

ONE DAY WHEN HEAVEN WAS FILLED WITH HIS PRAISES: (J. Wilbur Chapman, 1910)

JOHN BUNYAN: 1628 – 1688. 1 Corinthians 9: 24 (Book, *The Heavenly Footman*). Run hard on path of life.

1: 17th Century: Monarchs; (Henry V111, Edward VI, Mary) Queen Elizabeth 1, died 1603, James VI Scotland & James 1 – 1625; **AV Bible 1611;** Charles 1, 1649 beheaded; Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell, 1653-58; Charles 11, 1660 – 1685; James 11 – 1685 - 88, deposed, last RC Monarch. His 15-year-old Protestant daughter Mary 11 married William of Orange, [known in Northern Ireland & Scotland as ‘King Billy’]; invited to take English throne, installed 1689. Battle of Boyne 1690. James defeated, exiled to France protected by Louis XIV. Mary died 1694, William in 1702. **Composers:** Corelli, 1653; Pachelbel, 1653; Purcell, 1659; Vivaldi, 1678; Telemann, 1681; J S Bach, 1685; Scarlatti, 1685;.

2: Great Ejection: After restoration of Charles 11; 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 2,000 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.

3: Puritanism: Theological movement to cleanse the church from ‘popery’, empty ritual, formality. Tied to Reformation, Scriptures, Trinitarian theology, reformed church service, rights of conscience, conscience, political. Puritanism grew from need for Biblical preaching and teaching reformed doctrine; Biblical piety that stressed work of Holy Spirit in believer, restore Biblical simplicity in liturgy, vestments, church government. Puritans honoured God above all and gave everyone his due with the Word of God his rule in worship. **J. I. Packer:** “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.” **John Flavel:** (1628-1691) ‘The Scriptures teach us the best way of living, the noblest way of suffering, and the most comfortable way of dying.’ **Errors & Unity:** Puritan preaching addressed the mind, confronted the conscience and wooed the heart. They believed that a mindless Christianity fostered a spineless Christianity. ‘We must go with the stick of divine truth and beat every bush behind which the sinner hides, until like Adam who hid, he stands before God in his nakedness.’ Puritans taught us that preparing to die is the first step in learning to live.

4: A lost sinner: John Bunyan born in Elstow, near Bedford (69 cottages in village) where his father had a metalworker’s shop, Little education, rebellious, frequent cursing; ‘It was my delight to be taken captive by the devil at his will: being filled with all unrighteousness; that from a child I had but few equals, both for cursing, swearing, lying, blaspheming the holy name of God.’ Sporadic periods of convictions of sin helped restrain some rebellion. When sixteen his mother and sister died; father remarried. Bunyan joined Cromwell’s New Model Army for two and half years and continued rebellious ways. Fighting in Civil War sobered him. One soldier asked to take his place in a siege and was shot dead. His military experience later reflected in; *The Holy War*. Became a Tinker (metalwork),

mourned his joyless existence, realised he was outside of Christ and lost. 'I cannot now express with what longings and breakings in my soul I cried to Christ to call me.' Felt he had the worst heart in all of England. Confessed to be jealous of animals because they did not have a soul to account for before God. In early twenties and over a period of two and half years he experienced alternating moods of spiritual ecstasy and black depression; until he applied to himself the words: *Thy righteousness is in heaven*, while walking through a field. 'Saw with eyes of my soul, Jesus Christ at God's right hand. Realised that Christ's righteousness was mine, His merits mine, His victory also mine. My righteousness was Jesus Christ Himself.' In, *Grace Abounding*, did not mean the end of doubt or sin; shown in allegory; *Pilgrim's Progress*. The wicket-gate, for Christ is the only door to eternal life. *The Heavenly Footman*; the wicket-gate vital for none can enter heaven unless they enter by Christ, the door and the way, so the footman is reminded that it is not how fast he runs; he can never attain the prize if he is in the wrong road; but run hard; **1 Corinthians 9: 24**, *Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain* (AV). Dangers of **bye path-meadow, Slough of Despond, hill Difficulty, Doubting castle & Giant despair; Vanity Fair** (Romans 7). Written during twelve years in Bedford Gaol.

5: A Puritan Sinner: 1648 married unnamed God-fearing woman who owned two books; *The Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven & The Practice of Piety*. Convicted of his sin, went to Parish church & stopped swearing. Impressed by women with joyous conversation about new birth & Christ. 1651 some women introduced him to John Gifford, their Bedford Pastor. Sermon on Solomon 4: 1; *Behold thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair; thou hast doves' eyes within thy locks: thy hair is as a flock of goats, that appear from Mount Gilead*. Also Luther's commentary on Galatians in which he found his own experience. Primarily a preacher & pastor; moved to Bedford with wife and four children under six in 1654. Joined Gifford's Baptist church, became deacon & testimony was talk of town. Began preaching and writing books because he wanted to help poor folk in his church. Not an academic, little education & conscious of limitations. Big hearted, loving, concern for souls, disliked controversy; but when provoked, almost violent, then ashamed of language & abuse. His wife died and soon married Godly woman, Elizabeth who pleaded often for his release. He was arrested in 1660 on charge of preaching without official rights from the King. Told he would be freed if stopped preaching; 'If I am freed today, I will preach tomorrow.' **Prison, 1660-1672**, no formal charge & no legal sentence; wrote for income & made shoe laces. Some gaolers did allow him to leave for a time and preach. Only had Bible and *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*. Bedford church appointed him Pastor in January 1672 but not released until May. The first to suffer under Charles 11 and last released. Arrested again & freed in 1677 through appeal to Bishop of Lincoln by **John Owen**. He published, *Come and Welcome to Jesus Christ*, in 1678 [six editions], expounding **John 6: 37**; a free offer of grace to sinners to fly to Jesus Christ and be saved: *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out* (AV). Wrote ten more book in last three years of life. Died suddenly from fever in 1688. On deathbed, told friends that his greatest desire was to be with Christ; raised his hands to heaven & cried, 'Take me, for I come to Thee.' Buried in Bunhill Fields, close to John Owen and Thomas Goodwin.

LIVING, HE LOVED ME,; DYING HE SAVED ME