

**PRAYERS ANCIENT AND
MODERN, ADAPTED TO
FAMILY USE**

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Prayers Ancient and Modern, Adapted to Family Use by Prayers

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P R E F A C E.

VARIOUS attempts have been made, at different periods, to bring into use the devotional exercises of eminent men of former ages. If, however, ancient prayers are given unaltered, they are found, in most instances, to contain passages which, from their peculiarity of thought or style, are unsuited to the present day. The redundancies of some, the quaintness of others, the involved sentences, and often the florid phraseology, render them unfit for general use. Such a collection, although of the highest interest in itself, would be of little service as a manual of family devotion. On the other hand, a mere paraphrase, or translation of an old prayer into modern phraseology, would offend against good taste and right feeling. A happy medium has recently been shown, in the case of the favourite hymn, "Jerusalem the

Golden," which consists of certain passages selected and freely translated, from a poem of 3,000 lines, written in the twelfth century.

These remarks, however, chiefly apply to the older pieces of the following collection. In these, selection and adaptation has been the rule; though the author's text has been, as far as possible, adhered to. The names given are those which are commonly attached to the prayers; but there are cases in which the same prayer appears in various forms among the works of various writers, and the real authorship is matter of doubt.

The prayers of more recent times are given with closer adherence to the text, though even here the quaintness of the Elizabethan days and the diffuseness of more modern writers have been occasionally pruned down. The liberties taken have been generally confined to abridgment, the exclusion of obsolete expressions, redundant imagery, and figures of speech which to modern ears would be scarcely intelligible. The object kept in view throughout has been to produce a volume of *Prayers adapted to Family Use*.

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