

“Five Men of Grace” by John Calvert. Thursday Morning Studies term 4, 2022

Study 3

Thomas Brooks: 1608–1680.

Professor Carl Trueman, (Westminster TS) in 2012; ‘The Puritans are undoubtedly one of the most significant sources for theology that is both doctrinal and practical in equal measure.’

“‘Puritan’ as a name was, in fact, mud from the start. Coined in the early 1560s, it was always a satirical smear word implying peevishness, censoriousness, conceit, and a measure of hypocrisy, over and above its basic implication of religiously motivated discontent with what was seen as Elisabeth’s Laodicean and compromising Church of England. Later, the word gained the further, political connotation of being against the Stuart monarchy and for some sort of republicanism; its primary reference, however, was still to what was seen as an odd, furious, and ugly form of Protestant religion”. (JIPacker)

Puritans emphasised: Scriptures & Dedicated Christian scholarship, Trinitarian theology, electing grace of God, the Cross, applicatory work of Holy Spirit in lives of sinners. The church and Biblical worship, Scripture in all areas of life, personal conversion (John 3:3; James 2:17). Spiritual warfare made the Puritans what they were, for they accepted conflict as their calling, seeing themselves as the Lord’s soldier pilgrims and not expecting to advance a single step without opposition. ‘The Puritans lost, more or less, every public battle that they fought. Those who stayed in England did not change the Church of England as they hoped to do, nor did they revive more than a minority of its adherents, and eventually they were driven out of Anglicanism by calculated pressure on their consciences. (JIP)

“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.” (JIP)

1: 17th Century: Monarchs; Queen Elizabeth 1, died 1603, James VI Scotland & James I – 1625; **AV Bible 1611;** Charles I, 1649 beheaded; Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell, 1653–58; Charles II, 1660–1685; James II, 1685–88, deposed, last RC Monarch. (His 15-year-old Protestant daughter Mary II married William of Orange).

Musicians & Composers: Isaac Watts, 1674–1748. Henry Purcell, 1659–1695. Jeremiah Clark, 1674–1707. Antonio Vivaldi, 1678–1741. Claudio Monteverdi, 1567–1643. Johann Pachelbel, 1653–1706. Arcangelo Corelli, 1653–1713. Tomaso Albinoni 1671–1751. Giovanni Gabrieli, 1557–1612.

Great Ejection: After restoration of Charles II; St. Bartholomew's Day, August 24, 1662, [Black Bartholomew] in co-sequence of the Act of Uniformity passed by Parliament in May that year, more than 2,500 ministers were 'ejected' or expelled from their churches, residences, incomes because they would not conform to use of The Book of Common Prayer as the uniform order for worship in the C of E.

Thomas Brooks. Compared to other Puritans, little is known of his life. His birth county is unknown and there is no portrait, but his strong personality is shown in his writings. He matriculated as a 'pensioner' (which does not mean poverty), 7th July 1625 and entered Emmanuel College, Cambridge, aged about 17. This was the same year Charles 1 came to the throne of England and Scotland. He loved and was skilled in Hebrew, Greek and Latin but seems to have left before graduating and was ordained in 1640. Most of his years between 1625 and 1640 are unknown. He strongly supported the Parliamentary cause during the Civil War, 1642–48 and was a chaplain to Parliamentary forces on both land and sea. As a chaplain to the parliamentary fleet, he spent some years at sea and wrote; "I have been some years at sea and through grace I can say that I would not exchange my sea experiences for England's riches".

Although the New Model Army (Parliament) was victorious in the Civil War, Parliament and Army fell apart. Brooks was preacher in London at Thomas Apostles. He preached before the House of Commons (the Rump of the Long Parliament) in December 1648 with his sermon published as, 'God's Delight in the Progress of the Upright,' based upon Psalm 44:18, *Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from Thy way.* The Rump Parliament was the English Parliament after Colonel Thomas Pride (a Parliamentarian Commander) purged the Long Parliament on 6 December 1648, of those members hostile to the Grandees' (Aristocratic title) intention to try King Charles 1 for high treason.

"Rump" normally means the hind end or back-side of a mammal; its use meaning "remnant" was first recorded in the above context in English. Since 1649, the term "rump parliament" has been used to refer to any parliament reduced in size from its legitimate predecessor.

On 8th October 1650, a Thanksgiving Day for Cromwell's victory over the Scots at Dunbar the previous month, he again preached before Parliament; his text Isaiah 10:6 (rather cruel!). In 1652, in the face of opposition, Brooks moved to St. Margaret's, Fish-Street Hill, also in London. The complaint against him was his refusal to administer the sacraments to folk he deemed unworthy, a testimony to his strong conscience.

On St. Bartholomew's Day, 1662, he was one of many ministers evicted from their parishes and this drove him into nonconformity. However, he both resided and preached in proximity to St. Margaret's. During the Plague of 1665 and the Great Fire in 1666 he continued to minister to the needy. In two successive years of the 17th century London suffered two terrible disasters. In the spring and summer of 1665 an outbreak of Bubonic Plague spread from parish to parish until thousands had died and the huge pits dug to receive the bodies were full. In 1666 the Great Fire of London destroyed much of the centre of London, but also helped to kill off some of the black rats and fleas that carried the plague bacillus. Bubonic Plague, a ghastly disease, was known as the Black Death and had been known in England for centuries. The victim's skin turned black in patches and inflamed glands or 'buboes' in the groin, combined with compulsive vomiting, swollen tongue and splitting headaches made it a horrible, agonizing killer. In Vol. V1 of Brook's works, a 312 page treatise titled, 'London's Lamentations,' based on Isaiah 42: 24 & 25, is described as; 'perhaps the most remarkable contemporary memorial' of the calamitous event.

Preaching and writing a succession of treatises occupied him between 1652-80. The first: *Precious remedies against Satan's Devices*. His wife Martha died in 1676 and he wrote; 'She was always best when she was most with God in a corner. She has many a whole day been pouring out her soul before God for the nation, for Sion, and the great concerns of her own soul, when them about her did judge it more expedient that she had been in her bed, by reason of some bodily infirmity that did hang upon her; but the divine pleasures that she took in her [corner] did drown the sense of pain.' Brooks describes twelve of Satan's devices and their remedies, then focuses on eight devices Satan uses to keep believers from using the means of grace. He suggests remedies that keep saints in a sad, doubting condition of learning, divisions among the godly, excuse of ignorance.

The ministry of numerous Pastors has been enriched by their praying wives! He lived for three more years and married, Patience Cartwright.

No children came from either marriage and six months after making his Will, he 'entered into the joy of his Lord.'

The Works of Thomas Brooks, 6 Vols. 3,000 pages. (Modern Pubs.)

Heaven on Earth: A treatise on Assurance, 320 pages. 'There is no higher privilege than to be a child of God and to know it, for assurance brings joy to worship and prayer, and strength and boldness to our witness.' **Joel Beeke & Randall Pederson.**

The Mute Christian under the Smarting Rod. **Brooks writes, it is** 'the great duty and concern of gracious souls to be mute and silent under the greatest afflictions, the saddest providences, and sharpest trials they meet with in this world'. **Highly recommended for anyone going through trials they cannot change.**

Smooth Stones taken from Ancient Brooks. Selected by C H Spurgeon (Puritan Paperback) A collection of sentences, illustrations and quaint sayings from that renowned Puritan, Thomas Brooks. *Never put off conscience with any plea that you do not stand by in the great day of your account.*

Puritanism; 'began under Elizabeth 1 who suspected it, grew under James 1 who feared it, increased in power under Charles 1 and his Archbishop, William Laud, who despised it, gained a brief but august ascendancy under Cromwell who honoured it, and ended under Charles 11 and his bishops who hated it.' (Peter Lewis: *The Genius of Puritanism*)

On Godly living at home; faithful leadership and family worship are the right and left hand of godliness in the home. Brooks wrote; 'A family without prayer is like a house without a roof, open and exposed to all the storms of heaven.'

God saves us to live in Christ and to walk in holiness. Christ purchased us with His precious blood so that we could partake of all His benefits. The Holy Spirit is given to us for our growth in grace and holiness of life. Every moment of our day is a call to holiness. God demonstrated His own heart for holiness by crucifying His Son, the Lord of Glory, for our sin. Let this be a reminder that we must seek our all in all in Christ, so that Christ is the very context of our living. For faith to live in Christ, strive, in the strength of Christ and His Spirit, to bring every thought, word, and deed captive to the obedience of Christ. Joel Beeke & Mark Jones.