

Daubing The Wesleyan Wall

I recently culled from another site 15 summarized points from J.C. Ryle's "Warnings To The Churches." Here is point one:

1. BEWARE OF TRUSTING TEACHERS OF RELIGION

"Beware of supposing that a teacher of religion is to be trusted, because although he holds some unsound views, he yet 'teaches a great deal of truth.' Such a teacher is precisely the man to do you harm: poison is always most dangerous when it is given in small doses and mixed with wholesome food. Beware of being taken in by the apparent earnestness of many of the teachers and upholders of false doctrine.

Remember that zeal and sincerity and fervor are no proof whatever that a man is working for Christ, and ought to be believed. Peter no doubt was in earnest when he bade our Lord spare Himself, and not go to the cross; yet our Lord said to him, 'Get thee behind Me, Satan.' Saul no doubt was in earnest when he went to and fro persecuting Christians; yet he did it ignorantly, and his zeal was not according to knowledge.

The founders of the Spanish Inquisition no doubt were in earnest, and in burning God's saints alive thought they were doing God service; yet they were actually persecuting Christ's members and walking in the steps of Cain. – It is an awful fact that, 'Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.' (2 Corinthians 11:14) Of all the delusions prevalent in these latter days, there is none greater than the common notion that 'if a man is in earnest about his religion he must be a good man!' Beware of being carried

away by this delusion; beware of being led astray by ‘earnest minded men!’ Earnestness is in itself an excellent thing; but it must be earnestness in behalf of Christ and His whole truth, or else it is worth nothing at all.”

Of course Ryle would not dream of discrediting himself in the “responsible Reformed world” by applying this “warning” to John Wesley. Ryle doesn’t have a clue.

The following is quoted from a Patheos blog article entitled “Calvinists who love Wesley”:

Bishop J.C. Ryle, in his book on Evangelical leaders of the eighteenth century, gets the warnings out of the way right up front:

‘He [Wesley–CD] was an Arminian in doctrine. I fully admit the seriousness of the objection. I do not pretend either to explain the charge away, or to defend his objectionable opinions.’

But he goes on to his main point, saying,

‘we must beware that we do not condemn men too strongly for not seeing all things in our point of view, or excommunicate and anathematize them because they do not pronounce our shibboleth.’

What is to be found in Wesley, according to Ryle? For all Wesley’s deviations from the Calvinist line, Ryle says

‘But if the same man strongly and boldly exposes and denounces sin, clearly and fully lifts up Christ, distinctly and openly invites men to believe and repent, shall we dare to say that the man does not preach the gospel at all? Shall we dare to say that he will do no good? I, for one, cannot say so, at any rate. If I am asked whether I prefer Whitefield’s gospel or

Wesley's, I answer at once that I prefer Whitefield's: I am a Calvinist, and not an Arminian. That Wesley would have done better if he could have thrown off his Arminianism, I have not the least doubt; but that he preached the gospel, honored Christ, and did extensive good, I no more doubt than I doubt my own existence.'

And like so many other Calvinistic Wesley-fans, Ryle goes on to caution against bigotry:

'Finally, has anyone been accustomed to regard Wesley with dislike on account of his Arminian opinions? Is anyone in the habit of turning away from his name with prejudice, and refusing to believe that such an imperfect preacher of the gospel could do any good? I ask such a one to remould his opinion, to take a more kindly view of the old soldier of the cross, and to give him the honour he deserves. ...Whether we like it or not, John Wesley was a mighty instrument in God's hand for good; and, next to George Whitefield, was the first and foremost evangelist of England a hundred years ago.'

The fact that Ryle defends a fellow brother in Satan is not surprising. That's what Calvinists are SUPPOSED to do. But it's NOT what Christians do.

"And My hand shall be against the prophets who see vanity, and who divine a lie. They shall not be in the assembly of My people, and they shall not be written in the writing of the house of Israel, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel. And you shall know that I [am] the Lord Jehovah. Because, even because they made My people go astray, saying, Peace! and there [was] no peace. And he builds a wall, and, behold, others daubed it with lime. Say to those daubing [with] lime, Yea, it will fall. There will be a flooding rain; and you, O hailstones, shall fall, and a tempestuous wind shall break. And, behold, when the wall has fallen, it shall not be said to you, Where [is] the daubing with which you have daubed? So the Lord

Jehovah says this: I will even break in My fury [with] a tempestuous wind. And there shall be a flooding rain in My anger, and hailstones in fury, to consume it. And I will break down the wall that you have daubed with lime and bring it down to the ground; yea, I will bare its base. And it shall fall, and you will be consumed in its midst. And you shall know that I [am] Jehovah. And I will complete My wrath in the wall, and in those who daubed it [with] lime. And I will say to you, The wall is not; and, Those who daubed [are] not. The prophets of Israel who are prophesying concerning Jerusalem, and who see visions of peace for her, even [there is] no peace, declares the Lord Jehovah” (Ezekiel 13:9-16).

The Wesleyan Wall is not; and the Ryleian Dauber is not.

A Tastefully Broad Tolerance

J.C. Ryle's — I pause to clear my throat loudly — "Warnings to the churches." Point number two:

2. EVEN FALSE TEACHERS ARE ZEALOUS

"Many things combine to make the present inroad of false doctrine peculiarly dangerous. There is an undeniable zeal in some of the teachers of error: their 'earnestness' (to use an unhappy cant phrase) makes many think they must be right. There is a great appearance of learning and theological knowledge: many fancy that such clever and intellectual men must surely be safe guides. There is a general tendency to free thought and free inquiry in these latter days: many like to prove their independence of judgment, by believing novelties.

There is a wide-spread desire to appear charitable and liberal-minded: many seem half ashamed of saying that anybody can be in the wrong. There is a quantity of half-truth taught by the modern false teachers: they are incessantly using Scriptural terms and phrases in an unscriptural sense. There is a morbid craving in the public mind for a more sensuous, ceremonial, sensational, showy worship: men are impatient of inward, invisible heartwork. There is a silly readiness in every direction to believe everybody who talks cleverly, lovingly, and earnestly, and a determination to forget that Satan is often 'transformed into an angel of light.' (2 Corinthians 2:14)

There is a wide-spread 'gullibility' among professing Christians: every heretic who tells his story plausibly is sure to be believed, and everybody who doubts him is called a persecutor and a narrow-minded man. All these

things are peculiar symptoms of our times. I defy any observing man to deny them. They tend to make the assaults of false doctrine in our day peculiarly dangerous. They make it more than ever needful to cry aloud, 'Be not carried about.'"

Ryle is one of the most liberal and "charitably-minded" theologians around (e.g., Ryle's adulation of heretic, John Wesley). He has a very wide and expansive spiritual gut to go along with his tastefully broad tolerance for the doctrines of demons. Particularly, the demonic doctrine of universal atonement.

Safeguard Against False Doctrine

Point three of Ryle's "Warning to the churches":

3. THE BIBLE IS THE BEST SAFEGUARD AGAINST FALSE DOCTRINE

"Does any one ask me, What is the best safeguard against false doctrine? – I answer in one word, 'The Bible: the Bible regularly read, regularly prayed over, regularly studied.' We must go back to the old prescription of our Master: 'Search the Scriptures.' (John 5:39) If we want a weapon to wield against the devices of Satan, there is nothing like 'the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God.' But to wield it successfully, we must read it habitually, diligently, intelligently, and prayerfully. This is a point on which, I fear, many fail. In an age of hurry and bustle, few read their Bibles as much as they should. More books perhaps are read than ever, but less of the one Book which makes man wise unto salvation. Rome and neology could never have made such havoc in the Church in the last fifty years, if there had not been a most superficial knowledge of the Scriptures throughout the land. A Bible-reading laity is the strength of a Church."

Whatever Ryle bids me to observe that accords with Scripture, that I will observe and do (e.g., read, study, meditate on my Bible more, etc.). But I will not do after Ryle's works. For he says, and does not. One salient example of not safeguarding against false doctrine is Ryle's spiritual fornication with a notorious God-hater by the name of John Wesley. Of course, Ryle doesn't need to succumb to speaking peace to a God-hater

(cf. 2 John 9-11) to be convicted of not safeguarding since he is heretical enough all by himself.

Don't Make Your Preacher A Pope

J.C. Ryle "Warnings to the churches," point four:

4. DON'T MAKE A POPE OUT OF YOUR MINISTER

"Your minister may be a man of God indeed, and worthy of all honor for his preaching and practice; but do not make a pope of him. Do not place his word side by side with the Word of God. Do not spoil him by flattery. Do not let him suppose he can make no mistakes. Do not lean your whole weight on his opinion, or you may find to your cost that he can err. It is written of

Joash, King of Judah, that he 'did that which was right in the sight of the Lord all the days of Jehoiada the priest.' (2 Chronicles 24:2) Jehoiada died, and then died the religion of Joash. Just so your minister may die, and then your religion may die too; – may change, and your religion may change; – may go away, and your religion may go. Oh, be not satisfied with a religion built upon man! Be not content with saying, 'I have hope, because my own minister has told me such and such things.' Seek to be able to say, 'I have hope, because I find it thus and thus written in the Word of God.' If your peace is to be solid, you must go yourself to the fountain of all truth. If your comforts are to be lasting, you must visit the well of life yourself, and draw fresh water for your own soul. Ministers may depart from the faith. The visible Church may be broken up. But he who has the Word of God written in his heart, has a foundation beneath his feet which will never fail him. Honor your minister as a faithful ambassador of Christ. Esteem him very highly in love for his work's sake. But never forget that infallibility is not to be found in godly ministers, but in the Bible."

Bishop Ryle was an Anglican, correct? Huh. I'd argue correctly that many a Calvinist treat the "good Bishop" like a Pope.

Calvinist Buzz-Words And Phrases

Point five (with ten to go) of J.C. Ryle's "Warnings to the churches":

5. CONTROVERSY IN RELIGION

"Controversy in religion is a hateful thing. It is hard enough to fight the devil, the world and the flesh, without private differences in our own camp. But there is one thing which is even worse than controversy, and that is false doctrine tolerated, allowed, and permitted without protest or molestation."

False doctrine tolerated is worse. False doctrine tolerated is worse? Wait just a tolerant Calvinist minute. Something seems amiss here. Hey! Who are you and what have you done with Mister Ryle? Come on now! Out with it!

"It was controversy that won the battle of Protestant Reformation. If the views that some men hold were correct, it is plain we never ought to have had any Reformation at all! For the sake of peace, we ought to have gone on worshipping the Virgin, and bowing down to images and relics to this very day! Away with such trifling! There are times when controversy is not only a duty but a benefit. Give me the mighty thunderstorm rather than the pestilential malaria. The one walks in darkness and poisons us in silence, and we are never safe. The other frightens and alarms for a little season. But it is soon over, and it clears the air. It is a plain Scriptural duty to 'contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.' (Jude 3) I am

quite aware that the things I have said are exceedingly distasteful to many minds. I believe many are content with teaching which is not the whole truth, and fancy it will be 'all the same' in the end. I am sorry for them. I am convinced that nothing but the whole truth is likely, as a general rule, to do good to souls. I am satisfied that those who willfully put up with anything short of the whole truth, will find at last that their souls have received much damage. Three things there are which men never ought to trifle with, -- a little poison, a little false doctrine, and a little sin."

Oh, I am quite sorry Mister Ryle. I thought you were somebody else. Here, let me help you up. There, there, now. I surely didn't mean to startle you like that. It was a common tolerant Calvinist buzz-phrase — "their souls have received much damage" — that clued me in as to your true identity. You are in fact the real Mister Ryle.

"I am satisfied that those who willfully put up with anything short of the whole truth, will find at last that their souls have received much damage" (J.C. Ryle).

Other common tolerant Calvinist buzz-words are "deadly" or "lethal."

Ryle On Justification By Faith Alone

Ryle, point 6 in his Warnings to the churches:

6. WHY THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH ALONE WITHOUT WORKS IS IMPORTANT

“No man on earth is a real child of God, and a saved soul, till he sees and receives salvation by faith in Christ Jesus. No man will ever have solid peace and true assurance, until he embraces with all his heart the doctrine that ‘we are accounted righteous before God for the merit of our Lord Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works and deservings.’ One reason, I believe, why so many professors in this day are tossed to and fro, enjoy little comfort, and feel little peace, is their ignorance on this point. They do not see clearly justification by faith without the deeds of the law.”

Ryle says that “many professors” are ignorant on the point of justification by the work of Jesus Christ apart from human effort as the sole ground of acceptance before God (cf. Romans 10:1-4). Now Ryle does say “professors” and not truly regenerate Christians. But in other writings he states the matter quite clearly:

“Finally, do not forget that assurance is a thing which may be lost for a season, even by the brightest Christians, unless they take care.

Assurance is a most delicate plant. It needs daily, hourly watching,

watering, tending, cherishing. So watch and pray the more when you have got it. As Rutherford says, 'Make much of assurance.' Be always upon your guard. When Christian slept in the arbor, in Pilgrim's Progress — he lost his certificate. Keep that in mind" (J.C. Ryle, *Holiness*).

Thus Ryle is saying that it is possible for a truly regenerate person to be "ignorant of the righteousness of God, and [seek] to establish their own righteousness" (Romans 10:3). Let God be true, and Ryle a liar.

Nullifying The Cross As Propitiation

J.C. Ryle “Warnings to the churches,” point 7:

7. BEWARE OF ANY TEACHING THAT OBSCURES THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

“Let us always beware of any teaching which either directly or indirectly obscures justification by faith. All religious systems which put anything between the heavy laden sinner and Jesus Christ the Savior, except simple faith, are dangerous and unscriptural. All systems which make out faith to be anything complicated, anything but a simple, childlike dependence, – the hand which receives the soul’s medicine from the physician, – are unsafe and poisonous systems. All systems which cast discredit on the simple Protestant doctrine which broke the power of Rome, carry about with them a plague-spot, and are dangerous to souls.”

Recall in my previous posts of Ryle’s “Warning to the churches” how he counts John Wesley a spiritual brother. This means Wesley and Ryle are unified in a “gospel” that nullifies the cross of Christ as a propitiation (cf. Romans 3:24-25).

Evidently in Ryle’s blinded estimate, Wesley’s denunciation of Christ as the end of law for righteousness (Romans 10:4) does NOT necessarily constitute an obscuring of justification by the propitiating blood and imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ.

Also implied in Ryle's alleged warning is that "simple, childlike dependence" and "simple faith" means dependence or faith in an atonement that DOES NOT atone. Apparently to Ryle and other like-minded Calvinists, an atonement that ACTUALLY ATONES is some kind of novel or esoteric concept.

Humility And Meekness Rightly Defined

On to point 8 of J.C. Ryle's "Warnings to the churches":

8. ARM YOURSELVES WITH A THOROUGH KNOWLEDGE OF SCRIPTURE

“. . . let me first of all ask everyone who reads this paper, to arm himself with a thorough knowledge of the written Word of God. Unless we do this we are at the mercy of any false teacher. We shall not see through the mistakes of an erring Peter. We shall not be able to imitate the faithfulness of a courageous Paul. An ignorant laity will always be the bane of a Church. A Bible-reading laity may save a Church from ruin. Let us read the Bible regularly, daily, and with fervent prayer, and become familiar with its contents. Let us receive nothing, believe nothing, follow nothing, which is not in the Bible, nor can be proved by the Bible. Let our rule of faith, our touchstone of all teaching, be the written Word of God.”

A thorough knowledge of the written word of God will make God's people aware of the notorious anti-Christian irenicism of the Anglican heretic, J.C. Ryle.

Ryle's point number nine:

9. KEEP JEALOUS WATCH OVER YOUR OWN HEARTS“

“. . . let me entreat all who read this paper to keep a jealous watch over their own hearts in these controversial times. There is much need of this caution. In the heat of the battle we are apt to forget our own inner man. Victory in argument is not always victory over the world or victory over the

devil. Let the meekness of St. Peter in taking a reproof, be as much our example as the boldness of St. Paul in reproof. Happy is the Christian who can call the person who rebukes him faithfully, a 'beloved brother.' (2 Peter 3:15) Let us strive to be holy in all manner of conversation, and not least in our tempers. Let us labor to maintain an uninterrupted communion with the Father and with the Son, and to keep up constant habits of private prayer and Bible-reading. Thus we shall be armed for the battle of life, and have the sword of the Spirit well fitted to our hand when the day of temptation comes."

A rightly defined and understood meekness and humility when arguing for, and defending the true gospel. A humble boldness and meekness that is regulated by Scripture, and not regulated by J.C. Ryle.

Currency Of Compromise

Point #10 of J.C. Ryle's "Warnings to the churches":

10. FALSE DOCTRINE HAS NEVER CEASED TO BE THE PLAGUE OF CHRISTENDOM

"And no fact in Church history is more clearly proved than this – that false doctrine has never ceased to be the plague of Christendom for the last eighteen centuries (now twenty-one centuries). Looking forward with the eye of a prophet. St. Paul might well say 'I fear :.' 'I fear not merely the corruption of your morals, but of your minds.' The plain truth is that false doctrine has been the chosen engine which Satan has employed in every age to stop the progress of the Gospel of Christ. Finding himself unable to prevent the Fountain of Life being opened, he has laboured incessantly to poison the streams which flow from it. If he could not destroy it, he has too often neutralized its usefulness by addition, subtraction, or substitution. In a word he has 'corrupted men's minds.'"

Ryle with point #11:

11. WHEN CONTROVERSY IS A POSITIVE DUTY

"Controversy is an odious thing; but there are days when it is a positive duty. Peace is an excellent thing; but, like gold, it may be bought too dear.

Unity is a mighty blessing; but it is worthless if it is purchased at the cost of truth. Once more I say, Open your eyes and be on your guard.”

How ironic is this! Ryle, YOU are the man! You are the one who has bought the gold of peace at too dear a price. You are one of MANY Calvinists who have sold the truth of efficacious atonement down The Take-It-Or-Leave-It River!

Since Ryle had the Bible, he also had the Price Of Truth right in front of his face. But Ryle and other tolerant Calvinists play the wage-scorning harlot by bribing notorious Christ-haters with the currency of efficacious atonement compromise.

“How weak is your heart, declares the Lord Jehovah, since you do all these, the work of a woman, an overbearing prostitute, in that you built your mound in the head of every highway, and you make your high place in every open place; yet you have not been as a prostitute, [even] scorning wages. [Like] the adulterous wife, instead of her husband, she takes strangers. They give a gift to all harlots, but you give your gifts to all your lovers and bribe them to come to you from all around for your fornication. And in you was the opposite from [those] women in your fornications, since no one whores after you, and in your giving wages, and hire is not given to you. [In] this you are opposite” (Ezekiel 16:30-34).

There is a oft-told story of Charles Simeon and John Wesley that is quite heart-warming to many promiscuous Calvinists (you can google it if you would like further stomach-turning detail). For the purpose of this post, it is enough for me to say that it was not John Wesley that went whoring after Charles Simeon, but Simeon after Wesley. The same is true of most Calvinists who sacrifice Essential Gospel Doctrine on the Arminian Altar.

They go a-whoring under every green Arminian tree.

Rabble-Rouser Ryle

J.C. Ryle's "Warnings to the churches," point 12":

12. JESUS CHRIST IS THE ONLY WAY

“Christ is the way: men without Him are Cains, wanderers, vagabonds. His is the truth: men without Him are liars, like the devil of old. He is the life: men without Him are dead in trespasses and sins. He is the light: men without Him are in darkness, and go they know not whither. He is the vine: men that are not in Him are withered branches prepared for the fire. He is the rock: men not built on Him are carried away with a flood. He is the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last...the founder and finisher of our salvation. He that hath not Him hath neither beginning of good nor shall have end of misery. Oh, blessed Jesus, how much better were it not to be than to be without Thee! never to be born than not to die in Thee! A thousand hells come short of this, eternally to want Jesus Christ.’ This witness is true. If we can say Amen to the spirit of this passage it will be well with our souls.”

It appears from Ryle's comments that he is commenting on John 14:6. Ironically Ryle denies that Christ is able to “found” or “finish” the salvation of all whom He represented at the cross. Behold the blasphemy:

“Christ is...a Saviour for all mankind....He did not suffer for a few persons only, but for all mankind...What Christ took away, and bore on the cross, was not the sin of certain people only, but the whole accumulated mass of all the sins of all the children of Adam....I hold as strongly as anyone, that Christ's death is profitable to none but the elect who believe in His Name. But I dare not limit and pare down such expressions as the one before us. I

dare not say that no atonement has been made, in any sense, except for the elect. I believe it is possible to be more systematic than the Bible in our statements....I dare not confine the intention of redemption to the saints alone. Christ is for every man...I repudiate the idea of universal salvation as a dangerous heresy and utterly contrary to Scripture. But the lost will not prove to be lost because Christ did nothing for them. He bore their sins, He carried their transgressions, He provided payment; but they would not put in their claim to any interest in it...The atonement was made for all the world, though it is applied and enjoyed by none but believers.” [14]

[14] Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on the Gospels* (Grand Rapids, 1900), Vol. III, pp. 61f.

Cited by Norman F. Douty in his book, *Did Christ Die Only for the Elect?* (Wipf and Stock, 1998), page 77.

Ryle has the unmitigated gall to dare say that Jesus died “in some sense” for those in hell. Ryle treats the cross of Christ as NOTHING. Ryle opens up the floodgates of self-salvation since he believes that Christ died “in some sense” for those in hell. For Ryle, this “some sense” is exhibited not in effecting salvation for the non-elect, but limited “only” to bearing their sins, carrying their transgressions, and providing payment. Easy conclusion stated in a calm manner: Ryle is a God-hating, efficacious-blood-of-Christ-despising LIAR.

Whosoever righteousness one believes makes the difference between salvation and damnation is the righteousness one is attempting to come to God in. If one believes that Jesus Christ died for everyone without exception, then they are ipso facto attempting to come to the Father in their own righteousness (contrary to John 14:6).

J.C. Ryle believed that Jesus Christ established an everlasting

righteousness for those who will everlastingly perish. Thus Mr. Ryle is attempting to come to the Father through his own established righteousness (cf. Romans 10:3). God hates it and will not accept it.

“For Christ [is] the end of Law for righteousness to everyone that believes” (Romans 10:4).

Jesus Christ is the end of law for righteousness — NOT J.C. Ryle or those believing the self-righteousness-establishing doctrine of universal atonement.

Laborious And Relentless Study

J.C. Ryle's "Warnings to the churches," #11:

13. LET US ARM OUR MINDS WITH THE WORD OF GOD

“. . . if we would be kept from falling away into false doctrine, let us arm our minds with a thorough knowledge of God's Word. Let us read our Bibles from beginning to end with daily diligence, and constant prayer for the teaching of the Holy Spirit, and so strive to become thoroughly familiar with their contents. Ignorance of the Bible is the root of all error, and a superficial acquaintance with it accounts for many of the sad perversions and defections of the present day. In a hurrying age of railways and telegraphs, I am firmly persuaded that many Christians do not give time enough to private reading of the Scriptures.”

“In a hurrying age of railways and telegraphs.” Huh. Even busier and more hurried now.

“I doubt seriously whether English people did not know their Bibles better two hundred years ago than they do now. The consequence is, that they are ‘tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine,’ and fall an easy prey to the first clever teacher of error who tries to influence their minds. I entreat my readers to remember this counsel, and take heed to their ways. It is as true now as ever, that the good textuary is the only good theologian, and that a familiarity with great leading texts, is, as our

Lord proved in the temptation, one of the best safeguards against error. Arm yourself then with the sword of the Spirit, and let your hand become used to it. I am well aware that there is no royal road to Bible-knowledge. Without diligence and pains no one ever becomes 'mighty in the Scriptures.' 'Justification,' said Charles Simeon, with his characteristic quaintness, 'is by faith, but knowledge of the Bible comes by works.' But of one thing I am certain: there is no labour which will be so richly repaid as laborious regular daily study of God's Word."

A laborious and relentless study with, as one fellow put it, "Bible, pads, and pens. Highlighter, commentaries. Application necessary. Oh, yessir we get some in." We get some Bible study in, and by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit we discern that J.C. Ryle's theology is damnable.

Ryle's abysmal view of the cross of Christ is not a Reformed anomaly in the History and Theology of Calvinism. Many Calvinists besides Ryle believed Christ died for those in hell.

Ryle On Church History And Idolatry

Heretic J.C. Ryle's Warnings to the churches (last two points, #14 and #15):

14. BECOME THOROUGHLY ACQUAINTED WITH THE REFORMATION

“Let us make ourselves thoroughly acquainted with the history of the English Reformation. My reason for offering this counsel is my firm conviction that this highly important part of English history has of late years been undeservedly neglected. Thousands of Churchmen now-a-days have a most inadequate notion of the amount of our debt to our martyred Reformers. They have no distinct conception of the state of darkness and superstition in which our fathers lived, and of the light and liberty which the Reformation brought in. And the consequence is that they see no great harm in the Romanizing movement of the present day, and have very indistinct ideas of the real nature and work of Popery. It is high time that a better state of things should begin. Of one thing I am thoroughly convinced: a vast amount of the prevailing apathy about the Romanizing movement of the day may be traced up to gross ignorance, both of the true nature of Popery and of the Protestant Reformation.”

And:

15. BEWARE OF IDOLATRY

“Let us mark this well. It is high time to dismiss from our minds those loose ideas about idolatry, which are common in this day. We must not think, as many do, that there are only two sorts of idolatry—the spiritual idolatry of the man who loves his wife, or child, or money more than God; and the open, gross idolatry of the man who bows down to an image of wood, or metal, or stone, because he knows no better. We may rest assured that idolatry is a sin which occupies a far wider field than this. It is not merely a thing in pagan lands, that we may hear of and pity at missionary meetings; nor yet is it a thing confined to our own hearts, that we may confess before the mercy-seat upon our knees. It is a pestilence that walks in the Church of the Living Christ to a much greater extent than many suppose. It is an evil that, like the man of sin, ‘that sets himself up in God’s temple, proclaiming himself to be God’ (2 Thessalonians 2:4).”

A Mere Shibboleth

John Charles Ryle (1816-1900) was the first Anglican Bishop of Liverpool. He was

“the leader of the Evangelicals in the Church of England [i.e., Synagogue of Satan–CD]. A four-point Calvinist, he wrote many books which are still in print. Among them are his *Expository Thoughts on the Gospels* (7 vols.), *Knots Untied* and *Holiness*. Ryle is practical and experimental Calvinism at its best” (Curt Daniel, *The History and Theology of Calvinism*, p. 122).

In the Foreward to *Faithfulness and Holiness: The Witness of J.C. Ryle*, J.I. Packer writes:

“Though Ryle’s rhetoric retains its Victorian tinge, his points, biblical and Puritan as they are, are uniformly relevant to Christian living here and now, and indeed speak as pungently to our own shallowness and superficialities as they did to the counterparts of these lapses a century and a quarter ago.

Lamponing Bishop Ryle as a ham-fisted, Bible-punching caveman, a heavy-handed primitive, a bull in a china shop, and a faded old clown, has been a popular sport among non-evangelicals from Ryle’s day to our own. But I see him as a single-minded Christian communicator of profound biblical, theological, and pastoral wisdom, a man and minister of giant person stature and electric force of utterance that sympathetic readers still feel (‘unction’ was the old name for it), and I aim to present him as such” (J.I. Packer).

The following quotes are from J.C. Ryle’s *The Christian Leaders of the Last Century: Or England a Hundred Years Ago* (sometimes entitled “Christian

Leaders of the Eighteenth Century”; paragraphing is mine—CD):

“I should think my sketch of Wesley incomplete if I did not notice the objection continually made against him — that he was an Arminian in doctrine. I fully admit the seriousness of the objection. I do not pretend either to explain the charge away, or to defend his objectionable opinions. Personally, I feel unable to account for any well-instructed Christian holding such doctrines as perfection and the defectability of grace, or denying such as election and the imputed righteousness of Christ.

But, after all, we must beware that we do not condemn men too strongly for not seeing all things in our point of view, or excommunicate and anathematize them because they do not pronounce our shibboleth. It is written in God’s Word, ‘Why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother?’ We must think and let think. We must learn to distinguish between things that are of the essence of the gospel and things which are of the perfection of gospel” (J.C. Ryle, *Christian Leaders*).

What God through the apostle Paul calls ignorance of the righteousness of God revealed in the gospel (Romans 10:1-4), J.C. Ryle labels as a mere “shibboleth.” Paul prayed for the salvation of certain ignorant ones (thus judging them to be presently lost). But Ryle would call these zealous yet ignorant persons, brothers whom he dare not judge. Ryle’s position is that the righteousness of God revealed in the gospel (Romans 10:3) is NOT of the essence of the gospel. Paul carefully and deliberately flings Ryle’s remonstrance to not anathematize men over supposed “shibboleths” to the wind.

Ryle continued:

“We may think that a man preaches an imperfect gospel who denies election, considers justification to be nothing more than forgiveness, and

tells believers in one sermon that they may attain perfection in this life, and in another sermon that they may entirely fall away from grace. But if the same man strongly and boldly exposes and denounces sin, clearly and fully lifts up Christ, distinctly and openly invites men to believe and repent, shall we dare to say that the man does not preach the gospel at all? Shall we dare to say that he will do no good? I, for one, cannot say so, at any rate” (Ryle, *Christian Leaders*).

To Ryle’s depraved and unregenerate mind, a person who flatly contradicts Paul’s teaching in 2 Timothy 1:8-12 and Jesus’ teaching in John 10:28 is merely preaching an “imperfect gospel.”

Ryle:

“If I am asked whether I prefer Whitefield’s gospel or Wesley’s, I answer at once that I prefer Whitefield’s: I am a Calvinist, and not an Arminian. But if I am asked to go further, and to say that Wesley preached no gospel at all, and did no real good, I answer at once that I cannot do so” (Ryle, *Christian Leaders*).

It is both customary and fashionable for Calvinists like Ryle to defend their brothers in Satan. This is what they are SUPPOSED to do. But it is NOT what true Christians do. True Christians judge righteous judgment based on the work of Christ ALONE. Tolerant Calvinists like Ryle judge unrighteous judgment based on the efforts of the sinner.

“That Wesley would have done better if he could have thrown off his Arminianism, I have not the least doubt; but that he preached the gospel, honoured Christ, and did extensive good, I no more doubt than I doubt my own existence...I only say, before anyone despises this great man because he was an Arminian, let him take care that he really knows what Wesley’s opinions were. Above all, let him take care that he thoroughly understands

what kind of doctrines he used to preach in England a hundred years ago” (Ryle, *Christian Leaders*).

Ryle had the audacity, the temerity, the unmitigated gall to say that John Wesley preached the gospel and honored Christ. We are quite aware of Wesley’s damnable opinions and doctrines he belched from the pit of hell.

Ryle continues:

“Finally, has any one been accustomed to regard Wesley with dislike on account of his Arminian opinions? Is any one in the habit of turning away from his name with prejudice, and refusing to believe that such an imperfect preacher of the gospel could do any good? I ask such an one to remould his opinion, to take a more kindly view of the old soldier of the cross, and to give him the honour he deserves” (Ryle, *Christian Leaders*).

Wesley was an ignorant and zealous soldier of a powerless cross; a cross of none effect. An idolatrous and self-righteous “cross” that flitted around in Wesley’s blackened brain. John Wesley despised the true cross and counted it as foolishness, a skandalon, an utter offense.

Ryle:

“What though John Wesley did not use all the weapons of truth which our great Captain has provided? What though he often said things which you and I feel we could not say, and left unsaid things which we feel ought to be said? Still, notwithstanding this, he was a bold fighter on Christ’s side, a fearless warrior against sin, the world, and the devil, and an unflinching adherent of the Lord Jesus Christ in a very dark day. He honoured the Bible. He cried down sin. He made much of Christ’s blood. He exalted holiness. He taught the absolute need of repentance, faith, and conversion. Surely these things ought not to be forgotten. Surely there is a deep lesson

in those words of our Master, 'Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is on our part' (Mark ix. 39, 40)" (Ryle, *Christian Leaders*).

Ryle says that John Wesley "*made much of Christ's blood.*" Wow. *Really, Ryle?* Clearly Ryle is one in whom the true gospel has been hid. The god of this world had blinded the minds of both Ryle and Wesley, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine on them (2 Corinthians 4:3-4). Here is Wesley, not making much of, but profaning the precious and efficacious blood of Jesus Christ:

"Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died," (Rom. xiv. 15,) – a clear proof that Christ died, not only for those that are saved, but also for them that perish: ... (7:380-381)

"What! Can the blood of Christ burn in hell? Or can the purchase by the blood of Christ go thither?" I answer, ... If the oracles of God are true, one who was purchased by the blood of Christ may go thither. For he that was sanctified by the blood of Christ was purchased by the blood of Christ. But one who was sanctified by the blood of Christ may nevertheless go to hell; may fall under that fiery indignation which shall for ever devour the adversaries. (10:297)

Ryle concludes his disgusting encomium of a clear and obvious God-hater, John Wesley.

"Then let us thank God for what John Wesley was, and not keep poring over his deficiencies, and only talking of what he was not. Whether we like it or not, John Wesley was a mighty instrument in God's hand for good; and, next to George Whitefield, was the first and foremost evangelist of England a hundred years ago" (Ryle, *Christian Leaders*).

If God did not regenerate and cause John Wesley to believe the true gospel prior to his death, then Wesley was indeed a mighty instrument in God's hand for good in the way Pharaoh was a mighty instrument in God's hand for good (cf. Romans 9:16-24). One such "good" is the edification and instruction of His people concerning what ultimately makes them to differ from the lost. The truth conveyed in Romans 9:16-24 humbles them and causes them to tremble before Almighty God, thankful that He has graciously numbered them among the elect rather than the reprobate, knowing that it is the efficacious cross-work of Jesus Christ ALONE that makes them to differ from the "Pharaohs" of the world.

A cross of no effect

J.C. Ryle writes:

“Finally, has anyone been accustomed to regard Wesley with dislike on account of his Arminian opinions? Is anyone in the habit of turning away from his name with prejudice, and refusing to believe that such an imperfect preacher of the gospel could do any good? I ask such an one to remould his opinion, to take a more kindly view of the old soldier of the cross, and to give him the honour he deserves” (Ryle, *Christian Leaders*).

John Wesley was an ignorant and zealous soldier of a powerless cross; a cross of no effect. An idolatrous and self-righteous “cross” that flitted around in Wesley’s blackened brain. John Wesley despised the true cross and counted it as foolishness, a *skandalon*, an utter offense.

“For the Word of the cross is foolishness to those being lost, but to us being saved, [it] is [the] power of God” (1 Corinthians 1:18).

Ryle’s commendatory comments about Wesley reveal that he believes in the same anathematized gospel as Wesley (see Galatians 1:8-9). Both Ryle and Wesley are boasters in a “cross” of no effect. Those boasting in a powerless “cross” necessarily boast in themselves. Ryle and Wesley boast in a powerless “cross.” Thus, Ryle and Wesley boast in themselves.

“The boasters shall not set themselves before Your eyes. You hate all workers of iniquity” (Psalm 5:5).

Extravagantly Broad

J.C. Ryle writes in his popular book, *Holiness*:

“In the next place, a scriptural view of sin is one of the best antidotes to the extravagantly broad and liberal theology which is so much in vogue at the present time. The tendency of modern thought is to reject dogmas, creeds and every kind of bounds in religion. It is thought grand and wise to condemn no opinion whatever, and to pronounce all earnest and clever teachers to be trustworthy, however heterogeneous and mutually destructive their opinions may be. Everything, forsooth, is true and nothing is false! Everybody is right and nobody is wrong! Everybody is likely to be saved and nobody is to be lost! The atonement and substitution of Christ, the personality of the devil, the miraculous element in Scripture, the reality and eternity of future punishment, all these mighty foundation–stones are coolly tossed overboard, like lumber, in order to lighten the ship of Christianity and enable it to keep pace with modern science. Stand up for these great verities, and you are called narrow, illiberal, old–fashioned and a theological fossil!” (J. C. Ryle, *Holiness*)

Many tolerant Calvinist heretics treat the essential mighty foundation stones as non-essential lumber. Machen is one unregenerate agent of Satan who calmly and coolly tosses overboard the doctrine of plenary inspiration in order to commit spiritual fornication with God-haters under the guise of...what, exactly? A perverted view of charity?

“It must be admitted that there are many Christians who do not accept the doctrine of plenary inspiration. That doctrine is denied not only by liberal opponents of Christianity, but also by many true Christian men. There are many Christian men in the modern Church who find in the origin of Christianity no mere product of evolution but a real entrance of the creative power of God, who depend for their salvation, not at all upon their own efforts to lead the Christ life, but upon the atoning blood of Christ — there are many men in the modern Church who thus accept the central message of the Bible and yet believe that the message has come to us merely on the authority of trustworthy witnesses unaided in their literary work by any

supernatural guidance of the Spirit of God. There are many who believe that the Bible is right at the central point, in its account of the redeeming work of Christ, and yet believe that it contains many errors. Such men are not really liberals, but Christians; because they have accepted as true the message upon which Christianity depends. A great gulf separates them from those who reject the supernatural act of God with which Christianity stands or falls.” (J. Gresham Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism*, p. 75)

These liberals whom Machen judged as “*true Christian men*” did blasphemously assert that the Bible was NOT the Word of God, but merely the word of “*trustworthy witnesses*.” They accepted it not as the word of God, but as the word of men (cf. 1 Thessalonians 2:13). Apparently, these lying liberals have decided for themselves where these “trustworthy witnesses” have erred and where they have not erred. [Clearly, “a great gulf” does NOT separate them. They BOTH reject the Bible as THE criterion. They (in their blinded minds) are the criterion, and they have put themselves in the place of God the Holy Spirit by asserting what He did and did not say, and what He is, and is not in error about.]

Contrary to what Machen says, Christianity “stands or falls” on the the doctrine of plenary inspiration, and NOT on any message of Christ’s redeeming work contained therein since the “doctrine of [plenary] inspiration is the first principle from which all biblical doctrines are derived.” (CCF) Machen is cohort to those who undermined the Scriptures:

“For if you were believing Moses, you would then believe Me; for that one wrote concerning Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My Words?” (John 5:46-47)

If Machen’s (alleged) “true Christian men” do not believe that the Bible as a whole is true, then how will they believe that the Bible in its parts are true? Jesus says they CANNOT. They have a different standard by which they

judge what is true and what is false. They are like those whom Jesus addresses in John 5:46-47.

The tolerant Calvinist, spiritual fornicating heretic, J. Gresham Machen founded the “Orthodox Presbyterian Church.” Thus, the OPC was never a true Church. It began as a Synagogue of Satan, and it remains a Synagogue of Satan.

Define With Precision

“It may be laid down as a rule, with tolerable confidence, that the absence of accurate definitions is the very life of religious controversy. If men would only define with precision the theological terms, which they use, many disputes would die. Scores of excited disputants would discover that they do not really differ, and that their disputes have arisen from their own neglect of the great duty of explaining the meaning of words” (J. C. Ryle, *Evangelical Religion*).

Though an unbeliever, Ryle accurately explains how important it is to give precise definitions or meanings of the words being used or employed. Otherwise, people will not understand what you are saying. It is also important to discover how others with whom we are disputing are defining their terms as well.

May true Christians be quick to listen and to ask clarifying questions. And slow to speak (or write) or jump to any sinfully hasty conclusions. It is folly and shame to thrust with the Sword of the Spirit prior to a clear identification of the theological target.

“So that, my beloved brothers, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath” (James 1:19).

“If one rejects a matter before he hears, it [is] folly and shame to him” (Proverbs 18:13).

Ryle’s Wresting of Matthew 23:37

J.C. Ryle begins by commenting on Luke 5:12-16:

“Who shall deliver us from this body of death? Let us thank God that Jesus Christ can. He is that divine Physician, who can make old things pass away and all things become new. In Him is life. He can wash us thoroughly from all the defilement of sin in His own blood. He can quicken us, and revive us by His own Spirit. He can cleanse our hearts, open the eyes of our understandings, renew our wills, and make us whole. Let this sink down deeply into our hearts. There is medicine to heal our sickness. If we are lost it is not because we cannot be saved. However corrupt our hearts, and however wicked our past lives, there is hope for us in the Gospel. There is no case of spiritual leprosy too hard for Christ. We see, secondly, in this passage, our Lord Jesus Christ’s willingness to help those that are in need. The petition of the afflicted leper was a very touching one. ‘Lord,’ he said, ‘if you will, you can make me clean.’ The answer he received was singularly merciful and gracious. At once our Lord replies, ‘I will — be clean!’ Those two little words, ‘I will,’ deserve special notice” (J. C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on the Gospels*).

Calvinist J.C. Ryle speaks of “special notice” concerning the two little words, “I will.” Ryle continues:

“They are a deep mine, rich in comfort and encouragement to all laboring and heavy laden souls. They show us the mind of Christ towards sinners. They exhibit His infinite willingness to do good to the sons of men, and His readiness to show compassion. Let us always remember, that if men are not saved, it is not because Jesus is not willing to save them. He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. He would have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. He has no pleasure in the death of him that dies. He would have gathered Jerusalem’s children, as a hen gathers her chicks, if they would only have been gathered. He would, but they would not. The blame of the sinner’s

ruin must be borne by himself. It is his own will, and not Christ's will, if he is lost forever. It is a solemn saying of our Lord's, 'You will not come unto me that you might have life' (2 Pet. 3:9; 1 Tim. 2:4; Ezek. 18:32; Matt. 23:37; John 5:40)" (J. C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on the Gospels*).

Ryle — just like his Arminian brothers in Satan — will take up the *eisegetical* shoehorn to Matthew 23:37. Ryle "quotes" this passage as "Jerusalem's children" and "they" (i.e., the children) would not. But that is NOT what the passage says. It is NOT "they" would not, but "ye" would not.

[NOTE: J.C. Ryle is an adherent of "moderate Calvinism," of which at least one defining tenet is that God desires the salvation of all men without exception by His revealed or preceptive/prescriptive will. Calvinists like Ryle present and preach their "god" as expressing a sincere and "ardent desire" for the salvation of those whom he has decreed NOT to save.]

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, [thou] that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under [her] wings, and ye would not!" (Matthew 23:37; NOTE: 1 Thessalonians 2:16 also describes those who "would not.")

Ryle perverts this passage as saying "*they would not*," when in reality it says "*ye would not*." Ryle, not content with laying this false foundation, proceeds to erect an edifice of his impotent idol who is thwarted by the regnant wills of his refractory creatures. Presumably Ryle would deny that he paints this idol with the brush of failure despite this "desire" for the salvation of those who ultimately perish. I realize that these moderate Calvinists make a distinction between God's "desire" (or will) by way of precept and God's "desire" (or will) by way of decree. However, this distinction regarding different senses of the word "desire" or "will" vanishes in their preaching. And this vanishing act or blurring of the distinction

between types of “desire” or “willing” is witnessed in Ryle’s wresting of Matthew 23:37.

“The difference between Calvinism and other forms of theistic thought, religious experience, evangelical theology is a difference not of kind but of degree” (B.B. Warfield).

I surmise that not all who call themselves Calvinist or Reformed would agree with Warfield’s implicit acknowledgement of Calvinism differing from Arminianism only in DEGREE, and not in KIND. But when one reads about Charles Hodge’s spiritual fornication with Schleiermacher, Herman Bavinck’s “polemic against” the Roman Catholic Whore, and this wresting above by J.C. Ryle ... then, wow — it really isn’t a difference in KIND, but only of DEGREE!

“For such [are] false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore [it is] no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works” (2 Corinthians 11:13-15).

In 2 Corinthians 11:13-15 Paul says that this slither toward a seeming orthodoxy is NO MARVEL and NO GREAT THING. Think about how a minister or even a “lay” professing Christian might (unwittingly) accomplish this. Begin the supposed “regenerate life” with damnable heresy and then “grow into” or transform into a “less damnable” or “more orthodox” perspective.

The aforementioned Calvinists masquerade as true Christians — but they are false. Much of their confessional Calvinism is damnable. And even those doctrines which do appear Biblical and orthodox on the surface, they

judge to be non-essential doctrines.

Settled Sovereignty

J.C. Ryle writes:

“Of all the doctrines of the Bible none is so offensive to human nature as the doctrine of God’s sovereignty. To be told that God is great, and just, and holy, and pure, man can bear. But to be told that ‘He has mercy on whom He will have mercy’ — that He ‘gives no account of His matters,’ that it is ‘not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy’ — these are truths that natural man cannot stand. They often call forth all his enmity against God, and fill him with wrath. Nothing, in short, will make him submit to them but the humbling teaching of the Holy Spirit.

Let us settle it in our minds that, whether we like it or not, the sovereignty of God is a doctrine clearly revealed in the Bible, and a fact clearly to be seen in the world. Upon no other principle can we ever explain why some members of a family are converted, and others live and die in sin — why some quarters of the earth are enlightened by Christianity, and others remain buried in heathenism” (J. C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on the Gospels*).

Though an unbeliever, J.C. Ryle rightly says that the sovereignty of God in salvation is a truth

“that natural man cannot stand”

and that it

“[calls] forth all his enmity against God, and [fills] him with wrath.”

Ryle states that the “*natural man cannot stand*” God’s sovereignty. In Scripture a natural man is an unregenerate man. Thus, Ryle ought to consider men like John Wesley to be unregenerate since Wesley clearly hated God and His sovereign dealings with mankind. But Ryle believed Wesley to be a true Christian, so I suppose Ryle’s words here don’t really mean much.

Ryle’s description here would accurately describe John Wesley and your typical garden-variety Arminian.[1] It also describes all Calvinist or Reformed persons who believe they were saved while they, too, were venting their rage and shaking their fist at God. In other words, these Calvinists believe they were regenerate while their attitude was exactly like Paul’s objector in Romans 9:19-20.

[1] An “Arminian” is my theological shorthand term for those who believe (among other things) the autosoteric LIE that Jesus Christ died for everyone without exception and that God is unjust in His sovereign dealings with sinners in salvation and damnation.

Ryle said:

“Let us settle it in our minds that, whether we like it or not, the sovereignty of God is a doctrine clearly revealed in the Bible, and a fact clearly to be seen in the world.”

The sovereignty of God is clearly revealed in the Bible. Ryle is correct. The reason this doctrine is disbelieved by the natural man is NOT because it is murkily revealed in Scripture or difficult to understand. Not at all. The reason it is disbelieved is because the natural man does NOT believe that such a God who sovereignly saves and damns, exists. But He DOES exist, and so they will shake their God-hating fists at Him for sovereignly loving

and hating (Romans 9:11-14) and also for “[making them] like this” (Romans 9:18-20).