

THE CHILDREN'S RECORD

JOE'S VICTORY.

JOE Warner was up-stairs in his own room. On his bed were spread out all the books and magazines he owned, and he, with hands in his pockets stood surveying the display, evidently in great perplexity.

The Sunday-school scholars were packing a box to send to a missionary, and Joe's class were going to put in reading-matter.

It seemed to Joe an easy matter to promise something, he had so many books; but when he came to look them over there were none he wanted to part with. This one he should want to read over again; that one he liked best of all, he really believed; and that—why, that would leave such an empty space on his book-shelf!

His bound volumes of St. Nicholas? Why, they were out of the question entirely! he couldn't give one of those away. But wouldn't that poor, forlorn missionary boy enjoy one! It fairly made Joe's mouth water to think what a feast it would be to him. Well, it was too bad, but he could not spare one, and what should he send?

"I just wish they hadn't done a thing about it," he said to himself; "but since they have, I suppose I must give something, and I might as well decide."

So once more Joe went over the whole collection, book by book. When he had finished, the two smallest and least attractive of all lay by themselves; the rest he put back where they belonged.

That afternoon he wrapped up the books he had selected and carried them over to Miss Maynard's.

"Thank you ever so much!" she said. "I hope you have chosen just what you would like to have if you were 'way out there, so far from almost everything. It must be forlorn—mustn't it?—and I am so glad we have the chance to brighten some of the long hours for him! Besides, you know, Joe, Christ has promised to accept our little offerings as though given to himself."

Joe colored and stammered, and got away as quickly as possible.

"I wish they never had done a thing about the mean old box," he muttered. "I never will have anything to do with another, if I can help it. I should like to know why a fellow ought to go and give away something he wants himself? I should just miss one of my books awfully, but that fellow out there won't feel bad if he don't have it, 'cause he won't know anything about it."

Joe did not sleep well that night, and he felt half sick the next morning, but he went to church as usual. He was very glad to go, for somehow at home every book in the house seemed to be crying out "shame!" to him.

He was busy with his own unpleasant thoughts, and did not pay much attention to the opening exercises of the service, but a word in the text caught his ear at once:

"Neither will I offer unto the Lord that which cost me nothing."

Dr. Grant repeated it twice, solemnly and earnestly. Joe dropped his head; it seemed to him he spoke just to him, of all the congregation. That was what he had done—he had offered unto the Lord that which cost him nothing. Miss Maynard had said that Christ would accept their gifts as though made to himself; but he had not been willing to deny himself. O, dear! how mean and selfish he had been! and he had so much to enjoy, but he had not been willing to spare even a little!

After church he hurried home, and once more went up to his book-case. He could not help a bit of a shiver as he picked out the St. Nicholas he liked best of all.

"I've had everything all my life, and that poor boy hasn't had anything, hardly. I ought to be glad to make an offering that will cost me lots. I'll make it, anyway, whether I'm glad or not."

He went back to Sunday-school and handed Miss Maynard his St. Nicholas.

"I wish you would take out those two books I brought you yesterday, and send this instead. They didn't cost me anything, and they weren't a bit as I'd be done by, but I think this is."

"It's funny," he said to his mother afterward, "but when I gave what didn't cost me anything, I felt as horrid as could be; but when I gave what cost me a real ache, I felt good right off."—*Morning Star.*