

**THE MOTHER'S FAMILY
PRAYER
BOOK; OR, A HELP
TO FAMILY WORSHIP**

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The Mother's Family Prayer Book; Or, a Help to Family Worship by Anonymous

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ANONYMOUS

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THE MOTHER'S
FAMILY PRAYER BOOK;

OR,

A HELP TO FAMILY WORSHIP.

DESIGNED CHIEFLY FOR USE IN THE ABSENCE OF FATHERS,
AND FOR ALL HEADS OF HOUSEHOLDS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LIGHT BEYOND."

THEM THAT HONOUR ME I WILL HONOUR, AND THEY THAT DESPISE ME
SHALL BE LIGHTLY ESTEEMED."—1 SAMUEL, CHAP. II., VER. 30.

"AS FOR ME AND MY HOUSE, WE WILL SERVE THE LORD."—JOSHUA,
CHAP. XXIV., VER. 15.

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PREFACE.

IN these days of busy enterprise and commerce, the frequent absence of the Christian father from his family at the time of morning and evening worship, and in many cases his entire absence from home for weeks at a time, though injurious, is unavoidable ; and mothers, either from a natural shrinking from the effort, or from a real or imaginary inadequacy, are led to relinquish altogether, during the interval, the sacred duty of family worship. This omission cannot be justified in God's sight, and must exercise an influence for evil upon the young, and those who compose the domestic circle. A service of prayer specially adapted to aid mothers who are thus left, is a necessity which it is the author's present aim to meet.

The obligation to set up and maintain a family altar, is sealed upon the conscience of parents, by the highest and most binding considerations, and no controllable circumstances should be allowed to interfere with its performance.

It is cause of deepest regret, that this habit is not more seriously, nor more conscientiously cultivated by Christian parents, by heads of households, and by mothers alone in their anxieties, for the benefit to children and young people, to servants, and parents themselves, would be incalculably great.

In the domestic relation the most powerful influences exist, and the strongest impulses to good or evil are imparted.

therefore every opportunity to inspire holy thought and excite devout emotion, should be seized on by parents, and masters and mistresses. The family God has instituted, as his own provision for a godly seed, a 'nursery for the church,' and he expects that the fathers to the children shall teach the knowledge of his will, and the practice of his worship.

It is but reasonable that, while our heavenly Father upholds the family by his providence and mercy, he should be acknowledged openly by us as the God of the dwelling, and be praised as the great Source of our daily good.

Many more arguments in favour of this service, will suggest themselves to thoughtful minds, but the obstacles to its performance remain to some, in their own feeling of incapability, their great timidity, their educational deficiency, or their difficulty of free utterance, all which hindrances appear to them insurmountable. These excuses are pleaded in extenuation of the neglect of family prayer, especially in the case of mothers.

But it is better to borrow words than omit the solemn duty altogether, and it is to those who really feel helpless under their obligations and difficulties that the aid of this little volume is offered.

Adaptation to family circumstances and events as they occur, cannot be expected in any published prayers, but reference to these may be introduced by a few extemporaneous words. Some Occasional Prayers are added, for use as events that call for them may arise. Scripture lessons and appropriate hymns have been selected, but others may be chosen if these should be objected to. The hymns may be read or sung, or omitted altogether, as the time allows; *but as he that offereth praise glorifieth God, it is desirable*

that this part of the devotional exercise should be maintained. In many cases a hymn simply read at family worship, has been a means of much spiritual benefit.

The great aim of the present work is, to help mothers in bringing their own and their children's wants and desires before the Lord; and as long prayers are not desirable nor necessary, it has been a study to be as brief, yet as comprehensive as possible.

It will be deemed no objection that scriptural expressions are here freely made use of, as these are often most adapted to convey the desires and petitions of the soul, and have been the aids of holy men in all ages of the Church.

Simplicity of expression, and a studied avoidance of parade of language, is an indispensable element of devout prayer, which should ever be deemed too solemn and sublime a service, to admit of human display and ostentation. Our almighty Father needs no eloquence of words to work upon his divine compassion, no novelties of speech to excite his attention. His ear is bent to catch a sigh, and his mind takes in the meaning of an unuttered emotion, therefore our words should be few, but sincere and heartfelt, before the Lord.

It has been found no easy task to make great variety and avoid repetition, in prayers to be used by the same parties on the same occasions, but it is suggested that those who adopt these services might occasionally vary them by adding or substituting petitions that may arise to the mind at the time.

It is desirable also to say that these prayers need not be restricted to use by mothers, but fathers, or any heads of households, may adapt them for themselves by the omission or varying of parts that have individual reference. By the

alteration of the pronoun they might also avail for private and personal devotion.

It will be an unspeakable honour to be thus helpful to Christian parents, and the means of drawing down the divine benediction upon many households.

Especially will it be a satisfaction, if some mothers who have never before thought it possible for them to lead their offspring to the throne of God, should be encouraged to do so, both at the family altar, and in the secret retirement of the closet. No blessing can be expected where prayer is not the habit of the individual and of the family, and to assist in the discharge of this important duty is the desire and aim of

THE AUTHOR.

BRISTOL, *January*, 1870.

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