

**John Owen (1616-1683) -- One day He's coming, O Glorious Day! Romans 8: 13**

[Richard Sibbes; d. 1635] [John Bunyan; 1628-1688] [Richard Baxter, 1615-1691]. [Matthew Henry, 1662-1714] **Definition:** Puritan; first used in 1560s of English Protestants who considered reforms under Elizabeth incomplete & wanted more 'purification'. **John Flavel** (1630-1691) "The scriptures teach us the best way of living, the noblest way of suffering, and the most comfortable way of dying." The Puritans understood that a mindless Christianity fosters a spineless Christianity. They taught that preparing to die is the first step in learning to live.

**1: Puritanism:** theological movement tied to Reformation, Scriptures, Trinitarian theology, reformed church service, rights of conscience, stressed conversion; political. 'Puritanism' was initially a term of abuse but refers to desire for further reform of Elizabethan & Stuart C of E. and focus on Reformed theology; faith shaped by struggle with popular religious culture and Roman Catholicism **J.I. Packer:** *Puritanism was an evangelical holiness movement seeking to implement its vision of spiritual renewal, national and personal, in the state, the church, the home; in education, evangelism and economics; in individual discipleship and devotion and in pastoral care and competence.* -- Spiritual conflict made Puritan maturity; they accepted conflict as their calling. An American Indian leader, by comparison, described North American Protestantism: *man-centred, manipulative, success-orientated, self-indulgent & sentimental; three thousand miles wide and half an inch deep; spiritual dwarfs!*

**George Whitefield (1714-1770):** *Ministers never write or preach so well as when under the cross; the Spirit of Christ and of glory then rests upon them. It was this, no doubt, that made the Puritans ... such burning and shining lights.* (from reprint preface to Bunyan's works, 1767) **Richard Baxter** (1615-1691) *I preached, as never sure to preach again, And as a dying man to dying men.*

**2: 17<sup>th</sup> Century:** Elizabeth 1, died 1603; James VI Scotland & James I - 1625; **A V Bible 1611;** 1616, Wm Shakespeare died. Charles 1, 1649 beheaded; Charles II -1651 deposed; Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell, 1653-58; James II -1685-89 last RC Monarch. William & Mary, 1688, the Glorious Revolution. **Composers;** Corelli (Italian, 1653-1713), Vivaldi, 1678-1741; Telemann (1681-1767, German Baroque). **Plymouth Colony,** 1620; 1614-1648, Central Europe Thirty Years War [8 million. deaths]; 1631, Mount Vesuvius. 1666, Great fire of London.

**3: Great Ejection:** St Bartholomew's Day, August 24, 1662, in co-sequence of the Act of Uniformity passed by Parliament in May that year, more than 2,000 ministers were 'ejected' or expelled from their churches, residences, incomes because they would not conform to the use of The Book of Common Prayer, as the uniform order for worship in the C of E.

**3: Early Life:** Born Stadhams, Oxfordshire; three brothers & sister; father the local Puritan vicar. Godly from an early age & good scholar. To Queen's College, Oxford, aged 12; BA, 1632 & MA, 1635 aged 19. Studied 18-20 hours a day in teenage years. In frequent times of sickness he regretted missing many hours of sleep. Early twenties, conviction of sin, engulfed in turmoil & for three months could barely speak clearly. A convinced Calvinist with doctrinal knowledge but no assurance of salvation. Aged 26, with cousin to hear

Presbyterian Edmund Calamy but simple country preacher; **Matthew 8: 26**; *Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?* It was God's appointed Word & time for Owen's awakening. Doubts, fears, worries as to whether he was truly born anew by the Holy Spirit were gone; liberated & adopted as a son of God.

**4: Ministry:** A Pastor in 1643; addressed Parliament 1646, Chaplain to Oliver Cromwell during 1640s; Dean of Christ Church, Oxford 1651; Vice Chancellor 1652. During pastorate at Fordham, Essex he married Mary Rooke who bore eleven children, but only one daughter became adult. Unhappy marriage & returned home but soon died of consumption. 1644 from Presbyterian to Congregational. During 1660s led Independents through bitter years of persecution. Massive amount of theological writings. JIP: *The truth of the Trinity, story of the Creator becoming the triune Redeemer, was always his final point of reference, & the living of the Christian life was his constant concern.* Political issues meant that Owen & his group lost favour, replaced as VC. & some preaching; in seclusion but continued other preaching despite 1662 Great Ejection. With other Puritans, returned to London to preach after Plague & Great Fire. Wife died 1776 & remarried a widow, Dorothy. Suffered asthma & gallstones in last years but kept writing. Died 24 August; buried in Bunhill Fields.

**5: Emphasis:** His political messages to Parliament emphasised **personal holiness**. Based on OT pattern; the people of Israel were at the height of their fortunes when their leaders were Godly. The aim of personal holiness in all of life, and the mortifying of all known sin, was his teaching & personal emphasis. "One great hindrance in the ministry of the Word is that we are prone to preach and write without pressing into the things we say and making them real to our own souls. Over the years words begin to come easy, and we find we can speak of mysteries without standing in awe; we can speak of purity without feeling pure; we can speak of zeal without spiritual passion; we can speak of God's holiness without trembling; we can speak of sin without sorrow; we can speak of heaven without eagerness. And the result is an increasing hardening of the spiritual life" (JP).

**6: Mortification: Romans 8: 13.** J. I. Packer's battle; full surrender = ongoing victory over sin; 'Letting go & letting God' = unbiblical! For JIP & John Owen; Sin was all too present still in his life. Owen's series of sermons in Oxford. *The choicest believers, who are assuredly freed from the condemning power of sin, ought yet to make it their business all their days to mortify the indwelling power of sin.* Not by our self-efforts. *Mortification from a self-strength, carried on by ways of self-invention, unto the end of a self-righteousness, is the soul and substance of all false religion in the world.* Our duty in perseverance; accomplished through the Holy Spirit & our duty; spiritual progress is vital not mechanical for God is Sovereign; mortification involves the habitual weakening of sin & constant fighting against it with success, perpetual battle & work of faith coordinated with sincere & universal obedience. Prayer & constant desire to be delivered from the power of sin; "Assure thyself, unless thou longest for deliverance thou shalt not have it". "If we do not abide in prayer, we shall abide in cursed temptations."

*Mortification can never be thought of as separated from the ministry of the Spirit ... He convinces of sin in the first place, and reveals the help that is in Christ ... He alone brings the cross of Christ into our hearts with its killing power; for by the Spirit we are baptized into the death of Christ. He is both the Author and the Finisher of sanctification* (Sinclair Ferguson).