

Youths' Department.

FRANK'S DREAM.

"We haven't said our prayers, mother."
 "Never mind, dear, I'll hear them in the morning."
 "Please to hear me say mine, mamma!"

The earnest pleading tones in which these words were uttered, made the mother hesitate for a minute before she replied, "You know mamma's in a hurry, dear. There is company in the parlor; but she'll hear them in the morning." And with a kiss and a look of unutterable fondness bestowed upon each of her little boys, the young, beautiful, and loving, but careless, thoughtless mother, descended to the parlor, leaving the door ajar, so that if the little ones should call for anything, they could be the more distinctly heard. The wind blew in this crevice, making the light of the candle flicker, until at last it was extinguished. There was silence in the room for some ten minutes: then a sweet silvery voice asked, "Are you asleep, brother?"

"No!" was the reply.

"I wish nurse was come home to-night."

"Why?"

"Because she would listen to my prayer."

Another silence followed. Then again was heard the same sweet voice, "Let us get up and say our prayers, brother!"

"Why it is all dark, Willie."

"Never mind! we will take hold of each other's hand, and you know God can see us in the dark, just as plain as if it were light."

"But it's so cold."

"We won't stay in the cold long; and we will soon get warm again, when we get back into bed. Will you brother?"

"Mother said it was no matter; she said she would hear them in the morning."

"May be God will not take care of us until morning, if we do not ask Him to, brother. Will you?"

"Mother knows best, and she said never mind!"

After another silence there was a slight rustling in the room.

"Where are you, Willie?"

"By the bedside, brother. I will pray for you, too."

Some ten minutes elapsed, when again a slight movement was heard, which showed that the little fellow was creeping back into bed. "O, how cold you are, Willie!" was the exclamation, as his feet touched his brother's.

"I do not mind it, brother, I am so happy. I wish you had prayed, too, but I asked God to take care of you, too, to-night, and I think He will. Brother, if I should die to-night, I would not be afraid. I don't think it is hard to die."

"I do. I never want to die, and leave pa and ma."

"I would be willing to leave ma and pa, to live with God in heaven, and be always happy and always good. Wouldn't you?"

"No! I think it is a great deal pleasanter here. I don't believe that they have any kites or tops in heaven."

"But you know nurse says that the little angels have crowns of gold on their heads, and harps in their hands, and that they play such beautiful music on them and sing such pretty hymns. Oh, I'd like to be in heaven with them!"

"I would rather spin my top, than play tunes on a harp."

"But it isn't like playing common tunes; it is praising God! O, brother! if you would only pray, you would love and praise Him! I do not mean to say your prayers after mother or nurse, although it is very pleasant to have them teach us pretty ones. But I mean to ask God for whatever you want, just as you do ma and pa, and to coax him to make you good. O, how I wish, mamma, papa, and you would learn to pray so!"

"Where is nurse, mother? she has not been in our room this morning."

"Then she did not get home last night. She said that if her sister was worse, she would stay all night with her. But where is Willie?"

"He is asleep yet; I spoke to him, but he did not awake."

"Then I will keep some breakfast warm for him, and we will let him sleep as long as he will. I do not think Willie is well. Did you notice, dear," continued the mother, turning to her husband, "how heavy his eyes looked yesterday? But when I asked him if he was sick, he answered in his usual gentle way, 'Only a headache, mamma; don't be worried.'"

"I did not observe that he looked ill," was the reply. "But if he does not appear well to-day you had better send for a physician."

"O, I had such a funny dream last night, about Willie and I," exclaimed little Frank.

"What was it, my boy," asked his father, "ling to be amused with the prattle of his child."

"Well, after mamma left us last night, the light blew out; and Willie wanted me to get up in the cold and dark with him to say our prayers, and I wouldn't, because mamma said that we needn't say them till morning, and I thought she knew best. But Willie got up and said his, and when he came to bed again he was so cold that it made me shiver all over to touch him. But he said he didn't mind it, he was so happy, and he talked a great deal about dying, and about the angels in heaven, until I fell asleep, and it was that which made me dream, I suppose; for I thought Willie and I went to bed just as we had done, and that he said his prayers, and that I wouldn't say mine. But I thought the window was raised, and that the shutters were wide open, so that I lay on the bed looking up in the sky, and thinking how beautiful the moon and stars looked, when I saw away up in the heavens, further up than the stars, two shadows moving, that looked alike; but they kept floating down till they reached the lower stars, and then I saw that they were angels; but they looked so small at such a distance that I thought them baby-angels, but as they came nearer and nearer, they grew larger, and when they floated through the windows into our room, they looked like two very lovely ladies, with crowns on their brows, like Willie told of. But one seemed rather younger than the other, and she appeared to look up to the other angel, as if to be guided by her. But O, such beautiful voices as they had! When they spoke it sounded even sweeter than the church organ, when it plays very soft and low."

"When they came towards our bed Willie smiled, and stretched out his arms to go to them; but I was frightened, and covered my face with the bedclothes. I was afraid they would take me away with them, and I remembered that I had refused to pray, so I did not want to be taken where God was, then I heard one of these beautiful voices ask, 'Are we to take both?' O such music as was made when they talked! All around our room it floated sweeter than the soft, low carol of a bird; and I heard the answer, 'No: only the one that prayed. We are to leave the other one a while longer upon the earth, in hopes that he may learn to pray before we carry him before the great Hearer of prayer.' Then they came close to me, and I trembled dreadfully, and my heart beat so that I could scarcely breathe; and they uncovered my face and looked at me, but I dare not look at them; by-and-by I felt a big tear drop on my cheek. O, mamma, how grieved I was then, to think that I had made the angels weep; for I now thought I would much rather have crowns like they wore, and be as good and as lovely as they, and have God to love me, than have all the kites and tops, and marbles that are in the world! But they passed away from me, and they went to the other side of the bed, then I opened my eyes to watch them and they both smiled on Willie; and when they smiled their whole face grew bright, until they shone like the sun: then they stooped down and kissed Willie, and he smiled too; and I saw that his face was shining like theirs; and he stretched out his little arms again, and the taller angel lifted him from the bed, and laid him on the bosom of the younger one, who hugged him close to her, as though she loved him so much. Then the other angel twined her arms around both, and they all three floated through the air, until they sailed past all the stars, and became like pale white clouds that grew smaller and smaller, until they were nothing but little specks, and I saw them no more! For a long time I lay very still, looking up into the bright sky, hoping to see them come again, and bring Willie back again. But when I found they came no more—oh, I was so lonesome! I cried so hard, and when I looked at Willie's place in bed, and thought he would never lie there again, and that I must always sleep alone, and have no little brother to play with or to talk to, I thought my heart would break! But when morning came, and I awoke and found little Willie in bed with me, I was so glad and happy! His eyes were only half closed, that made me think at first that he was awake; and his lips were parted with the same sweet smile that he wore last night when the angels looked at him, which made me look so like one of them; that made me feel so strangely again, so that I could not speak loud, but whispered softly, 'Willie! Willie!' but it did not wake him; then I laid my hands on him very gently, but he was so

cold that it made me start. When I found that he did not get warm all night I put the bed clothes tight around him, and did not try to wake him again."

A strange chill crept through the mother's heart as she listened; and, rising from the breakfast-table, she hastened to the children's room. She found her little Willie lying on the bedside, pale, cold, and very beautiful, in that sleep which knows no waking.—*Ladies Visitor.*

Selections.

GOD'S PROMISES.—Do the promises of God concerning our stability, think you, make it a matter indifferent for us to use or not to use the means whereby to attend or not to attend to reading? to pray or not to pray, that "we fall not into temptation?" Surely, if we look to stand in the faith of the sons of God, we must hourly, continually be providing and setting ourselves to strive. It was not the meaning of our Lord and Saviour in saying, "Father, keep them in my name," that we should be careless to keep ourselves. To our own safety, our own sedulity is required. And then blessed forever and ever be that mother's child whose faith hath made him the child of God. The earth may shake, the pillars of the world may tremble under us, the countenance of the heaven may be appalled, the sun may lose his light, the moon her beauty, the stars their glory; but concerning the man who trusted in God, if the fire has pronounced itself unable as much as to singe a single hair of his head, if lions, beasts ravenous by nature, and keen with hunger, being set to devour, have as it were religiously adored the very flesh of the faithful man—what is there in the world that shall change his heart, overthrow his faith, alter his affection towards God, or the affection of God to him? If I be of this note, who shall make a reparation between me and my God? Shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? No; I am persuaded that neither tribulation, nor anguish, nor persecution, nor famine, nor nakedness, nor peril, nor the sword, nor death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall ever prevail so far over me. I know in whom I have believed; I am not ignorant whose precious blood hath washed for me; I have a shepherd full of kindness, full of care, and full of power; unto him I commit myself; his own finger has engraven this sentence in the tables of my heart, "Satan hath desired to winnow thee as wheat, but I have prayed that thy faith fail not;" therefore the assurance of my hope I will labor to keep, as a jewel unto the end; and by labor, through the gracious mediation of his prayer, I shall keep it.—*Hooker.*

THE WEEKLY OFFERTORY.—It is a mode most agreeable to the practice of the early Church; it is a mode adopted by almost every Church in the world except our own; it is a mode which seems fitted for almost all the various conditions of our parishes. It is well adapted to the congregations of manufacturing parishes, where large gains are frequently made in short periods, and where each one who feels disposed to return to God in proportion to the way in which he has been blessed has the opportunity weekly of doing so. It is well adapted to agricultural parishes, where the farmers' gains are made by the aggregate of small savings, and where there are more unwilling to give largely than frequently, and where they have the opportunity of putting their weekly mite into the plate. It is well adapted to the poor, who have the right to be presented with such an opportunity of giving. It is the only means that I know of by which a large result can be produced without those constantly recurring excitements which cannot be kept up without great effort. The subject was mooted somewhat twenty years back; but most unfortunately the attempt became connected, accidentally as we usually say, with certain schemes of doctrine, and a prejudice was thus created against the practice from causes with which it had no necessary connection whatever, for we know there is not the slightest connection between the weekly offertory, and any scheme of doctrine. It is practised in almost every Protestant community. It must have been a most unreasoning prejudice which could ever have connected this primitive usage with any forms of doctrine seeming to tend towards Rome. Of late it has been a very hopeful sign of the times that a growing feeling in favor of the revival of the offertory has been springing up in the minds of the laity themselves. It has been adopted by a clergyman at Kidderminster, at the request of his parishioners. A similar movement has recently taken place at Manchester. In my own diocese it has been adopted in some agricultural parishes with marked success.—*The Bishop of Lincoln in Convocation, 1857.*