

SPECIAL ARTICLES

Our Contributors

BOOK REVIEWS

AN UNEXPECTED QUESTION.

One morning about twenty years ago a lawyer on the way to his office stopped outside a barber's shop door to get a "shine."

The little bootblack who plied his trade there was no stranger to him, although he knew him only by his street name. This morning the boy was unusually silent. The lawyer missed his bright remarks and began to rally him a little, when suddenly the boy looked up in his face and said:

"Mr. Bartlett, do you love God?" The lawyer was an upright, self-respecting man, but neither a church attendant nor much given to religious thought, and he took the question at first as an attempt at a joke on the part of the boy; but he soon found that it was meant in all seriousness. No one had ever asked him the question before in quite the same way and it staggered him.

"Why do you ask me that, Bat?" he said, after a rather awkward pause. "What difference does it make to you?"

"Well, I'll tell you, sir. Me mother an' me's got to get out; for the place we live in'll be tore down pretty soon, an' a feller like me can't pay much rent. Mother does all she can, but you see there's three of us, and me grandmother's lame. I dunno what to do. Yesterday I heard two men talkin', an' one of 'em said God would help anybody that loved him if they'd tell him they was in the hole. I thought about it 'most all night, an' this mornin' I made up my mind I'd lay for somebody that knew him well enough to ask him."

The lawyer was embarrassed. All he could say to the threadbare little bootblack was that he had better ask some one else. He had better keep inquiring, he told him; for in a city of so many churches he would surely find the sort of person he wanted. He thrust a dollar into the boy's hand and hurried away.

But all that day he found his thoughts reverting to the bootblack and his strange question. "A fine position for an educated man in a Christian country!" he said to himself. "Struck dumb by an ignorant street Arab! I could not answer his question. Why not?"

The lawyer was an honest man, and his self-examination ended in a resolution to find out the reason why. That evening he went, for the first time in many years, to prayer-meeting, and frankly told the whole story, without sparing himself. From that day life had a new meaning for him, and a higher purpose.

A few days later, at a conference of ministers of different denominations in the same city, the lawyer's strange experience was mentioned by the pastor who gave him his first Christian welcome. Immediately another minister told of a young man in his congregation who had been awakened to a religious life by the same question put to him by the same little bootblack. The interest culminated when a third declared that he had a call from the bootblack himself, who had been brought to his study by a man who had appreciated his unexpected question and knew how to befriend him.

Such an incident could not be allowed to end there. The boy was helped to good lodgings, and to patronage which enabled him to provide better for his "family." At last he had found somebody who loved God; and in time he

had learned to love himself, and "knew him well enough to ask him." Opportunities for a decent education were opened to him, and he showed so much promise that his lawyer friend took him in first as an office-boy and finally as a student.

Many would recognize the bootblack today if his name were given, not only as a member of the bar in successful practice, but as a church member and a worker in Sabbath school. He loves boys; and the few who knew that he was once a bootblack understand his interest in little fellows who need a friend. Helping them is for him loving God in the most effectual way.—Youth's Companion.

AFTER VACATION.

It may be assumed that we return from vacation days with renewed strength and vigor. The wearied system has had rest, the nervous tension has been relaxed, new inspiration has been gained from the touch of the larger world.

Vacation breaks up the monotony of continuous duty, and the relief from the ever-present sense of pressing work gives time for thought. Whether on the mountain, the lake or the sea, whether in the multitude or in the quiet of the cottage far away from the strong currents of human activity, one is in other touch with the world, and brings back something of the impressions received.

This separation from the regular routine of work, and from our ordinary surroundings gives us a different viewpoint of our life and work. They are seen in perspective, and are more clearly defined to us. Unconsciously to ourselves there is more or less of review and of anticipation. From this come plans for our return. Suggestions have been received which may be worked out in the coming year. Possibilities have been considered and entered in the note book for practical application. Thus we may bring new elements into our lives, and gain new force for what comes to our hand. There is some disarrangement in withdrawing for a time from our usual responsibilities. On our return some readjustment may be necessary; the lines have been dropped and we may require some time to get them firmly in hand again, but time must not be wasted under this plea. Much of the gain of vacation will be lost if we allow the freshness of the reinvigorated life to be worn off in the first weeks of our return. The whole force of what we have gained should be brought into use at once. The sea and mountain breezes should be brought home with us that others may share our benefit.

We should return to our places with the inspiration of the greater possibilities before us in the world-movements now taking place. With God one day is as a thousand years in what He brings about. In some measure it is so with us. One year may bring results not gained in other many years. Long periods of preparation precede the events which seem to come suddenly. We seem to be at a time for which centuries have been preparing. It is a privilege to live in the present day, and to take part in the mighty works of God. We cannot read His calendar, but we see the world all astir, and hear the Voice, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord."

We return to our work in the joy of a glorious vision and with the resolution to labor with greater energy and in the confidence that the Gospel of Christ will soon fill the world with His glory.—United Presbyterian.

FAREWELL TO MISSIONARY NURSES.

A farewell meeting was held last week in the lecture room of Knox church, Toronto, to Miss Christina A. Mitchell and Miss Janet Plaunt, who are leaving for Vegreville, Sask., where they will work as missionary nurses among the Gaiicians and others among whom lies the hospital work.

Miss Mitchell is a graduate of the Toronto General Hospital and has had considerable experience lately as district tuberculosis nurse in Toronto, and previous to that as district and mission nurse in New York and Montreal. Miss Plaunt is from Renfrew and goes as Miss Mitchell's assistant.

The meeting was held under the auspices of the Women's Home Missionary Society of the Presbyterian Church, the Rev. A. B. Winchester presiding. Dr. E. D. McLaren gave an address on the church's obligation in Western Canada and dwelt on the Home Mission Committee's interest in the hospitals at Vegreville as well as at Teulon and Wakaw. Miss Mitchell and Miss Plaunt both addressed the meeting and Miss Mitchell was presented with a life membership certificate in the Woman's Home Missionary Society, and was also the recipient of many things necessary to her outfit, among which was an elder comforter from Lady Clark.

Three graduates of Toronto General Hospital have left for the Yukon, where they will be in charge of the Good Samaritan Hospital. They are Miss Isabel Moodie, of Richmond Hill, who will be superintendent, with Miss Lawson, of Hamilton, and Miss Burkholder of Stayner as assistants.

TORONTO AND VICINITY.

Rev. D. W. Christy was inducted into the ministry on September 17th and given his first charge, Reid avenue Presbyterian church. The new house of worship in the East end was largely erected by the generosity of Bloor street Presbyterian church. Mr. Christy has labored among this new congregation from the time they met in a tent until they grew in enterprise and numbers and erected the present edifice. Rev. S. T. Martin, of Streetsville, preached the sermon. His text was based upon the contents of Revelation, second chapter—the message to the church at Ephesus. Rev. J. McP. Scott, of St. John's church, gave the charge to Rev. Mr. Christy, while Rev. Dr. W. G. Wallace, of Bloor street Presbyterian church, addressed the congregation. Moderator Rev. W. F. McKay, of Milton, presided.

CHURCH UNION.

The Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregational delegates of the joint committee on church union met last week in the Metropolitan church, Toronto, for the first general session of the fourth conference. The Baptists have refused to go into the union, so have no delegates present.

The meetings are all being held behind closed doors, but it is expected that by the middle of this week some definite results will be arrived at which will enable the conference to present the proposition to the various high courts of each church for acceptance.

Joseph Joachim, the celebrated violinist, and conductor of the Royal Academy of Music in Berlin, died on August 15, after a long illness at the age of 76 years.