

Who Was Thomas Manton?

Handout #1

And I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Blessed indeed," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!" (Rev. 14:13)

I. **Why is Manton Forgotten?**

II. **Is He Worthy of Our Study?**

Spurgeon: "Manton is not brilliant, but he is always clever; he is not oratorical, but he is powerful; he is not striking, but he is deep."

Ryle: "I do not regard him as a writer of striking power and brilliancy, compared to some of his contemporaries . . . I do not regard him as a writer of such genial imagination . . . Learning again does not stand out as conspicuously in Manton's writings as in the works of some of the Puritans . . . Manton's chief excellence as a writer, in my judgment, consists in the ease, perspicuousness, and clearness of his style."

III. **Early Life**

IV. **Education**

V. **Ministry**

For my own particular, I must say, as Pharaoh's chief butler said, "I remember my faults this day" (Gen. xli. 9): I cannot excuse myself from much of crime and sin in it; but I have been in the ministry these ten years, and yet not fully completed the thirtieth year of my age. The Lord forgive my rash intrusion! Whatever help or furtherance I have contributed to the faith and joy of the saints, by my former public labours, or my private ministerial endeavours, or shall do by this present work, I desire it may be wholly ascribed to the efficacy of the Divine grace, which is many times conveyed and reached forth by the most unworthy instruments.¹

¹ Manton, *Works*, 4:134.

Sowton (1640–1643)

Colyton (1643–1645)

Stoke Newington (1645–1656)

Covent Garden (1656–1662)

Post-Ejection (1662–1677)

In short, perhaps few men of the age in which he lived had more virtues and fewer failings, or were more remarkable for general knowledge, fearless integrity, great candour and wisdom, sound judgment, and natural eloquence, copious invention, and incredible industry, zeal for the glory of God, and good-will to men; for acceptance and usefulness in the world, and a clear and unspotted reputation, through a course of many years, among all parties of men.²

VI. Manton's Enduring Importance

"Anyone who means business with God will find that Manton grabs, searches, humbles, and builds up in a quite breath-taking way."³

² "Some Memoirs," in *Works*, 1:xxxii.

³ J. I. Packer, "Introduction," in *James*, Crossway Classic Commentaries, x.