

Richard Sibbes (1557-1635); Rising, He justified freely forever;

2 Chronicles 34: 26-28. The 'heavenly Doctor'. [William Perkins; 1558-1602.] [John Bunyan; b. 1628] [Richard Baxter, 1615-1691, fifteen years at Kidderminster] [Jeremiah Burroughs; 1599-1646, *The reason why we worship God in a slight way is because we do not see God in His glory.*]

1: 16th Century: Mary 1 died the year after his birth. Elizabeth 1, 1558-1603; Dutch East India Company established, 1602; James V1, 1603-1625; John Milton, 1608-1674; AV Bible, 1611; Scot, John Napier (1550-1617) introduced Logarithms to simplify calculations & decimal point. 1623, first English Dictionary published by Henry Cockeram; Charles 1, 1625-1649. Walter Raleigh, 1552/4-1618; (Armada, 1588); failed gunpowder plot, 1605; Plymouth Colony, 1620; 1614-1648, Central Europe Thirty Years War [8 million deaths]; 1631, Mount Vesuvius erupted.

2: Background: Born in at Tostock, Suffolk; eldest of six children, baptised in the parish church at Thurston where he grew up and went to school. His Christian father, Paul, a wheelwright who wanted his son to follow him was irritated at the expense incurred by his son's love of books. His father offered him wheelwright tools, but Richard was not interested. Aged eighteen he was admitted to St. John's College, Cambridge. An excellent student; BA in 1599, fellowship 1601, MA in 1602. Converted under preaching of Paul Baynes (1573-1617) who followed Perkins St. Andrews, Cambridge.

3: Ministry: Ordained at Norwich, 1608 to Church of England ministry. Chosen as one of college preachers in 1609 and earned BD in 1610. Lecturer at Holy Trinity Church, Cambridge; 1611-1616. Cambridge had succumbed to spiritual indifference after Perkins' death, 1602. His preaching awakened Cambridge and a gallery was built to seat visitors. Amongst others he helped turn Thomas Goodwin (1600-1679) to Christ [aged 20]; and away from Arminianism and a rhetoric preaching of style [orator] more than substance.

4: London: In 1617 he was invited to Gray's Inn, London, the largest of four great Inns of Court, for the study and practice of law, as a lecturer. He also became master of St. Catharine's College, Cambridge in 1626 and received the Doctor of Divinity. Then, King Charles 1 offered him the charge of Holy Trinity, Cambridge. Until his death in 1635 he continued to preach at Gray's Inn, as master of St. Catharine's Hall, and vicar of Holy Trinity. Known as "the heavenly Doctor" because of his Godly preaching and heavenly life style manner. He was a gentle character & avoided controversy if possible; 'Fractions breed fractions. Exceptions were his battles with autocratic Archbishop Laud (1573- (1633, Arch) - 1645), Roman Catholics and Arminians (free will). Laudianism is collection of rules on matters of ritual & enforced by Laud to maintain worship in England & Wales, in line with King's wishes. Precursors to later High Church views (Cardinal Newman). Biographer, Izaak Walton (1593-1683); author of *The Complete Angler*: wrote of Sibbes: *Of this blest man, let this just praise be given, Heaven was in him, before he was in heaven.* Sibbes never married but was part of an astonishing network of friendships; ministers, lawyers, parliamentary leaders: "Godly friends are walking sermons".

5: Theology: He influenced Anglicans, Presbyterians, Independency; a pastor to pastors & followed a moderate life style. He wrote; *To peach is to woo ...* 'The main scope of all [preaching] is, to allure us to the entertainment of Christ's mild, safe, wise, victorious government'. He brought truth home to the heart. His theology of the Holy Spirit was also important because of its emphasis on how the Spirit operates in the daily life of the Christian. He referred to that process as "entertaining the Spirit" in the soul. He meant: to welcome with hospitality and nurture our friendship with the indwelling Spirit. He wrote: *There is nothing in the world so great and sweet a friend that will do us so much good as the Spirit, if we give him entertainment ... The Spirit sanctifieth and purifieth and doth all from the Father and the Son and knits us to the Father and the Son;* etc ... However; Sibbes believed that our sealing in the Spirit was in two distinct matters; regeneration to a sinner and then applying that seal to the believer's consciousness. **John Owen** (1616-1683) later disagreed with this distinction, also **Calvin**.

6: Influence: **C H Spurgeon** (1834-1892) wrote; *he scatters pearls and diamonds with both hands.* English Presbyterian preacher **Maurice Roberts** (1938-) *His theology is thoroughly orthodox, of course, but it is like the fuel of some great combustion engine, always passing into flame and so being converted into energy thereby to serve God and, even more, to enjoy and relish God with the soul.* **J I Packer** (1926-): 'Sibbes concentrated on exploring the love, power, patience of Christ, and the riches of the promises of God. He was a pioneer in working out the devotional application of the doctrine of God's covenant of grace.' Sibbes' writing continues to bring comfort and encouragement to modern readers. His 128-page book; *The Bruised Reed*; comprises sixteen chapters where he expounds **Isaiah 42: 3**, *A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.* **Richard Baxter** (1615-1691); God used the reading of this treatise to bring about his conversion. **Martyn Lloyd-Jones** (1899-1981); *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, who was known in London in the early seventeenth century as the 'Heavenly Doctor Sibbes' was an unfailing remedy ... 'The Bruised reed' quieted, soothed, comforted, encouraged and healed me.*

7: Finally: Sibbes's last sermons preached a week before his death, were on **John 14:2**, *In my Father's house are many mansions ... I go to prepare a place for you.* Asked in his final days how his soul was faring, Sibbes replied; 'I should do God much wrong if I should not say, very well'. He dictated his last will and testament on July 4, 1635, the day before his death. He began: 'I commend and bequeath my soul into the hands of my gracious Saviour, who hath redeemed it with His most precious blood, and appears now in heaven to receive it'. Funeral sermon preached by William Gouge, minister of St. Ann Blackfriars, 45 years and member of Westminster Assembly.

Volume One, of his Works; (*The Bruised Reed*) and *The Soul's Conflict*, 175-page treatise on **Psalm 42: 11**, showing how the believer can, by faith in Christ, gain victory over spiritual despair.

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