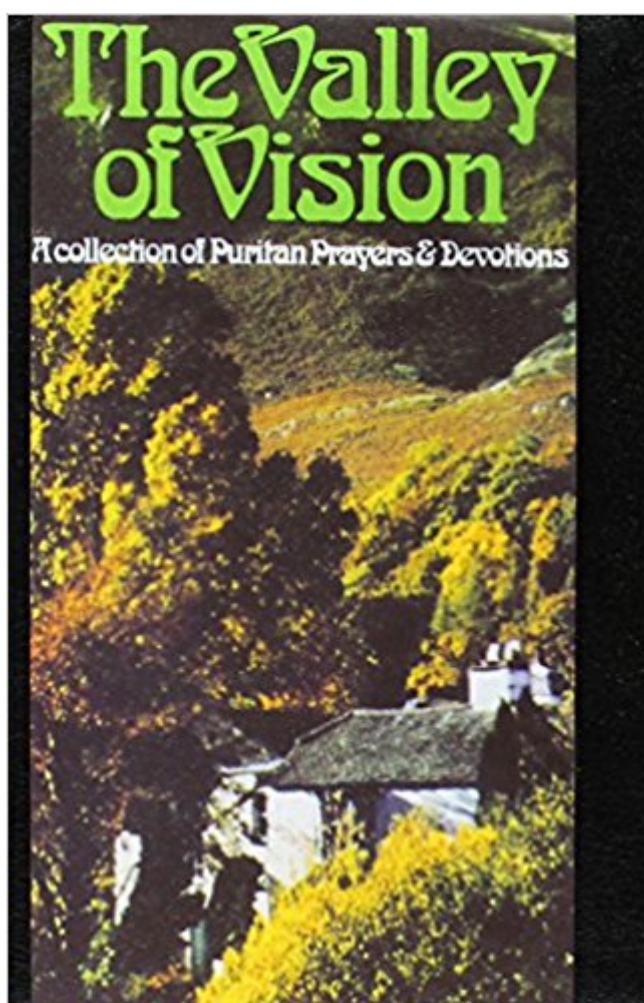


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Valley Of Vision (Leather): A Collection Of Puritan Prayers And Devotions



Synopsis

The strength of Puritan character and life lay in prayer and meditation. In this practice the spirit of prayer was regarded as of first importance and the best form of prayer, for living prayer is the characteristic of genuine spirituality. Yet prayer is also vocal and may therefore on occasions be written. Consequently in the Puritan tradition there are many written prayers and meditations which constitute an important corpus of inspiring devotional literature. Too often ex tempore prayer lacks variety, order and definiteness. The reason for this lies partly in a neglect of due preparation. It is here that the care and scriptural thoroughness which others found necessary in their approach to God may be of help. This book has been prepared not to 'supply' prayers but to prompt and encourage the Christian as he treads the path on which others have gone before.

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Customer Reviews

Arthur Bennett (1915-1994), was an English-born minister, tutor, and author who loved to study the Puritans. He has drawn the prayers in this much loved modern-day spiritual classic from what he refers to as the largely forgotten deposit of Puritan spiritual exercises, meditations and aspirations. He states that this book of Puritan prayers has a unity not often found in similar works. The title of the book comes from Isaiah 22:1 "The oracle concerning the valley of vision". The book was first published in 1975. The research for this book took years to complete, most likely done in the mid-1960s through the early 1970s. Bennett writes that the Puritan Movement was a religious phenomenon of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but its influence continued at least to the time of the great Baptist preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon

(1834-1922), who may be regarded as the last of the great Puritans. Bennett composed the first prayer himself. He tells us the authors and books he is quoting are 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 but he doesn't tell us which works or author is associated with each individual prayer. Bennett's desire is that the publication of these prayers will help to introduce people of today to the Puritans and their writings. It is a wonderful resource to read in daily devotions, which is how I use it. Bennett states that the book is not intended to be read as a prayer manual. He writes that the soul learns to pray by praying. Thus, the prayers should be used as aspiration units, with the Puritan's prayers becoming springboards for our own prayers. A final section of the book has been added for occasions of corporate worship. This is a wonderful resource that I cannot recommend too highly to include as a part of your daily worship.

This book is worth its weight in gold. I say that because the words that are written in this book have no doubt come from the hearts of men that have been refined by the fire of God. You will not find this book in the libraries of 95% of Pastors in America today because if it were, there would be no way to deliver these self-help lullabies they call sermons. Reading through some of these prayers and meditations put in right perspective in my simple mind the subtle words in Genesis 5:24 where it says....and Enoch walked with God.. I'm not promoting the verse, or Enoch, or the fact that he walked with God, the point I am trying to make is that I was always intrigued yet never able to fully say in my "Christian walk" that I fully grasp the magnitude of what it means to "walk with God" though God is in me, and I in Him which also goes for every born again believer. I thought about Enoch walking with God when reading Valley of Vision, I read and see many who walked with God though likely not as Enoch, yet this masterful work by these servants of the Lord have allowed me to have a better understanding and desire to truly WALK WITH GOD.

This is by far my favorite devotional. In my highs and lows, this collection of hymns, prayers and poems has been a faithful, humbling and encouraging companion, always pointing me back to the Lord. You will find no words of self-help within its pages, only theologically sound and Christ centered words of truth. I highly recommend. No other devotional has ministered to my soul as this one has. One of my most precious books.

I've used this book for several years now and found that it is helpful in more ways than just how to pray. It teaches much about the Bible through the prayers. It is helpful in how to view problems and trials, and living life in general. I start every morning with one prayer. Often it is not the entire prayer that is so helpful, as just one line or two. There is much to meditate on in this book, and it is so very helpful with my spiritual life. I've given the book away as a gift and it has been much appreciated. The only "issue" I have with the book is the very unattractive cover, especially when it is meant as a gift.

I have bought this book for quite a few people and recommended it even more often. The book itself is wonderful and makes anyone who reads it feel they are hearing the sincere heart of a person clearly interested in humbling themselves before God and who not only knows him but knows the character God is interested in developing in each of us. Superb prayers that usher the reader into the presence of the Lord. Unfortunately I don't believe this particular binding is real leather and is nothing like the first bunch I bought several years ago. Additionally, it came to me crushed and bent up in the mail and if it were real leather it would be able to resume it's original shape-which it didn't. The book gets 5 stars, the binding gets 1.

This is a heavy duty inspirational prayer book. It is quite a window back in time...a space that I am very grateful to have been invited to visit. I feel very quiet and still when I say these prayers.

I'm a Roman Catholic and a member of the Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites. Having a preconceived image of the Puritans from popular culture, I was happily surprised by the beauty and poetry of these prayers. They are so obviously written by people of sincere and profound faith, speaking in such a heartfelt and personal way with their Lord. The book contains prayers that you can make your own in any mood or frame of mind. The book itself is also very well produced, with a quality leather cover. There is a website you can Google on which someone has offered a daily schedule for reading these prayers. I haven't done that yet but it's a neat idea. In the Catholic church we have something called the "Liturgy of the Hours" which are psalms and other prayers arranged to sanctify the day at 7 different hours; the website's concept is similar in that there are, I think, three daily readings. I think any Christian would value this book.

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