

## Articles and Sermons :: Why Read The Puritans Today?

**Why Read The Puritans Today? - posted by crsschk (), on: 2007/7/9 0:20**

A few excerpt from an excellent article ...

They will elevate your concept of God to a degree you probably never thought possible, and show you a God who is truly worthy of your worship and adoration. Jeremiah Burroughs, in his classic book *Gospel Worship*, said "The reason why we worship God in a slight way is because we do not see God in His glory." The modern man hears about a God who isn't worth worshipping; why should he worship a God who wants to do good, but can't pull it off because man just won't co-operate, and then who is sovereign? MAN IS!

One of the reasons we think so poorly is because we read so little. Reading helps us to think, and we live in a photographic culture now instead of a typographic culture. Everything is pictures, videos, movies. The work is all done for us, so we don't have to wrestle with concepts. Someone else interprets the matter for us in pictures. In the Puritan day, words were frozen on a page and forced you to deal with the thoughts expressed.

Puritans had a "love affair" with Christ, and they wrote much about the beauty of Christ. One of the greatest of the Puritans was Thomas Goodwin, a Congregationalist. Writing about heaven, Goodwin said,

*"If I were to go to heaven, and find that Christ was not there, I would leave immediately, for heaven would be hell to me without Christ."* Heaven without Christ is no heaven, and if Christ is not there, I have no desire to be there. These people were in love with Christ. James Durham wrote this on Song of Solomon 5:16, in his application of the sermon, *"If Christ is altogether lovely, then everything else is altogether loathsome."* We don't feel that way about Christ, do we? We want a little of Christ, and a little of a lot of other things. But the true Christian wants Christ and nothing but Christ. Samuel Rutherford wrote this about the beauty of Christ:

*I dare say that angels' pens, angel's tongues, nay, as many worlds of angels as there are drops of water in all the seas and fountains, and rivers of the earth cannot paint Him out to you. I think His sweetness has swelled upon me to the greatness of two heavens. O for a soul as wide as the utmost circle of the highest heaven to contain His love! And yet I could hold but little of it. O what a sight, to be up in heaven, in that fair orchard of the New Paradise, and to see, and smell, and touch, and kiss that fair field-flower, that evergreen tree of life! His bare shadow would be enough for me; a sight of Him would be the guarantee of heaven to me." If there were ten thousand thousand millions of worlds, and as many heavens, full of men and angels, Christ would not be pinched to supply all our wants, and to fill us all. Christ is a well of life; but who knows how deep it is to the bottom? Put the beauty of ten thousand thousand worlds of paradises, like the Garden of Eden, in one; put all trees, all flowers, all smells, all colors, all tastes, all joys, all loveliness, all sweetness in one. O what a fair and excellent thing would that be? And yet it would be less to that fair and dearest well-beloved Christ than one drop of rain to the whole seas, rivers, lakes, and fountains of ten thousand earths.*

The Puritans will help us with practical living. Richard Baxter's *Christian Directory* has been called "the greatest manual on biblical counseling ever produced." Before this century, all counseling was done from the pulpit or during a pastoral visit to the home to catechize the family. Pastors were seen as the physicians of the soul. Interestingly enough, the very word "psychology" means the study of the soul. Suke, from which we get "psyche," from which we get psychology, means soul. But now, what used to be the cure of sinful souls has become the cure of sick minds. That has now been taken away from the pastor, who knows the soul best, and given to counselors, most of whom don't even believe in God. They can't cure spiritual ills. Baxter's *Dictionary* shows the genius of a man who could apply Scripture to all areas of life. Dr. James Packer calls it the greatest Christian book ever written.

Lewis Bayly's *Practice of Piety* is a model of a Puritan devotional manual. The idea was that of regulating one's entire day and life by Scripture. Dr. John Gerstner says that this book stated the Puritan movement.

There was no area of life that the Puritans believed was not to be regulated by Scripture. Even time alone was to be put to godly use. Nathanael Ranew wrote a fine work titled *Solitude Improved by Divine Meditation*. This is the classic Puritan work on spiritual meditation. Ranew's premise is that even when alone the Christian can "improve" himself by putting his mind to good use, meditating on God and His attributes. If there were to be an eleventh commandment, it would be: "Thou shalt not waste time."

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The Puritans wrote many of these kinds of "manuals." John Preston preached five sermons from 1 Thessalonians 5:1 7 on prayer, titled "The Saints' Daily Exercise," which is included in *The Puritans on Prayer*.

R.C. Sproul wrote the foreword to Jeremiah Burroughs' book, *A Treatise on Earthly-Mindedness*. Here is a book on the great sin of thinking like the world thinks rather than thinking God's thoughts after Him.

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A must read saints ...

(<http://www.the-highway.com/articleDec97.html>) Why Read The Puritans Today?

**Re: Why Read The Puritans Today? - posted by tjservant (), on: 2007/7/9 0:48**

Quote:  
-----If man is created in the image and likeness of God, how could anyone ever have a lack of self-esteem. If you are a Christian, Christ traded His life one-on-one for your life. THAT'S TRUE WORTH, MY FRIENDS!  
-----

Amen!

Quote:  
-----the best counseling takes place in the pulpit when the Word of God is opened and expounded and applied.  
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Amen!

Quote:  
-----Their high view of God came from their high view of Scripture. and if we want to know God they way they did, we must love His Word the way that they did. And that love will be increased only by diligent, intensive study. And to read the Puritans is the next best thing. In fact, it is like going to school with the finest minds the church has ever had.  
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Outstanding article. Very bump worthy. :-)

**Re: Why Read The Puritans Today? - posted by Josiah777 (), on: 2007/7/9 7:45**

Quote:  
-----Puritans had a "love affair" with Christ, and they wrote much about the beauty of Christ. One of the greatest of the Puritans was Thomas Goodwin, a Congregationalist. Writing about heaven, Goodwin said,  
"If I were to go to heaven, and find that Christ was not there, I would leave immediately, for heaven would be hell to me without Christ."  
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Thanks for the post! This article sparked something in me to go back over some of these Puritan writings and see what single eye they had on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ken

**Re: Why Read The Puritans Today?, on: 2007/7/9 8:13**

Looking at the time you posted this Mike.

"Puritans had a "love affair" with Christ, and they wrote much about the beauty of Christ."

I have loved the writings of the Puritans since first recommended when I was a baby in Christ by D. Wilkerson.

The Scripture verse I woke up with that goes with the quote above and feel led to post here is ....

1Jn 4:20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

**Re: Why Read The Puritans Today? - posted by crsschk (), on: 2007/7/9 9:13**

The Puritans will help us understand the sufficiency of Christ. This comes under great attack in our modern church. You may have Christ to save you, but you need psychology to help you get through life. You may have Christ to save you and help you with your spiritual hurts, but you need something else for those deep emotional pains you are feeling.

There is a title by Ralph Robinson, a contemporary of Thomas Watson in London, *Christ All and In All*. There is another book by that same title by Philip Henry. Robinson wrote over 700 pages on that one verse in Colossians, (3:11). You see, it is our deficiency in understanding the sufficiency of Christ that is the issue. If Christ is all in all, how can we look to anyone or anything else for answers?

In his book, *The Saints' Treasury*, Jeremiah Burroughs has a sermon on the Colossians verse. Burroughs makes a statement like this, "Surely Christ is an object sufficient for the satisfaction of the Father." None of us would argue with that, would we? Isaiah tells us that God will see the result of the anguish of His soul and be satisfied. So Christ is enough to satisfy the Father. Then Burroughs continues. "Surely, then, Christ is an object sufficient for the satisfaction of any soul!" Do you get the reasoning? Those Christians who spend their entire life whining about their lot in life as if Christ were not enough; what blasphemy to say that Christ is enough to satisfy God, but He isn't enough to satisfy me!!! Long before there was a Freud, a Puritan had solved the problem of modern psycho-babble that has so charmed the church today.

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**"Robinson wrote over 700 pages on that one verse in Colossians, (3:11)"**

Oh my!

**Re:, on: 2007/7/9 10:23**

I have been having a similar conversation with some sisters of the wrongs of Psychology and that the majority of our reasonings to seek help is due to our 'own' choices that we've made.

Much of it is extremely "self-focused", but there are times when people are sincerely busted up inside over things ... but that is where the Church fails them far too many times.

When people are in with a group of callous, self-centered, non-feeling Christians, then they resort to the ways of this world also.

We shouldn't have any homeless if the Church would do it's job. Or hungry children or people hit with horrendous hardships and on and on, that the Church relegates over to the world's agencies to help or liberal churches to do.

Just these verses alone should convict...

Jas 1:27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

Jas 2:14 What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?

Jas 2:15 If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,

Jas 2:16 And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?

Jas 2:17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

Jas 2:18 Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works.

Jas 2:19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

Jas 2:20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

Jas 2:24 Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.

Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy.

The Church needs to be there for all that are hurting. The Church should be a Hospital for souls.

The only one that seems to be "holding out a hand of help" in many cases for many people is this stupid world with it's stupid methods or 'religious' groups.

There's a way to handle even those whose choices have led them into mistakes as Christians ... but there are few and far between "ministers" that care enough or have the heart of Christ to know how **HE** would deal with people.

Gal 6:1 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

We are The Body of Christ ---- not Islands.

Body Ministry is sorely lacking in this holier than thou extreme, so folks go to more "self" oriented Churches, just to find someone to talk to.

If we think we don't need others to talk to - we've become extremely Unbiblical & hardened.

Christ works 'through' His Body to address all of man's problems.

If our Christianity is not 'outward' toward others, it's a bunch of unholy hotair. Or self-righteous hotair.

Jesus was "others minded always and only", but this Church has the two extremes .... the self-righteous who have no heart and the one that is all human heart and not Biblically.

We can't let the unBiblical humanist church turn us against helping others, just because that's ALL they purport to be doing.

If we lose pathos, we've lost His whole message and we've lost those who are hurting to the world or Rick Warren Churches.

We are responsible "before GOD" for every human that passes by our way .... Before God!

If we want to have people who are "whole" amongst us, we have to extend what Christ Jesus would to them. Show them the same mercy we would like to have from Him.

But some only see Christ as 'always' with that whip in His hand.

Sometimes a rebuke 'is' in order --- but very seldom if ever a slammed door.

Break our hearts LORD for your creation, which You Loved enough to DIE for. You tolerated us this long Father --- bring us into the Image of Your Son and show us where we are so much not like Him. Give us Your heart. Give us your tears. Give us Your Love. Give us Your eyes.

Re: - posted by tjservant (), on: 2007/7/9 11:45

Quote:  
-----it is our deficiency in understanding the sufficiency of Christ that is the issue. If Christ is all in all, how can we look to anyone or anything else for answers?  
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This speaks volumes.

Re:, on: 2007/7/9 15:15

If Christ was truly our "all in all", we would reflect His Image and not just come to a point that "we need no one".

Many threads here on coming into some state of "Holiness", but few on coming into His Image.

I don't want to hear Holiness without His Image being the Goal.

Holiness without being conformed to His Image is a cold hard religion.

Until one is walking wholly in the Spirit and doing exactly what HE would do for others - as if HE were still here in the flesh and what He'd be doing if HE were {which is what "His" Body is supposed to be & be doing} then all talk of some self-focused Holiness turns His stomach and hurts millions. Actually trillions.

We are living Epistles read of "all" men.

How are we appearing as "Christ" to this world or in our town or street or at work ?

If we are not living for "others-always-only" as He did, then we are Not like Him and He is our only example, not some writers.

If we were 'like Christ', then others 'could' come to us with needs, because we were born-again with those works being predestined that we should be doing.

When someone has been in the actual presence of Him and transformed by this experiential knowledge of Him, it shows and not even with words --- just their presence alone will do what His did when here.

Those who only walk in the letter of the law and not the Spirit of the law, show this lack of experiential knowledge or having been in His presence and it is a very abrasive experience to encounter them for their lack of grasping what true "GOD-li-ness" is. Better phrased Christ-like-ness.

But instead of being transformed/conformed into 'HIS' Image, we have transformed HIM into ours.

There's a different view of what Jesus was and is like, from every person you'll ever ask.

How many Jesus's are there in "The Church" ? ... I would venture to say, millions.

Will He say in that day, Depart from Me, I Never "knew" you ?

Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/7/9 15:17

Quote:  
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GrannieAnnie wrote:  
Holiness without being conformed to His Image is a cold hard religion.  
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i like that quote from Keith Daniel: holiness without Christ is heresy

**Re:, on: 2007/7/9 17:06**

Thought some may like this website that's downloadable to read off line.

<http://www.puritansermons.com/download/download.htm>

The Index is at the bottom of this page and three up top.

The "If you're looking for .... " section is really nice too.

**Re: - posted by pastorfrin, on: 2007/7/10 4:47**

Dear Sister,

You said:

Quote:

"The Church needs to be there for all that are hurting. The Church should be a Hospital for souls.

Break our hearts LORD for your creation, which You Loved enough to DIE for. You tolerated us this long Father --- bring us into the Image of Your Son and show us where we are so much not like Him. Give us Your heart. Give us your tears. Give us Your Love. Give us Your eyes.

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Two wonderful post Annie, and truths we should all take to heart; it is not about us, but about what we do with the love we have been given for others. I was going to write much about this until I found this:

“Fellow citizens with the saints.”

— Ephesians 2:19

What is meant by our being citizens in heaven? It means that we are under heaven's government. Christ the king of heaven reigns in our hearts; our daily prayer is, “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” The proclamations issued from the throne of glory are freely received by us: the decrees of the Great King we cheerfully obey. Then as citizens of the New Jerusalem, we share heaven's honours. The glory which belongs to beatified saints belongs to us, for we are already sons of God, already princes of the blood imperial; already we wear the spotless robe of Jesus' righteousness; a

I ready we have angels for our servitors, saints for our companions, Christ for our Brother, God for our Father, and a crown of immortality for our reward. We share the honours of citizenship, for we have come to the general assembly and Church of the first-born whose names are written in heaven. As citizens, we have common rights to all the property of heaven. Ours are its gates of pearl and walls of chrysolite; ours the azure light of the city that needs no candle nor light of the sun; ours the river of the water of life, and the twelve manner of fruits which grow on the trees planted on the banks thereof; there is nought in heaven that belongeth not to us. "Things present, or things to come," all are ours. Also as citizens of heaven we enjoy its delights. Do they there rejoice over sinners that repent—prodigals that have returned? So do we. Do they chant the glories of triumphant grace? We do the same. Do they cast their crowns at Jesus' feet? Such honours as we have we cast there too. Are they charmed with his smile? It is not less sweet to us who dwell below. Do they look forward, waiting for his second advent? We also look and long for his appearing. If, then, we are thus citizens of heaven, let our walk and actions be consistent with our high dignity.

Spurgeon, C. H.

I guess the big question is "If, then," much to be done if, then.

Good Job sister,

In His Love  
pastorfrin

**Re: Christ Altogether Lovely - posted by Josiah777 (), on: 2007/7/11 9:01**

I've really been blessed by Puritan author John Flavel's "Christ Altogether Lovely". It is a very rich gold mine of Christ-exalting insights that have caused my heart to stop in wide-eyed wonder of what a great and altogether lovely Redeemer we have in our Lord Jesus Christ. I got this off the beforementioned puritansermons.com site. Here's one excerpt from it I found especially satisfying:

Quote:  
-----Let us consider this excellent expression, and particularly reflect on what is contained in it, and you shall find this expression "altogether lovely."

First, It excludes all unloveliness and disagreeableness from Jesus Christ. As a theologian long ago said, "There is nothing in him which is not loveable." The excellencies of Jesus Christ are perfectly exclusive of all their opposites; there is nothing of a contrary property or quality found in him to contaminate or devalue his excellency. And in this respect Christ infinitely transcends the most excellent and loveliest of created things. Whatsoever loveliness is found in them, it is not without a bad aftertaste. The fairest pictures must have their shadows: The rarest and most brilliant gems must have dark backgrounds to set off their beauty; the best creature is but a bitter sweet at best: If there is something pleasing, there is also something sour. If a person has every ability, both innate and acquired, to delight us, yet there is also some natural corruption intermixed with it to put us off. But it is not so in our altogether lovely Christ, his excellencies are pure and unmixed. He is a sea of sweetness without one drop of gall.

Secondly, "Altogether lovely," i.e. There is nothing unlovely found in him, so all that is in him is wholly lovely. As every ray of God is precious, so every thing that is in Christ is precious: Who can weigh Christ in a pair of balances, and tell you what his worth is? "His price is above rubies, and all that thou canst desire is not to be compared with him," Prov. 8:11.

Thirdly "Altogether lovely," i.e. He embraces all things that are lovely: he seals up the sum of all loveliness. Things that shine as single stars with a particular glory, all meet in Christ as a glorious constellation. Col. 1:19, "It pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell." Cast your eyes among all created beings, survey the universe: you will observe strength in one, beauty in a second, faithfulness in a third, wisdom in a fourth; but you shall find none excelling in them all as Christ does. Bread has one quality, water another, raiment another, medicine another; but none has them all in itself as Christ does. He is bread to the hungry, water to the thirsty, a garment to the naked, healing to the wounded; and whatever a soul can desire is found in him, 1 Cor. 1:30.  
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"Yes, He is altogether lovely." Song of Songs 5:16

Ken