

IN THE MAKING.

Joe was the youngest of a family of four,—the only boy. His father died three months before his birth. His drinking habits gave him no chance of recovery from the injuries he received in a railway accident. No more loving and devoted husband and father there could have been between his drinking bouts.

During the six weeks he lay upon his back he heeded the command, enabling, "Be ye reconciled to God," and through the faithful ministry of his wife, sister, and brother-in-law, he rejoiced in Christ his Saviour, by whom his peace had been purchased "through the Blood of His Cross."

The sick chamber became a Bethel. Earnestly he sought to be for God and his dear ones all that was possible in his fast-shortening sojourn on earth.

Miriam, Faith and Joyce, aged respectively fourteen, twelve, and ten years, had each given evidence that she was "born from above" (John 3:3), having received Christ as her own personal Saviour (John 1:12), and Christ was to each little maiden "A living, bright reality," adding to the bright joyousness of life.

Joe, aged nine, was a striking contrast to his sisters.

"A chip of the old block," Uncle Joe sadly commented, as he watched the development of his clever, attractive little nephew. "Kathie, I tremble for that boy," he said to his wife. "He seems to have no backbone, no will but to drift."

"You are right, Joe, but we must remember that he has no father, and, being delicate during his early years, has tended to his spoiling. The poor lad-die has a stiff fight before him."

"Then, my dear Kathie, he will, as now, be missing, and join the enemy's ranks."

"Oh! Joe, knowing his weakness, should we not make him a subject of constant prayer, and have faith in God, and not for a moment in our thoughts consign him to the enemy?"

This conversation was suggested by Joe's approaching ninth birthday, eagerly looked forward to by the young folk.

Seated at his bedside, Uncle Joe began: "I was reading to-day, Sonnie, 'Live your life now as you would like to see it at the end.'" Tenderly lay-

ing his hand on the boy's shoulder, his uncle continued: "What about this very day? Your loving mother, and those dear sisters of yours, and everyone else made your pleasure their object, and you took all as your right. And when little Joyce had that nasty fall, you had no thought for her pain, but were vexed with her for breaking up the party a half-hour earlier. I could say more, but will not. Boy, your life is before you. Give it into the safe keeping of Another, the Lord Jesus Christ, who died for you, died for your sins, died that you might not die. Joyce was a year younger than you when I sat by her bedside, as I now sit by yours, and a very happy little girl folded her hands, and said, 'I thank you, Lord Jesus, for dying on that dreadful Cross in my place. And please help me to live "Thank You" all my life.' It is because she lives "Thank You" that she is the sweet, sunny little girl she is, happy because she belongs to Jesus, happy because she is His little handmaiden, serving and pleasing all she can, for His sake. Joe, is your life to be for Christ or self?"

Joe's only reply was to bury his head beneath the bed clothes, and with a silent prayer Uncle Joe left the room.

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"There, dearie, you look as sweet and interesting an invalid as was ever made," and Kathie stood a few yards off and regarded her sister with fond affection.

Madge smiled as she disclaimed being an invalid, and playfully chided her sister for thinking of everybody in terms of patient, but adding, "It is very nice to be coddled a bit sometimes."

"Oh! how I thank God for my noble girls, so good and wise, and all doing so well. Miriam and Faith are considered first-class mistresses in their respective Forms, and are loved by their pupils. And Joyce, our home bird, our sunbeam, what should I do without her, for somehow I easily tire, and each contributes her share to make sweet and glad the home."

"You do not mention Joe, Madge. "What about him?"

Madge hesitated. "I could wish he were more like his sisters. Oh! it breaks my heart to say it, but twice lately he has smelt of beer. I feel as

if a sword were hanging over my head where he is concerned."

The pent-up sorrow found outlet in prolonged weeping, while Kathie lovingly stroked her sister's hair.

"There, Kathie, I am all right now, and I do not want to waste a moment of our precious time together.

"Well, Madge, I have been thinking if we are 'co-workers together with God,' that we are meant to consult Him at every turn over those consigned to our care, at each fresh evidence of their lack or need. You say your heart sank within you when you smelt Joe's breath of beer. Did you act faith by a look of trust God-ward that he was committed to Him, and pray for his deliverance, though to the eye of sense he seemed so terribly involved in Satan's toils? And then, darling sister, forgive my saying it, but you are often silent when you ought to speak, and so are losing the influence and power that should be yours as his mother. Joe says that he would dismiss him from his office but for your sake. He seems to have no backbone, and always manages to evade the most obvious duty, and gets far beyond his deservings in the way of popularity by way of his gifts, not virtues. With a delicate mother and three sisters, surely the time has come for him to assume a man's part in his little world."

At this very time the subject of this conversation was sitting in his uncle's private room, the picture of misery.

"Joe, do you realise that for your conduct these past weeks I could have you committed to gaol for embezzlement? How could you take advantage of the trust forced upon you through the sickness and death of so many of my staff during the epidemic? You have used your gifts and position to bring dishonour upon a reputable firm. I dismiss you from my employ. This is a sad business, Joe. Again I urge you. Get on your knees, confess yourself a sinner, and cast yourself upon the mercy of God in Christ Jesus Who died to save you, and be reconciled to God. Stay, one word more, Joe. I am willing to see you in three days' time with regard to your future, but I hold out no hope of reinstating you in my office."

It was a very forlorn youth that slowly wended his way home. How face his mother and sisters? How