

OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

NEVER FORGET TO PRAY.

Never, my child, forget to pray,
 What'er the business of the day.
 If happy dreams have blessed thy sleep,
 If startling tears have made thee weep,
 With holy thoughts begin the day,
 And ne'er my child, forget to pray.

The time will come when thou wilt miss
 A father's and a mother's kiss,
 And then, my child, perchance thou'lt see
 Some who in prayer ne'er bend the knee;
 From such examples turn away,
 And ne'er my child, forget to pray.

A BEAUTIFUL PRAYER.

A FEW months ago there died in England a very noble Christian woman. Her name was Frances Ridley Havergal. She had endeared herself to many thousands of people all over the world by her beautiful songs and other writings. Some of the hymns you sing were written by her. She lived very close to Christ, and seemed to do everything she did simply and only for Him.

In a little book she wrote she tells us about one of her dying mother's words to her when she was only a child. She said, "Fanny dear, pray to God to prepare you for all that He is preparing for you." The words were spoken very feebly, but out of the depths of a great heart of love, and as she went away they seemed to sound over and over again as if she could never forget them.

"I wonder what He is preparing for me!" she thought. "Oh, I do hope He is preparing one of the many mansions for me! How I wish to know whether He is! But I don't think He is preparing me for it, else I would not feel naughty so often!"

These words from her mother's trembling lips never ceased to repeat themselves in her thoughts. Nearly twenty years afterward, when she was a busy woman, she wrote: "I have just been praying words from my own mamma's lips when I was a little girl: 'Prepare me for all that Thou art preparing for me.'"

Then, thirty years afterward, she said that the little prayer her mother had taught her—"O Lord, prepare me for all that Thou art preparing for me"—had been her life-prayer. Again, only a little while before she died, she said, "The words mamma taught me in 1848 have been a life-prayer with me. This preparing goes on, it is as when gaining one horizon, another and another spreads before you."

This one single sentence, spoken by her precious mother just before she went to God, was not only remembered along all her busy years and amid all her many sorrows and sufferings, but it helped to shape all her own life. What a beautiful sentence it was! I am sure it would be a very sweet prayer for every child to learn and to make every day: "Lord, prepare me for all that Thou art preparing for me."

You cannot tell what God is preparing for you. It may be a deep sorrow. He was preparing sorrow for *this* dear child. In a little while her mother lay very still and cold in death, and the rest of her years she was motherless. You do not know what grief or loss may be preparing for you. God knows. Ask Him to prepare you for it if it is coming.

Then you do not know what important duties He is preparing for you. Perhaps you have a great mission to fulfil. Sometimes ships are sent out in war-times with sealed orders which are not to be opened till they reach a certain place. All of us go out into life with sealed orders: until we

come to the place where the duty is to be performed we do not know what our mission is. You may have to stand in a very important place and do a great work. Ask God every day to prepare you for the work He is preparing for you.

Then there is another way to think of this prayer. Jesus said He was going to His Father's house to prepare mansions for His disciples. Think of that every day—He is preparing a *mansion* for you. It is a very beautiful and holy place. It is where Jesus Himself is. Surely we need a great deal of preparation before we shall be ready for that place. Our prayer ought, then, to be that God would prepare us for the home that our Master is preparing for us. Let us ask Him to make us new hearts—hearts to love Him and love one another—to make us like Christ Himself. That is the way we need to be prepared for the heavenly mansions.

A little boy was gazing very intently up into the skies one summer evening, and his mother asked him what he was thinking about. "I was thinking," he replied, "how far away heaven is, and how hard it must be to get there." His mother replied, "Heaven must first come down to you, my child. Heaven must first come into your heart."

Her words were very wise and true. We can never get into heaven until we get heaven into our hearts—that is, we must be made holy and pure and good by Christ's grace. No one with a bad heart can ever enter heaven.

Will you not pray every day, "Lord, prepare me for the mansion in glory which Thou art preparing for me!"

THE UPPER SPRING.

THERE was once a little mountain village which was supplied by two springs of water. One was very near, at their doors; it was small, it was often muddy, its waters were not wholesome, it could not entirely satisfy thirst. The other was higher up the mountain; it was very large, it was clear as crystal, it preserved health, it cured disease, its waters never failed, it was free to all.

Of course the dwellers in that village used the upper spring entirely! Not so. But surely they used it mostly, and only resorted to the lower one for the commonest purposes! It was not so; here and there one was to be found who seemed to realize the value of the one, and the insufficiency of the other, and there was always one man among them, who spent his life trying to persuade the people to depend upon the upper spring alone; indeed, he gathered them all together, or as many as would come to hear him, one day in every week, and explained the virtues of its waters, and pleaded with them to use it. But for the most part the villagers resorted to the lower spring; they spent money and time digging it deeper, and cleaning it out, planting trees and flowers around it, and making a fine path to it. Half that effort would have brought them an abundant supply from the upper spring, but they would not be persuaded, though many of them acknowledged that they were doing unwisely.

Now the King of the country came to visit that town. He was wise and good, and loved His people, and he determined to draw them to the life-giving waters of the upper spring. So without letting them know at first what He would do, He secretly turned aside the waters of the lower spring, until it was sometimes entirely dry, and never more than a very scant supply. So it came to pass, that the people of that village began to go daily to the upper spring, and after they had once

known the taste of its sweet, refreshing waters, they did not even look to see if the waters of the other had returned, but wrote hymns of praise to their King, for His dealings with them.

Dear little people, can you read my parable? The pleasures of this life are the lower spring, God's worship and service the upper. Now, if one of you is poor, and this world's goods are scarce, say to yourself, "My King keeps the earthly spring low, I will learn to go daily to the upper one, will devote my life to His service." Dear child, in His name I promise you abundant and true happiness. Is one of you sick and suffering, cut off from the busy work and play of your companions? It is your King's love for you—He leads you so to the upper spring, whose waters give, not bodily strength, but patience and peace and a blessed entrance into a heavenly home, where pain and sickness never come, and where, in the presence of the King, we have exceeding joy!

GIVE UP.

"OH, mamma," said sweet little Jessie, "you can't think how Ruth Gray acts! She's the selfishest, troublesomest thing."

Mamma smiled. "Well," said she, "can't we help Ruth to be better?"

"I wish you could," said Jessie.

"You say Ruth is selfish: think how dreadful that is!" said her mother. "Ruth's friends love her, and do everything for her, and God loves her and is very kind; yet she thinks only of herself."

"Yes; and she cries and she frets so!" said Jessie, sadly.

"Poor child! can't we do anything for her?" said her mother again.

"Tell me how," asked Jessie, earnestly.

"Why not form a 'Give-up Society' and ask Ruth to join?" said her mother. "Each member might pay a cent every time she is cross, or wants her own way. You might take the money to buy comforts for the poor, and Ruth could be treasurer. That would give her something kind to do. She might begin to love others, and when she loves them she will like to please them better than herself."

A BAD DUET.

NOTHING is more lovely in boys and girls than quiet, sweet tempers. Some days ago two young friends of ours went into the parlour to practise a duet on the piano. They were brother and sister. For a time the music came in jerks, then stopped altogether. Opening the door, another duet was heard. "You didn't." "I did." "I say you were too fast." "But I know I wasn't." This is what we heard—a very sad duet, in which there was no music. An unhappy temper spoils our sweetest enjoyments.

PENNIES given to God's cause from love to Him, are worth more than a ton of gold given for mere show.

LIKE Stephen, we may carry brightness on our face. There is something in the world which we may learn; there is something from God which we may have, that will change all to brightness. Not, indeed, to brightness such as the angels above live in, and continually behold. There are some things to weep over; there are many things to fear. This is a world of cloud and shadow. But the heaven in which the cloud floats is larger than the cloud, and all full of light. Shadows are melting things.