

he hated more than anything else to be called a coward.

So finally he consented one day to wait until the large farm bell which was to call the men to dinner rang, and then the two boys stole quietly out of the house and ran to the stable yard with all their might lest some one might see them and prevent the destruction of the old hay-riek.

There was mischief brewing in the air that day and every sound made the boys start and turn around to see if they were discovered. But their plans were carried out without interruption, and in less than five minutes the old hay-riek was all ablaze smoking and crackling and sizzling like the biggest bonfire.

Unfortunately the boys had forgotten the north-east wind that was blowing, and thought of nothing but their eagerness to run away before the men reached the spot. The barns were in the greatest danger and the hay-rieks had already caught from the burning straw.

To make matters worse Tom Long, who really was the cause of the fire, ran home and left Bob to help himself the best way he could. Bob could see the dreadful calamity he had wrought by his thoughtlessness and yet dared not venture a stone's throw from where he was hiding. He waited and wished, but it was no use, the barn was burnt down and he was afraid to go home and tell his father how it was done.

The shadows began to fall and night closed in. He knew only too well how anxious the family would feel at his disappearance, and he was also quite faint from his long fasting. "What shall I do?" he cried, "I never can tell father, and now I remember he forbade me ever playing with fire." There he sat squeezed down in a dark corner full of spiders and cobwebs, suffering tortures because his conscience told him how very wrong he had been, until finally he heard footsteps and from the words he could catch he guessed they were looking everywhere for him. Not for anything would he show himself, because he could not tell that he did it, and his conscience had accused him enough already. He saw the farm hands looking everywhere for him and the light of their lanterns streamed into his hiding-place almost revealing his whereabouts, but he remained quite still until they had passed out of sight. There was not much chance of his getting home that night, and he began to feel so tired and such a tremendous lump in his throat would try to choke him. He could not get rid of it either, until finally Bob felt so unhappy he began to cry. How much he wished he had never been so disobedient! He thought of all the wicked things he had ever done now often he had teased his sister and cruelly tied pussy to a tree; he counted on his fingers the number of times he had run off from school to go shooting until he wished he had never been born, he was so unhappy. It was very dark and he felt so lonely, he wanted to sleep in his comfortable bed at home, which was far easier than the tiny corner he was almost suffocating in.

At last unable to endure any longer the great suspense, he crept slowly out and ran around to the sitting-room window and softly turned the blind. He could see the family looking troubled enough and heard each one ask about him, but still he dared not go in because he lacked courage to tell the whole truth and confess his fault. Finally Bob grew so sleepy he sank down on the door-step and slept soundly.

Now it happened that his father coming out to take one more look found him there and gently raising him in his arms carried him into the cosy sitting-room and laid him on the sofa. No need to tell his father who did the mischief—he read it plain enough in Bob's face and he saw he was severely punished by his own conscience.

If he had only had courage to resist Tom Long's influence he would have been spared much sorrow, but in the beginning he was afraid to be called a coward by a boy who really was one, and he therefore proved himself anything but brave when he could not say no when his conscience told him it was wrong.

You may be sure Bob's father forgave him, and as to Bob himself he grew to be a good boy and wasn't afraid to be called a coward when he felt sure he was right, and I do not believe he ever forgot that night, and if ever you should come across him I hope you will not forget to ask him about the day the old hay-riek was set on fire. I think he will say he found it better and more comfortable to have a clear conscience.

HELP, OR HINDER, WHICH?

"Harry! Harry! There, dear, I wouldn't. Harry, if you please."

Those were some of the mild, deprecatory expressions that Mrs. Linn was often constrained to use during class exercises, as her attention was unwillingly attracted toward the mischievous and demoralizing pranks of one of the brightest, and in some respects, most interesting pupils of her large class of boys.

One Sunday Mrs. Linn asked Harry to stop a few moments after school. "I've a favor to ask of you," she added in her brightest and pleasantest manner, that at once disarmed any rising rebelliousness in the lad, who knew that he had been even more than usually reckless in his annoying actions that morning, and who suspected that his teacher desired to re-monstrate in private with him concerning those habits that caused her such grief and pain. But her countenance reassured him, and he waited willingly, all the chivalric element of his bright boy nature responding heartily to his teacher's implied demand upon him for loyal service.

"It's just this, Harry," said Mrs. Linn, taking the lad's hand as if to bid him "good-bye," and by the act indicating that she meant not to detain him, "you comprehend how a person may render a positive service?"

"Certainly," answered the boy. "Well, I've been thinking that it may be possible for me to render service negatively. I don't know for a certainty that such a thing can be done. I know, however, that if it can, you are the very boy to demonstrate its possibility to me. The favor I ask of you is of the negative sort. I will deal candidly with you in asking it, you may deal as candidly in granting or refusing it. I must have the help the co-operation of every member of my class; the positive help, if I can, if not that, then if it can be had, the negative help. You have shown plainly that you will not accord to me that positive help which I so much need, and would so highly prize. The weight of your influence you throw against me. I fear, too, that your influence may be even strong enough to bar some of your companions out of the Kingdom. I dread to think of your assuming the responsibility and the consequent accountability of such grave action. The favor I wish is your promise that, since you will not help either your teacher or your classmates in the way of life, at least you will try not to hinder them. Is that more than fair?"

"No, I suppose not," said the lad thoughtfully. "Deal fairly by me in your answer, then," said Mrs. Linn. "If you will not or cannot grant my favor, that ends the matter, of course. I don't wish you to make a promise that you are certain not to perform. But if you think you can cordially grant it, I shall be grateful indeed for your promise not to hinder by any word or deed, those of your companions who, but for you, might strive to enter in at the strait gate. It is of the nature of a negative service, and, as I said, perhaps it is an impossible thing. I only ask you to promise to try it."

Harry's hand had remained in his teacher's while she stood and made known her wishes to him. He did not withdraw it as he stood a moment and thought; only a moment. Then he gave her hand a quick, decided grasp, and said, "All right, I know what you mean. I'll try it. You can depend on me."

"Thank you, Harry," said Mrs. Linn. "I thought I could depend on you if only I could get you enlisted." And with a bright smile she bade him "good morning" and went her way.

Weeks passed. Harry stood manfully to his promise. No sly, irrelevant word or gesture was suffered to escape him. No ridicule or scoffing remark fell from his lips. When Jasper Burns, who for a long time had been shyly and tremblingly seeking the way of salvation, at length announced his new-found hope, Harry so far controlled himself as to repress both word and grimace, though he was aching to whisper "Correct! Go up head! Clear up into holiness corner, Brother Burns," in the old teasing fashion. Only he had promised Mrs. Linn not to hinder. One Sunday it came Harry's turn to ask Mrs. Linn to remain a few moments with him. Without preface or apology he blurted out the matter. "It's all up, Mrs. Linn. It can't be done. You've got to help, or you've got to hinder."

"Yes?" gently said Mrs. Linn, in an enquiring tone.

"I don't believe there is such a thing as negative service," said Harry, with a scornful tone. "Any way, I can't render it. I'm not one of the negative sort. I'm positive, whether I mean to be or not. Just think! Charley Harris whispered to me this morning that he wished he was a Christian. 'Well,' said I, 'what hinders?' And what do you suppose he said? 'You hinder,' says he. 'If you were only a good boy, I'd be on my feet in a minute. You see how it is?'" added Harry to Mrs. Linn.

"Yes," she answered sadly. "It is the old, old sorrow that plagues the heart of the Master when here on earth. 'He that is not for me is against me.'" There was a moment's silence.

Then Mrs. Linn said tenderly and earnestly, "I think the Lord has spoken to you, Harry, in this matter. I don't see but that he has laid it upon you to choose what you are willing to do—help, or hinder, which?"

And Harry's brave and manly answer, as he arose and gave his hand to his teacher, caused her happy heart to sing for joy.

"I've thought a good deal about all this since that Sunday, you know. I will not hinder. I told you you could depend on me for that. Consequently I must help." Then, with a bright smile, though the tears were in his eyes as he spoke, he added, "You have got me enlisted."—Mrs. W. J. in S. S. Classmate.

"AT EVENING TIME IT SHALL BE LIGHT."

In a discourse upon this passage, Dr. Cuyler says:—

This passage has a beautiful application to a Christian old age. Many people have a silly dread of growing old and look upon gray hairs as a standing libel. But, if life is well spent, its Indian Summer ought to bring a full granary and a golden leaf. Bunyan introduces his Pilgrim to a Land of Beulah, where flowers of rare beauty grow, and where breezes from the Celestial City fan the furrowed cheek. The spiritual light at the gloaming of life becomes mellow, it is strained of mists and impurities. The aged believer seems to see deeper into God's Word and further into God's Heaven. Not every human life has a golden sunset. Some suns go down under a cloud. At evening-time it is cold and dark. I have been looking lately at the testimonies left by two celebrated men who died during my boyhood. One of them was the king of novelists; the other was the king of philanthropists. Both had lost their fortunes and lost their health.

The novelist wrote as follows: "The old p-t-chaise gets more shattered at every turn of the wheel. Windows will not pull up; doors refuse to open and shut. Sicknesses come thicker and faster; friends become fewer and fewer. Death has closed the long, dark avenue upon early loves and friendships. I look at them as through the grated door of a burial-place, filled with monuments of those once dear to me. I shall never see the three-score and ten and shall be summed up at a discount." Ah! that is not a cheerful sunset of a splendid literary career. At evening-time it looks gloomy and the air smells of the sepulchre.

Listen now to the old Christian philanthropist, whose inner life was hid with Christ in God. He writes: "I can scarce understand why my life is spared so long, except it be to show that a man can be just as happy without a fortune as with one. Sailors on a voyage drink to 'friends astern' till they are half-way across; and after that it is 'friends ahead.' With me it has been 'friends ahead' for many a year." The veteran pilgrim was getting nearer home. The Sun of Righteousness flooded his western sky. At evening-time it was light.

ONE IN CHRIST.

A CHAPTER OF ACTUAL EXPERIENCE BY H. B. G.

Among our neighbors last winter were a young married couple who had recently buried their only child. The poor mother, who felt—as every mother so smitten has felt—as if her affliction were without parallel, turned to the great Burden-bearer and in Him found rest. She was of a shrinking disposition, however, and for some time she refrained from making any public profession of her faith. In the spring there was an unusual degree of interest in the church which she attended and one of her friends proposed to her that they should together unite with the church at the May communion. After considerable hesitation she decided that she ought to do so.

One day when her husband came home from his work she said to him, "I am thinking of going with Mrs. — to meet the examining committee this evening, with reference to joining the church next month." She had not expected to receive any encouragement from him, but had even feared that he might dislike the idea. He said nothing, however, and when she went out she had no means of judging what he thought of her action.

Left alone, the husband tried to busy himself in carrying out the plans which he had laid for the evening, but he felt nervous, and the stillness of the house oppressed him. His thoughts kept wandering after his wife. In his heart he could not help approving her resolution, yet he keenly felt that it was taking her away from him. Finally he became so disturbed that he could no longer remain in the house. Taking his hat he set out for a walk, hoping the cool air and exercise would restore his calm. He hardly noticed which way he was walking, till suddenly he found himself on the street corner opposite the church.

Instinctively he glanced toward the windows of the committee-room, and as the light from them met his eyes there came into his soul an overwhelming sense of his own position. Inside the room was his wife, enjoying light and warmth and the kind counsel of wise friends; only a few feet away he stood in cold and darkness and loneliness. But all this was only a symbol to him, for he was thinking of the Saviour whom she had chosen, but he had re-

ced, of the narrow way which she had entered, but upon which he had refused to set his feet. He was separated from her, and as the cars passed this separation would increase.

He was shut out from her now, he would be shut out in the life to come. Between him and her there would be a great gulf fixed, which no one could cross.

He paced up and down before the church, his feeling growing more and more intense until it amounted to absolute agony. Very clearly he saw the one way by which all further separation might be avoided. He knew and acknowledged to himself the duty which God was thus forcibly setting before him, but all the forces of his nature were in armed rebellion. The struggle was fierce and bitter. Every time he came in sight of the committee room windows he felt afresh that he was shut out, and he could not put away the reflection that when once the Bridegroom had passed in, and the doors had been shut to, it would be forever too late for any to enter. "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Even while the sense of loneliness and utter desolation deepened, he saw one knocking at the door, and he heard the voice of one saying, "If any man will open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Many a time he had seen and heard the same, but he had chosen to avert his eyes and close his ears, now resolved to undo the door. The struggle was over. "Oh Galilean, thou hast conquered!"

We have Bible warrant for believing that there was joy in heaven that night over a penitent sinner, and well we know that there was devoutest joy and thanksgiving in that wife's heart when she learned from her husband's lips that the step which she had dreaded and shrunk from taking so long had been the crowning influence in winning him to Christ.

When the first Sunday in May came, the two, separated no longer in any respect, but more perfectly and happily united than ever before, sat together at the communicable table.—Christian Union.

SCRIPTURE ENIGMA.

XVIII.

1. An emblem of the Lord of life and grace, Whose death has wrought salvation for our race?
 2. What typifies our Heavenly Father's care And shows the love He to his children bare?
 3. And in sad contrast, name a type of those Who 'gainst God's Word have dared their ears to close?
 4. Who first brought sorrow to the world below, And was the source of all its sin and woe?
 5. A type of Him, of whom it is foretold That He shall draw all nations to his fold?
 6. A type of Jesus' kind and gentle sway, By which He leads us in the heavenly way?
 7. To what choice jewel, beautiful and rare, Did John the founders of the Church compare?
 8. A tree that symbolized the Jews of old, And in a figure their sad fate foretold?
 9. An emblem that our Lord doth typify? How safe are those who on His aid rely?
 10. A symbol brought to show God's wrath did cease, Which hence became the well-known type of peace?
 11. What is of coming day a herald bright, And typifies the God of love and light?
 12. A type of Him who hid from heaven descended, And feeds all those that on His grace depend?
 13. A type of that which makes all sorrow's light, And throws a beam across the darkest night?
 14. An emblem of a city placed on high Which dared Almighty power to defy?
- In the instances of these types we read Not to depend on man in time of need, But put our trust in God's Almighty power, Who help will give for every trying hour.

—The Day of Rest gives the following marvellous particulars respecting the production of the Bible. "The Bible production in our time is equal to more than a million copies a year, or say more than nineteen thousand every week, more than three thousand every day, three hundred every hour, or five every minute of working time. At this rate, the press is producing an English Bible or New Testament every twelve seconds. These Bibles are not wasted—they are required—and more copies of the Sacred Scriptures are demanded in the English tongue than in the languages of all the other nations of the world, although the number of versions to which this country gives encouragement and assistance, over and above, is considerably more than one hundred and fifty."