

**PRAYERS FOR FAMILIES, FOR
FOUR WEEKS. SELECTED
FROM SCOTT, GRAY, KNIGHT,
HARDMAN, AND OTHER**

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Prayers for Families, for Four Weeks. Selected from Scott, Gray, Knight, Hardman, and Other
by E. Garbett & Thomas Greene

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E. GARBETT & THOMAS GREENE

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PRAYERS FOR FAMILIES,
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PRAYERS FOR FAMILIES,
FOR FOUR WEEKS,

BEING A REPRINT OF THOSE PUBLISHED IN 1856

BY THE REV. E. GARBETT, M.A.,
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SELECTED FROM SCOTT, GRAY, KNIGHT, HARDMAN,
AND OTHERS.

EDITED BY

THOMAS GREENE,

OF CHICHESTER,

(By permission of Mr. Garbett), the First Edition being out of print.



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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

THE object kept in view in the preparation of this Volume has been to supply a series of devotional exercises for the Family, sufficiently simple in their language to be within the understanding of the most ignorant, and sufficiently comprehensive in their petitions to touch the experience of the most cultivated. To combine these two conditions is a task of no easy attainment: but only in proportion as it is accomplished will the essential conditions of family worship be fulfilled.

The devotion of a family stands midway between the spiritual exercises of an individual soul and the services of a public congregation, and partakes in some degree of the peculiarities of them both. The elements of private prayer will be varied as the ever-changing experiences of the individual Christian. To a mind accustomed to examine and review the past, no two successive days will be identical in their results, or wear in the retrospect precisely the same colours. The lights and shadows of the soul are as varied and endless as those of the outward heavens. One day has been a day of temporal mercies, another of temporal chastisement. One day has been spent in the flush of perfect health; and another in the depression of bodily pain and weakness. To-day the Christian is fighting his great warfare amid the bustle of earthly business; to-morrow he may be prostrate upon a sick bed, looking in solitude and silence into his own heart. The circumstances of the spiritual life are yet more diverse than those of the natural. One day may be marked by elevation of spirit and by joy in the Holy Ghost; another by depression of heart and darkness of soul. To-day the Christian may pour out his heart before God with a freedom and holy boldness that leaves no want untold, no secret desire unex-

pressed; to-morrow the spirit of prayer may have died away in the heart, and the words of prayer fall slowly and painfully from the lips. What Christian man or woman can be ignorant of the ever-varying circumstances and temptations of the spiritual life? But all these things are the elements that make up private prayer; for prayer to be a reality must be the mirror that reflects the lights and shadows of daily life; in short it must be as varied as the experiences it professes to utter.

With united prayer it is different, and the difference increases in proportion to the number of persons who partake in the common act. In family prayer, for instance, each member of the circle brings his own private experiences with him, but these experiences cannot fully enter into the united devotions, since only that which is felt in common can be expressed in common. There is however no lack of varied subjects in which a most true and actual identity of Christian experience will exist. If in becoming more comprehensive the petitions of the family become less varied, they do not become the less specific. There are providential mercies to be in common enjoyed, and in common acknowledged; temporal bounties to be sought, and divine protection supplicated. Farther than this, there are duties reciprocally due to one another, springing from the several relations in which members of a family stand to each other, as parents and children, brothers and sisters, masters and servants. Wisdom from on high to know what is our Heavenly Father's will, and grace to perform it when it is known, must therefore be sought in common through that Saviour who having "himself suffered, being tempted, is able also to succour them that are tempted." Nor will there exist a family circle upon earth in which there will not have occurred derelictions in the discharge of these mutual duties, which we need to confess together, and together seek forgiveness for them. Of these relative duties there is none more incumbent than the right exercise of mutual influence, that members of a family "may exhort one another and that so much the more as they see the day approaching." But to discharge this how large a measure of grace and wisdom is needed? If the light is dim in the soul itself, the ray it will shed forth to guide and enlighten others

will be faint indeed; and hence prayer for the spiritual state of the common circle and for all those graces which may abound unto mutual edification must enter of necessity into the proper province of family supplication. Nay more still; as those who love one another, if they are themselves born of God, must needs watch and pray over the souls of those who are dear to them after the flesh, and must needs suffer a diminution or enjoy an increase of personal happiness in the religious difficulties or progress of those they love, there is a tie closely knitting the harmonious happiness of the whole circle with the spiritual state of each of its individuals. What an ample field for spiritual exercises is thus afforded in the common hopes and fears of the family, although it does not include the specialities of individual experience.

When we rise from the family to the Congregation we have more comprehensive sympathies, and therefore more comprehensive wants. As the family is made up of individuals, each with their own experience, so the Congregation is made up of families, each with their own experience. The elements of prayer and praise are still less varied and variable. Yet how large and manifold they are even here may be seen and felt by every devout member of the Church of England who joins with the understanding as well as with the tongue in the incomparable Services which the piety of our forefathers, through the good Providence of God, has bequeathed to us.

It is by regarding prayer in these several relations to the individual, the family, and the Congregation, that the much agitated question between written forms of prayer and extemporaneous utterances can be most satisfactorily solved. The devotions of the public Congregation must be of necessity at once the least varied and the most comprehensive. A precomposed form of prayer is therefore most suitable for them, as it may well be doubted whether the mind of any man living is competent to grasp, in an extemporaneous effusion, the large range of topics they involve, reaching from the conversion of the individual soul to the grandest hopes of the Church of CHRIST at large. While the unvarying character, generally speaking, of the petitions of a Congregation admits of adequate conception before-hand, their comprehensive character requires mature thought for their satisfactory expression.

The very reverse holds good in regard to private prayer. Here the subjects of praise, confession, and prayer, are so infinitely diversified from day to day, that to stereotype them in any one given form of words is simply impossible. To use an unvarying form with an ever-varying experience is to separate the one from the other, and to make prayer itself, in that degree, a formal and unreal thing. To pray is to ask God for what we want, and the whole teaching of the word of God proves that this request, and the faith in which it is to be made, must be equally specific and individual. Thus our Lord in a very remarkable passage, to which it would be well if more attention was given by the Church of Christ, teaches us, "what things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." Mark xi., 24. If therefore private prayer is to be the true expression of private experience, it can only be done by the use, either wholly or in part according to individual characters, of extemporaneous supplication.

Midway between private and public prayer stands family devotion, neither so varying as the former, nor so unvarying as the latter. It may well admit therefore either of written compositions or of unwritten effusions. It is not well to judge those who use either the one or the other. They to whom the Holy Ghost has given the gift of utterance may well express out of the fulness of their own hearts its prayers and praises. Those who are differently endowed may well avail themselves of a precomposed form.

This brings us back to the object of the present volume. It claims no originality, but has been designed and executed in the hope of promoting the glory of God by supplying forms which may be suitable for all the classes that make up the family circle, simple enough for the understanding of the child and the domestic, and experimental enough for the adult believer.

May it please God to prosper the design to his glory and to the edification of his people.