

CHAPTER ONE

Growing and Studying in Difficult Times

What do you remember?

What was John Owen's father's occupation?

Why were some Puritans leaving England?

Who paid for John Owen's studies in college?

What did John Owen's uncle want him to do?

Why was the Parliament angry with King Charles I?

Why didn't King Charles talk to the Parliament about every decision?

Why were the Puritans worried?

Did Archbishop Laud disagree with the Puritans only about worship?

Different times

It's strange for us to read that John Owen went to college when he was 12. In those days, children usually received their earlier education at home, first with their parents and then (when a family could afford it) with tutors, and started college much earlier than we do now. Even at that time, however, John Owen started earlier than most other children.

Something to think about

John Owen had to make a difficult choice. He could have stayed at Oxford, continued his education, and followed his career in the Church of England, as his uncle wanted him to do. But he would have had to worship in a way that he believed was contrary to God's Word and wouldn't have been able to fully teach what the Bible says about salvation. Probably, there were others who agreed with Owen but decided to stay and wait for things to change. Owen couldn't do that.

Can you think of times when you (or some people you know) have decided to follow your convictions even if you had to lose something?

Later, John Owen lost his job and his uncle's support because he favored the Parliament instead of the King. In matters like these, Christians may make different choices and they are free to follow their conscience, keeping in mind what is best for others. John Owen thought that it was best for the English people to be ruled by a Parliament and not by a King, and had to stand by his convictions even when it meant losing his job and other sources of income. Do you think he made the right decision? Why?

What does it mean?

Councilor (or councillor) – A member of a council, which is a group of people chosen to give advice or make laws

Archbishop – A bishop [or supervisor of churches] at the head of a large province. (The word "bishop" comes from the Greek *episkopos*, meaning "overseer").

Chaplain – A minister of the Gospel in charge of a chapel, which is a private place of worship, or a place where Christians worship instead of an established church. The word "chaplain" is also used for a minister attached to a branch of the military, a family, or a court.

Chapel – A small place of worship, sometimes in a residence

Tutor – A private teacher

Civil – Related to citizens

Civil war – A war between opposing citizens of the same country

Revolution – A sudden or complete change
(The word comes from the Latin *revolvere*, meaning "to turn around").

Conviction – A strong persuasion or belief

Convince – To overcome by argument.
(The word comes from the Latin *convincere* (*con* = "with", *vincere* = "to overcome"; so, to overcome with an argument or proof).

Some practice

Use the words convince and conviction in sentences:

Mapwork

Find **Stadhampton**. It is about 10 miles south-east of Oxford, in an area called South Oxfordshire, in South East England. The church that you see in the photo on page 7 of the book was actually smaller and a little different when John Owen lived there, but was still in the same location, so you can imagine his family walking there on a Sunday morning.

Find **Oxford**. The city of Oxford started in the 8th century. The University of Oxford is first mentioned in writings from the 12th century. It is the oldest university in the English speaking world, and is still very prestigious today. During the Civil War, Oxford sided with the king, who moved his residence there.

Find **Hurley**. It is a village close to the River Thames, in the county of Berkshire. John Owen stayed there for a while as chaplain at the home of Lord John Lovelace.

Now find **London**. It is the capital of England and the United Kingdom. It was a large and beautiful city. We don't know exactly how it looked, because four-fifths of it was destroyed by the Great Fire of 1666.

John Owen was born in Stadhampton, studied in Oxford, worked in Hurley, and then moved to London. Trace these travels on this map.

Artwork

The illustration in the book shows John Owen as a young man, throwing the javelin. He also studied hard, played the flute, and competed in long jump. Draw Owen busy doing one of these activities.

A tip from Matt Abraxas (the illustrator):

When you draw a figure in motion, it's good to start with a stick figure and then put ovals or boxes around each line. Even if you want to draw something curved, like an arm ready to catch a ball or a dancer bending her body on one side, it's always best to start with straight lines in a stick figure and add the curve later on. People usually try to draw curved lines right away and they are much harder to fix.

Assurance of Salvation

John Owen was discouraged because he was not sure if he was one of God's children. Then he heard a sermon that renewed his faith. The text of the sermon was Matthew 8:26, "Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?" Read the whole passage, Matthew 8:23-27. Can you see how it might have comforted Owen?

Jesus told His disciples that they should not have been afraid, because He was with them and had promised to take care of them. They were afraid because they looked at the wind, the storm, and the weakness of their boat instead of looking at His promise. We are all like the disciples sometimes. When we fail so often to keep God's Law, it's easy to wonder if we are really God's children. That's because we look at our failures and feelings and not at God's promise.

During his life, Owen spoke often about assurance of salvation. He had personally learned that it's the Holy Spirit that helps us to be sure that we are God's children, headed for Heaven, and gives us this assurance through the promises in His Word, especially the preached Word.

In one of his sermons, Owen also gave the example of Abraham. When God told Abraham that from him was going to come a great nation, Abraham and his wife Sarah had no children and were too old to have any. The promise seemed impossible, but Abraham believed and soon the promised child arrived - Isaac, a forefather of the Jewish nation and most of all of Christ.

The Bible teaches repeatedly that those who have true faith in Jesus Christ are saved from God's wrath, declared righteous in Christ, and adopted by God as His children. "But to all who did receive Him [Jesus], who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God" (John 1:12). This is a promise we need to keep in mind when we start to doubt.

Owen explains that God has repeated His promise many times, has sworn that he will keep it, and has given us much proof, sending first Jesus as a man and then His Holy Spirit who is always with us. We can be absolutely sure that God will keep His word.

CHAPTER TWO

A Pastor and a Writer

What do you remember?

Do you remember the name of John Owen's wife?

Why were many people in England confused about religion?

Was John Owen happy as a pastor in Fordham and Coggeshall?

When did the war become especially dangerous for John Owen?

Do you remember when King Charles I was executed?

Why was the death of King Charles so shocking for the English people?

Why did Oliver Cromwell ask John Owen to follow him to Ireland?

Why didn't John Owen want to go?

Different times

You may have some hard time reading the words of the original printing of John Owen's catechism on page 18. You may notice that their "s"s look more like "f"s and there "u"s look like "v"s. For example, look at how the words "Christ" or "unfolded" are written. That's how they wrote in those days. Also, some of the spelling is different. Today, we write "catechisms" and not "catechismes."

Owen and Cromwell wanted a republic, which is a government where the people can choose their own leaders. At that time, the king of England had full powers, while the Parliament was supposed to only give suggestions. The king could also "fire" the Parliament if he wanted to. Owen and Cromwell wanted a government without a king, where the Parliament has the final say, making decisions by vote. Today, however, most rulers have to respect a constitution and the will of the people. Very few have absolute power. One of them is the Pope, who has full powers in the State of the Vatican.

Something to think about

John Owen said that cutting off men's heads cannot solve religious arguments. Many nations throughout history used violence to convince other nations to turn to a particular religion, but this is not what Jesus taught. Owen recognized that wrong teachings are a serious problem. He said they are like a spiritual sore that cannot be ignored, but needs to be corrected with spiritual means. What are some of these spiritual means?

- a. God's Word
- b. Prayer
- c. The instruction and correction of the officers of the church
- d. All of the above

If someone who is a Christian teaches you something that you know is wrong according to the Bible, what should you do?

- a. Nothing, because you are too young.
- b. Listen well and, if he or she is a nice person, believe as they do.
- c. Tell your parents, research the subject in the Bible and catechisms, and when you are sure they are wrong, pray for them.

What does it mean?

Excellent - remarkably good

Comely – pleasing in appearance; attractive; beautiful; pretty

Example – Mary Rooke was excellent and comely.

Clarity – clearness; being clear

Example: John Owen could explain Christian teachings with clarity.

Congregation – an assembly of people brought together for common religious worship

Example – John Owen was pastor of a congregation of two thousand people

Republic – a state in which the power rests on the citizens entitled to vote and is exercised by representatives chosen by them.

(The word comes from the latin "res" "publica", meaning "public thing.")

Proper – appropriate, fitting, right

Remedy – a cure or medicine.

Example – Cutting off men's heads is no proper remedy for wrong teachings.

Headquarters – a center of operations

Example – Lord Fairfax set up his military headquarters in Coggeshall

Overpower – to overcome, being stronger than another

Example – The king's supporters were overpowered by the Parliament's troops.

Execute – This word has the double meaning of "to do" and "to put to death."

Example – King Charles I was executed in London.

Execution – the act of executing.

Another word used for the execution of a king or queen is "regicide", from the latin "rex" (=king) and "cidium" (killing).

Release - to let go

Example – Cromwell ordered Owen's church to release him from his pastoral duties.

Write two sentences using the word "proper":

It is proper to _____

It is not proper to _____

History Notes

The English Civil War – a timeline

March 10, 1629

Charles I dissolves Parliament and begins 11 years of personal rule.

July 23, 1637

The imposition of a prayer book causes a riot in Scotland

April 13, 1640

Desperate to find money to fight the Scots, Charles I reopens Parliament, but closes it again after one month.

August 28, 1640

The Scots defeat the English at Newburn

November 3, 1640

Charles I reopens Parliament

October 1641

Rebellion breaks out in Ireland. Thousands of Protestant settlers are killed.

January 4, 1642

Charles I tries to arrest five leading members of parliament

August 22, 1642

Civil War officially begins

September 25, 1643

Parliament enters into an alliance with the Scots

February 15, 1645

Parliament establishes the 'New Model Army'

June 14, 1645

Royalists are crushed by the New Model Army

May 5, 1646

Charles I surrenders to the Scots, who sell him to the Parliamentarians for 400,000 pounds.

January 30, 1649

Charles I is executed at Whitehall, London

Art Appreciation



King Charles I was the most passionate art collector of all the British kings, and was always inviting artists from other countries. His favorite artist was Anthony Van Dyck, from Holland. In 1632, he made Van Dyck a knight and kept him at court as main painter. Van Dyck painted many portraits of Charles I and his family.

The portrait above, from the Royal Collection at Windsor Castle, in London, shows King Charles from three different angles. Charles sent a copy of this portrait to Bernini in Italy, asking him to make a bust following this.

Notice:

Colors – Why do you think the artist used red in the middle and darker colors on the sides?

Composition – The two side pictures are similar but not the same. One is turned all the way and the other 3/4 of the way. What other differences do you see between the two? Why do you think the artist didn't draw them exactly alike?

Background – Look at the picture, then imagine the three figures against a bright blue sky instead of this background. How different are your feelings?

Do We Need Catechisms?

From the earliest centuries after Christ, the church has had some special instruction for new Christians and children. This type of instruction was called catechism, and the students were called catecumens. The word catechism comes from the Greek and it means "to sound down" (into someone's ears).

In John Owen's days, catechisms had become especially important. Martin Luther, John Calvin, and other Reformation leaders had helped the church to return to biblical teachings that had been forgotten or misunderstood. Many things had changed, and people had questions that needed answers: "How can we escape God's punishment for our sin? What is true faith? What is true repentance?"

Pastors and theologians like John Owen often wrote short catechisms for the people in their church. Even Martin Luther and John Calvin wrote some.

In 1643, the same year when John Owen became pastor at Fordham, the English Parliament called a group of theologians at Westminster Abbey in London and asked them to write some documents so that all Christians in England could believe the same things. These documents included a Confession of Faith, a Larger Catechism, and a Shorter Catechism. They were completed in 1647. Together, they are called "the Westminster Standards." Many churches still follow this confession and these catechisms today.

Another group of documents still used today are the Heidelberg Catechism, Belgic Confession of Faith, and Canons of Dordt. The first documents were written at different times by different theologians, but they were approved at a meeting in Dordt, Holland, in 1618. Together, the three documents are called "Three Forms of Unity" because they help to unite the church in the same belief.

Catechisms are very important because they give clear explanations and definitions. In all subjects, definitions are necessary if we want to understand and to be understood. It might take a little time at first, but it's worth it. For example, in math, it might take a little time to learn the definitions of polygon, triangle, and equilateral, but once you learn them, you and I will be able to talk about equilateral triangles without having to explain each time that we are referring to a flat shape with three straight lines, all of the same size.

In the same way, when we talk about God, faith, and salvation, the catechisms help us to understand clearly what these things mean. Without a clear definition, people can use the same word and talk about many different things.

Catechisms are very helpful in many other ways. They help us to explain Christian teachings to others, they help us to understand the Bible, and they give us much comfort.

CHAPTER THREE

From the Battlefield to the University Halls

What do you remember?

Can you remember at least one reason why Cromwell wanted to fight Ireland?

What was Owen's job in Ireland?

What did Owen see when he visited Trinity College in Dublin?

What did Owen ask Parliament to do when he returned from Ireland?

Why was working at Oxford difficult for Owen?

How many children did Owen have? How many died before him?

What was Owen's favorite duty?

Why did Owen refuse to wear the traditional cap and hood?

Different times

In England, as in other countries at that time, people were expected to follow the religion of their ruler. Since the people of Ireland were mostly Roman Catholic, Cromwell thought that his conquest would bring the Gospel to that land. We don't know how John Owen felt about the war. He might have thought it was necessary for some reason. We know that later on he said that cutting off men's heads is no proper remedy against wrong teachings. It has taken many centuries and many wars for people to begin to understand that the Gospel cannot be spread by force.

Something to think about

Preaching to Parliament, John Owen said, "How is it that Jesus Christ is in Ireland only as a lion staining all His clothes with the blood of His enemies; and there is no one to show that He is a Lamb sprinkled with His own blood for His friends?"

Where in the Bible is Jesus called "the Lion of the tribe of Judah"?

Did Jesus promise to take revenge on his enemies? When?

Where in the Bible is Jesus called "the Lamb of God"?

Whenever John Owen wrote a book, he studied carefully what other Christians had said on the same subject, even those who had different ideas. Why do you think it's important to do this?

What do you think is the meaning of the title "The Death of Death in the Death of Christ"?

Ask your parents if you need help in answering any of these questions.

What does it mean?

Chaplain - Christian minister who performs religious services for a military group, a prison, hospital, or, in the past, for private families or courts.

Chancellor – The head of some universities.

Trinity – The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit existing as one God.¹

Communion – (in the text) A close relationship with someone or something.²

Cocked – A hat with the edges turned up on two or three sides.³

Modest – not showing too much of a person's body.⁴

Mortification – (in the text) Putting to death, keep down by force.

University- a large school that a student may attend after high school

Parliament- a group of people who assist the head of state in making decisions and who make the laws for a country

Expedition- a journey taken for a reason

Literature- stories, poems, plays, and other written work of value

Scholar- a person who has great knowledge, usually from research and study

Word Roots

Today, the word "mortification" means "to make someone feel embarrassed." John Owen used it a different way. In Latin, *mortem* means "death" and *ficare* or *facere* means "to make." So, "to mortify" means "to make dead" or, in some cases, "to keep down by force."

The word Trinity is not in the Bible, but the Bible talks much about God as three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. When Christians tried to explain this teaching, they had to make a word to describe God as three in one. Trinity comes from the Latin *trinus*, which means "of three." The number three in Latin is *tres*, but the form *tri* is often used before a word to show that it is made of three parts (for example, *tricycle* = a bicycle with three wheels, *triangle* = a shape with three angles). Ask your parents to help you to find more.

¹ Merriam-Webster Learner's Dictionary

² ibid

³ ibid

⁴ ibid

Mapwork



Dublin is an ancient city, perhaps founded by Vikings. It was quite small when Owen and Cromwell arrived in 1649. Only about 9,000 people lived there, and many buildings, including the university, were in ruins. There was a small community of Puritans living there, who had escaped the persecution at the time of Queen Elizabeth I. More Protestants moved there later to escape religious persecution in other countries. By the 18th century, it had become the second largest city in the British Empire. In 1921, when Ireland gained independence from England, Dublin became its capital. The University of Dublin, also called Trinity College, is still standing. Jonathan Swift, the author of Gulliver's Travels, is one of the many important people who graduated from it.

Drogheda is a port city on the East coast of Ireland. When Cromwell attacked it in 1649, it was an important walled city. The Irish Parliament met there many times. The walls of Drogheda were very tall but thin, so they fell easily under Cromwell's cannon fire. The main reason why Cromwell attacked Drogheda is because he needed a city by the sea where he could receive provisions for his troops, but the city council refused to surrender. He also wanted to set an example to other cities, so they would not try to resist. What happened in Drogheda is very sad, but this type of attacks happened frequently in those days.

Music

When the King Comes Home in Peace Again

The most famous song sung by the Cavaliers was "When the King Comes Home in Peace Again." Ask your parents⁵ to help you to listen by using this link.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7dRnm7tn7U0>

The words might be difficult to understand, but just imagine the supporters of King Charles singing this. Imagine how inspired they were in their fight for the return of their king. Of course we know from history that no king or lack of king has ever brought true peace, but people have always been wishing and fighting in the hope to bring peace to their land. Think of these men leaving their families behind and risking their lives for this dream.

Now think of what the Bible tells us about the only King who will ever bring true peace – Jesus Christ. We know for sure that He is coming, and "I can surely tell that things will go well when our King comes home in peace again"!

Irish Dance

The Irish dance we know today comes from earlier forms of dance which were popular in Ireland and Scotland among the common people. By the time of Queen Elizabeth I, Irish dances were already in demand, so much that the queen had some groups performing for her. One of the most popular types of Irish dance at that time was called Rince Fada. Ask your parents to help you to look at a sample of this dance online by using this link <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KJ7FVCQwFzI&feature=related> or another of their choice. Maybe you can try to follow along.

The songs that accompany Irish dances are of course traditional Irish songs, usually performed with different instruments, including hornpipes or bagpipes.

⁵ Parents should always assist their children when watching video-clips online, as others may post some inappropriate comments at any time.

John Owen on...

Mortification of Sin

In his book, *Mortification of Sin*, John Owen explains how sin still causes much trouble in our life and needs to be mortified, which means "put to death." His book is full of great images that help us to understand how to fight against sin.

When Jesus died on the cross, He took the punishment for all our sins, so God will not condemn us for them, but we will continue to have a sinful nature until we get to Heaven. Sin can never again make us his slaves, but can make us very weak spiritually. Besides, God hates sin, and we should be so thankful for the salvation He has given us in Christ that we don't want to allow into our lives something he hates so much.

Owen compares sin to an enemy. If we don't fight it every day, it will get stronger and make us weaker. He also compares it to a cloud. "It is a cloud, a thick cloud that spreads itself over the face of the soul and intercepts [stops] all the beams of God's love and favor." Of course God's love and favor is still there because of Jesus Christ, but sin doesn't let us see it.

Owen tells us that we will never completely "put to death" sin in this life, not until we join Christ in glory, but we have to fight it every day. The battle might seem hard, but we are on the winning side. Jesus has not only taken the punishment for our sins, but has given us His Spirit that will always win over sin. When your sins seem to difficult to conquer, remember that God has given you the power to fight.

In a prayer in this book, Owen remembers how weak he is in himself. "I am a poor, weak creature, unstable as water, I cannot excel," he said. "My soul has become has parched (dry) ground, and an habitation of dragons." He remembers his broken promises and all the times he thought he had conquered sin, but was deceived. Finally, he says, "Behold, the Lord Christ, that has all fullness of grace in His heart, all fullness of power in His hand, He is able to slay all these His enemies... He can take my drooping, dying soul, and make me more than a conqueror."

Draw a picture of a cloud blocking sun-rays.

CHAPTER FOUR

Winds of Persecution

What do you remember?

When did Oliver Cromwell become Lord Protector?

What did a Lord Protector do?

Why was John Owen shocked?

When did Oliver Cromwell die?

How did most people feel when Charles II was crowned king of England?

Did King Charles II keep his promises of religious freedom?

What happened during the Great Ejection?

How far did Puritan preachers have to stay away from their old congregations?

Why did many Puritans move to America?

Different times

To us, it's very strange to think that a king could tell all churches how to worship. Imagine how difficult it would be if one day you arrived in church and the bulletin showed a program totally different than the one you normally follow, including things that your church family doesn't consider appropriate. Now imagine that the government passed a law demanding that every church worship that way. How would you or your parents react?

During Owen's time, England's kings were head of both country and church, and everyone had to do what they said. No one could protest, and those who disobeyed could lose their lives.

King Charles II also made a law saying that Puritan preachers and pastors had to stay at least five miles away from any church where they had preached before. Ask your parents to show you how far is five miles from your home. In those days there were no cars and people traveled by horse, carriage, or on foot. That's why most people went to the church that was closest to their home. Having to stay five miles away from a church meant that those pastors would probably never see again many of the people they loved and for whom they cared.

Something to think about

When King Charles made some very difficult laws, Owen and his friends discussed the situation and prayed together. They concluded that the way the king wanted them to worship was contrary to the Scriptures and that they had to obey God even if it meant disobeying the king.

The Bible teaches us in many passages that we need to obey those who have the rule over us. That includes kings, queens, presidents, governors, as well as teachers, bosses, pastors, church elders, and parents. You can find some of these teachings in Romans 13:1, 7; Ephesians 5:21-24; 6:1-9, and 1 Peter 2:17. We also read, however, that a Christian cannot obey if he or she is asked to do something contrary to God's law (see Acts 5:29).

For example, what would you say if you were working and your boss asked you to lie to a customer on the phone? Would you say no? Should you still be nice and respectful? Think of something you could say in that occasion.

What does it mean?

Persecute – to treat someone in a cruel or unfair way, especially because of their beliefs.

Turmoil - great confusion

Strewn – scattered

Uniformity – the quality of being the same

Poverty – the state of being poor

Ejection – forcing someone to leave

Discourse – a long talk or piece of writing about something¹

Liturgy – a set of ceremonies and words used in public worship

Congregation- the people who regularly attend a religious service

Word Roots

We know that "uniformity" means the quality of being the same. The king wanted uniformity in the church. That means that he wanted all churches to worship in the same way.

Can you think of a word that sounds the same? What about "uniform"? Look up its meaning and write it here:

The word "uniform" comes from the Latin *unus* (one) and *forma* (shape or format).

Uniforms have or seem to have just one shape or style.

Here are some other words starting with uni-. Can you see why?

Unicycle – _____

Unicorn – _____

¹ Merriam Webster's Learner Dictionary

History Notes

The Arrival of Puritans in North America

May 14, 1607

The first permanent British colony in North America was founded by Captain John Smith in Jamestown, Virginia. The colonists were financed by the Virginia Company of London to find gold, silver, and other riches in America. They were just men and boys. The women came on separate trips. Even if the trip was mostly taken for practical reasons, most of the families were Puritan. The conditions in America, however, were so difficult – with lack of food, disease, fire, and war with the Indians – that only 60 of 300 people survived.

April 1620

A group attempting to escape religious persecution in England sailed for America on a ship called Mayflower. They landed at Plymouth Rock, Massachusetts. They became known as the "Pilgrim Fathers".

Watch some facts about the Mayflower online:

<http://www.history.com/videos/deconstructed-mayflower#deconstructed-mayflower>

The picture down below is entitled "The First Sunday at New Haven." New Haven is in Massachusetts. When the Puritans first arrived in America, they didn't have buildings so their Sunday services were held wherever possible.



Writing and Poetry

Puritans liked to write about their daily feelings, struggles, and lessons as they grew in God's grace. They did this especially through diaries and poetry. Sometimes they wrote books about their lives (autobiographies). For example, John Bunyan's *Grace Abounding* is an autobiography of his life. Agnes Beaumont, a young woman who attended John Bunyan's church, wrote an autobiographical story of her struggle when her father began to forbid her to worship there. The Puritans also wrote books on the lives of other believers, which were meant to inspire others.

The first published Puritan poetess in America was Anne Bradstreet (1612-1672). The following is one of her poems:

By Night When Others Soundly Slept

By night when others soundly slept
And hath at once both ease and rest,
My waking eyes were open kept
And so to lie I found it best.

I sought Him whom my soul did love,
With tears I sought him earnestly.
He bowed his ear down from above.
In vain I did not seek or cry.

My hungry soul he filled with good;
He in his bottle put my tears,
My smarting² wounds washed in his blood,
And banished thence my doubts and fears.

What to my Saviour shall I give
Who freely hath done this for me?
I'll serve him here whilst³ I shall live
And love him to Eternity.

² smarting = hurting, causing a sharp pain

³ whilst = while

Read John Owen!

Discourse Concerning Liturgies

The Puritans believed that Christians should worship according to God's Word without adding anything else. They quoted Deuteronomy 12:32, which says, "See that you do all I command you; do not add to it or take away from it." While other Christians believed that we can worship any way we want, as long as the Bible does not forbid it, Puritans did not dare to worship in any way that God had not commanded.

Just as in the Bible God consumed by fire Nadab and Abihu, Aaron's sons, for using in their worship a fire that God had not commanded to use (Leviticus 10), Puritans believed that God will refuse any form of Christian worship that He does not specify in the Bible, particularly in the New Testament, where we see how the Christian church worshipped.

In Acts 2:42, we read this about the early church: "And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers." The Puritans believed that only teaching, preaching, sacraments (breaking of bread), fellowship, and prayers should be part of worship. The opinions about music were different. They believed singing was allowed (Jesus and His disciples sang a hymn in Matthew 26:30), but they didn't normally use musical instruments.

This is what John Owen had to say about this:

"The worship of God is of that nature that whatsoever is performed in it is an act of religious obedience. That anything may be esteemed such, it is necessary that the conscience be in it subject to the immediate authority of God. ... In things which concern the worship of God, the commanding power is Christ, and his command the adequate rule and measure of our obedience (Mt. 28:20)."



CHAPTER FIVE

England's Dark Hour

What do you remember?

When did the plague spread to London?

How many people died during the plague each week?

How long did the Great Fire of London last?

After the fire had died, where did Owen go?

Why could Owen preach safely in London?

What did the king's declaration of 1672 allow Puritans like Owen to do?

Who wrote the book *The Pilgrim's Progress*?

Why did the King once again enforce the old restrictive laws?

According to the people, what caused the plague, the fire, and the lost war with Holland?

What did Owen admire in John Bunyan?

Different times

The Great Fire of London began while people were asleep. The first building to burn was a shop of the King's personal baker. One of his servants saw the flames after midnight and was able to warn everyone. Today, we would call the fire-fighters, but in those days they didn't exist. Also, today our homes are mostly made of bricks and cement, but in those days they were made of wood and pitch, which burn very fast. They were also very close to each other, so the fire could spread quickly from home to home.

The best way to stop the fire was to destroy the buildings which were on its way, but the Mayor didn't want to do it so finally the king sent someone else to take care of it. In the end, over 13,000 houses had burned and about 100,000 people were homeless.

The people however learned some lessons and when they rebuilt the city they made sure that the buildings were stronger, made with bricks, mortar, and stones. They also made wider streets.

Something to think about

John Owen was saddened when he saw Christians fighting with each other. He said, "It seems that we are some of the first who ever, anywhere in the world, from the foundation of it, thought of ruining and destroying persons of the same religion with ourselves."

Owen was not talking about people who called themselves Christian but taught some things that were really not in the Bible. He was talking about true Christians who believed the same things, but worshiped in different ways. He knew that there are some things that all Christians should believe and then other things that were less important. To him, worshiping God as he taught us to do in the Bible was very important, but not enough to cause arguments and divisions with other believers.

Do you think it is true? Can you name one thing we should all believe if we want to call ourselves Christian? Then can you name one thing that is not as important?

What does it mean?

Plague – A dangerous disease or calamity that spreads to many others.

Flea – A small insect with no wings who jumps on animals to suck their blood.

Restrictive – Setting boundaries and limiting freedom.

Issue – Something causing concern

Pilgrim – A person who travels to a goal, usually a holy place.

Progress – A moving toward a goal.

To make a living – To make enough money to be able to survive

Tinker, Tailor

John Bunyan made his living fixing pots from place to place. In those days, a man holding that profession was called “tinker”. Have you ever heard the rhyme, “Tinker, tailor, soldier, sailor, rich man, poor man, beggar man, thief”? It probably started before John Owen was born. In England, it was used by children to count small objects. In America, it’s used sometimes to count players to find out who should be “it.”

Writing practice

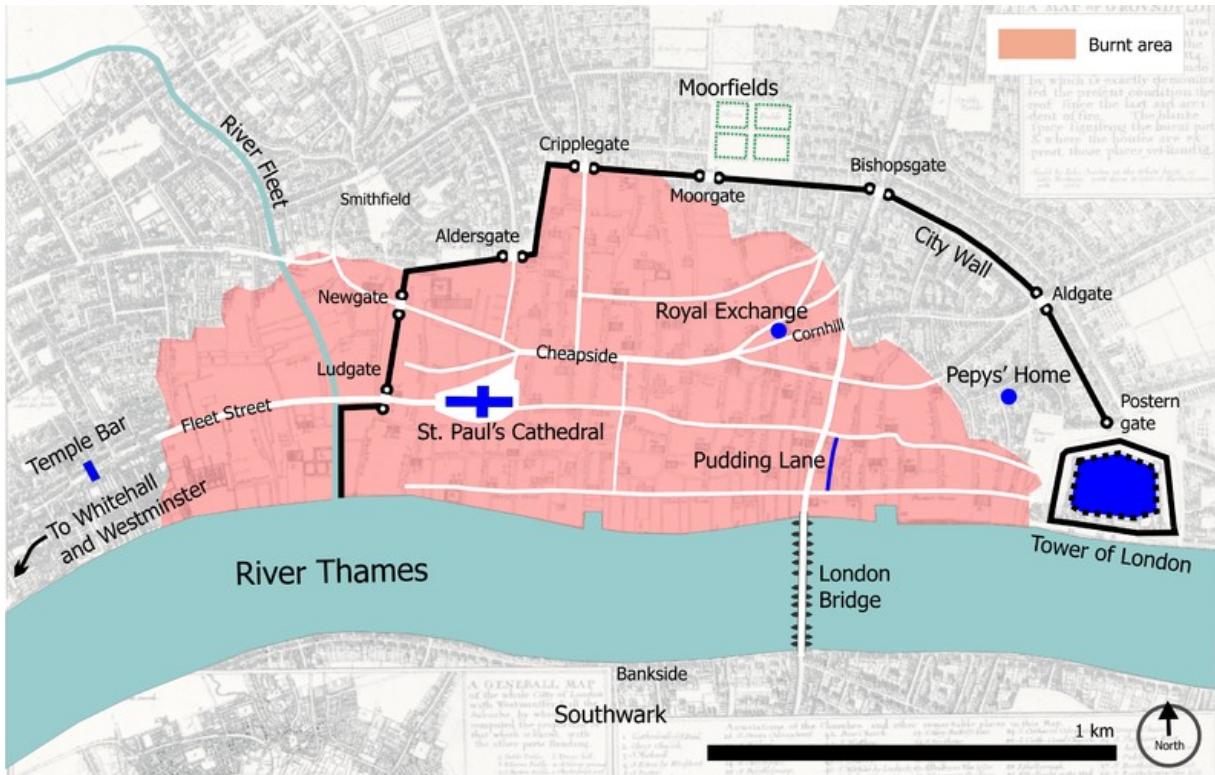
In this chapter, we see that John Owen wrote letters to influential people to convince them to allow religious freedom. Letter-writing has been a very important activity since ancient times. As you know, most of the New Testament in the Bible is made up of letters written to churches or to people.

When we write something to convince our readers, we call it persuasive writing. Maybe you can write a persuasive letter on a separate piece of paper. Find something that is very important to you and write a letter to someone to convince them of its importance.

In the Bible, Paul wrote a letter to a Christian to convince him to forgive his servant who had stolen from him and had run away. Do you know the name of this letter?

Do you know the name of the run-away slave?

Mapwork



This is a map of London after the fire. The first building to burn was the shop of the king's baker on Pudding Lane. Samuel Pepys is a writer who was able to see the fire from his home and wrote everything in his diary.

St. Paul's Cathedral also caught fire, and the roof caved in, crashing on the floor. It burned for two days and nights.

Many people looked for refuge on the River Thames.

The London Bridge survived the fire but its arches and foundations were weakened.

The city was rebuilt very much on the same model as before, but with stronger buildings and wider streets.

¹ Drawn by Bunchofgrapes in Corel Draw, posted on Wikipedia. Released under the [GNU Free Documentation License](#).

Literature and Writing

Diaries

We know many details about the Great Fire of London because a man named Samuel Pepys kept a very accurate diary and wrote down everything that happened in those days. Here are some of the things he wrote (remember that when he said that Jane called that doesn't mean on the phone – there were no phones in those days):

“Jane called us up about three in the morning, to tell us of a great fire they saw in the City. So I rose and slipped on my nightgown, and went to her window...but, being unused to such fires as followed, I thought it far enough off; and so went to bed again and to sleep.

About seven rose again to dress myself, and there looked out at the window, and saw the fire not so much as it was and further off. ... By and by Jane comes and tells me that she hears that above 300 houses have been burned down to-night by the fire we saw, and that it is now burning down all Fish-street, by London Bridge.

I made myself ready presently, and walked to the Tower, and there got up upon one of the high places, Sir J. Robinson's little son going up with me; and there I did see the houses at that end of the bridge all on fire, and an infinite great fire on this and the other side the end of the bridge.”

“[I] walked through the City, the streets full of nothing but people and horses and carts loaden with goods, ready to run over one another, and removing goods from one burned house to another.”

“Word was carried in to the King. So I was called for, and did tell the King and Duke of York what I saw, and that unless his Majesty did command houses to be pulled down nothing could stop the fire.”

You can read more of this diary on your own.

Diaries are very important. When we study history, we learn very much about what happened and how people lived, just by reading diaries of people from different times. Some of these writings have become particularly famous throughout history.

Today, not many people keep diaries, but some people write blogs. Some people also like to write short messages through some online services called micro-blogs, like Twitter. When the US troops killed terrorist Osama Bin Laden in Pakistan, a man who lived nearby started to send messages to Twitter telling everyone what he noticed. He said he saw helicopters and heard shots but didn't really know what was happening. He was very surprised when he found out! In some ways, he was like a modern Samuel Pepys because journalists learned many important details through his messages.

Do you keep a diary? Even if you don't, try to keep a diary today, even for part of the day. Who knows? You may write something very important.

CHAPTER SIX

John Owen's Last Years

What do you remember?

When did Owen's wife, Mary, die?

How many of Owen's children lived to adulthood?

Who were the "informers"?

Why did the informers who had captured Owen let him go?

What disease made breathing difficult for John Owen?

Where did Owen retire in and spend his last days?

When did John Owen die?

What important fact did John Owen understand about his own mind?

What nickname was given to John Owen by Charles Spurgeon?

Why did John Owen think a Christian could have nice things or money?

Different times

A horse and buggy in Owen's day was like a fancy car today. Only the rich could afford it. Usually people travelled on horseback. The poor could only travel on foot. There was no public transportation, but for long trips there were wagons taking a few people at a time for a fee. When the trip was very long, there were inns (or hotels) along the way where the travelers could rest and the rider could exchange his tired horses for other horses that had been resting for a few days.

Something to think about

John Owen didn't think it was wrong for a Christian to have nice things or money if they were used responsibly. Do you think he was right?

Many Christians throughout history thought that riches were dangerous for the soul, so they gave everything away and became poor by choice. Other Christians, like Owen, believe that if God gives us good things, we can be grateful and use them for his glory and for the good of others. Can you give an example of how riches can be used for the good of other people? Can you find what the New Testament says about using riches? (some examples, I Timothy 6:17-18, Hebrews 11:26, Luke 8:14)

Does the Bible say that money is the root of all evil? Can you find a reference?

Later, John Owen lost his job and his uncle's support because he favored the Parliament instead of the King. In matters like these, Christians may make different choices and they are free to follow their conscience, keeping in mind what is best for others. John Owen thought that it was best for the English people to be ruled by a Parliament and not by a King, and had to stand by his convictions even when it meant losing his job and other sources of income. Do you think he made the right decision? Why?

What does it mean?

Buggy – A small carriage pulled by one or two horses

Responsibly – In a way that shows care and responsibility in choosing between right and wrong.

Informer – (in this case) A person who informs others if someone has broken the law).

Asthma – A lung disease that sometimes makes it very difficult to breathe.

Under-rower – A rower is someone who moves the boat by pulling or pushing oars. If Jesus is our Pilot, then John Owen says he is an under-rower, even lower than a regular rower. He said that to comfort his friends and to let them know that his death was not going to cause any great trouble to the Ship of God's Church, because Jesus was still in command.

John Owen knew the Bible well, and knew that in I Corinthians 4:1 Paul calls himself a servant, which in the original Greek really meant an under-rower. Under-rowers have to do exactly what the Pilot says.

Inscription – Something written or carved in a hard substance (in this case, on a tomb stone)

Grasp – to hold firmly, usually by the hand. In a similar sense, it means to get hold of something mentally, to understand.

Some practice

In our society, we talk a lot about driving responsibly or drinking responsibly. Give an example of driving responsibly. Then give an example of managing money responsibly.

Read John Owen!

Glory of Christ

When John Owen wrote his last book, *The Glory of Christ*, he was getting close to the end of his life. In his Preface to the book, he explains why it's important for Christians to remember Christ's Glory and meditate on it constantly: *If our future blessedness shall consist in being where he is, and beholding of his glory, what better preparation can there be for it than in a constant previous contemplation of that glory in the revelation that is made in the Gospel, until the very end, that by a view of it we may be gradually transformed into the same glory?*

Sometimes when we are ready to move to another city or country we start preparing to what is ahead, especially if that will be our last destination and if we are really looking forward to the move. If we know that we are all pilgrims on this earth and that heaven is our final destination, we should prepare for it. If our happiness in heaven comes from the fact that we will be with Christ and see his glory, then the best way to prepare is by continuing to contemplate (or study attentively) that glory here on earth. How can we see that glory here? John Owen answers, “in the revelation that is made in the Gospel.”

And why should we try to see that glory now? Owen gives different reasons. One very practical reason is that keeping our eyes on Christ’s glory and remembering that we will have a part in that glory “will carry us cheerfully, comfortably, and victoriously through life and death.” If we keep our eyes on the glory of Christ, we will easily remember that everything on this earth will pass away, and we will not worry too much about it.

Besides, Owen says that one of the reasons why we should try to keep our eyes on Christ’s glory now is “that by a view of it we may be gradually transformed into the same glory.” Here he was probably thinking of 2 Corinthians 3:18, “And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.”

The glory of Christ has a transforming power. Also, Owen explains that most of our spiritual problems come when we let too many other things (or the wrong things) into our minds. On the other hand, “when the mind is filled with thought of Christ and his glory, when she soul cleaves to him with intense affections, they will cast out, or not give admittance to those causes of spiritual weakness and indisposition.”

Read Colossians 3:1-5; Ephesians 5:8.