

**FAMILY PRAYERS, EXTRACTED
CHIEFLY FROM THE MANUALS OF
BISHOP HAMILTON, AND THE REV.
J. H. SWAINSON, AND ARRANGED
ON THE LITURGICAL PRINCIPLE**

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Family Prayers, Extracted Chiefly from the Manuals of Bishop Hamilton, and the Rev. J. H. Swainson, and Arranged on the Liturgical Principle by Edward Meyrick Goulburn

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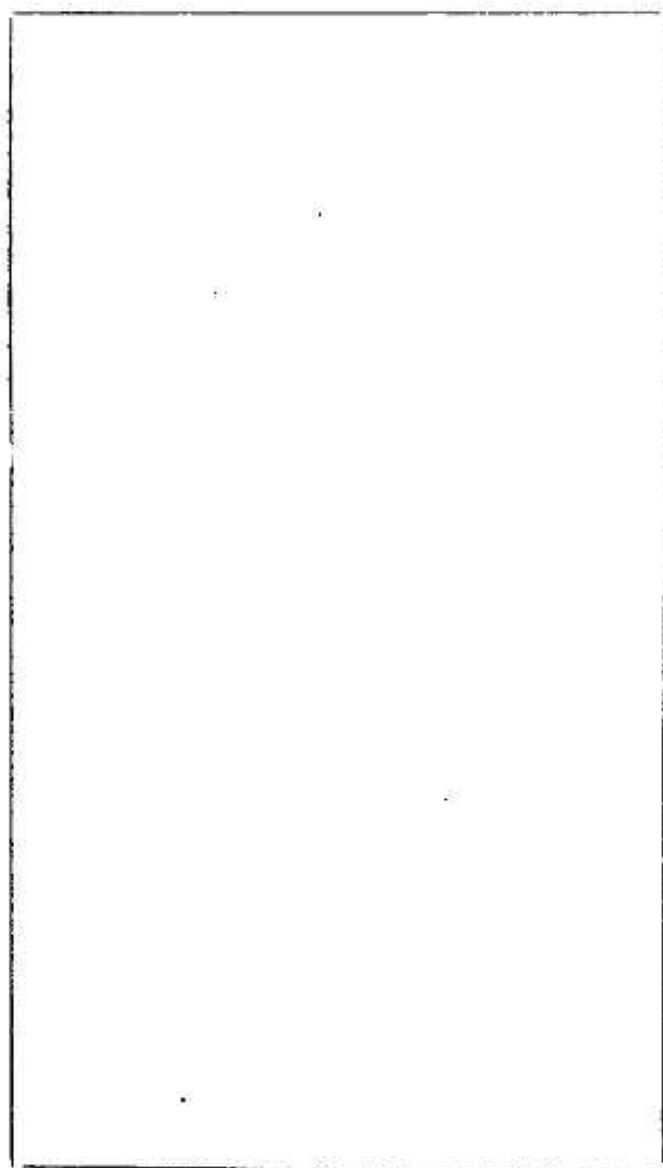
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EDWARD MEYRICK GOULBURN

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BISHOP HAMILTON, AND THE REV. J. H. SWAINSON,

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arranged on the liturgical principle,

BY

EDWARD MEYRICK GOULBURN, D.C.L., D.D.

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PREFACE.

I.

PRAYER, considered according to the number of persons who engage in it, divides itself into two kinds. It may be offered by one individual, apart from others. It may be offered by several persons in common. These two kinds of Prayer may be made distinct subjects of thought and practical advice.

Prayer of two kinds—individual, and social.

II.

Accordingly, we find in Holy Scripture distinct counsel given upon each of these duties, and a distinct promise annexed to the performance of each.

Individual prayer,—that in which we represent to God the peculiar trials of which our own hearts are cognizant, and implore the graces corresponding to our peculiar needs,—is to be offered in the greatest privacy our circumstances admit of. "Thou, when thou prayest, enter into

Counsels and Promises of Holy Scripture for either kind of Prayer.

“thy closet, and, when thou hast shut thy door,
“pray to thy Father which is in secret.”

The promise annexed to the performance of this duty is one appropriate to the method, in which we are recommended to perform it. The prayer has been offered privately; but it shall be recognized and recompensed publicly. “Thy
“Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee
“openly.”

Agreement among the petitioners is the counsel given for the common prayer of more than one. “If two of you shall agree on earth as touching
“any thing that they shall ask.” The worshippers shall come to a common understanding as to the subject of their petitions. This might be done by conference before the prayer upon what should be the matter of it,—the form being left to the suggestions of the mind at the moment of engaging in it. Or it might be done (as it is in our own Church) by a Form of Common Prayer, which should be in the hands of all, and which all should agree to employ in common on certain occasions.

Not only is a promise of success made to this kind of Prayer,—(“it shall be done for
“them of my Father which is in Heaven”)—but a present blessing is assured to the gather-

ing, however small. There may seem to be only two or three present, but there shall be really a Fourth, invisible to the eye of sense. The Fourth Personage, whom Nebuchadnezzar saw in the furnace, and "whose form was like the Son of God," shall be mystically present, to procure acceptance for the prayer by His Mediation and Intercession. "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." It is observable that Christ's Presence is not covenanted to the single, but to the united petitioners. Not but that It would be enjoyed by a single petitioner, approaching GOD in real penitence and faith. But the Lord would have us comprehend that in Him we cannot stand alone—that we are one Body—that His Church, in the midst of which He covenants to be, is essentially a community, composed of several, not of one member. And for this reason, in delivering to us a Form of Prayer, He couched it in the plural; "When ye pray, say, "Our Father," &c.

III.

But we are now in search of the Scriptural Ground for *Family Prayer*.

Considered as simply that kind of Prayer, in which several engage in common, it will fall of

Scriptural Ground of Family Prayer, to be found in the Old Testament.