

# THE VALLEY OF VISION

*A Collection of Puritan Prayers  
and Devotions*

Edited by  
Arthur Bennett

*The burden of the valley of vision*  
ISAIAH 22:1



THE BANNER OF TRUTH TRUST

THE BANNER OF TRUTH TRUST  
3 Murrayfield Road, Edinburgh EH12 6EL, UK  
P.O. Box 621, Carlisle, PA 17013, USA

\*

© The Banner of Truth Trust 1975

Reprinted 1977  
Reprinted 1983  
Reprinted 1986  
Reprinted 1989  
Reprinted 1994  
Reprinted 1995  
Reprinted 1997  
Reprinted 1999  
Reprinted 2001  
Reprinted 2002  
Reprinted 2005  
Reprinted 2007  
Reprinted 2009

\*

ISBN-13: 978 0 85151 228 0

\*

Typeset in 10/12.5 pt Adobe Caslon Pro at  
The Banner of Truth Trust

Printed in the U.S.A. by  
Versa Press, Inc.,  
East Peoria, IL

TO MY COLLEAGUES AND STUDENTS AT  
ALL NATIONS CHRISTIAN COLLEGE, WARE,  
FOR TEN YEARS' FELLOWSHIP  
IN CHRIST

## *Preface*

The prayers in this book are drawn from the largely forgotten deposit of Puritan spiritual exercises, meditations and aspirations. They testify to the richness and colour of evangelical thought and language that animated vital piety in an important stream of English religious life. It is hoped that their publication will help to redress the neglect of this vast ocean of Puritan spirituality.

The Puritan Movement was a religious phenomenon of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, yet its influence continued at least to the time of Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834–92) who may be regarded as the last of the great Puritans. Although the political storm ended in 1660, its theological ground-swell carried forward distinct forms of practical religion for many decades, particularly family worship and private devotion. In these spheres, and in that of the authority of Scripture over the whole of life, New England Presbyterians and Congregationalists were at one with English Dissenters and Anglican evangelicals in a close-knit union that transcended differences of worship, discipline and polity. They spoke the same spiritual language, shared the same code of values, adopted the same attitude towards the Christian religion, and breathed out the same God-centred aspirations in a manner that makes it impossible to distinguish the voice of conformist from that of non-conformist. Thus, this book of Puritan prayers has a unity not often found in similar works. The strength of Puritan character and life lay in the practice of prayer and meditation. Many of those who held the doctrines of grace wrote down a record of God's intimate dealings with their souls, not with an eye to publication, but, as in David Brainerd's case, to test their spiritual growth, and to encourage themselves by their re-perusal in times of low spiritual fervour. Others, like William Jay and Henry Law, turned their personal devotions into corporate forms for family worship, and published them to the church at large. Yet others, such as Philip Doddridge and William Romaine, wrote prayers into their literary works in order to evoke the reader's spiritual response. Many ministers went further and advised their congregations to put their private prayer thoughts on paper and vocalize them. There thus emerged an important corpus of inspiring Puritan prayers that are still largely unused.

In extracting this selection from Puritan literature it has been necessary to change some prayers from the plural and the third person into the singular and the first person in order that the book might be used chiefly in private devotion. But, by a change of pronoun, most of them can be employed in corporate worship. A final section has been added for occasions of corporate worship. Old idiom has been retained, but it has been necessary to reframe some phrases in order to accommodate archaic thought to modern understanding. A number of prayers were originally spiritual experiences, as in the case of Thomas Shepard, and some others are confections from different sources to bind together a given theme.

A poetic form has been adopted throughout as an aid to easier comprehension and utterance. Each prayer consists of a number of main clauses with subsidiary clauses that illuminate and enlarge the subject. In this way an opportunity is provided for pauses and reflections. The editor is thus responsible for the structure of the prayers as here printed. The book is not intended to be read as a prayer manual. The soul learns to pray by praying; for prayer is communion with a transcendent and immanent God who on the ground of his nature and attributes calls forth all the powers of the redeemed soul in acts of total adoration and dedication. The prayers should therefore be used as aspiration units, the several parts of which could become springboards for the individual's own prayer subjects. These and their divisions can also serve homiletic purposes.

The prayers are taken from the works of Thomas Shepard, Thomas Watson, Richard Baxter, John Bunyan, Isaac Watts, William Williams, Philip Doddridge, William Romaine, David Brainerd, Augustus Toplady, Christmas Evans, William Jay, Henry Law and Charles Haddon Spurgeon. They are sent out with the prayer of Philip Doddridge, that, 'However weak and contemptible this work may seem in the eyes of the children of this world, and however imperfect it really be, it may nevertheless live before thee, and through a divine power be mighty to produce the rise and progress of religion.'

I desire to thank the Rev. Iain H. Murray of the Banner of Truth Trust for his encouragement to produce this work, Mr S. M. Houghton, many of whose kindly criticisms have been accepted, and the Rev. R. E. Davies, who helped to resolve theological points. I am grateful to the Trustees of the British Museum, Dr Williams' Library, and the Evangelical Library for access to out-of-print books.

ARTHUR BENNETT

# Contents

*Preface* vii

Introductory: THE VALLEY OF VISION xv

## 1: FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT

The Trinity	3	Christ is All	18
God the All	4	Fullness in Christ	19
God the Source of All Good	5	Union with Christ	20
The Great God	6	The Name of Jesus	21
The All-Good	7	Christ Alone	22
The Mover	8	Jesus my Glory	23
The Divine Will	9	The Love of Jesus	24
Divine Mercies	10	Love to Jesus	25
God Enjoyed	11	The Second Coming	26
A Present Salvation	12	Spiritus Sanctus	27
Man's Great End	13	God the Spirit	28
God Honoured	14	The Spirit of Jesus	29
Praise and Thanksgiving	15	The Spirit's Work	30
The Gift of Gifts	16	The Spirit as Teacher	32
Christ the Word	17		

## 2: REDEMPTION AND RECONCILIATION

The Gospel Way	35	The Precious Blood	41
The Awakened Sinner	36	Love Lustres at Calvary	42
The Convicting Spirit	37	The Saviour	44
The Cry of a Convicted Sinner	38	Reconciliation	45
God and Myself	39	Deliverance	46
The Mediator	40	Regeneration	47

THE VALLEY OF VISION

Resurrection	48	Living for Jesus	58
Election	49	Kept by God	59
Christian Calling	50	A Christian's Prayer	60
Assurance	51	Amazing Grace	61
A Convert's First Prayer	53	The Great Discovery	62
The Life Look	54	A Neophyte's Devotion	63
Victory	55	The 'Nevers' of the Gospel	64
Freedom	56	True Religion	65
Belonging to Jesus	57		

3: PENITENCE AND DEPRECATION

Self-Knowledge	69	The Broken Heart	83
Yet I Sin	70	Self-Noughting	84
The Dark Guest	71	Shortcomings	85
Paradoxes	72	Backsliding	86
Heart Corruptions	73	Sins	87
Self-Deprecation	74	Pride	88
The Deeps	75	Passion	89
Continual Repentance	76	Penitence	90
Confession and Petition	77	Man a Nothing	91
Contrition	78	A Cry for Deliverance	92
Humiliation	79	Mercy	93
Mortification	80	Crucifixion and Resurrection	94
Purification	81	New Beginning	95
Reproofs	82	Reliance	96

4: NEEDS AND DEVOTIONS

Need of Grace	99	Choices	105
Conflict	100	Desires	106
Peril	101	Faith and the World	107
Need of Jesus	102	Journeying On	108
Weaknesses	103	Spiritual Growth	109
The Infinite and the Finite	104	Voyage	110

Year's End	111	Morning	117
New Year	112	Morning Needs	118
The Family	113	Morning Dedication	119
Caring Love	114	Evening Prayer	120
Divine Support	115	Evening Praise	121
Grace Active	116	Evening Renewal	122
5: HOLY ASPIRATIONS			
Longings after God	125	Openness	133
Consecration and Worship	126	Christlikeness	134
Resting on God	127	Christian Love	135
Devotion	128	Love Shed Abroad	136
The Personal Touch	129	To be Fit for God	137
Divine Promises	130	Confidence	138
Spiritual Helps	131	Covenant	139
Refuge	132		
6: APPROACH TO GOD			
Act of Approach	143	The Throne	148
In Prayer	144	Requests	149
Living by Prayer	145	After Prayer	150
Meeting God	146	A Colloquy on Rejoicing	151
The Prayer of Love	147		
7: GIFTS OF GRACE			
God All-Sufficient	155	Comforts	164
Privileges	156	Fullness	165
Blessings	157	Happiness	166
Faith	158	Vocation	167
Love	159	Truth in Jesus	168
Joy	160	Grace in Trials	169
Contentment	161	The Grace of the Cross	170
Rest	162	Calvary's Anthem	171
Sleep	163	Sincerity	172

THE VALLEY OF VISION

8: SERVICE AND MINISTRY

God's Cause	175	A Minister's Praises	187
Service and Equipment	176	A Minister's Bible	188
Things Needful	177	A Minister's Preaching	189
Humility in Service	178	Scriptural Convictions	190
The Servant in Battle	179	Lord's Day Eve	191
Vain Service	180	The Lord's Day	192
Love Rest in God	181	Lord's Day Morning	193
A Disciple's Renewal	182	Worship	194
A Minister's Evils	183	The Lord's Supper	195
A Minister's Prayer	184	The Minister before Sacrament	196
A Minister's Confession	185	Lord's Day Evening	197
A Minister's Strength	186	The Minister's Covenant	198

9: VALEDICTION

Earth and Heaven	201	Retrospect and Prospect	203
Heaven Desired	202		

10: A WEEK'S SHARED PRAYERS

First Day Morning—Worship	207	Fourth Day Evening—God All-Sufficient	214
First Day Evening—The Teacher	208	Fifth Day Morning—The Giver	215
Second Day Morning—God Over All	209	Fifth Day Evening—Protection	216
Second Day Evening—Bounty	210	Sixth Day Morning—The Gospel	217
Third Day Morning—God Creator and Controller	211	Sixth Day Evening—The Mediator	218
Third Day Evening—Before Sleep	212	Seventh Day Morning—God's Good Pleasure	219
Fourth Day Morning—True Christianity	213	Seventh Day Evening—Future Blessings	220

<i>Bibliography</i>			221
---------------------	--	--	-----

*Introductory*

THE VALLEY OF VISION

## THE VALLEY OF VISION

LORD, HIGH AND HOLY, MEEK AND LOWLY,  
Thou hast brought me to the valley of vision,  
    where I live in the depths but see thee in the heights;  
    hemmed in by mountains of sin I behold thy glory.

Let me learn by paradox  
    that the way down is the way up,  
    that to be low is to be high,  
    that the broken heart is the healed heart,  
    that the contrite spirit is the rejoicing spirit,  
    that the repenting soul is the victorious soul,  
    that to have nothing is to possess all,  
    that to bear the cross is to wear the crown,  
    that to give is to receive,  
    that the valley is the place of vision.

Lord, in the daytime stars can be seen from deepest wells,  
    and the deeper the wells the brighter thy stars shine;

Let me find thy light in my darkness,  
    thy life in my death,  
    thy joy in my sorrow,  
    thy grace in my sin,  
    thy riches in my poverty  
    thy glory in my valley.

I

*Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*

## THE TRINITY

THREE IN ONE, ONE IN THREE, GOD OF MY SALVATION,  
Heavenly Father, blessed Son, eternal Spirit,

I adore thee as one Being, one Essence,  
one God in three distinct Persons,

for bringing sinners to thy knowledge and to thy kingdom.

O Father, thou hast loved me and sent Jesus to redeem me;

O Jesus, thou hast loved me and assumed my nature,  
shed thine own blood to wash away my sins,  
wrought righteousness to cover my unworthiness;

O Holy Spirit, thou hast loved me and entered my heart,  
implanted there eternal life,  
revealed to me the glories of Jesus.

Three Persons and one God, I bless and praise thee,  
for love so unmerited, so unspeakable, so wondrous,  
so mighty to save the lost and raise them to glory.

O Father, I thank thee that in fullness of grace  
thou hast given me to Jesus,  
to be his sheep, jewel, portion;

O Jesus, I thank thee that in fullness of grace  
thou hast accepted, espoused, bound me;

O Holy Spirit, I thank thee that in fullness of grace  
thou hast exhibited Jesus as my salvation,  
implanted faith within me,  
subdued my stubborn heart,  
made me one with him for ever.

O Father, thou art enthroned to hear my prayers,

O Jesus, thy hand is outstretched to take my petitions,

O Holy Spirit, thou art willing to help my infirmities,  
to show me my need, to supply words, to pray within me,  
to strengthen me that I faint not in supplication.

O Triune God, who commandeth the universe,  
thou hast commanded me to ask for those things  
that concern thy kingdom and my soul.

Let me live and pray as one baptized into the threefold Name.

## GOD THE ALL

O GOD WHOSE WILL CONQUERS ALL,  
There is no comfort in anything  
    apart from enjoying thee  
    and being engaged in thy service;  
Thou art All in all, and all enjoyments are what to me  
    thou makest them, and no more.  
I am well pleased with thy will, whatever it is,  
    or should be in all respects,  
And if thou bidst me decide for myself in any affair,  
    I would choose to refer all to thee,  
    for thou art infinitely wise and cannot do amiss  
    as I am in danger of doing.  
I rejoice to think that all things are at thy disposal,  
    and it delights me to leave them there.  
Then prayer turns wholly into praise,  
    and all I can do is to adore and bless thee.  
What shall I give thee for all thy benefits?  
I am in a strait betwixt two, knowing not what to do;  
I long to make some return, but have nothing to offer,  
    and can only rejoice that thou doest all,  
    that none in heaven or on earth shares thy honour;  
    I can of myself do nothing to glorify thy blessed name,  
    but I can through grace cheerfully surrender soul and body to thee,  
I know that thou art the author and finisher of faith,  
    that the whole work of redemption is thine alone,  
    that every good work or thought found in me  
        is the effect of thy power and grace,  
    that thy sole motive in working in me to will and to do  
        is for thy good pleasure.  
O God, it is amazing that men can talk so much  
    about man's creaturely power and goodness,  
    when, if thou didst not hold us back every moment,  
    we should be devils incarnate.  
This, by bitter experience, thou hast taught me concerning myself.

BLOGS: Justin Taylor. The Valley of Vision. Justin Taylor | January 30, 2010. Share Share Tweet Tweet Email. Lord, high and holy, meek and lowly, Thou has brought me to the valley of vision, where I live in the depths but see thee in the heights; hemmed in by mountains of sin I behold Thy glory. Let me learn by paradox that the way down is the way up, that to be low is to be high, that the broken heart is the healed heart, that the contrite spirit is the rejoicing spirit, that the repenting soul is the victorious soul, that to have nothing is to possess all, that to bear the cross is to wear the crown, that to give is to receive, that the valley is the place of vision. Lord, in the daytime stars can be seen from the deepest wells, and the deeper the wells the brighter Thy stars shine. Finally, the poem ends with a request: Let me find Thy light in my darkness, . . . Thy glory in my valley. Jonah found God's glory during his time in the ocean's depths. He rebelled against God and ended up in

The Puritan prayer "The Valley of Vision" speaks of the distance between a sinful man and his holy God. The man says to God, "Thou hast brought me to the valley of vision . . . ; hemmed in by mountains of sin I behold Thy glory." Aware of his wrongs, the man still has hope. He continues, "Stars can be seen from the deepest wells, and the deeper the wells the brighter Thy stars shine." Finally, the poem ends with a request: "Let me find Thy light in my darkness, . . . Thy glory in my valley." Jonah found God's glory during his time in the ocean's depths. He rebelled against God and ended up in BLOGS: Justin Taylor. The Valley of Vision. Justin Taylor | January 30, 2010. Share Share Tweet Tweet Email. Lord, high and holy, meek and lowly, Thou has brought me to the valley of vision, where I live in the depths but see thee in the heights; hemmed in by mountains of sin I behold Thy glory. Let me learn by paradox that the way down is the way up, that to be low is to be high, that the broken heart is the healed heart, that the contrite spirit is the rejoicing spirit, that the repenting soul is the victorious soul, that to have nothing is to possess all, that to bear the cross is to wear the crown, that to give is to receive, that the valley is the place of vision. Lord, in the daytime stars can The valley of vision is the place of paradox. Here, the one who wants to save his life loses it for the sake of Another. Here, strength is perfected in weakness, and the greatest is the servant of all. Living in the depths, we see Him in the heights, Learning that the way down is the way up, To be low is to be high, And to bear the cross is to wear the crown. The songs on this CD are inspired by the book The Valley of Vision: A Collection of Puritan Prayers and Devotions, edited by Arthur Bennett. \_\_\_ As 21st century Christians we can easily idolize the limited perspectives and culturally sha