

**A SELECTION OF HOME
PRAYERS, ARRANGED IN
THIRTY-ONE SERVICES**

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A Selection of Home Prayers, Arranged in Thirty-One Services by Anonymous

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ANONYMOUS

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WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS
EDINBURGH AND LONDON
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PREFACE.

THIS volume is meant to provide material for daily use in household worship.

There can be no fixed rule as to the materials or the form most suited for the purpose. These will naturally vary with the age, the culture, the character, and the temperament of those who use them; but it will surprise no one who is familiar with the literature of Christian devotion, that in this volume, extensive use is made of those Collects which the Anglican Church has incorporated in her Prayer-book; and that, in addition, they have a place by themselves. It has seemed better to arrange them thus, than to mix them up with other materials, original or collected. Probably no forms exist which are comparable to these Collects, in all the essential requisites of catholic devotion. By combining several of them into a single

Service, a connected but varied series is easily obtained.

Some, who have been accustomed to regard the arrangements of the Anglican Prayer-book as approximately perfect, may dislike to find any portion removed from its old connection. If, however, the materials arranged for the public services of the Church are to be used in domestic worship, a rearrangement or selection of some sort is necessary; and the order adopted in this volume was arrived at after much consideration, and comparison with other methods.

The volume begins with thirty-one Services—one for each day of the month—and closes with the Collects, which may be either used by themselves, or appended (in whole or in part) to the Service for the day.

A suggested Lectionary for domestic use is printed as an appendix.

Every form of prayer should combine simplicity with depth, and sententious brevity with fervour. It should unite fulness and force of thought, with compactness of form and directness of expression. It will have an additional charm if, to the undogmatic embodiment of human feeling, it adds a certain antique staidness, combining a grave simplicity with archaic grace of phrase. It is this latter feature which gives to the prayers which possess it

their more permanent character, inasmuch as it connects them with the past without losing hold of the present. Admirably embodied in the liturgies of the ancient Church, it can scarcely be said to characterise our modern attempts in the same direction.

The best prayers are the simplest, if they are at the same time expressive and full. Devotional thought should never be involved, and yet it should not be commonplace. It should be neither didactic, nor trivial. The triumph of perfect simplicity to which the writers of the old Church Collects attained, cannot perhaps be fully appreciated till one tries to add another to the series. It will then be seen that to avoid intricacy and to escape familiarity, to be neither rhetorical nor conventional, is the great difficulty and desideratum.

To attain to it—to construct a series of devotional forms that shall be solemn, earnest, and fervent, yet simple and natural in diction—it is above all things necessary that the subject-matter of the prayer be general, and not special; the thought outlined, but not filled in; and details suggested rather than expressed.

Hence the form should be undogmatic. One great dogma—including others within it—lies, of course, at the heart of all prayer; but

with the Divine nature on the one hand, and the human on the other, all the materials for devotion are supplied, and may be wrought out of their spiritual relations and affinities. The devout life is but the pulse of the human heart beating towards the Divine, and in the Divine, with all the varied relations of recognition, love, and trust which exist between them. Dogmatic thought, therefore (in the conventional sense of the term), ought to be rigorously excluded from family devotion, which should be the catholic utterance of human feeling and aspiration, broad as are the wants of humanity, and not overflowing into any peculiarities of religious opinion. The more closely our worship keeps to the elements of experience, the greater the number of those able to join in it with hearty appreciation.

It will be observed that the Services are printed for responsive worship.

The Lord's Prayer is invariably meant to be repeated by all in unison.

First Service.

Let us Pray.

I.

O GOD, in whom we have our being, who in thy light hast revealed thyself unto us, but whom in our darkness we cannot comprehend, grant that we may think worthily of Thee as we ought to think, and may renew thine image in us, according to the pattern of thy Son, the man Christ Jesus, and by the grace of thy Holy Spirit.

Amen.

II.

O ALMIGHTY God, who hast made thy children to be one in the knowledge of thyself, grant that they may also be joined together in unity of spirit, and of holy desire, that they may serve Thee, in quiet freedom ;

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