

WHAT DO YOU WANT.

BY CAROLYN SMYTHE.

A Christian man, the business of whose life was to sow the seed that might spring up into eternal life, found himself one summer morning among the woods and hills of a country place, whither he had come for rest and vacation. The change from city atmosphere to the pure air of the mountains was rest and tonic of itself; so he said to himself, "Now I don't want to go hunting or fishing; I am going to work, and I am going to do the hardest work I can find."

In a town three miles away, he remembered, there lived a lawyer whom he had known from boyhood—a wicked, profane, unbelieving man—and toward his office he turned his steps. At the door he was informed that the lawyer was out of town and would not return for a fortnight. A young man who was in the office, supposing he had come on business, said, "It need make no difference, sir. If you will put your case in my hands I will attend to it."

"No, I prefer to see the state's attorney himself."

"It will not be necessary, sir. I have been in the office a number of years, and can give your case all needed attention, if you will tell it to me, and I will report to the state's attorney on his return."

"Thank you; I think I will wait and see him myself."

Still the young man persisted, until the stranger turned to him and said, "Very well, since you are so eager to assume my case, I will tell you what it is, and then, perhaps, you will not care so much about it. I came here this morning to talk with Mr. B. on the subject of personal, practical religion. Now, will you take my case?"

"Yes, sir, and thank you too," was the quick, sincere reply. Then he went on to say that he had been thoughtful and concerned about his soul for a year; that no one had ever spoken to him on the subject, although he had wished for counsel, and had attended prayer-meetings and purposely walked home with Christian people hoping to be addressed by them. "Until at last," he said, "I have concluded that no one cares for my soul; or else, there is nothing in it. I am not sure which is truth. Now I shall be so glad if you will talk with me."

While they were in the midst of their conversation the door was suddenly thrown open, and a young man rushed in.

"Halloa, Frank. Are you ready for that horseback ride?"

"No; I am not ready. I cannot go this morning."

The new-comer withdrew to a remote corner of the room, and the others continued their talk. More or less of their words fell upon his ear, and he began to edge his way nearer to the speakers, till at last he was within reaching distance, when the elder man touched him with his finger, and said, "What I have been saying to your friend here is equally applicable to you, young man."

"Oh, no, it is not; I am a sceptic."

"Oh, you are a sceptic, are you? Did it ever do you any good?"

"No."

"Do you expect it ever will?"

"No; I don't know as I do."

"Then it would not do you any harm to give it up, would it?"

"No, but there is the trouble—how to get rid of it."

"Oh, that is not the trouble at all. It lies back of that—how to get the disposition to get rid of it."

"Oh, I have that already. I'd be glad enough to get rid of it if I could."

"I am inclined to doubt you, sir; but if you will allow me to put you to the test I can soon satisfy you and myself as to your disposition."

"I am ready, sir, to submit to any test you please."

"Very well. Will you sign this?" and putting his hand into an inner pocket he drew out a total abstinence pledge.

Now the young man was at that moment slightly under the influence of liquor, but after carefully and thoughtfully reading the pledge, he at length said, "Yes, I will sign it," and he wrote his name on the paper, and before he returned it made a copy of it, which he put in his own pocket. "Now, sir, what next?"

"Let us go into the inner room where we can be more secure from interruption."

After some further talk, the elder stranger proposed that they should pray together.

The young men were very willing that he should pray with and for them, but declared that they themselves did not know how to pray.

"Praying, my friends, is only asking for what we want, and if you don't know how to pray, then you simply don't want anything. That is all."

This was a new aspect of the case, and the young sceptic said, "If I could see Jesus Christ I would tell him what I want, more than anything else, that he should take away all my scepticism, change my heart, and make me a Christian."

"Then that would be praying if you should say that to him here and now. And what do you want most of anything?" turning to the lawyer.

"I don't want anything but to become a Christian."

"Very well, tell God just that, and keep on telling him until he makes you one."

After praying they separated, and never met again. Two years after, their stranger guest heard that the young lawyer was the most active member of the church at his home; and although he had not given up his profession for which he had spent years of study, he had so prepared himself by other study as to be able to take his pastor's place if he were necessarily absent, and was proving by his life that a man can serve God faithfully in the successful practice of the law.

Still a few years later the seed-sower learned incidentally that the young sceptic was studying for the ministry, having devoted his life to the service of that God whose existence he once denied. Both these young men frankly attributed their conversion to the interview in the state attorney's office with a stranger whom they never met again, and whose name they never knew.—*Am. Messenger.*

JENNIE'S LESSON.

"Jennie! Jennie!" It was mamma's voice calling, and Jennie heard it, but she was very busy reading her Sabbath-school library book. Jennie loved reading, and her book was a very interesting one. She was doing a good thing, but when mamma called, she should have answered. Soon the call came again, louder than before.

"Jennie! Jennie!"

This time she answered, "Yes, mamma, in a minute." Then she looked back upon her book, and forgot all about the call, till, finishing a chapter, all at once she remembered, and jumping up, ran quickly down stairs.

"What is it, mamma?" she asked in a doubtful voice, for mamma was sewing and did not raise her eyes from her work.

"Uncle John called to take you to ride with Clara and Millie," mamma answered quietly.

"Didn't he wait, mamma?" asked Jennie in a rueful voice.

"Oh no, my child; he said he could not wait a minute, and now you have waited ten minutes before coming to see what was wanted."

Uncle John had lately bought a horse and sleigh, and Jennie had been longing for a ride; and now she had missed it. She began to cry, for the disappointment was bitter and hard to bear. Mamma allowed her to cry a little, then said kindly,

"Come and sit by me in your little chair, Jennie, and let us have a talk together. Do you see the frost on the northern window, where the sun has not shone all day, Jennie? And do you see the words there, which you were writing with your finger this morning when I called you to breakfast?"

Jennie saw the writing upon the window and remembered. Then she hung her head in shame.

"Do you know, Jennie, who wrote some words upon two tables of stone with his finger?" asked mamma again.

"It was God," said Jennie.

"And what did he write, Jennie?"

"The ten commandments."

"Don't you think they must have been very important, if God wrote them in the stone with his own finger?"

"Yes, mamma," answered Jennie in a very low voice.

"I think my little girl can repeat the fifth commandment. That is the children's commandment, you remember," said mamma.

And Jennie's head was bent very low, as she repeated, "Honor thy father and thy

mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

"Didn't you disobey mamma when you were writing upon the window, after I had called you to breakfast?"

"Yes, mamma," sobbed Jennie.

"And so you dishonored me, too, before our visitor, Miss Gray, didn't you, Jennie?"

"Oh yes," sobbed Jennie again.

"And now Uncle John has gone away, saying in his heart, 'What a naughty, disobedient child Jennie is!' and so you have dishonored me again. O Jennie, that is far worse than any disappointment about the ride."

Jennie laid her head upon mamma's knee and cried. This time they were not cross tears, but sorry tears. Then she asked her mamma to forgive her, and mamma kneeled down with her, while they asked the dear Saviour to forgive her too, and to help her to honor and obey her dear mamma always.—*Lilian Payson, in Child's Paper.*

"A NAIL IN EVERY BUILDING."

The late Prof. Samuel Miller, of Princeton, N. J. was a man of large benevolence. He refused to aid no object which he considered worthy of public or private beneficence. He used to say that he loved to have a nail in every building intended for the glory of God or the good of man. It was in his heart to aid to the extent of his ability every worthy cause. And doubtless he had his reward. He had it as he went along, in the consciousness of doing good. He had it in the prayers and benedictions of the poor. He has it now in heaven, in the smile of his divine Lord. And he will have it in the great rewarding day, when the Master will bring to light every good deed, and say unto him, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Were all to act on the same principle, how much good would be accomplished! "A nail in every building intended for the glory of God or the good of man." A helping hand for every worthy object. Here a little and there a little. A portion to seven and also to eight. Few are so poor but that they might adopt this rule. The writer's income has always been small, and his means quite limited; and yet it has been his rule for almost half a century to give something, his mite, or his two mites, to every worthy object presented. He has never allowed a contribution-box pass without casting in his little offering. Nor has he refused to put his name to a subscription for some small sum. Nor have the poor been turned away from his door unfed. And it is his experience that it is "more blessed to give than to receive." He takes pleasure in giving; his only regret being that it is not in his power to give more. He would have not only a nail in every building, but a brick or a stone, a board or a timber. And he has endeavored to bring up his children to adopt and to practise according to the same rule. And it is a pleasure to him to see them doing so. He has no fear that they will impoverish themselves in this way. He feels that as for himself he is better off, even for this world, than if he had kept all to himself; and it is his belief that it will be so with respect to them. At any rate, he would have them liberal. He would have them scatter blessings all along their path through this needy world, and do all in their power to make their fellow-men better and happier.—*American Messenger.*

A CAPITAL PRESCRIPTION.

A rather eccentric yet eminent physician was called to attend a middle-aged rich lady who had imaginary ills. After many wise enquiries about her symptoms and manner of life, he asked for a piece of paper, and wrote down the following prescription: "Do something for somebody." In the gravest manner he handed it to the patient, and left.

The doctor heard nothing from the lady for a long time. On Christmas morning he was hastily summoned to the cottage of her Irish washerwoman.

"It's not meself, doctor, it's me wrist, that's ailing. Ye see, I was after going out into the black darkness for a few bits of wood, when me foot struck this basket. It stood there like a big mercy, as it was, full of soft flannel from Mrs. Walker. She towld me that your medicine cured her, doctor: so, if you plaze to put a little of that same on me

wrist, I'll be none the worse for me nice present."

"It is a powerful remedy," said the doctor gravely. And more than once in after-years he wrote the prescription: Do something for somebody.

"OH, THE DRUDGERY of this every-day routine!" cries many a business man, and many a housekeeping woman. "To get through the day, and have the same round to traverse to-morrow!" Yes, but how do you know what use the gracious Superintendent of your life is making of this humdrum as you call it? A poor, blind mill-horse treads his beat, hour after hour, and it all seems to him to come to nothing. But the shaft he is turning is geared into others, and they into wheels that in other rooms, above him, far away beyond his hearing, are working out results that he could never comprehend. Wait till you see no longer through a glass darkly, and see the unknown bearings and connections of your life-work with other generations, and may be, with other worlds.—*Advance.*

Question Corner.—No. 19.

BIBLE QUESTIONS.

217. In what kingdom was it that a law once signed by the king could never be altered?
218. What king signed a decree that no one should ask a petition of any god or man excepting the king, for thirty days?
219. What king dreamed of a great image and forgot it so that he could not tell it in the morning?
220. By whom was the dream revealed to him?
221. What king was made to eat grass as oxen?
222. How was Elijah provided with food when he dwelt by the brook Cherith?
223. Who was the last king of the kingdom of Israel?
224. What man's hair when cut weighed two hundred shekels?
225. Where do we find the words, "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself"?
226. What king and his queen caused a man to be killed in order that they might possess his vineyard?
227. Of whom did Paul say, "From a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures"?
228. Who succeeded Moses as leader of the children of Israel?

BIBLE ACROSTIC.

1. Scene of Christ's first miracle.
 2. Abraham's chief servant.
 3. One of the judges of Israel.
 4. Great-grandfather of Abraham.
 5. Eldest son of Cain.
 6. A commercial city signifying "a rock."
 7. Son of Boaz and Ruth.
 8. A woman of Sorek, beloved by Samson.
 9. Ruth's sister-in-law.
 10. One of Isaac's sons.
 11. A beverage offered the Saviour on the cross.
 12. A book of the Bible.
 13. Father of Leah and Rachel.
- The initials form an exhortation by the prophet Isaiah.

ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS IN NO. 17.

193. Belshazzar's. Daniel v. 5.
194. See Daniel v. 25, 28.
195. Namaan the Syrian. 2 Kings v. 10, 15.
196. The turning of the water into wine. John ii. 2.
197. Zacharias and Elizabeth. Luke i. 13.
198. In Capernaum. Mark ii. 1.
199. In Nazareth. Luke iv. 16, 29.
200. At the pool of Bethesda. John v. 2, 5.
201. Deborah. Judges iv. Esther. Esther viii. Jael. Judges v. 24, 31.
202. Idolatry. See Ezra and Nehemiah.
203. Jerubbaal: he was given this name by his father after he had destroyed the altar of Baal. Judges vi. 27, 32.
204. Cousin. Esther ii. 7.

BIBLE ACROSTIC.

- 1, Philip. 2, Rhoda. 3, Enoch. 4, Pharaoh.
- 5, Aaron. 6, Rizpah. 7, Ezra. 8, Yea. 9, Eneas. 10, Tabitha. 11, Hezekiah. 12, Esther.
- 13, Woman. 14, Assyria. 15, Yellow. *Prepare ye the Way.*

CORRECT ANSWERS RECEIVED.

To No. 16.—Herbert Davidson, 12; George W. Foster, 12; Alex. Johnson, 11; Mary E. Coates, 11; Andrew Paterson, 10.