

HM 4.1 – Puritan Perspectives on Ministry

Puritan Spirituality

Further Reading

- John Owen – *Works* - especially vols VI - IX
- Richard Baxter – *Practical Works*
- *Westminster Standards* – Confession, Catechisms, Form of Presbyterian Church Government, Directory of Public Worship
- Henry Scougal – *The Life of God in the Soul of Man*
- Samuel Rutherford - *Letters*
- Henry Scudder – *The Christian's Daily Walk*
- Richard Lovelace – *The American Pietism of Cotton Mather*
- Joel Beeke - *The Puritan Practice of Meditation*
- E Brooks Holifield – *The Covenant Sealed: The Development of Puritan Sacramental Theology in Old and New England, 1570-1720*
- Rich Lusk – *Paedo-faith* (chapter 6)
- David Field – *Decalogue Dod*
- John Spurr – *English Puritanism – 1603-1690*
- J I Packer – *Among God's Giants*
- David Sceats – *The Experience of Grace – Aspects of the Faith and Spirituality of the Puritans*
- Dewey Wallace – *The Spirituality of the Later English Puritans*
- Leland Ryken – *Worldly Saints*
- Kelly M Kapic and Randall C Gleason (eds) - *The Devoted Life: An Invitation to the Puritan Classics* (DF review in *Evangelical Quarterly* 78.2 or (longer version) online at <http://davidpfield.blogspot.com/2005/12/devoted-life-review.html>)

Bibliographies in Packer, Wallace and Ryken will take you a good deal further.

Trying to capture / use Puritan spirituality:

- Arthur Bennett - *The Valley of Vision*
- Jerry Bridges - *The Pursuit of Holiness* and *The Practice of Godliness*
- Donald Whitney - *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*

Articles of interest:

- Don Carson – “When is Spirituality Spiritual?” in *Gagging of God* 555-569
- J I Packer – “Evangelical Foundations for Spirituality” – SSW II 255-67
- Marian Raikes – *Presenting Everyone Mature*
- Stephen Perks – “What is Spirituality?” – *Christianity and Society*, July 2000 (also in *Common Law Wives and Concubines* 91-112)

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1. what is (the object of the study of) spirituality?
  - theology and dynamic and machinery of experienced relationship with God?
2. what distinguishes true from false?
  - the presupposition – God and his truth - the reality we're trying to get in touch with
  - the practice/process – aligned with that reality and conformed to God's directions - the ways we try and get in touch with it
3. how study it? - at least get a handle on a given "spirituality"
  - story, metaphors, beliefs, method-approach, method-how-to, priorities, adjectives
4. what psychology? how does a human being work?
5. what does it aim for, how does go about achieving that and how is it measured/identified?

## **Puritan spirituality – characteristics, questions and comments**

### ***Introduction***

- who/what were the puritans?
- why were they called ‘puritans’?
- looseness of the term
- the key characteristic of puritanism
  - they were accused of logic-chopping, doctrinal pickiness, obsession with orthodoxy, speculation
  - and of being enthusiasts, fanatics
  - and of being legalists, moralists, busy-bodies, martinets
- they were totalitarian
  - detail
  - intensity
  - consistency
  - conscience
  - “painful”
- uncomfortable or attractive? (Baxter e.g.)
  - to whom?
  - what makes one way or the other?
    - where’s God in it all?

### ***Theology***

#### Reformation theology

- sovereignty of God
  - reading providence
  - chastisements
  - *coram Deo*
  - vocation / priesthood all believers
- centrality / supremacy / perspicuity of the Word
- Calvinist soteriology
  - sweet and rotten tulips (brevity life, depth sinfulness)
- Christ-centredness – union with Christ

### ***The human person***

Faculty psychology – affectionate practical divinity

|           |           |            |
|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Mind      | Will      | Heart      |
| Cognition | Volition  | Affections |
| Knowledge | Decisions | Feelings   |
| Doctrine  | Conduct   | Experience |
| Dogma     | Morality  | Piety      |

Priority of the object: emotions as reactions

### ***Means and mechanisms***

#### The WORD

- Sermons
- Meditation
- Third use of the law
- Psalms
- Catechizing

#### The BODY

Sabbath  
Family  
Church government  
Sacraments  
Holy conference

### ***Problems and questions***

Couldn't relax

Assurance

- self-suspicion and self-examination

“Anxiety and arrogance – the old combination”

Reading providence

Unrealistically high expectations

Intellectualist / elitist

Tension at heart of puritanism – covenant and election (parish or gathered; paedobaptist or not; intensive or extensive)

World-affirming or world-denying?

### **Packer and Ryken enthusing about the puritans**

J I Packer: *A Quest for Godliness*

Introduction: Items of conscious debt ...

1. John Owen helped me to be realistic about my continuing sinfulness and the discipline of self-suspicion and mortification to which, with all Christians, I am called.
2. Owen, under God, enabled me to see how consistent and unambiguous is the biblical witness to the sovereignty and particularity of Christ's redeeming love.
3. Richard Baxter convinced me that regular discursive meditation in which as he quaintly puts it you 'imitate the most powerful preacher you have ever heard' in applying spiritual truth to yourself, as well as turning that truth into praise, is a vital discipline for spiritual health.
4. Baxter also focused my vision of the ordained minister's pastoral office.
5. The Puritans have taught me to see and feel the transitoriness of this life, to think of it, with all its richness, as essentially the gymnasium and dressing room where we are prepared for heaven and to regard readiness to die as the first step in learning to live.
6. The Puritans shaped my churchly identity, by imparting to me their vision of the wholeness of the work of God that they called reformation and that we would more likely nowadays call renewal.
7. The Puritans made me aware that all theology is also spirituality in the sense that it has an influence, good or bad, positive or negative, on its recipients' relationship or lack of relationship to God.

Afterword: Puritans as great thinkers, worshipers, hoppers, warriors

Leland Ryken: *Worldly Saints*

The Genius of Puritanism – What the Puritans did Best

1. The God-centred life – putting God first
2. All of life is God's – living in two worlds – both equally real
3. Seeing God in the commonplace – in the ordinary events
4. The momentousness of life – everything matters
5. Living in a spirit of expectancy – exhilarated with hope
6. The practical impulse in Puritanism – making a difference in people's lives
7. Getting back to basics – the heart of the matter, inner reality
8. The balanced Christian life – head and heart, theory and practice, this world and next, active and contemplative, grace and holy living
9. A simplicity that dignifies – worship, lifestyle, preaching
10. A sure foundation – Bible

## ***Some Examples of / Comment on Puritan Spirituality***

- 1) John Geree – *The Character of an Old English Puritan* - seen
- 2) Thomas Taylor – *Christian Alphabet*– seen
- 3) Samuel Rutherford – quotations from *Letters*– seen
- 4) Jonathan Edwards – previous handout & forthcoming lecture
- 5) Beeke / Sach on assurance – previous handout & forthcoming lecture
- 6) Tom Schwanda on Isaac Ambrose – forthcoming lecture
  
- 7) Richard Baxter – passages from *Christian Directory* – previous handout – tone and priorities
- 8) Richard Baxter– from *Directions and Persuasions to a Sound Conversion*, pp.588-599
- 9) John Dod – Puritans and law – key issue
- 10) John Owen – recovering from a decay of the principle of grace – Christ-centredness
- 11) John Bunyan – from *Grace Abounding* – anxiety
- 12) Lovelace on Mather – previous handout

### **7) Richard Baxter on various – from *Christian Directory* - c.1665 - separate handouts**

Tone and priorities

- a) Types and evidences of sinful desire – p.277
- c) How selfish is my love for God? - pp.161-62
- d) Special seasons of duty – pp.230-31
- e) The life of godliness is the best life – p.51
- h) The hatred of God – p.123

### **8) Richard Baxter– from *Directions and Persuasions to a Sound Conversion*, pp.588-599**

Introductory: from *A Treatise of Conversion*. II.483

"*Hinderance 5*: The next hinderance is inconsiderateness ... When truths are not considered of, they are but as medicines that lie in a box, and therefore are not like to work; it is the work of consideration to bring down truths from the understanding to the heart and to hold them there till they do work ...

*Direction 5*: If ever you would be converted, use to consider frequently and seriously of those truths of God that must do the work. The word of God is pure and powerful to convert the soul, but can you look it should convert you, if you will not so much as soberly think upon it? How can that work upon your hearts which is out of your minds? ... If I could prevail with this congregation to be but considerate, and now and then to bestow some time to get the truth to their hearts, I should great hopes of the conversion of you all: for light is stronger than darkness ..."

A.E. Housman – "Three minutes' thought would suffice to show this but thought is irksome and three minutes is a long time."

### **9) John Dod – 1549-1645 – on Old Testament law**

John Dod, in his views of the use of Old Testament law, was a mainstream puritan and typically reformed.

[See, for example, John Calvin, *Institutes*, II.vii; Francis Turretin, *Institutes*, Eleventh Topic; *Westminster Confession*, Chapter XIX; *Heidelberg Catechism*, Questions 92-115; William Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of the Cases of Conscience*, 1606; Edward Elton, *An Exposition of the Ten Commandments*, 1623; William Ames, *Marrow of Sacred Divinity*, 1641; Anthony Burgess, *Vindiciae Legis*, 1646; Thomas Shepard, *Theses Sabbaticae*, 1649; James Durham, *The Law Unsealed*, 1676.]

He believed that the law had a threefold use: to restrain the evil-doer, to drive the sinner to Christ and to instruct the righteous in ways pleasing to God. He believed that law was an inescapable concept in a universe with a God who was neither morally indifferent nor silent. God has standards and reveals those standards and those revealed standards represent authoritative moral demands upon his creatures. He further believed that the Ten Commandments represented a distinct and special summary of God's universal moral law which in addition to being written by the finger of God on stone was also stamped upon the conscience of all humankind. These commandments were specially given to Israel not to show that they were not binding upon all humankind but rather to show that they could only be kept by a redeemed people. No human being, the Lord Jesus Christ excepted, has ever kept these Ten

Commandments, the summary of which is the twofold love command, and thus all men and women deserve the curses announced by the law. The Lord Jesus Christ came not to set aside the moral law but rather to keep it, confirm it, expound it and intensify it and to bear the punishment due to the elect for their transgression of it. And more, he came to enable his redeemed people to keep it themselves and thus enjoy the blessings of obedience. The law, after all, was not a malicious imposition of a spiteful tyrant but the loving, righteous, wise instruction of a Fatherly God who loves to bless. Obedience to it by the pardoned and renewed people of God represents the path to true human maturity and to the flourishing not only of individuals but of societies. Those individuals and societies that live by the law of God will enjoy the blessings of God and those that do not will suffer the curse of God. Many times in his life Jesus, who declared that Scripture cannot be broken and who lived by every word that came from the mouth of God, sang, "Oh, how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day" and "I open my mouth and pant, because I long for your commandments" and "Seven times a day I praise you for your righteous rules". Far from setting aside the law, Jesus by his Spirit causes the law, which his servant Paul calls holy, righteous, good and spiritual and says he delights in in his inner man, to be written upon the hearts of his people. He gives them the new hearts which are essential to a life of loving God which is, of course, a life of obeying his not-burdensome commands. He also gives them all manner of encouragements and motivations to obey, knowing that obedience is a blessing and a delight to the renewed people of God. Those with new hearts will seek to please God with their every thought, word and deed and will pursue universal obedience in the fear and love of God.

The Ten Commandments are expounded in the case law which helps us to understand specific applications. They are spiritual and require heart obedience. They bring positive and negative requirements, touch the inner life and the outer life, direct the individual by himself and in all his roles, responsibilities and relationships. Even now no believer perfectly obeys the requirements of the law - far from it - and yet true and sincere obedience is possible and God is - and does not merely pretend to be - truly pleased with it, rewarding it with all manner of blessings in this life and the next. Such is his providence, however, that the righteous continue to suffer much affliction, which, it should be understood, God allows and uses for their real good; and also that the curse which rests upon the unrighteous is rarely manifest in its full force this side of judgment.

This is the Reformed synthesis and Dod's *Decalogue* is fully in tune with it. He pays almost no attention to what some would see as "negative" statements about the law on the simple grounds that the law is negative only when misunderstood and misused by sinners. Rightly understood and rightly used by the right people it is nothing but a good gift of a loving God whose will for the faithful, who delight in and constantly meditate upon the law, is prosperity, life, maturity, and true humanness; in a word, blessing. The law is the revelation of the perfect will of God. So, quite simply, the law is my enemy if God is my enemy. But if God is my friend then the law is my friend.

## **10) John Owen on recovering from a decay of the principle of grace – 1676**

### **Discourses 4-6 in *Works*, vol 9**

#### ***DISCOURSE 4: Question. How may we recover from a decay of the principle of grace?***

Answer. We have been speaking concerning the decay of the principle of grace; and I will now offer you some few thoughts that may be applied unto our recovery from the decay of this principle. In doing which, I shall tell you no more than I think I have found myself. If we would recover spiritual life, we must come as near as we can unto, and abide as much as we are able at, the well-head of life. Christ is the spring of our spiritual life; he is every way our life. It is in a derivation of life from Christ, and in conformity to him, that we must look for our spiritual life.

Before I mention how we should approach unto and lie at this well-head of life, let me observe to you this one thing, — that when there is a general contagious disease (the plague, or the like), every man will look to his health and safety with reference to other occasions, but will be most careful in regard to the general contagion. Now, if forsaking this spring of life be the plague of the age, and the plague of the place where we live, and the plague of Christians, we ought to be very careful lest this general contagion should reach us, more or less, one way or other. It is evident to me, — who have some advantage to consider things, as much as ordinary men, — that the apostasy, the cursed apostasy, that spreads itself over this nation, and whose fruits are in all ungodliness and uncleanness, consists in an apostasy from and forsaking the person of Christ. Some write of how little use the person of Christ is in religion; — none, but to declare the doctrine of the gospel to us. Consider the preaching and talk of men. You have much preaching and discourse about virtue and vice; so it was among the philosophers of old: but Jesus Christ is laid aside, quite as a thing forgotten; as if he was of no use, no consideration, in religion; as if men knew not at all how to make any use of him, as to living to God. This being the general plague, as is evident, of the apostasy of the day wherein we live, if we are wise, we shall consider very carefully whether we ourselves are not influenced more or less with it; as where there is a general temptation, it doth more or less try all men, the best of believers, and prevail more or less upon their spirits. I am afraid we have not, some of us, that love for Christ, that delight in him, nor do make that constant abode with him, as we have done. We have very much lost out of our faith and our affections him who is the life and center, the glory and the power, of all spiritual life, and of all we have to do with God, — Jesus Christ himself. I brought it in only to let us know, that if we would revive our spiritual life (and, believe it, if any of us are not concerned in our spiritual decays, these are sapless things, and will be heard with as much weariness as spoken), we are to abide more at the well-head

of life. It is the direction of our Lord Jesus Christ, "Abide in me: unless ye abide in me, ye can bring forth no fruit. And every such branch shall be so and so purged." But you will say, "How shall we do so? how shall we abide, more than we have done, at this well-head of life?"

**1. We are to abide at the well-head of life by a frequency of the acts of faith upon the person of Christ.**

Faith is that grace, not only whereby we are implanted into Christ, but whereby we also abide in him. If so, methinks the frequent actings of faith upon the person of Christ are a drawing near to the well-head of life. And though we are to put forth the vigor, the earnestness, the watchfulness of our hearts unto obedience; yet a ceasing to continue in the acting of faith upon the person of Christ, even under the vigor of our own endeavours by those general, outward desires of walking with God and living to him, will weaken us, and we shall find ourselves losers by it. Do you all understand me? I am not teaching the wise and more knowing of the flock; I would speak unto the meanest. I say, suppose we should resolve with great earnestness, diligence, watchfulness, to abide in duties, in inward duties, to watch over our hearts, which is required of us; yet, if in our so doing we are taken off thereby from frequent actings of faith upon Christ, as the spring of our life, we shall decay under all our endeavors, watchfulness, and multiplication of duties. Wherefore, my brethren, let me give you this advice, — that you would night and day, upon your beds, in your ways, upon all occasions, have the exercise of faith upon the person of Christ; faith working by a view of him as represented in the gospel, by trust in him, and by invocation of him, — that he may be continually nigh unto you. And you cannot have him nigh unto you, unless you make yourselves, by these actings of faith, through his grace, continually nigh unto him: so you will abide at the well-head.

I could show you those excellent advantages that we should have by continually being near to Christ, who is the overflowing spring of grace, and from whence it will issue out to us, if we abide with him, be nigh to him, and keep up to this well-head.

**2. Abide with him in love.** Oh, the warm affections for Christ which some of you can witness concerning yourselves, — that your hearts have been filled withal towards Christ, when you have been under his call to believe on him! And it is a marvellous way of abiding with Christ, to abide with him by love; which is called "cleaving to God and Christ:" it is the affection of adhesion, and gives a sense of union. "How, then, shall we get our hearts to abide with Christ by love?" This is a subject that if I were to preach upon, how many things would presently offer themselves to us, from the excellency of his person, from the excellency of his love, from our necessity of him, the advantages and benefits we have by him, and his kindness towards us! All these things, and many more, would quickly present themselves unto us. But I will name but one thing, and I name it the rather, because I heard it mentioned in prayer since I came in: Labour to have your hearts filled with a love to Jesus Christ, as there is in him made a representation of all divine excellencies. This was God's glorious design. It is not to be separated from his design of glorifying himself in the work of redemption; for a great part of God's glorious design in the incarnation of Christ, was in him to represent himself unto us, "who is the image of the invisible God, the express image of his person." Now, if you do but consider Christ as God is gloriously represented unto you in him, you will find him the most proper object for divine love, — for that love which is wrought in your hearts by the Holy Ghost, for that love that hath sweetness, complacency, satisfaction in it. Then, let us remember that we exercise our minds to consider Christ, as all the lovely properties of the divine nature and counsels of his will, as to love and grace, are manifested by Christ. If we would abide at the well-head of life, we must abide in these things; and let love be excited to Christ under this especial consideration, — as he who represents the supreme object of your love, God himself, in all the glorious properties of his nature.

**3. Add meditation hereunto; study Christ more, and all the things of Christ; delight more in the hearing and preaching of Christ.** He is our best friend; let not the difficulties of the mystery of his person and grace deter you. There are wonderful things of the counsels of heaven, and of the glory of the holy God, in the person of Christ as the head of the church; if you would be found inquiring into them, an unsearchable treasure of divine wisdom, grace, and love is laid up in Christ: therefore meditate upon them more. Let me assure you this will prove the best expedient for the recovery of our spiritual life. And I will abide by this doctrine to eternity, that without it we shall never recover spiritual life to the glory of God in Christ.

**4. And then, brethren, seeing we have, in the next place, felt decays in the midst of the performance of multiplied duties, labor to bring spirituality into your duties.**

"What is that," you will say, "and wherein doth it consist?" It is the due exercise of every grace that is required to the discharge of that duty. Let every such grace be in its due exercise, and that is to be spiritual in duty. As, for instance, would a man be spiritual in all his prayers? — let him, then, consider what grace and what exercise of grace is required to this duty. A due fear and reverence of the name of God; faith, love, and delight in him; an humble sense of his own wants, earnest desires of supply, dependence upon God for guidance, and the like; — we all know that these are the graces required to the discharge of this duty of praying by the Holy Ghost. And let these graces be in a due exercise, and then you are spiritual in this duty. Is the duty charity, — giving a supply to the poor? There is to be a ready mind, a compassionateness of heart, and obedience unto the command of Christ in that particular. These are the graces required to the discharge of that duty, and to watch against the contrary vices. So that if we would bring spirituality into duty, it is to exercise the graces that are required by the rule to the performance of that duty. I shall only farther give you this one caution, — have a care that your head in notion and your tongue in talk do not too fast empty your hearts of truth. We are apt to lay it up in our heads by notions, and bring it forth in talk, and not let it be in our hearts;

and this weakens spiritual life greatly. Ye hear the word preached; and it is of great concernment what account we shall give of the word that hath been preached unto you: for we that preach must give an account of our preaching, and so must you of what you hear; and many a good word is spoken, truly, and yet we see but little fruit of it. And the reason of this is, that some, when they hear it, take no farther regard of it, but “let it slip,” as the apostle speaks, Hebrews 2:1.

And if we complain of the treacherousness of our memories, — it is the most harmless way of the slipping out of the word. It is not the treachery of our memories, but of our hearts and affections, that makes the heart like a broken vessel, — that makes all the rents in it where the water runs out, as the comparison is. The word slips out by putting your affections into carnal exercise; and it quickly finds its way to depart from the heart that gives it no better entertainment. We talk away a sermon and the sense of it; which robs us both of the sermon and the fruit of it. A man hears a good word of truth, and, instead of taking the power of it into his heart, he takes the notion of it into his mind, and is satisfied therewith. But this is not the way to thrive. God grant that we may never preach to you any thing but what we may labor to have an experience of the power of it in our own hearts, and to profit ourselves by the word wherewith we design to profit others! And I pray God grant that you also may have some profit by the word dispensed to you, — that it slip not out through carnal affections, and be not drawn out through notions and talk, with a regardlessness to treasure it up in your hearts!

These things we are diligently to attend unto, if we would recover our spiritual losses that we are complaining of, and that not without just cause.

**DISCOURSE 6: Question. How may we make our addresses to Christ for the exercise of grace; that is, that we may have grace strengthened, and be ready for all exercise? or, How may we make application to Christ, that we may receive grace from him to recover from decays?**

Answer. I think the direction given by our Savior himself is so plain, and doth so fall in with our experience, that we need not look much farther. Saith he, “Unless ye abide in me, ye cannot bear fruit.” The business we aim at is fruit-bearing; which consists as much in the internal, vigorous actings of grace, as in the performance of outward duties, — to be faithful in our minds and souls, as well as in our lives. “The way for that,” saith our Savior, “is, ‘Abide in me.’” And unless we do so, he tells us plainly, do we whatever we will else, we “cannot bring forth fruit,” So that the whole of our fruitfulness depends upon our abiding in Christ. There cannot, then, be much more said unto this business, but to inquire a little what it is to abide in Christ.

Certainly, it is not a mere not going off from Christ; as we say, a man abides when he doth not go away. For I hope that, under all the decays we have complained of, and want of fruitfulness, yet we have not left Christ, and gone away from him. We have so far abode in him as the branch abideth in the root, from whence it hath its communication and supplies. Therefore there is something in particular included in this abiding in Christ, dwelling in Christ, and Christ dwelling in us.

And there seems to be this in it, — that to abide in Christ, is to be always nigh unto Christ, in the spiritual company of Christ, and in communication with Christ. It doth not lie in a naked, essential act of believing, whereby we are implanted into Christ, and will not go from him; but there is something of an especial, spiritual activity of soul in this abiding in Christ: it is abiding with him, and in his presence.

And as this abiding with Christ must be by some acts of our souls, let us consider what acts those are; which may give a little farther light into this matter. And, First, It must be, certainly, by some act of our minds. Secondly, By some act of our wills. Thirdly, By some act of our affections. And thus we abide with Christ; which is the way certainly to bring forth fruit.

**First.** There is an abiding with Christ in our minds. Now this, to me, is in contemplation and thoughts of him night and day, — “I sought him on my bed, in the night,” saith the spouse; — to consider very much the person of Christ, to contemplate upon him as vested with his glorious office, and as intrusted and designed by the Father to this work. “We all,” saith the apostle, “with open face beholding the glory of the Lord as in a glass, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord.” My brethren, that which you and I are aiming at is, to be “changed into the same image;” that is, into the image and likeness of the glory of God in Christ. I dare boldly say, by those of us who have reason to have daily apprehensions of our going out of the world, and leaving this state of things, that we have no greater desire, nor is there any thing more frequent in our minds, than this, that we may be more and more changed into that image before we go out of this world; for we are looking after perfection in likeness to Christ. Therefore aged Christians especially will bear witness, that there is nothing now we long for more than to be more and more changed into the image and likeness of Christ. How shall we get to this? Why, saith he, “The way is, by looking steadily upon Christ, as a man looks with an optic glass to an object at a great distance. We behold him,” saith he, “by looking steadily upon Christ himself, and the glory of God in him.” Now there is a wonderful large object for us to behold; for when you look upon the glory of God in Christ, you have what you please of Christ for the object of your eye and view; the person of Christ, the office of Christ, the merit of Christ, the example of Christ, the death of Christ, and what you will, so you be much intent in your thoughts and minds, much in immediate contemplation about Christ. I do not know how you find it, brethren; but it is the advice I would give you who are aged Christians, and not likely to continue long in this world, to exercise yourselves in immediate contemplations upon Christ. All the

teachings you have had from ministers, the principal end of them has been to enable you to this; and really, if I know any thing, we shall find them accompanied with a sweet transforming power, beyond what we have had experience of in other ways and duties. "We shall be changed into the same likeness." Well, then, we abide with Christ in the acts of our mind, by immediate thoughtfulness and contemplation upon Christ in the night, and upon our beds, and in our walkings, and by the wayside, and in times we set apart for meditation. We are greatly to labor after an intuitive view of Christ; that is, a direct view in the contemplation of Christ.

**Secondly.** If you will abide with Christ, there must be an acting of your will in it also; and that is, in great diligence and carefulness about that obedience which Christ doth require, in all the instances of it. This is a great way of abiding with Christ, when we labor to have our wills in a readiness unto all the instances of obedience that Christ requireth at our hands. Let that be the question, whether it be the will of God that we should do thus, or not? And if it be so, pray let us be ready to show we do abide with Christ, by yielding cheerful and willing obedience to him in this instance and duty which he calleth us unto; and so in all other things. I would have every one of us think often of this matter, — what it is Christ requires of me personally, in a way of duty and obedience. And I would have us labor to have in great readiness all things which Christ requires of us. And especially, brethren, I would have this in a readiness, that Christ requires of me to walk very circumspectly and carefully, — to keep myself from spots and pollution, and defilements, by converse in the world. This Christ requires at all times, in all instances, and upon all occasions. What have we been preaching? what have former teachers been instructing us in? All that you are taught is, that you should come to the knowledge of all instances of duty, and the way of them, which Christ requires at your hands. And "if ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

This is your fruit-bearing, — a direct contemplation upon Christ; wherein I would beg that both you and my own soul might be found more to abound, while we are in this world (and you will find Christ, in the discharge of this duty, will make very near approaches and frequent visits to your hearts, — more in the discharge of this duty than of any other); and to have our hearts in a readiness to comply with every instance of obedience Christ requires at our hands.

**Thirdly.** There is an abiding with Christ in point of affection. There may be love and delight in all these things; if there be not, very spiritual contemplations will be a bar. There is no duty that is required of any man in this world so spiritual, so heavenly, so evangelical, but, through want of love and delight, a man may be slothful in performing of it. I may tie myself to do so this hour or that hour, and have no benefit to my own soul, nor give any glory unto God, if there be not love and delight in it. They will sweeten the duty, and refresh the heart of God and man, Christ and us. So labor, brethren, and pray greatly for it, that you may abide with Christ with delight, that you may find a sweetness and refreshment in it, and that every season of retiring unto Christ may bring a kind of spiritual joy and gladness to your hearts. Now you have a great opportunity, having shaken off the occasions of life and other concerns, to dwell with Christ; — now it is a good time.

## 11) John Bunyan's *Grace Abounding* – 1666

I am here unfolding of my secret things - 174

339 paragraphs + Conclusion

1-264 - spiritual experiences

265-317 - account of call to ministry

318-339 - account of imprisonment

3. I did soon lose that little I learned

7. I was often much cast down and afflicted in my mind therewith, yet could I not let go my sins

10. When I have seen some read in those books that concerned christian piety, it would be as it were a prison to me.

10. Heaven and hell were both out of sight and out of mind

16. I fell in very eagerly with the religion of the times ... to go to church twice ... and very devoutly both say and sing as others did, yet retaining my wicked life.

20-21. I went home when the sermon was ended, with a great burden upon my spirit ... but behold it lasted not, for before I had well dined, the trouble began to go off my mind .. Wherefore, when I had satisfied nature with my food, I shook the sermon out of my mind

22. [Playing 'cat'] a voice did suddenly dart from heaven: 'Wilt thou leave thy sins and go to heaven, or have thy sins and go to hell?' Too late - sin away !

26. Now therefore I went on in sin with great greediness of mind, still grudging that I could not be so satisfied with it as I would

Rebuked for swearing - gave it up.

30. Wherefore I fell to some outward reformation, both in my words and my life and did set the commandments before me for my way to heaven; which commandments I did also strive to keep, and, as I thought, did keep them pretty well sometimes

32, 36. I loved to be talked of as one that was truly godly ... but poor wretch as I was, I was all this while ignorant of Jesus Christ and going about to establish my own righteousness

37. Visit to Bedford - 3 or 4 poor women talking of the things of God. 'I was now a brisk talker also myself in the matters of religion ... but they were far above, out of my reach'

46. And now, methought, I began to look into the Bible with new eyes ... and, indeed, I was then never out of the Bible.

51 - faith and puddles

56 - whether elect or not

63. Begin at the beginning of Genesis, and read to the end of the Revelations and see if you can find that there was ever any that trusted in the Lord, and was confounded

66 - what if the day of grace over and gone

70. If this great man had all his portion in this world, one hour in hell-fire would make him forget all

82. Conscience - I could not now tell how to speak my words, for fear I should misplace them. Oh, how gingerly did I then go in all I did or said !

85. Two things would make me wonder; the one was, when I saw old people hunting after the things of this life, as if they should live here always; the other was, when I found professors much distressed and cast down, when they met with outward losses

87 - fear of reprobation

90-91 - comfort from Song of Songs - subjectivity

93-4 - voices

96 - temptation to blaspheme

97 - maybe Muslims are right

117 - under Gifford's ministry

120-121 - understanding of the person and work of Christ

126. God did set me down in all the things of Christ ... he did open them unto me, make them shine before me, and cause them to dwell with me, and comfort me over and over, both of his own being, and the being of his Son, and Spirit, and Word, and gospel.

129-30. Luther on Galatians - 'as if his book had been written out of my heart ... I do prefer this book of Martin Luther upon the Galatians, excepting the Holy Bible, before all the books that ever I have seen, as most fit for a wounded conscience.'

Increasing assurance but further temptations

144. My sin, when compared to the blood of Christ, was no more to it, than this little clot or stone before me, is to this vast and wide field that here I see

163. I found it hard work now to pray to God, because despair was swallowing me up

On to 227 ups and downs -

180 - sin v Holy Ghost

184 - tempter began afresh to mock my soul

186 - I cannot now express what I saw and felt of the steadiness of Jesus Christ

191 - I should be sometimes up and down twenty times in an hour

194 - I was refreshed

195 - I began to despond again

205 - My peace would be in and out sometimes twenty times a day; comfort now, and peace presently; peace now, and before I could go a furlong as full of fear and guilt as ever heart could hold

All this illustrates 52: I was tossed betwixt the devil and my own ignorance. It was when he came to look more carefully at the texts which stumbled him that he made progress - see eg 221-227.

229. But one day, as I was passing in the field, and that too with some dashes on my conscience lest yet all was not right, suddenly this sentence fell upon my soul, Thy righteousness is in heaven; and methought withal, I saw, with the eyes of my soul, Jesus Christ at God's right hand; there, I say, as my righteousness; so that wherever I was, or whatever I was adoin, God could not say of me, He wants my righteousness, for that was just before him. I also saw, moreover, that it was not my good frame of heart that made my righteousness better, nor yet my bad frame that made my righteousness worse; for my righteousness was Jesus Christ himself, that same yesterday and to-day and for ever.

232. Now I could look from myself to him, and should reckon that all those graces of God that were now green in me, were yet but like those cracked groats and fourpence-halfpennies that rich men carry in their purses, when their gold is in their trunks at home ! Oh, I saw my gold was in my trunk at home.

233. Now could I see myself in heaven and earth at once; in heaven, by my Christ, by my head, by my righteousness and life, though on earth by my body or person.

249. Now also I should labour to take the Word as God had laid it down, without restraining the natural force of one syllable thereof.

276. I preached what I felt, what I smartingly did feel

305. Great grace and small gifts are better than great gifts and no grace

327. The parting with my wife and poor children hath oft been to me in this place as the pulling the flesh from my bones ... especially my poor blind child, who lay nearer my heart than all I had besides; O the thoughts of the hardship I thought my blind one might go under, would break my heart to pieces.

### Conclusions

2. Sometimes, when, after sin committed, I have looked for sore chastisement from the hand of God, the very next that I have had from him hath been the discovery of his grace

5. Of all tears, they are the best that are made by the blood of Christ; and of all joy, that is the sweetest that is mixed with mourning over Christ. Oh it is a goodly thing to be on our knees, with Christ in our arms, before God.

### Dying Sayings - attached to some editions of Grace Abounding:

No sin against God can be little, because it is against the great God of heaven and earth; but if the sinner can find out a little God, it may be easy to find out little sins

Sin turns all God's grace into wantonness; it is the dare of his justice, the rape of his mercy, the jeer of his patience, the slight of his power, and the contempt of his love.

Thou art beaten that thou mayest be better

When thou prayest, rather let thy heart be without words, than thy words without a heart.

The best of Christians are found in the worst of times

Christ is the desire of nations, the joy of angels, the delight of the Father; what solace then must that soul be filled with, that hath the possession of him to all eternity.

## **12) *The American Piety of Cotton Mather – 1663-1728***

### **Cotton Mather – 1663-1728**

Born Boston. Son of Increase Mather. Grandson of John Cotton and Richard Mather.

Richard Mather's reasons for moving to New England:

1. A removal from a corrupt church to a purer.
2. A removal from a place where the truth and professors of it are persecuted, unto a place of more quiet and safety.
3. A removal from a place where all the ordinances of God cannot be enjoyed, unto a place where they may [be].
4. A removal from a church where the discipline of the Lord Jesus Christ is wanting, unto a church where it may be practised.
5. A removal from a place, where the ministers of God are unjustly inhibited from the execution of their functions, to a place where they may more freely execute the same.
6. A removal from a place, where there are fearful signs of desolation, to a place where one may have well grounded hope of God's protection.

Pastor of Second Church, Boston, 1683; Published around 400 books. His *magnum opus* was *Magnalia Christi Americana* (1702) [BOT], an ecclesiastical history of America from the founding of New England to his own time. His *Manuductio ad Ministerium* (1726) was a handbook of advice for young graduates to the ministry: on doing good, on college love affairs, on poetry and music, and on style.

<http://www.gty.org/~phil/mather.htm>

Lovelace, Chapter Four:

110-113 - intro - character and sources of Mather's "machinery of piety"

113-121 - meditation - Scripture (how read), natural world, daily life, judgments

122-128 - prayer - importance, as instrument, purpose, Holy Spirit, how often, spontaneous, vigils, days of prayer,

128-130 - family devotions

130-136 - Sabbath

136-139 - Sacraments - Lord's Supper, prep for it, baptism, "lesser instruments" - diary, self-exam, vows, intentions, conference and friends, reading

142-145 - assessment

Do you like Cotton Mather?

What do you admire?

What worries you?