

**HOME PRAYERS,
WITH TWO SERVICES
FOR PUBLIC WORSHIP**

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Home Prayers, with Two Services for Public Worship by James Martineau

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When ye pray, say, Our Father.—LUKE xi. 2.

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P R E F A C E .

As this small volume is the last which I shall offer to my contemporaries, so is it the first of which I cannot render any distinct account. In all previous cases I have had something to say which it seemed needful to throw into the courses of current thought; and I could indicate the place into which it might naturally flow. For the following pages I can offer no such plea. They add nothing to the common stock of human experience. They pour forth only the story of every inward life, and breathe the old familiar tones of wonder, sorrow and aspiration. They do but utter some little part of what every one may lay bare for himself before Him that seeth in secret. What excuse then can there be for any attempt, on another's part, to say it for him? So deeply

have I always felt the force of this question, as hitherto to shrink from sending 'Prayers' to the press;—both as a vicarious intermeddling with the free devotion of souls unknown, and as a gratuitous exposure of a sacred confidence between the personal conscience and the Searcher of hearts. Thus regarded, *published Prayers* seemed at variance with the injunction,—“Thou, when thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and *having shut the door*, pray to thy Father who is in secret.”

I own, however, to some gradual softening of this scruple. Perhaps it may be the declining strength of life which induces a natural sympathy with the varieties of mental dependence that cannot even confess their helplessness without interpreter;—the child's scanty conscience and unready mood;—the wandering thoughts of the untrained mind;—the slow compunctions of the self-satisfied;—the dry affections of the too prosperous. At all events I am more aware than I was of the need of *fellowship* in the

spiritual life, and less disposed to trust to its pure spontaneity; and therefore deem it no longer a breach of true reserve, but rather a requital for many a blessed incentive from souls and books that have uplifted me, if, standing on the last verge of this scene of things, I treat it as my Confessional, and bear witness to others, ere I go, how its vicissitudes and possibilities have looked to me and have borrowed their true significance from the eternal light of God beyond the veil. If even a few persons who fancy themselves alone shall find here an echo of their heart-tones or genuine words for what falters upon their lips, their scattered feeling after the true notes may swell into a chorus, and out of faint beginnings rise into a glow of faith. So easily lost are the tender voices of the spirit, that we need to overhear each other.

The 'Home Prayers' which form the chief part of this volume are thrown into the shape suitable for a plurality of persons assembled to use them. But, with slight

exception, they are equally available for individual devotion, by the simplest modification of grammatical form. So far as it is possible for one person to speak for many, the needs of each are the needs of all: so that there is no ground for any substantive difference between the manuals of personal and those of collective devotion. The specialties of individual trial and temptation, despondency and joy, are of infinite variety, and can only be met by the spontaneous piety stirred in each by the discipline of life. The pathetic cries which are thus wrung from the heart of almost every lot supplement and intensify in meaning the universal language of self-surrender, and quicken it with penetrating power.

The two 'Public Services' which close the volume are reproduced, with some slight modification, from the "Common Prayer for Christian Worship," published in 1862. It was suggested to me that they would be acceptable in Country Houses so placed as to be beyond reach of congenial Church

Worship; and might, in such cases, facilitate the gathering together of neighbours ready for religious sympathy as well as social kindness. If in ever so few instances they should thus check the growing neglect of Public Worship or the dissentient attendance upon it, I shall be grateful to the friends who have asked for this Appendix to my volume.

I have, in conclusion, to tender my thanks to my friends the Rev. Russell Lant Carpenter, B.A., for permission to use the Prayer on p. 86, which had been contributed to his sister Mary's "Morning and Evening Meditations," 4th Edition, 1857; and Miss Frances Power Cobbe, for similar permission in regard to the Prayer on p. 89, which had its first place in her "Alone to the Alone," 1871.

LONDON, *November 13, 1891.*