

As others see us.

Our brethren in the Upper Provinces are interested in our own operations in the Maritime Provinces. The editor of the Canadian Baptist has been giving his readers a description of our Convention Scheme, so called. It may interest many of our readers to see what is said by our contemporary. There may be some members of our own churches who are not as familiar as they should be with the plan. We have been requested to copy the article, and most readily comply.

THE MARITIME CONVENTION SCHEME.

In a former issue we referred to the composition of Maritime Baptist Convention and to the different denominational enterprises which come under its cognizance and control: we shall now briefly sketch the plan which has been adopted by the Convention for raising benevolent moneys.

This plan is commonly called the "Convention Scheme." It originated in the recommendation of a committee appointed by the Convention four years ago to consider the whole question of finance in its relation to the body and to suggest a better method of replenishing the denominational treasuries. Previous to this, with a few honorable exceptions, the churches acted without system in this matter. They gave unmethodically, spasmodically, or not at all. A few dollars, amounting perhaps to less than ten cents a member, collected a few days before the meeting of the several Associations, was about all that many of them aimed at doing. Some again chose to restrict their benevolence almost entirely to one channel, contributing possibly to Home Missions to the exclusion of Foreign, or to Home and Foreign Missions to the exclusion of Education. It came thus to be felt that a plan of raising money was needed which would embrace all the objects of the Convention and secure to each its relative share of financial aid. Such plan was found in the "Convention Scheme."

In this scheme it is recommended:— 1. That every church endeavor to raise an equivalent of at least one dollar per member for its entire membership. This for the three provinces would amount to \$38,400—a sum sufficient to make all the enterprises of the denomination nearly doubly strong and efficient. The scheme does not of course forbid any church to go if possible beyond the equivalent of a dollar per member, as it does not exclude any that honestly fail to reach this figure.

2. That every church allow its moneys to be apportioned among the different objects of the Convention by the application of Convention scale: that is, that forty cents of every dollar go to Home Missions, twenty-five to Foreign Missions, twenty-five to Acadia College, five to Ministerial Education, and five to an Expense and Emergency Fund. Churches or individuals wishing to designate their moneys can do so, as the wishes of the donors will be carried out, still they are strongly advised to abide by the rule which has been framed by the Convention. This rule may be modified whenever the necessity shall arise. At the next meeting of the Convention the question will doubtless have to be considered whether twenty-five per cent. of the benevolent funds of the denomination should henceforth go to Acadia College now that the department of theology has been removed, or whether a portion of this twenty-five per cent. should not henceforth go to the support of Maritime students at McMaster Hall.

Different plans of carrying out the scheme are in operation among the churches that have adopted it. In some, weekly collections by means of or without envelopes are taken; in others monthly or quarterly. But whatever method is employed for raising money, the churches are expected to send forward their contributions as often as once a quarter.

The general supervision of the scheme is entrusted to a finance committee of three, one for each province, appointed by the Convention, and reporting annually to it. The churches of any one province have simply to send their contributions to the member of the finance committee representing that province; he then applies the scale of appropriation and forwards to the different treasuries the sums going res-

pectively to them. The only moneys that are excepted from this arrangement are those raised by the Women's Mission Aid Societies, though in the final report each church is credited with the portion of these moneys contributed by it.

Such then in brief is the "Convention Scheme" which our brethren of the Maritime Provinces have adopted for the raising of benevolent funds.

Several things may be said in its favor:—

1. In the first place it is a 'Scheme.' The difference in results between a systematic and unsystematic way of doing things is very great. The church that has resolved to abandon the latter and espouse the former has already begun to advance.

2. It is a scheme that combines in itself the chief excellencies of the plan of giving that is sanctioned in the New Testament (1 Cor. 16:2); for it asks every professing Christian to give, to give regularly or at stated times, and as God has prospered him. It accepts a few cents from the poor who are not able to give their dollar, and it expects the rich to make up the deficiency by giving more than the dollar. And while it urges the churches to reach if possible the average dollar per member, it encourages them, if they have the ability, to go much beyond.

3. It brings before each church the denominational work as a whole and educates them to a due appreciation of every part of it. To those preferring to give only to Home Missions it shows that Home and Foreign Missions are really one, and that while charity begins at home, it does not or should not stay there. To those giving only to Missions but ignoring Ministerial Education, it shows that the success of the former is vitally bound up with that of the latter.

4. It is marked by simplicity and unity. It obviates the necessity of working two or three systems of giving in the same church, or of having a different set of collectors for every object that is assisted, in which case one set is liable to appropriate or trench upon the field of another. Church machinery as well as denominational may become so complicated and cumbersome as largely to neutralize the motive power by the friction engendered.

In the matter of benevolence there has been great improvement in the Maritime Provinces since the adoption of the "Convention Scheme" four years ago.

In their last report the finance committee say:—"Your committee find that the churches on Prince Edward Island have all adopted the Convention Scheme and are strongly attached to it. Many of the churches are doing nobly and setting a fine example to larger and richer churches elsewhere.

"The scheme is regarded very favorably by the churches in New Brunswick. Their contributions to the regular fund show an improvement on last year's collections to the amount of about \$600.00.

"In Nova Scotia many of the churches are taking a forward step in Christian benevolence. The increase in their contributions to the Convention Fund runs from two-fold to ten-fold.

"Your committee are persuaded that if their efforts are seconded heartily by the pastors and leading lay members of the churches, in a few years they will be able to report that one dollar per head has been raised for our entire membership.

In each of the three provinces several churches contributed nearly the dollar per head of their membership, the following went beyond:—

Table with 3 columns: Name, Members, Per head. Lists churches in P. E. Island, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia.

Is there not room for a more systematic and consequently more efficient way of raising Benevolent Funds in the Provinces of Quebec and Ontario?

The grass of the field is better than the cedars of Lebanon. It feeds more, and it rests the eye better—that thymy, daisy-eyed carpet, making earth fair and sweet and homelike. Kindness is the turf of the spiritual world, whereon the sheep of Christ feed quietly beneath the Shepherd's eye.—Faber.

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1884.

FIRST QUARTER.

Lesson VII.—FEBRUARY 17, 1884.

THE CONVERSION OF THE JAILER.

Acts xvi. 25-40.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Vs. 29-34.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."—Acts xvi. 31.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

- M. The Lesson.—Acts xvi. 25-40.
T. The Deliverance of the three Hebrews.—Dan. iii. 23-30.
W. The Deliverance of Daniel.—Dan. vi. 16-23.
T. The Deliverance of Peter.—Acts. xii. 1-12.
F. Rejoicing in Adversity.—Hab. iii. 17-19.
S. Rejoicing in Trials.—1 Pet. iii. 12-19.
S. Conversion of the Three Thousand.—Acts ii. 37-41.

ANALYSIS.—I. Songs in the Night, Vs. 25, 26. II. The Startled Sinner, Vs. 27-30. III. How to be Saved, Vs. 31-34. IV. Christian Dignity, Vs. 35-40.

QUESTIONS.—What proof did Lydia give that her heart was opened by the Lord? What charge did they bring against the missionaries? How were Paul and Silas treated?

Vs. 25, 26.—Where did we leave Paul and Silas in the last lesson? What had befallen them? What were they doing at midnight? Who heard them? Any one besides the prisoners? What about the chains on the prisoners? Does God answer prayer now?

Vs. 27-30.—Where was the jailer during the songs of praise? What alarmed him? Is the suicide saved? I John iii. 15. How did Paul know he was about to commit suicide? How did he prevent it? Where did the jailer bring them? What great question did he ask?

Vs. 31-34.—What answer did Paul and Silas give? What is it to believe? Was his household saved by his faith? What further instruction did Paul and Silas give? To whom? Where did the jailer wash their stripes? What does the word baptize mean? Who are to be baptized? Were the jailer's household believers? Did they all rejoice in Christ?

Vs. 35-40.—What message did the magistrates send to the prison? What did Paul say to the message? How did this affect the magistrates? What caused them to humble themselves to the prisoners? Where did Paul and Silas go upon leaving the prison? Who were the brethren?

Lesson Proving.—Where, in this lesson, do we find—1. That joy is not dependent upon circumstances, but comes from rest in God? 2. That Christ is able to save to the uttermost? 3. That conversion makes one a new creature? 4. That true obedience is prompt?

Our lesson gives us the origin of the Church at Philippi, between which and Paul a peculiar affection existed, and to which the most joyous of his Epistles was directed. Our last lesson left Paul and Silas in the inner prison of that city, a foul and loathsome dungeon, with their bodies sore from beating, and their feet fast in the stocks.

NOTES.—Vs. 25, 26.—Prayed and sang praises. Better, praying, they were singing hymns. It seems natural that Paul and Silas in their condition of confinement, with bleeding backs and torturing position, should pray for deliverance, but they did more; they burst out into songs of praise. Not the foul dungeon, nor physical suffering, could repress their joy in the Lord. Prisoners heard (were eagerly listening to) them. Never before were such sounds in such a place. And suddenly. For God was listening also. A great earthquake. God does answer prayer, and honor faith, and has power over physical nature, notwithstanding the carping of unbelievers. Though the region and time were noted for convulsions of this kind, this earthquake was no mere happening. And while an ordinary earthquake would shake the foundations of the prison, it would not break the fetters of all the prisoners, bursting off hand cuffs, and carefully releasing the feet from the stocks.

Vs. 27, 28.—The keeper. The jailer of verse 23. Would have killed himself. Knowing that his life was forfeited if the prisoners had escaped (xii. 19), and supposing that they had fled. He would have covered disgrace by suicide—an act approved among the Romans. Paul cried with a loud voice. Either the jailer's purpose was supernaturally communicated to Paul, or he became aware of it through some frantic cry; for Paul could not see him in the darkness. The loud voice betokens the apostle's earnestness. Do thyself no harm. The Romans glorified suicide, the Word of God teaches that no murderer has eternal life in him. We are all here. Paul may have been placed where he could know whether any passed out.

Vs. 29, 30.—Light. Lights (plural). Most likely, torches; with one of which

in his hand he sprang in to the darkness of that inner prison. Came trembling, a broken hearted penitent. God had spoken to him in the earthquake, and in the loving spirit of his servants; and conscience, that makes "cowards of us all," was awakened. Hence his trembling. Fell down. The posture of reverence. He associated Paul and Silas with the miracle. Brought them out, i. e., of the inner prison, into another room, but not as yet into his own house (vs. 34). What must I do to be saved? Not from the earthquake, nor from punishment by the Roman law, for the prisoners were safe; but from sin. To this point Paul's answer is directed.

Vs. 31.—Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. The only, yet all-sufficient answer. The Greek presents a contrast which is lost in the translation. He had called them by the usual title of respect, sirs, or lords; they answer that there is one Sir or Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ, who saves sinners. Thou shalt be saved. Notice the positive assurance. And thy house. Not on his faith, but in the same manner.

Vs. 32-34.—Spake unto him . . . and to all in his house. Like Cornelius (x. 24), the jailer gathered his family for religious instruction, which Paul and Silas readily gave. Noting that they taught all, and that the same all were baptized (vs. 33), and are said to have believed (vs. 34), and also to have rejoiced (vs. 34). To speak of infant baptism here, is absurd. The Holy Spirit seems to take great care to exclude any such idea. Took them . . . and washed their stripes. He took them from the outer room to the fountain or tank, or perhaps to a swimming bath which was often connected with prisons. Grace had made his heart tender, and he gently washed their bruised backs. In the same tank or reservoir, which was ample for immersion, he and his family were baptized. Another striking instance of baptism following immediately upon faith. Now he receives them as honored guests into his house, which may have been over the prison; and, like Lydia, gives the best of his hospitality; and the night which began with sorrow ends with rejoicing.

Vs. 35, 36.—When it was day. What an eventful period had been that between midnight and morning. Serjeants. The rod bearers who had probably beaten Paul and Silas. Let those men go. We are not told what led to this sudden change of action. The jailer was delighted, and brought the news to Paul, adding the Christian salutation, go in peace; expecting his ready acquiescence.

Vs. 37.—"Almost every word of Paul's reply," says Hackett, "contains a distinct allegation" against the magistrates. They have beaten us; beaten us openly; beaten us uncondemned, i. e., without a trial; have beaten Romans; and have cast us into prison. To treat Roman citizens thus was a crime against their law, and would subject the magistrates to prosecution on the charge of treason, and even to the death penalty.

Vs. 38-40.—They feared. As well they might, had Paul and Silas been vindictive. Besought them. They came with honeyed and obsequious words, and doubtless, with profuse apologies. Brought them out. Not thrusting them out privately, but escorting them in open day, in view of the people. To depart out of the city. Perhaps fearing a popular excitement. Brethren. Lydia's family, the jailer's family, and perhaps others already won to the gospel; the nucleus of the Church of Philippi. Comforted. Exhorted and encouraged to be faithful. Departed. As the third person they is used, it is possible that Luke and Timothy may have remained, while Paul and Silas went on their way.

SUGGESTED LESSONS.

Our Lord verified his promise of Matt. xviii. 20 to Paul and Silas. Though only two were gathered in his name, he was in the midst. Had Paul and Silas spent their time in bewailing their fate, there would have been no earthquake, and no converted jailer. It is rejoicing Christians that shake the world. If any man needed to be a long time under the terrors of the law before pardon, it was the jailer; but none need be, for there is no merit in conviction of sin, and every moment away from Christ but adds to our guilt. The one rule of baptism only upon profession of faith, is not departed from here; nor is it anywhere else in the New Testament.

Help for Parents, or for the Teacher of the Primary Class.

Ask the question, "What must I do?" Talk about it. Add the remaining words, and then ask who can answer it. A few who have studied the Golden Text will say, "believe." That, in itself, is not the right answer; for by it the child is taught that believing is something by which it earns heaven—a doctrine that works wonderful mischief among many. With the help of God, lead them to do the thing, without any talk of their understanding it. Tell the story of the man who asked that question, what led to his asking it, where he was, etc. Did you ever try real hard to be perfectly good? How did you succeed? Show here that no one can possibly be good enough to get to heaven by so doing. Could any one live a day without sin? Suppose they could, what would be done about the sins already committed? What Paul said means just this: "God knows all about how bad you are, and loves you even with all your badness. He sent his Son to save you; he sent us here to tell you how Jesus died, rose again, and is now above, ready to hear and help you. It is true that you deserve to die; but Jesus has taken all the punishment, and paid his own life for you. If you believe this, you are forgiven. God will not see your sins; for they are all taken away by Jesus, and you are saved. Let all your family believe, and they will be saved too."

Just think of Jesus—how good and loving he is, and of all he has done for you, and of what he is all the time doing. The more you think of this, the more you will feel that it is all true. And you will love such a dear Saviour more and more. The more you love him, the more you will hate sin, and try to do only such things as please him. And you will find that without your knowing exactly how it came, you are happy like the jailer, and glad to show your love for Jesus in any way you can.

—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

Boys' Department.

Original and Selected.

Bible Enigma.

No. 263.

I am composed of 26 letters. My 1, 12, 8, 15, 9, 23, the residence of the prophet Balaam. My 19, 21, 9, 14, 6, 25, 4, 15, 11, 22, an officious member of the church at Corinth. My 26, 9, 14, a nephew of Abraham. My 21, 22, 15, 21, a word in Hosea, meaning "my husband." My 22, 5, 13, a wild beast. My 17, 26, 3, 19, 7, a bird of the Old Testament. My 17, 20, 10, 25, 2, a son of Japheth. My 24, 10, 18, 22, one of the lesser prophets.

My whole is a command of God to the Israelites 800 years before Christ.

CURIOS QUESTIONS.

No. 186.

What important injunction may be formed of the following letters: A r p y whottni gescain.

No. 187.

Find a hidden river in each of these sentences: 1. It cannot be that he was never honest.

2. When he went in, I let him take the pail.

3. The ancient name of France was Gaul, not Iberia.

4. What a very bad verse! I never saw any quite so poor.

5. Do you remember that weed we saw down by the brook?

6. As the broken pieces would not connect, I cut out others.

7. He said, "Oh, I only wanted that one."

8. Charles told us that Major Daniels was at the exhibition.

No. 198.

1. Prefix twice five to "capable of doing," and have "that can be held or maintained."

2. Prefix the same to a small industrious insect, and have "one who holds possession of any place."

3. Prefix the same to a conjunction, and have a part in music.

Find answers to the above—write them down—and see how they agree with the answers to be given next week.

Answer to Bible Enigma.

No. 262.

Acrostic.

- (a) T abernacles.
(b) H adad-Rimmon.
(c) E nbakkore.
(d) C enser.
(e) I taly.
(f) T alitha-cumi.
(g) Y ara (linen).
(h) O strich.
(i) F rankincense.
(j) D edication.
(k) A staroth.
(l) V inegar.
(m) I ncense.
(n) D agon.

THE CITY OF DAVID.

ANSWERS TO CURIOS QUESTIONS.

No. 184.

BANE, bean, cane, Can, Dane, Dean, fane, Jane, Jena, jean, lean, Lena.

No. 185.

- Beagle, eagle.
Brail, rail.
Bluff, luff.
Bream, ream.
Brigs, riggs.

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

A Generous Gift.

The late Edward Young, of Ironbound Light-house, was baptised by the writer in June, 1855, and united with the North West Church. Owing to the position he occupied on that island it was out of his power to associate with the church in its religious services, but he maintained an interest in the church, which appeared to strengthen as the years passed away. When the meeting house was built at Mahone Bay, he loaned toward the debt even hundred and forty-five dollars, for which he took a note at five per cent. interest. Later on when the church was pressed for the payment of a mortgage of twenty five hundred dollars on the building, he came forward and took up the mortgage, and held it also at five per cent interest, making a total of thirty-two hundred and forty-five dollars, on which interest had been paid until the last year: the money was ready to pay that when he died. Last August he had his will written, giving the church the whole debt at his death, and twelve hundred dollars in cash out of money he had in a bank. But on account of the witnesses he wanted not living on the island, where he resided, the will was not signed. About the last of December he took a violent cold, which caused his sudden death on the 3rd of January. Thus the matter was left open for dispute. But a satisfactory settlement has been made with the heirs of the deceased, by which twenty-six hundred and sixty-two dollars of the church debt has been cancelled, leaving the church virtually free from debt. Last evening a resolution was passed by the congregation acknowledging the hand of God in influencing the heart of our deceased brother to make the generous gift, and also in influencing the heirs of the deceased to settle the matter harmoniously. Thus the church is relieved from a heavy burden, and is placed under renewed obligations to enlarge her sphere of usefulness. May others be prompted to similar benevolent acts, the prayer of yours in the gospel, A. W. BARRS.

For the Christian Messenger.

From France.

PARIS, Jan. 17, 1884.

France is seriously disturbed. The destitution of a quarter of a million of people is acknowledged, and there seems some chance of the passage of a grant of three million of francs to release the tools of mechanics from the pawn offices, the wildest advance toward socialism yet made, and a useless one too, because work and not tools is what is wanted.

Young Prince Victor is playing shrewdly for the Bonapartist succession, by writing a letter which in professing his filial obedience, he really discloses his readiness to supersede it further. He has also proved his orthodoxy by a big subscription to Petrus-panos, and by making an offer to visit the Pope, which the Holy See with characteristic sagacity, declined.

Spanish affairs are again in a state of active ferment and likely soon to bring forth either a revolution or a strongly marked evolution in a conservative sense of Alfonso's monarchy. Serrano has had long and frequent interviews with M. Jules Ferry, and is not so communicative as is his wont with journalists. He appears to bear a load of anxiety upon his shoulders. The French government has sent orders to the Prefects in the Southwestern departments to be careful to disarm all Spanish soldiers who may take refuge upon French territory, and to prevent enemies of King Alfonso from converting any point there into a centre of hostile action toward him.

There is high authority for saying that the French Government is disposed to do its utmost to reverse the recent vote in the Chamber against the importation of American pork. The ministers who have examined into the subject are satisfied that the objection on the score of disease are practically groundless, and that other motives governed the action of Paul Bert and his supporters. M. Ferry and Herisson, believe it will be practicable to reverse the vote within a reasonable time, and have given assurances in the proper quarter of their friendly intentions.

AUGUST