

**DIVINE AND  
MORAL SONGS  
FOR CHILDREN**

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Divine and Moral Songs for Children by Isaac Watts

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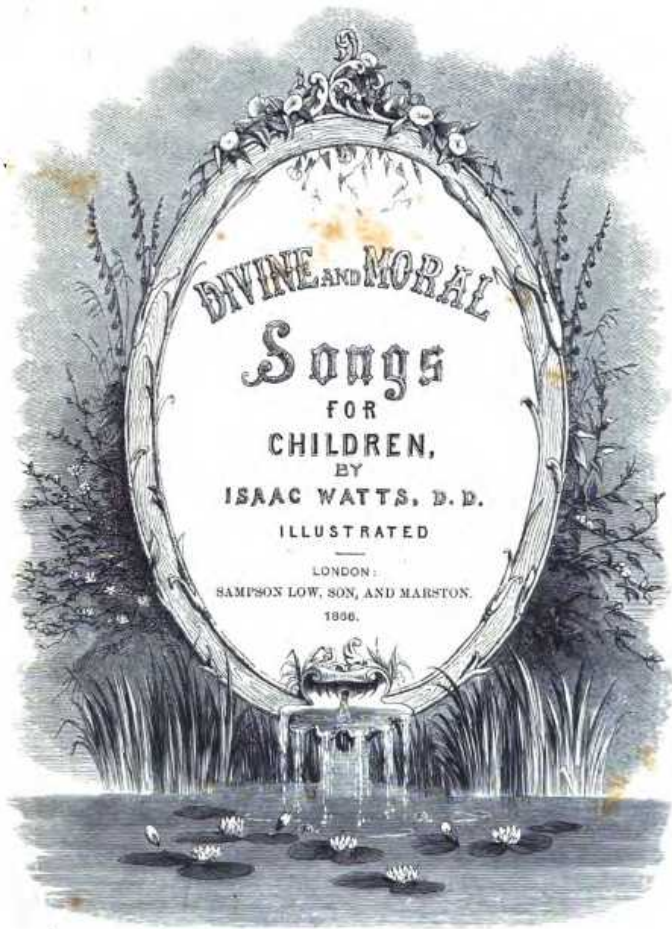
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**ISAAC WATTS**

**DIVINE AND  
MORAL SONGS  
FOR CHILDREN**







280. C. 19.



## P R E F A C E.

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TO ALL THAT ARE CONCERNED IN THE EDUCATION OF  
CHILDREN.

MY FRIENDS,

It is an awful and important charge that is committed to you. The wisdom and welfare of the succeeding generation are intrusted with you before hand, and depend much on your conduct. The seeds of misery or happiness in this world, and that to come, are oftentimes sown very early; and, therefore, whatever may conduce to give the minds of children a relish for virtue and religion ought, in the first place, to be proposed to you.

Verse was at first designed for the service of God, though it hath been wretchedly abused since. The ancients among the Jews and the Heathens taught their children and disciples the precepts of morality and worship in verse. The children of Israel were commanded to learn the words



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of the song of Moses, Deut. xxxi. 19, 30; and we are directed in the New Testament, not only to sing "with grace in the heart," but to "teach and admonish one another by hymns and songs," Ephes. v. 19. And there are these four advantages in it:

1. There is a great delight in the very learning of truths and duties this way. There is something so amusing and entertaining in rhymes and metre that will incline children to make this part of their business a diversion. And you may turn their very duty into a reward, by giving them the privilege of learning one of these songs every week, if they fulfil the business of the week well, and promising them the book itself, when they have learned ten or twenty songs out of it.

2. What is learned in verse is longer retained in memory, and sooner recollected. The like sounds and the like number of syllables exceedingly assist the remembrance. And it may often happen that the end of a song, running in the mind, may be an effectual means to keep off some temptations, or to incline to some duty, when a word of scripture is not upon their thoughts.

3. This will be a constant furniture for the minds of children, that they may have something to think upon

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when alone, and sing over to themselves. This may sometimes give their thoughts a divine turn, and raise a young meditation. Thus they will not be forced to seek relief for an emptiness of mind out of the loose and dangerous sonnets of the age.

4. These Divine Songs may be a pleasant and proper matter for their daily or weekly worship, to sing one in the family at such time as the parents or governors shall appoint; and therefore I have confined the verse to the most usual psalm tunes.

The greatest part of this little book was composed several years ago, at the request of a friend who has been long engaged in the work of catechising a very great number of children of all kinds, and with abundant skill and success. So that you will find here nothing that savours of a party: the children of high and low degree, of the Church of England or Dissenters, baptized in infancy or not, may all join together in these songs. And as I have endeavoured to sink the language to the level of a child's understanding, and yet to keep it, if possible, above contempt, so I have designed to profit all, if possible, and offend none. I hope the more general the sense is, these composures may be of the more universal use and service.

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I have added at the end some attempts of sonnets on moral subjects, for children, with an air of pleasantry, to provoke some fitter pen to write a little book of them.

May the Almighty God make you faithful in this important work of education: may he succeed your cares with his abundant grace; that the rising generation of Great Britain may be a glory among the nations, a pattern to the Christian world, and a blessing to the earth!

I. W.

