

Prayers Ancient and Modern: Selected and Arranged for Daily Reading

Mary Wilder Tileston

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This collection of prayers for daily use has been gathered from many sources, ancient and modern. It has historical interest, and the literary quality has been carefully considered, but the primary object is to nourish the spiritual life. As the design is to provide a brief selection for every day, in many cases a portion only of a long prayer is given, or it is condensed by omission, but alterations have been made as sparingly as possible.

Fourteen centuries of prayer, aspiration, and praise unite here in one harmony of devotion. A large number of these prayers date from the fifth and sixth centuries, taken from the Leonine, Gelasian, and Gregorian Sacramentaries, from which the collects in the Book of Common Prayer are in great measure derived. The earnest and impassioned prayers of St. Augustine belong to the same period. Many of the prayers attributed to him, however, are of later origin and doubtful authorship, some of them, probably, being by St. Anselm and St. Bernard. There are some striking and fervent collects from the Mozarabic Sacramentary, which was in use in Spain before A. D. 700. In the Middle Ages, St. Anselm, Thomas a Kempis, and others contribute devout prayers, and the age of the Reformation in England and Germany is very rich in devotional treasures. In the succeeding centuries, Bishop Andrewes, Jeremy Taylor, Bishop Wilson, Dr. Johnson, and many others, continue the golden chain down to the present century. The names of Christina G. Rossetti, George Dawson, Rowland Williams, and E. B. Pusey are enough to show that the spirit of prayer still burns with a steady flame.

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