
Puritan Preachers: Men Foursquare

Mark Minnick

Introduction



A corner of Spurgeon's "den."
Some of his beloved Puritan friends.

By all means read the Puritans, they are worth more than all the modern stuff put together.

--C. H. Spurgeon¹

In a time like this, I believe that the study of some of the great Puritan divines is eminently calculated, under God, to do good and stay the plague. I commend the study especially to all young ministers.

--J. C. Ryle²

*My real interest arose in 1925 when, in a way that I need not explain now, I happened to read a new biography of Richard Baxter. . . From that time a true and living interest in the Puritans and their works has gripped me, and I am free to confess that my whole ministry has been governed by this. . . I am interested in Puritanism because it seems to me to be one of the most useful things any preacher can do. Nothing so encourages a true ministry of the Word because these men were such great exemplars in that respect.*³



¹ Cited by Iain Murray, *The Forgotten Spurgeon* (London: Banner of Truth, 1973), 184.

² Quoted in "Editorial Notes," *Banner of Truth*, February, 1957, 3. For Ryle's spirited defense of the Puritans, despite their faults, see the introduction to his *Light from Old Times* (1890).

³ David Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *The Puritans: Their Origins and Successors* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1990), 237-238.

Who were the Puritans?

1. Nationally, they were _____.



Note: The American Puritans were the cross-Atlantic offshoot of the English Puritans. They included men like John Winthrop (1588-1649; governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony), William Bradford (1590-1657; governor of Plymouth Plantation), John Eliot (1604-1690; missionary to the Algonquians), Thomas Shepherd (1605-1649), John Cotton (1585-1652), and the famous Mathers (Richard, Increase, and Cotton).

2. Chronologically, they lived in the _____.

1. Beginning with _____ (translator of the 1st printed English NT in 1526)?⁴
2. Tapering down in the decades following the Glorious Revolution (1688).

3. _____, they were Church of England clergy and laypersons.

1. Initially **Episcopal** in their understanding of church polity.
2. But many studied themselves into _____
(such as Thomas Watson and Philip Henry).
3. And others studied themselves even further, into _____
(such as John Owen, Thomas Goodwin, and Jeremiah Burroughs).
4. And still others could be said to be “puritan,” if not in their taxonomy, then certainly in their outlook and lifestyle, such as **Baptists** like Thomas Helwys and John Bunyan.

(Now note this definition of *puritan*. “A member of an English religious group in the 16th and 17th centuries who wanted to make church ceremonies simpler, and who believed that it was important to work hard and control yourself and that pleasure was wrong or unnecessary”⁵)

4. Philosophically, they wished to _____ (*purify*).

*Puritanism . . . was a _____, a total Christian philosophy. ...The Puritan goal was to complete what England’s Reformation began: to finish reshaping Anglican worship, to introduce effective church discipline into Anglican parishes, to establish righteousness in the political, domestic, and socio-economic fields, and to convert all Englishmen to a vigorous evangelical faith. Through the preaching and teaching of the gospel, and the sanctifying of all arts, sciences, and skills, England was to become a land of saints, a model and paragon of corporate godliness, and as such a means of blessing to the world.*⁶

⁴ It [Puritanism] began in England with William Tyndale the Bible translator, Luther’s contemporary, a generation before the word ‘Puritan’ was coined (J. I. Packer, *A Quest for Godliness: The Puritan Vision of the Christian Life* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 1990), 28). Others, however, would not begin Puritanism until sometime within the reign of Elizabeth I (see William Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957), 5).

⁵ <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/puritan>.

⁶ Packer, *A Quest for Godliness*, 28.

What Makes the Puritans Pastoral & Pulpit Models?

**He was. . . [a man foursquare],
immoveable in all times,
so that they who in the midst of many opinions,
have lost the view of true religion,
may return to him and there find it.**

--John Gere⁷

1. They Were _____.

It would be a mistake to suppose that they were inferior in education or in literary scholarship to their rivals. They merely made a point of laying their learning aside in order to win, or at least to make a show of seeking, the ear and the confidence of all men.⁸



The divines of the Westminster Assembly typically had both their Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degrees from either Oxford or Cambridge. Not uncommonly they served as Fellows in the Colleges of those Universities. About half continued their studies to obtain the Bachelor of Divinity and approximately a quarter to obtain the Doctor of Divinity. To acquire a

B.D. one normally had to be a Master of Arts of seven years' standing, performing in the divinity disputations, in addition serving as respondent once and as opponent once in two disputations. Then, within a year, one delivered a Latin sermon to the clergy of the University at Oxford, or at Cambridge preached three sermons, one in Latin to the clergy of the University, one in English in the University Church, and another in English at Paul's Cross in London. For the D.D., one had to be a B.D. of four years' standing, deliver six lectures on any part of Scripture or three lectures on one of the Epistles, take part in disputations and preach as for the B.D. The obtaining of a D.D., therefore, or becoming Master of a College, was a mark of distinguished scholarship.⁹

⁷ Quoted by J. I. Packer in *A Quest for Godliness* (frontispiece), and taken from *The Character of an old English Puritane, or Nonconformist* (1646).

⁸ Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism*, 27.

⁹ William Barker, *Puritan Profiles: 54 Influential Puritans at the time when the Westminster Confession of Faith was written* (Ross-Shire, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 1996), 153.

2. They Were _____.

1. They put the pulpit at the _____ of the church or chapel.



Matthew Henry's Chapel, Chester, UK

2. They attracted great throngs of spiritually hungry people.

In Cambridge in the 1560s Thomas Cartwright was such a popular preacher that the windows of St. Mary's, across the street from King's College Chapel, had to be taken down so that the crowd outside could hear.

In London in the 1640s Jeremiah Burroughs and William Greenhill preached morning and afternoon. The people referred to them affectionately as the *morning and evening star*.



Laurence Chaderton once preached in Lancashire, and having preached full two hours, he paused and said, "I will no longer trespass upon your patience."

Upon this all the congregation cried out, "For God's sake, go on, go on!"¹⁰

3. They moved the people with convincing, convicting power.

4. They viewed their preaching as the preaching of _____.

Jeremiah Burroughs (1600-1646) corrected the people, *Many times you will say, "Come, let us hear such a man preach;" Oh no, let us go and hear Christ preach, for it doth concern the ministers of God that they preach not themselves, but that Christ should preach through them: so it concerns you that hear. . . to come to hear Jesus Christ.*¹¹

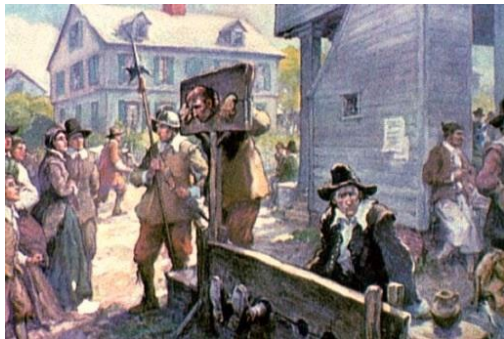
¹⁰ Benjamin Brook, *The Lives of the Puritans*, (1813; repr., Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria, 1994), 2:448.

¹¹ *Gospel-worship: OR The Right manner of Sanctifying the Name of God in Generall* (London: printed for Peter Cole, 1648), 166. Burroughs' assertion was grounded in I Thessalonians 2:13, "For this cause also thank we God

Paul Baine (1573-1617) explained Ephesians 2:17, *And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near.*

Now, Baine said, he was never a minister but of the circumcision (Rom. 15:8), to the lost sheep of the house of Israel in his own person (Matt. 15:24). Therefore we see that Christ is present and hath a part in preaching even when men preach. . . for that is the office of Christ our great Prophet. . . to be present and teach inwardly in the heart with that Word which is outwardly sounded unto the ear by men. . . Thus Paul preached to the ear, but Christ to the heart of Lydia. This must teach us to look upon Christ as the chief Prophet among us, and the chief Preacher whosoever speaketh.¹²

3. They Were _____¹³



Spiritual warfare made the Puritans what were. They accepted _____ as their calling, seeing themselves as their Lord's soldier-pilgrims, just as in Bunyan's allegory, and not expecting to be able to advance a single step without opposition of one sort or another.¹⁴

*His own life he accounted a warfare, wherein Christ was his captain; his arms, prayers and tears; the Cross his Banner, and his word [motto] *Vincit qui patitur* [he who suffers conquers].¹⁵*



If this is all they have to say, I will make them conform themselves or I will harry them out of the land or else do worse.

(James I (reigned in England 1603-1625), to the Puritan delegation presenting the Millenary Petition at Hampton Court Palace, January 14, 1603)

without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it* not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."

¹² *A Commentary upon the Whole Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Ephesians* (London: printed for S. Miller, 1658), 246.

¹³ See Gerald R. Cragg's, *Puritanism in the Period of the Great Persecution: 1660-1688* (Cambridge: University Press, 1957). Chapter IV, "Shades of the Prison House" (pp. 88-127), is the best coverage of the imprisonment of Puritans of which I am aware.

¹⁴ Packer, *A Quest for Godliness*, 22.

¹⁵ Gere, *The Character of an old English Puritane, or Nonconformist*.



(James' grandson,
Charles II (reigned in
England 1660-1685.)

The Clarendon Code¹⁶



1661 Corporation Act¹⁷

1662 Act of Uniformity¹⁸

Over 2000 English ministers and another 300 Scottish clergy refused compliance with the 1662 Act of Uniformity and were expelled from their churches and livings. Richard Baxer, who was himself one of them, testified that, *Many hundreds of them with their wives and children had neither house nor bread. ... Though they were as frugal as possible they could hardly live; some lived on little more than brown bread and water. ... In many cases their income scarcely provided bread and cheese.*"

1664 Conventical Code¹⁹

1665 Five-Mile Act²⁰

¹⁶ The Clarendon Code was a series of four legal statutes passed between 1661-1665 which effectively re-established the supremacy of the Anglican Church after the interlude of Cromwell's Commonwealth, and ended toleration for dissenting religions.

¹⁷ Required all municipal officials to take Anglican communion and formally reject the Solemn League and Covenant of 1643. The effect of this act was to exclude Nonconformists from public office.

¹⁸ Made use of the *Book of Common Prayer* compulsory in religious service. Over 2000 English ministers and another 300 Scottish clergy refused to comply with this act and were forced to resign their livings.

¹⁹ Outlawed conventicles (a meeting for unauthorized worship) of more than 5 people who were not members of the same household. The purpose was to prevent dissenting religious groups from meeting.

²⁰ Nonconformist ministers were forbidden to come within 5 miles of incorporated towns or the place of their former ministries. They were also forbidden to teach in schools.

*Diaries and Letters of Philip Henry, M.A.*²¹

- June 14, 1681** *Being invited to preach at Thomas Millington's at Weston. . . I went and preached there. Psalm 66:18. Was interrupted by two Justices, Sr. Thomas Vernon and Mr. Charles Manwaring, who took our names. 143 or thereabouts. Threatened us with the execution of the Law. Father, thy will be done! While tis for well doing that we suffer, they cannot harm us.*
- July 25** *Edw. Wilk. & Thom. Pemb. and Randy Churt being the High Constable brought a warrant under their hands to distrain upon me for £40 for Weston business & upon Matthew for 5 shillings for being assembled on the 16 of June with others at Weston.*
- August 29** *This day Mr. Pem & Jo. Y. came again with the same warrant as before and distrained upon the coal, the hay, the muck-cart, and wheels, the great sled, and the field of barley. He distrained also upon the tithe-corn in the old barn.*
- Sept. 1** *They began to carry. Six teams carried it away. Mr. Will. Hanmer's team carried the first load, being as was supposed about 14 hundred (hay scarce this year; Widow Payne said she had given 30 shillings for about the like quantity a few days before. John Davies, James Higginbotam, Thomas Madocks each of them 12 hundred, Thomas Woods and Benyon's together—about 10 hundred—in all six load, being 60 hundred. The pitchers and carriers were Griffith Jones, John Cartwright, John Roberts, Craven Clutton, Rodenhurst, who were promised 12 pennies apiece. In the afternoon three of them came again and carried each them a load of coal, valued the first to 13 shillings, 4 pennies, the other to 10 shillings apiece, being great loads. Also 4 other loads by 4 teams pressed for the purpose upon the road in the King's name, Mr. Pem. showing them the old warrant with two hands and two seals, wherein not a word mentioning any such power given to him, which frightened them to do it.*
- Sept. 2** *They set in to carry the barley out of the oak field (twas four times plowed and sowed with 20 measures). . .*
- Sept. 3** *Made an end. Croxton's team, & John Philips' & Luke Row's, carried each of them a load of barley, my neighbor Ralph Nixon carried a load, part of hay & part of barley—my neighbor John Simson carried a load of coal, John Yong another, Croxton another, and Wil. Jarvis another. The wheels were carried by _____, the tumbrel draughts and sled by Mr. Thomas Hanmer's team. In all 24 teams and 12 assistants. In October following they began to thresh the barley, having sold it to Mr. Fairbrace near Orton at the rate of 3 shillings per measure. . . About the middle of November they made an end. Tis said there was 118 measures, besides the light corn, which was not a little.*

²¹ Matthew Henry Lee, ed. (London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., 1882), entries throughout pp. 299-308, but not always in strict chronological order. Philip Henry was the father of Matthew Henry, the famous English commentator. Ironically, Matthew was born in the year of the Great Ejection, 1662.

Oliver Heywood, ejected from Coley Chapel, lamented twenty years later,

This hath been a long, dark and gloomy day. . . Ministers and their flocks rent asunder; solemn assemblies sorrowfully broken up; sad and silent Sabbaths, by some profaned; ignorance increasing, conversion work suspended, sinners hardened, young believers in religion discouraged, atheism abounding, persecution revived, and thousands of precious souls wandering about as sheep that have no shepherd: many public places ill supplied, and guilt brought upon the nation, pressing us down towards destruction, yea such sins as leave a people remediless, mocking the messengers of God, despising his words, misusing his prophets, till the wrath of God arise against us, till there be no remedy, or no healing. . . and surely this lies nearest the hearts of real saints, next to God's glory and to their own souls, that poor sinners should ruin themselves and destroy the nation. It is dreadful indeed to see debauchery in the land abounding, and the basest of men vent personal malice against God's dearest children for no other fault than worshipping God, and praying for their persecutors.²²

4. They Were _____.

In his introductory letter to *Husbandry Spiritualized* (1669), **John Flavel** explained his having time to write, *Thou hast here the fruit of some of my spare hours, which were thus employed, when, by a sad providence, I was thrust from the society of my dear friends, into a solitary country-dwelling.*²³



*Scrutiny of the lists of English printed books from the close of the sixteenth century to the outbreak of the revolution shows that it was the Puritan writers who probably did more than any others of the time to keep the printers and booksellers busy and the common public supplied with reading matter.*²⁴

George Whitefield observed, *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. When cast out by the black Bartholomew-act and driven from their respective charges to preach in barns and fields,*

²² *Israel's Lamentation after the Lord*, in vol. 3 of *The Whole Works of the Rev. Oliver Heywood* (London: John Vint, 1825), 390.

²³ Opening sentence of his "Epistle to the Intelligent Countrey Reader," in which he explains the making of his book, *Husbandry Spiritualized: or, The Heavenly Use of Earthly Things* (London: printed by Robert Boulter, 1678).

²⁴ Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism*, 23.

*in the highways and hedges, they in an especial manner wrote and preached as men having authority. Though dead, by their writings they yet speak; **a peculiar unction** attends them to this very hour.*²⁵

Reading to Flavor Your Soul

As water tastes of the soil it runs through, so does the soul taste of the authors that a man reads.

--John Trapp on Proverbs 19:27



Introductory

Beeke, Joel R. and Randall J. Pederson. *Meet the Puritans*. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2006.

Lewis, Peter. *The Genius of Puritanism*. Haywards Heath Sussex: Carey Publications, 1977.

Martin, Robert P. *A Guide to the Puritans*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1997.

Ryken, Leland. *Worldly Saints: The Puritans as they Really Were*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990.

Packer, J. I. *A Quest for Godliness: The Puritan Vision of the Christian Life*. Wheaton: Crossway, 1990.

²⁵ *The Works of the Rev. George Whitefield* (London: printed for Edward and Charles Dilly, 1771), 4:306. Bold emphasis mine.

Anthologies of Quotations

Bennett, Arthur. *The Valley of Vision: A Collection of Puritan Prayers & Devotions*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1975.

Spurgeon, C. H. *Smooth Stones Taken From Ancient Brooks: Collected Sayings of Thomas Brooks*. Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria, 1996.

Thomas, I. D. E. *A Puritan Golden Treasury*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1977.

Affliction:

One son God hath without sin, but none without sorrow (John Trapp).

Affliction may be lasting, but it is not everlasting (Thomas Watson).

Christ:

His cry is not "Forward", but "Follow" (William Guthrie).

God is best known in Christ; the sun is not seen but by the light of the sun (William Bridge).

Covetousness:

A circle cannot fill a triangle, so neither can the whole world the heart of man (John Trapp).

Parenting:

Some parents, like Eli, bring up their children to bring down their house (George Swinnock).

As for those parents who will not use the rod upon their children, I pray God He useth not their children as a rod for them (Thomas Fuller).

Biography

Baxter, Richard and Theodosia Alleine and other friends. *Life & Letters of Joseph Alleine*. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2003.

Bonar, Andrew, ed. *Letters of Samuel Rutherford*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1984.

Cook, Faith.

Fearless Pilgrim: The Life and Times of John Bunyan. Faverdale North, Darlington, England: Evangelical Press, 2008.

Samuel Rutherford and His Friends. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1992.

Cooper, Derek. *Thomas Manton: A Guided Tour of the Life and Thought of a Puritan Pastor*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2011.

Harman, Allan. *Matthew Henry: His Life and Influence*. Geanies House, Fearn, Ross-shire, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2012.

Packer, J. I. *A Grief Sanctified*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: Vine Books, 1997.

Simpson, Phillip L. *A Life of Gospel Peace: A Biography of Jeremiah Burroughs*. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2011.

Whyte, Alexander. *Thomas Shepherd: Pilgrim Father and Founder of Harvard, His Spiritual Experience and Experimental Preaching*. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2007.

Williams, J. B. *The Lives of Philip and Matthew Henry*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1974.

Pastoral Work and Preaching

Baxter, Richard. *The Reformed Pastor*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1974.

Beeke, Joel R. and Terry D. Slachter. *Encouragement for Today's Pastors: Help from the Puritans*. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2013.

Perkins, William. *The Art of Prophecy*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1996.

Subject Studies

Beeke, Joel R.

Heirs with Christ: The Puritans on Adoption. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2008.

Puritan Reformed Spirituality. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2004

Dennison, James T., Jr. *The Market Day of the Soul: The Puritan Doctrine of the Sabbath in England, 1532-1700*. Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria, 2001.

Murray, Iain H. *The Puritan Hope: Revival and the Interpretation of Prophecy*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1971.

Saxton, David W. *God's Battle Plan for the Mind*. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2015.

Theology

Beeke, Joel R. and Mark Jones. *A Puritan Theology: Doctrine for Life*. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2012.

Recommendations

★ **Bunyan, John.** *Pilgrim's Progress*

Bridge, William. *A Lifting up for the Downcast.*

(13 sermons on Psalm 42:11, *Why art thou cast down, O my soul?*)

Burroughs, Jeremiah. *The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment.*

Contentment in every condition is a great art, a spiritual mystery. It is to be learned, and to be learned as a mystery.

Flavel, John.

The Fountain of Life: A Display of Christ in His Essential and Mediatorial Glory.

The Mystery of Divine Providence.

(Psalm 57:2, *I will cry unto God most high, unto God that performeth all things for me.*)

It is the duty of the saints, especially in times of straits, to reflect upon the performances of Providence for them in all the states and through all the stages of their lives.

Goodwin, Thomas. *The Heart of Christ.*

(Full title (1651): *The Heart of Christ in Heaven towards Sinners on Earth. Or, A Treatise Demonstrating the Gracious Disposition and Tender Affection of Christ in His Human Nature Now in Glory, Unto His Members Under All Sorts of Infirmities, Either of Sin or Misery.*)

Heywood, Oliver. *Closet Prayer* (rept. entitled, *Private Prayer: A Christian Duty*)

Owen, John. *Of the Mortification of Sin in Believers.*

(You might want to try it in the edition edited by Kelly M. Kopic and Justin Taylor, entitled *Overcoming Sin and Temptation*. It also includes Owen's other two classics on sin, *Of Temptation: The Nature and Power of It*, and *Indwelling Sin*. Or begin with the abridgment done by Richard Rushing.)

Sibbes, Richard. *The Bruised Reed and Smoking Flax.*

I shall never cease to be grateful to Richard Sibbes, who was balm to my soul at a period in my life when I was overworked and badly overtired, and therefore subject in an unusual manner to the onslaughts of the devil... I found at that time that Richard Sibbes... was an unfailing remedy. His books The Bruised Reed and The Soul's Conflict quietened, soothed, comforted, encouraged, and healed me" (David Martyn Lloyd-Jones).

Watson, Thomas.

The Art of Divine Contentment.

The Christian on the Mount: A Treatise on Meditation.

The beasts in the old law that did not chew the cud were unclean; the professor who does not by meditation chew the cud is to be accounted unclean. Meditation is like the watering of a seed: it makes the fruits of grace to flourish.