

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 away 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 for himself. I should just miss one of my books awfully, but that fellow out there won't feel bad if he doesn'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 unpleasant thoughts, and did not pay much attention to the opening exercises of the services, 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 had 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 he 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 am 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, felt good right off."—*Morning Star*.

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