A thank-offering from D. for French Evangelization, \$3, also Mission to the Jews \$2; A Friend, Youngsville, for Home Mission, \$2. A. C., Toronto, for McCall Mission, Paris, France, \$1.

LOOKING out upon the mission field of Northern Persia, we see forty missionaries occupying the chief centres, and about a hundred out-stations clustered around; there are nearly two hundred native assistants aiding to man these centres and out-stations, and nearly two thousand communicants located at these points, so as to form an excellent haven for the whole mass. And there is an open door to the Gospel in every house in all this great field.

## SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHER.

### INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

#### LESSON VI.

Feb. 19, 1884. } THE CONVERSION OF LYDIA. { Acts 16 11-24.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Whoso heart the Lord opened that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul."—Acts 16:14.

TIME.—A.D. 52. Directly following the events of last lesson; probably a year had elapsed since starting on this journey.

PLACE.—Philippi, in Macedonia.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.—Ver 11. "Therefore:" because of the vision. "Loosing:" Rev. "setting sail." "Straight course:" they had a favourable wind, by which they were only two days from Troas to Neapolis, whereas five days were taken on the return voyage from Philippi. "Samothea," an island eight miles long, six broad, in the Egean Sea. "Neapolis:" sixty-five miles further on the mainland coast, ten miles from Philippi. They did not remain at either of these places going or returning.

Ver. 12. "Philippi:" a city of Macedonia. "It took its name from its founder, Philip, the father of Alexander, prominent in secular history as the scene of the great battle which sealed the fate of the Roman Republic—Brutus and Cassius being defeated by Augustus and Antony. "The chief city:" rather, the first, or as the Rev. has it, "the first of the district," for the idea is, not that it was the capital or principal place; but, as the cry had been from Macedonia, they had pushed on not tarrying until they reached this, the first city in Macedonia. "A colony:" the Roman colony was a kind of miniature Rome with all the privileges and governmental order of the imperial city; its magistrates bore the Roman titles. The Romans planted here were the soldiers of Antony sent by Augustus. The events which befel the apostle at Philippi were directly connected with the privileges of the place and with Paul's own privileges as a Roman citizen.

Ver. 13. The company had been in the city certain days, and now "on the Sabbath" they go out to a river side, the Gangas, in all probability, though some have supposed the Strymon. "Prayer went to be made:" if Paul looked for a synagogue he did not find one, but he did find that a little company, chiefly, if not altogether women met for prayer, either in a small temporary building such as were sometimes so used, or simply at a certain spot by the river, and to these women they spoke, a small, unpromising beginning, but from this mustard seed grew the precious harvest of a flourishing church. So did the Master speak to the woman of Samaria.

Ver. 14. We now have the first fruits of the work in Europe; not very much, but what a harvest has followed. "Lydia:" probably so called from the country from which she came. Thyatira was a city of Lydia, in Asia Minor. "A seller of purple:" purple dyes or cloth, the colour was obtained from a shell fish, the inhabitants of Thyatira inherited the reputation of the Tyrians for this colour, so extravagantly valued at that time. "Worshipped God:" she was a proselyte. "Opened:" the heart has eyes, Eph. 1:18; they are naturally closed, it is only God who can open them. "Lord opened:" by His spirit, made her willing to hear, and ready to receive. "The things spoken by Paul:" the way of salvation through Jesus. It appears to have been a quiet conversation rather than a preaching.

Ver. 15. Baptized:" having received the truth she made a public profession of her faith, she was not ashamed of Jesus. "Household:" we have in this chapter another instance of the baptism of a household; one also in ver. 33; in ch. 10:2, 44-48, and in 1 Cor. 1:16, not to press 16, 15 of the same epistle; how any one not wedded to a theory, and looking at the narrative through the medium of that theory, can argue that there were not children in any of these families, or that they were not included in the rite, it is impossible to conceive. Would not the Jews who circumcised their infants, and the Gentiles who purified them by water naturally present them for baptism, surely yes, and have we the shadow of a hint that they were forbidden to do so? no! one. "If—faithful—come into my house:" a modest petition, humble and earnest, her heart was drawn out towards those who had given her spiritual things and she would minister to them of her temporal things: see 2 Kings 4:8-10. "Constrained:" would take no refusal, as in Luke 24:29, the disciples and the Master.

Ver. 16. "As we went to prayer:" not on the same day, Paul and his companions spent several Sabbaths in Philippi. "Spirit of divination:" or of Python, the name of the serpent at Delphi killed by Apollo (so mythology teaches), it afterwards became the name of soothsayers, especially of those who practised ventriloquism. The people thought that a God dwelt within her. Paul saw only one possessed by an unclean spirit, a demoniac; she was a mixture of fraud, clairvoyance, insanity, and devil. "Gains by Soothsaying:" pretending to foretell, for this money was paid to her masters. Irreligion encourages such gain, religion forbids it.

Ver. 17. "Followed—cried:" close and frequently, to passers by. "These men:" etc. So the demons recognized and trembled at Jesus. Matt. 8:29; Mark, 3:11, etc. "Way of Salvation:" or of safety, as the populace would understand.

Ver. 18. For the honour of the Master it was needful to stop this lest it might be supposed that Paul had dealings with this spirit, he was "grieved," not for himself but for Him whose name he bore. "In the name of:" Paul, like Peter, performed his miracles in the name of Jesus, they would not be supposed to be working by their own power. "Come out of her:" it was a real deliverance from the evil one. We are not told, but probably the deliverance was

completed by the damsel's conversion, entering into the liberty of Jesus Christ.

Ver. 19. Here the love of gain comes in, not the first time the early church had confronted it. See ch. 5:1-11; 8:18; not the last, 19:25; 24:26. And since those days it has not lost power nor evil influence. These "masters" were willing that the girl should continue a demoniac rather than that their "gains" had gone. "Caught Paul and Silas:" the leaders, Luke and Timothy being only subordinates appear to have been left unmolested. "Market place" in Greek cities, the centre of social life, there sat the magistrates for the transaction of legal business.

Vers. 20, 21. "Jews:" a term of contempt used to prejudice the magistrates and people, the Jews were in exceeding bad odour just then, they had lately been banished from Rome by Claudius. "Trouble our city:" this the ostensible, loss of gain the real, ground of their action. "Customs not lawful:" Judaism was permitted, but its followers were not allowed to propagate their religion, pagans were expressly forbidden under heavy penalties to undergo circumcision. Christianity was looked upon as a form of Judaism. "Being Romans:" another artful appeal to patriotic prejudices.

Ver. 22. This was sufficient. "The multitude:" easily moved as mobs generally are. "Magistrates:" to please the people, so Fuite scourged and delivered Jesus. "Sent—commanded to beat:" Rev. "with rods." Roman scourging was very severe. "Thrice was I beaten with rods," says Paul. 1 Cor. 11:25. Perhaps in the tumult Paul and Silas had no opportunity to claim their Roman citizenship.

Vers. 23, 24. "Many stripes:" the law of Moses mercifully limited punishment. The Roman law did not; Paul said, 1 Thess. 2:2. They were "shamefully entreated." "Prison—charging:" as if they were dangerous criminals. "Inner prison:" a dungeon, probably a dark cold cell from which light and air were excluded. "Stocks:" a heavy piece of wood with holes into which the feet were put, and stretched apart from one another. It was thus an instrument of torture. Christianity has carried its ameliorating influences even into our prison.

#### HINTS TO TEACHERS.

Prefatory.—Although we have referred in the "notes" to the baptism of Lydia's household, as bearing on the question of the baptism of infants, as we could hardly help doing, it would not be well to let that subject be discussed, even in a class of senior scholars. The doctrine does not rest upon that or similar passages, and, without disparaging this doctrine, the importance of which is hardly enough realized we fear to-day, it is yet true that there are other thoughts which in this lesson demand the chief attention.

Topical Analysis.—(1) The conversion of Lydia (vers. 11-15). (2) The possessed damsel (vers. 16-18). (3) The arrest and imprisonment of Paul and Silas (vers. 19-24).

The first topic is full of important lessons. We have the Gospel taught. The apostolic company was not above sitting down with a small band of women and telling them of Jesus. They did not ask: "Is it for this we have been led from fields white to the harvest to speak to a few women?" but like the Master did the work before them. Learn and teach that there is no estimating the result to the world, of winning one soul to Christ. The history of the church is full of such instances; teach your one or two scholars if you have no more, feeling that maybe the conversion of thousands may follow your prayerful faithfulness with these. Don't omit to point out that the action of these men was, in another thing—like that of Jesus, wherever they were they sought out a place of worship on the Sabbath, if there was no synagogue they found "a place where prayer was wont to be made." Yet further we see the gospel received. Show that it was in obeying the commands of God and seeking Him in prayer that Lydia found the blessing. Cornelius prayed and Peter was sent. Lydia prays and Paul is led hundreds of miles to open to her the truth, and God opened her heart to attend, give heed unto the things spoken: "The preparation of the heart—is from the Lord." Prov. 16:1. Then there is the Gospel manifested. The new life in Lydia's heart could not be hidden, it shone forth, and its first manifestation was love to the brethren, she "constrained" them to enter into her house, "and abide there," and this would be followed by other proofs of the change in her heart; we know this, that she was not ashamed of the apostles in their bonds, for when they left the prison it was to her house they went, and it was there they met the brethren and comforted them.

On the second topic we may teach (1) That evil spirits are a reality and so exercise a power over the actions of men and women to-day, though the manifestations may differ. These who would teach us there is no devil are doing his work. He is wishful that men should disbelieve his existence. (2) That evil spirits know Jesus and the gospel and are compelled to confess them. This they did unwillingly when He was on earth. Matt. 8:29, etc. Jesus is the stronger man armed that overcomes the strong one, even the devil.

On the third topic, we see at once that the gospel is opposed to all wicked ways of gain. There are men in this Canada of ours, as there were at Philippi in the first century, who care nothing for the souls or bodies of their fellow-men so long as they themselves can get gain; to get money is not wrong, to get it by evil practices is, and no one can be a true Christian and make money by improper means, the gospel is a transforming power and purifies whatever it touches. Further, Christians must expect opposition and persecution from the world. The power of evil is crippled by the influence of the Gospel pervading worldly laws, but the spirit remains ready to show itself when opportunity occurs.

Main Truth.—Through evil report and through good report the gospel spreads and shall finally conquer and fill the whole world.—Psa. 22:27; Psa. 72:9 and on; Isa. 2:2; Dan. 2:35, 44; Mal. 1:11; 1 Cor. 15:24, 25; Rev. 5:13.