

**A BOOK OF PRAYERS FOR
WORKING MEN OF ALL RANKS:
EARNESTLY DESIGNED FOR
FAMILY DEVOTION AND PRAYER**

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A Book of Prayers for Working Men of All Ranks: Earnestly Designed for Family Devotion and Prayer by John Elden

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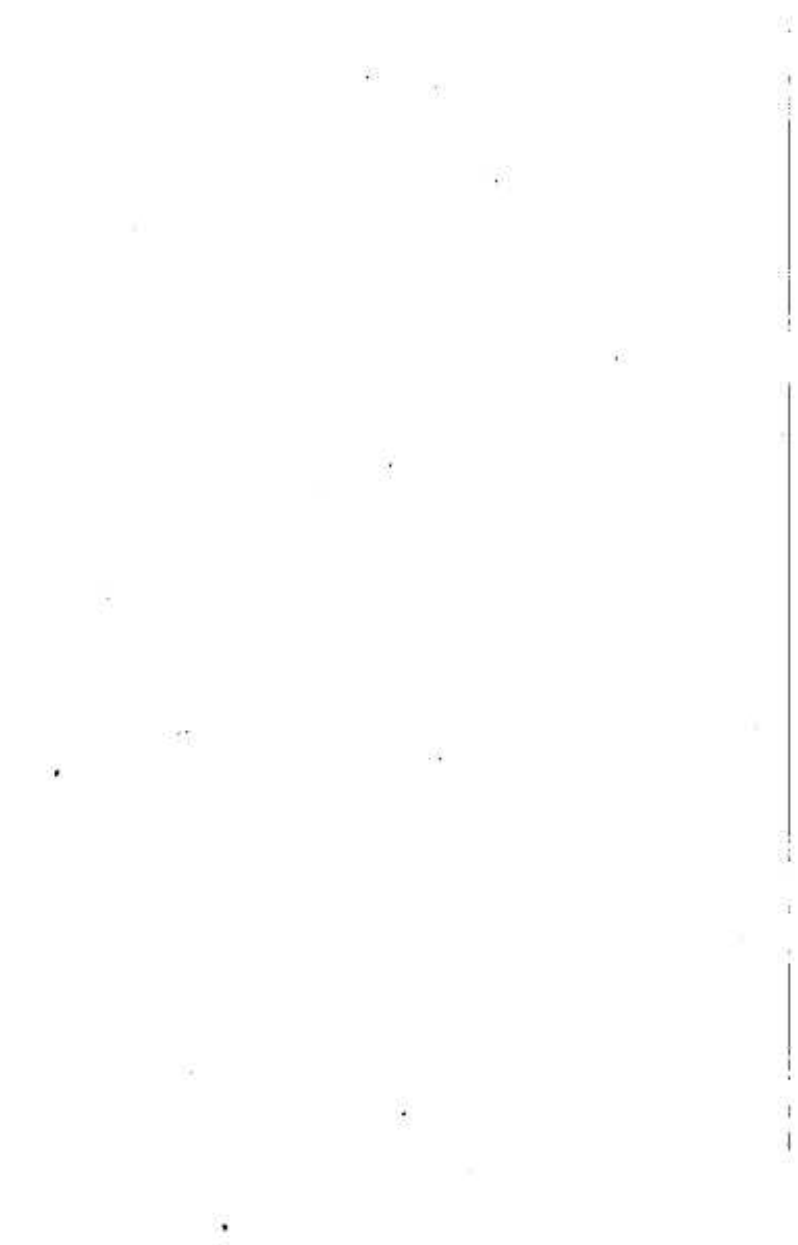
A BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER,

FOR

MEDITATION AND DEVOTION,

AMID ACTIVE LIFE.

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BOOK OF PRAYERS
FOR
WORKING MEN OF ALL RANKS:
EARNESTLY DESIGNED
FOR FAMILY DEVOTION
AND
PRIVATE MEDITATION AND PRAYER.

BY
JOHN ELDEN.

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P R E F A C E

“ For the very sure and lively Christian faith is, not only to believe all things of God which are contained in Holy Scripture; but also is an earnest trust and confidence in God, that He doth regard us, and hath care (charge) of us, as the father of the child whom he doth love.”—*Bishop Cramer, in Homily.*

PRAYER should not be a bare wish to arrive at the Celestial City at the *end* of our pilgrimage. It should spring from a desire to feel at once that we are on the road, actually journeying onward in eternal things. To feel that, must be a great happiness; and that we may feel it we should devoutly pray. Now of all eternal things, which will continue with us when our pilgrimage is happily over—more glorious than the kindred knowledge and love of the truth—is the knowledge and love of God. To *know*, under the inspiration of his holy Spirit, by experience that we may depend upon Him, so far as to leave caring for earthly things either as means or end, and only to do so as an evidence and exercise of love and trust;—to *know* that He gives a loving spirit power over intellect, and social tact, and skill—sometimes using them, sometimes doing without

them—is indeed to feel Him ever present, ever faithful, ever reconciled.

The author's desire (he cannot say how far he has accomplished it) has been to write a short course of prayers, for the use of those whom God has called by his gospel to live with this new aim and new life:—such as feel that their joy and strength is to trust their heavenly Father; and their blessing, to grow in an eternal and lasting life according to his will and judgments, by the power of his continual help.

He has tried to use common words and phrases; and such as, in their common meanings, convey most truly the plain meaning of the New Testament writings—not so much of the authorised translation of King James I., as of the Greek itself. Even a cottager may, he hopes, understand them.

He wishes these prayers to prove a pleasure and benefit to those who may be living and working, for the time, away from home. May they help to warm the hearts of such towards their God and neighbours; and encourage them, though alone, wisely to keep their consciousness pure and guileless, and every pure love faithful and strong.

Some, too, living in the retirement of a family, may have well-nigh fallen into the error of idleness or frivolity. This book treats of a life worth living for: one which is clear from both hypocrisy and vain

confidence. It recognises a God, to *obey* whom is life everlasting. It will do well if it call forth, but fail to express, the reader's gratitude to God for the blessing of such a life.

These few simple prayers perhaps contain sufficient understanding of perishable worldly life, and of helpless natural passions—from these we must trust God to release us, that we may die to them as did Christ; and not with them. And they contain, at the same time, thought and prayer for real and actual revival into a spiritual imperishable life; which God will give us, as he has given glory and life to our Brother Christ, after He died.

It is not the *sin* blotted out, but the eternal humility, gratitude, and promises opened by its forgiveness, that occupy the attention and give soundness to the faith of conscientious people. 1 Sam. xii. 19—21; Luke ix. 62; Rom. v. 1, 2; vii. 6, &c. The holy Spirit is named by our Saviour the *Encourager* (Παράκλητος).

A great folly amongst us is idolatry. It consists in worshipping the less and dependent, instead of the greater and necessary. He who absorbs himself wholly in his ramble may get back, though with a healthy appetite, too late for dinner. She who gives up her soul to the dressing may, when dressed, be too late to start on the expedition. God has given no promise to those who wilfully absorb themselves

in any temporal occupation (however important or religious) so as to foolishly think any part of it, even for the moment, more necessary than the *bonâ fide* remembering Him who is their Creator and Saviour, their present and upholding God.

The result of weariness absorption and labour, to the forgetting of God and his laws of union and holiness, is but the continual building of wood or stubble or hay upon the good foundation. What says our Saviour as to our only chance of building real hope or success? Luke xii.

Let us follow God, and his will; and take any labour or distress that comes in our way for his sake, not for its. He can rob each of its *sting*, and clothe us in his righteousness and glory. Let us die to the world; but never to God:—let us die to the world, to live in good faith with God; then God is faithful, and will *give* us this life for the honour of Christ, and his own love and promise' sake.

How wise, and faithful to our great Benefactor should we be, were we to do all our work (whether priestly, educational, mercantile, or manual) with our minds set upon Him:—with our eyes always open and our hearts attentive to the spiritual scenery of God's goodness, our own weakness and failure; God's strength to which we are owing, and have owed, all through Christ's holy sacrifice for our sin and future acceptance; to the holy Spirit working in all things, visible and invisible, in truth and power; to the