

Querist's Column.

[All matter intended for this column should be addressed to E. C. Ford, Fort Williams, Kings County, N. S. Questions touching the meaning of scriptures will be gladly received.]

Q.—Please explain the parable of the unjust steward. Luke xvi. 1-12. S. B.

A.—That this parable was spoken to teach us our financial duties to God is evident from the fact that the "Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things and they derided him" (Verse 14).

The figure is that of a landlord who had a steward employed to take charge of his business, but he wasted his lord's goods and for this he was called unjust and was put out of his stewardship. But, anxious to make provision for his future, he acted wisely in that while the goods were yet under his control he made such a prudent use of them that he secured for himself friends who would receive him into their homes when he was put out of his stewardship.

The application is easy. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof." Hence, whatever of this world's goods we may possess belongs to God and we are His stewards. As is taught in the parable of the talents, so in this, whatever we have has been given as a trust to keep and improve. Our time of service is this life, the day of settlement will be hereafter.

The conclusion is, "Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when it shall fail they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles." R. V. For if we are not faithful in that which is least—our worldly possessions—who will commit to our trust the true riches? Again, if you are not "faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own?" From this we learn that our earthly possessions really belong to God, but our heavenly blessings will be our own.

Q.—Please give an explanation of the words of our Lord in Matt. xi. 19. "But wisdom is justified of her children." H. M.

A.—In the revised version of this Scripture we have this rendering: "But wisdom is justified by her works." The meaning of this is that the wisdom of the teaching of Jesus will be vindicated by its effects upon the lives of those who receive His word and "bring forth the peaceable fruit of righteousness." Though the wisdom of this world may speak of the Gospel as foolishness, it is still both the wisdom and power of God to them that receive it. This will be so manifest in the lives of those who are the "children of God by faith" that their happy, peaceful lives and their works of righteousness will vindicate or justify the wisdom of all God's teachings.

THE GENERAL CONVENTION.

On Thursday morning, October 15th, about eleven o'clock, a solitary individual started from Springfield, Mo., for Allegheny, Pa., to attend what is commonly called "The National Convention of our Brotherhood."

The morning was lovely and warm and your correspondent never, either in body or spirits, felt better in his life. He just felt good, for he was going on his way to a big meeting, to have a big time, to see some big men, to hear some big sermons, big singing, big reports, big resolutions for Christ and the world and to see big givings, etc., etc., in fact he could not think of anything being small at that meeting, and strange though it may seem the writer of these notes began to feel big himself.

The lightning speed of the train presented to the observers an ever changing scenery, so that the beautiful, the grand and the romantic followed each other in quick succession. Looking out of the window and turning the eyes downward the myriads of tree tops, with the iridescent leaves of variegated colors, appeared as an immense carpet of indescribable beauty, covering the bottoms of the valleys, then the mountain slopes, the uplands and yonder stretching

away up to the highest mountain peak, the blue outlines of distant hills came in sight, now the running streams and brooklets, with their waters sparkling in the sun and joyfully wending their ways to meet at some distant place to unite in forming a larger and a more useful body, so that in some respects they typified the delegates hurrying from the different sections of the States to swell the numbers and add to the importance of the great convention. Methinks that if the Psalmist of Israel had seen all these sights in such a short space of time he would have exclaimed, "The mountains and valleys declare the glory of God and the trees and the streamlets showeth forth His handiwork."

On Friday evening, about 7 o'clock, having travelled something like seventeen hundred miles, Allegheny was reached, and in less than a half an hour we (for there was many of us then) were at the place appointed for holding the convention.

Our readers are familiar, no doubt, with the statistical reports, these having appeared in the columns of other religious papers, and for this reason are, with but few exceptions, omitted in these few random notes. Neither will an attempt be made to give anything like a full report of what was said and done, but only a few facts not especially emphasized by other writers. And first, here is an idea of the place of worship.

The house is on the corner of Arch and Montgomery streets, is of brick and faces the east. In front is an iron railing with swinging gates, and after advancing a short distance you ascend three or four stone steps and entering the front door you are in a sort of vestibule, in which, on the right and left, ascend stair-ways leading to an upper hall and then you pass to the main audience room. But leaving the front door and going forward a few steps and pushing open a sort of folding door you have before you a large room for Sunday-school and prayer-meeting purposes. The St. John brethren will see at a glance that it resembles very much the Coburg street church. The main audience room has at the east end a gallery, the floor of which forms the ceiling of the upper hall, the pulpit is on a platform in the west end. There are four large windows on the north side and four on the south and a large one in the east end. There are three seats in a tier—the centre one being twice the length of the side ones, and the side ones having aisles between their outer ends and the wall make four aisles in all. Nine hundred can be comfortably seated in this room.

On the evening of our arrival all the rooms were thrown open and beautifully lighted. A large crowd had gathered and each one was trying, so it appeared, to outdo every other one in kindness. You no sooner entered the door than some one or more would exclaim: "Why there is Bro. so-and-so, I must go and speak to him. Well! well! if I aint glad to see you," etc. And then would follow such hand-shaking, such as I have often seen and felt at our Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and P. E. Island gatherings. Oh! how I would like to have some of those provincial shakes right now. This was called "an informal meeting," at which you were expected to speak to everybody and everybody to you.

On Saturday morning, at half past nine, the Christian Women's Board of Missions began their session with reading and prayer. These sessions continued till 10 o'clock Monday night, suspending business on Lord's day for worship. This Board was seventeen years old on the 21st of October last. It has employed forty-five missionaries since its organization, and eighteen are now in its employ—six in Jamaica, four in India, five in Montana, two in Kentucky, one at Ann Arbor, besides rendering assistance to other fields of labor. During the seventeen years it has collected \$243,794.43. The first year it received but \$1,200, in the year just closed about \$43,000.

The President, Sister O. A. Burgess, conducted the meeting with grace and dignity. Her simplicity of dress and manners, her earnestness and loving appeals for the work of saving souls won all hearts, and everyone felt and many said, God bless the women in their noble work.

Tuesday at 9 a. m. the Foreign Christian Missionary Society commenced its session with a thirty minute prayer-meeting. Bro. C. L. Loos is the President, Archie McLean, formerly of P. E. Island, the Secretary. This society was organized in Louisville, Ky., in October, 1875. It is supporting seventy-five missionaries, and already over 5,300 have turned to the Lord through its efforts.

The General Christian Missionary Convention had a short session on Tuesday afternoon and then adjourned till Wednesday, 2 p. m., and continued till Thursday night 10 o'clock. It was organized in 1849, showing it to be the senior and parent society of the two mentioned above. Its first foreign missionary was Dr. J. T. Barclay and the field was Jerusalem in Palestine. During the year just closed \$97,192.00 was poured into its treasury, and adding the Church Extension Fund of \$18,000 gives a total of \$55,192.00.

Though interesting and profitable it might be, time and space will not permit a further reference to what was said and done during that week's meeting. But just a few things more before bringing to a close these notes.

In the main audience room were hung within the sight of all present immense maps. On the north side there were two—China and India—and over China was written in large letters, "A million a month in China dying without God." And as the missionary from China turned his eyes towards that map and with his fingers pointed to those words it made every one feel the need of doing more for China than ever before. At the west end and above the pulpit was a large map, having the eastern and western hemispheres. In the western, looking north, Canada and the United States were painted green, representing Protestantism; South America, red, Catholicism; Western—away up the N. W.—a little green spot, British Isles; away down south-east, another green spot, Australia. Russia was a smoky black; but Africa intensely black, heathendom. On the south was a map of Japan. When looking upon those maps it was impossible to feel otherwise than that the evangelization of the world is an immense work, an important work, and woe is me if I have no part or lot in this work.

The sermon on Lord's day morning by Bro. Garrison of St. Louis, Mo., was fine. The raising of about \$5000 for hospitals in China was so quickly done that a stranger to such things might well ask: *Why, where am I?*

An address by Bro. J. W. Loos on Negro evangelization presented in a forcible manner the importance of this work.

Bro. R. Graham's sermon—The sources of missionary enthusiasm—was a masterly effort. Surely he never did better in his life. His tongue was indeed "as the pen of a ready writer." His soul seemed to be on fire. His love for and loyalty to the truth were to the listeners soul-inspiring, and on that Tuesday night we all loved him better, if that were possible, than ever before.

Bro. Tozo Ohno, an educated Japanese convert, now in Toronto, but soon to return to his native country, was greeted with a hearty applause when he said: "I am not a disciple of the Disciples, but I am a disciple of Jesus Christ." Brethren, that is a point worth considering.

The addresses of Brothers Meigs, Loos, Tyler, Streater, Garst, Moffatt, and those of Sisters Burgess, Jessie H. Brown, Graybiel, Boyd, Christian and Mitchell, must all pass unnoticed.

The hospitality of the Allegheny and Pittsburg brethren cannot be surpassed. The patience, impartiality and executive ability of Bro. W. F. Richardson, preacher of the Allegheny church was remarkable.

The devotional spirit characterized all the meetings. The desire to do more for Christ pervaded every heart.

Was it a big meeting? Yes; it was immense. Did it come up to your expectations? Why, yes, and away beyond them.

Some one says: "Our preacher does not believe in foreign missions, and how to convert him from