

# Our Young People

**MAKING THEIR LIVES A PRAYER.**—Whittier.

Topic for December 17.—“**Teach Us To Pray.**”—Luke, 11: 1-13.

Prayer moves the Hand which moves the world.—Wallace.

## Need of Prayer.

For what are men better than sheep or goats  
That nourish a blind life within the brain,  
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer  
Both for themselves, and those who call them friend?  
For so the whole round world is every way  
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.

—TENNYSON.

## An Effectual Prayer.

BY D. L. MOODY.

One of the greatest helps to prayer that I know is a study of the great prayers of the Old Testament and their answers. Take, for example, Daniel's prayer in the ninth chapter of his prophecy.

Notice its brevity,—only sixteen short verses. You will find this quality in all Scripture prayers, and it is a good point to remember, especially when praying in public. We are not heard for our much speaking.

Notice its fervency,—“I set my face unto the Lord my God to seek by prayer and supplication, with fasting and sackcloth and ashes.” He was dead in earnest, and this is the kind of prayer God answers. “The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” Cold, formal prayers are not only a waste of time and breath, but an insult to God. A prayer that is of so small account to one that he goes to sleep offering it, or forgets in ten minutes what he has asked for, will certainly accomplish little for himself or others.

And Daniel began with a thorough and humble confession of his own sins and the sins of his people; eleven of the sixteen verses are thus occupied. He first got rid of the iniquities that had separated the people from God. It was not merely a confession of sin and weakness in a sort of general way that meant but little, but it was a specific and careful enumeration of particular sins. How such a prayer as that would wake up many a prayer meeting, and open the windows of heaven to many a church!

Daniel's prayer was based upon the promises; he had looked over the Book, and stood upon many a “thus saith the Lord.” Some one has said, “Put a promise into the suit, and you may have anything.” One who would be a power in prayer must be mighty in the Scriptures. George Muller had read the Bible through consecutively more than a hundred times, besides the other study he had given it. This was one of the great secrets of the wonderful answers to his prayers,—he kept himself in touch with

God through the Word, and so knew how to pray according to His will.

You will observe that Daniel was definite in his petitions. “Cause Thy face to shine upon Thy sanctuary that is desolate”; this was his request. He had a great burden of heart for one particular thing, brought that thing to God, and asked definitely for it. It is always refreshing to hear a prayer like that. It will help us in our prayer meetings to have definite needs clearly before us, and I know of nothing that will bring greater joy to a Christian heart and a greater uplift to his faith than to see God's hand at work in answer to such petitions. It seems to me that if we could hear God's voice after some long prayers it would be softly saying, “My child, ask what I shall give thee.”

Three or four times in Daniel's prayer are words to this effect: “For Thine own sake, O my God.” Here you have another prominent feature of the prayers of the Bible; they are for the glory of God.

There is no need to ask whether this prayer was answered. Of course it was. I don't believe there has ever been a definite, fervent prayer, offered according to God's revealed will, with a single view to His glory and accompanied by a thorough and honest confession and forsaking of sin, that was not answered; and I don't believe there ever will be. Oh for a revival of such praying! Let us strengthen ourselves in God's abundant promises and in His wonderful answers to prayers in the past, and go on to ask and expect great things. We pray yet to the God of Daniel and Nehemiah, Jehoshaphat and Hezekiah, Moses and Samuel, and he is still “the God that doeth wonders.” If the thousands of young people who are this week considering the subject of prayer in their meetings could now really begin to pray, we should have a revival of God's work such as this old world has never yet seen. May God grant it, for His Son's sake.—C. E. World.

## A Scientist's Prayer.

When Louis Agassiz, the great scientist and teacher, opened his summer school of science at Penikese Island, he held the first meeting in a large barn. It was a beautiful summer day, and the wide doors stood open to the blue sky, the rocky fields, and the sweep of the blue sea beyond. Agassiz had arranged no programme of exercises, trusting to the suggestion of the moment; and, as he looked upon the eager faces of those who had come to study nature under his guidance, he found his inspiration in them, and called upon them to join with

him, as the most fitting prelude to their work together, in silently asking God's blessing upon it. It was a beautiful scene and the hushed pause that followed the prayer was only broken by the words of an address that carried on, in the same spirit of reverence, the interpretation of the creative work of the Almighty Hand.

## True Prayer.

If we with earnest effort could succeed  
To make our life one long connected prayer,  
As lives of some, perhaps, have been and are;  
If, never leaving Thee, we had no need  
Our wandering spirits back again to lead  
Into Thy presence, but continued there  
Like angels standing on the highest stair  
Of the sapphire throne—this were to pray indeed.

But if distractions manifold prevail,  
And if in this we must confess we fail,  
Grant us to keep at least a prompt desire,  
Continual readiness for prayer and praise,  
An altar heaped and waiting to take fire  
With the least spark and leap into a blaze.

—R. C. TRENCH.

## Thoughts on Prayer.

Prayer will make a man cease from sin, or sin will entice a man to cease from prayer.—John Bunyan.

I have learned that the value of prayer depends not so much upon its intensity in moods, or its regularity in times, as on its constancy as a continuous way of living. We need to live in a state of prayer.—Professor Stuart.

We ought to be Mary and Martha in one; we should do much service and have much communion at the same time. It is easier to serve than to commune. Joshua never grew weary in fighting the Amalekites; but Moses on the top of the mountain in prayer needed two helpers to sustain his hands. See to it that sitting at the Saviour's feet is not neglected, even though it be under the specious pretext of doing Him service.—Charles H. Spurgeon.

I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go. My own wisdom and that of all about me seemed insufficient for that day.—Abraham Lincoln.

## Hints for Talks and Testimonies.

What is prayer?  
Why does one need to be taught to pray?  
What is often lacking in prayer?  
How may one learn how to pray?  
For whom should we pray?  
How may the Bible best be used in connection with prayer?  
What connection is there between our prayers and our work?  
When should we pray?  
How may we learn to pray without ceasing?  
What should be the purpose of prayer?

## For Daily Reading.

Mon., Dec. 11.—After this manner pray.  
Mat. 6:9-13  
Tues., Dec. 12.—Praying in faith. Mark 11:20-24  
Wed., Dec. 13.—In the name of Jesus.  
John 16:28-26  
Thurs., Dec. 14.—Definite prayer. Luke 13:35-43  
Fri., Dec. 15.—United prayer. Matt. 18:19-20  
Sat., Dec. 16.—Prayer and love.  
Matt. 5:28, 24; Mark 11:25, 26  
Sun., Dec. 17.—Topic. Teach us to pray.  
Luko 11:1-13