

## John Piper oor J.C. Ryle (1816-1900)

Onderstaande is uittreksels uit John Piper se biografiese skets oor J.C. Ryle, die godvrugtige, evangeliese en wonderlike skrywer van meer as 'n eeue gelede. Ryle was lank Anglikaanse Biskop van Liverpool.

Is sy kommentaar en beoordeling nie deur en deur van toepassing op ons kerklike situasie in Suid-Afrika nie! Dit klink of Ryle in die tweede huis van my af bly.

Lees Ryle! Ek sê weer: Lees Ryle! Sy Engels is uiteraard bietjie verouderd, maar hy lees maklik! Vroeg in my lewe as Christen het ek sy mees bekende boek, "Holiness", gelees. Wat 'n impak het dit nie op my gemaak nie!

En nog iets: Luister/kyk na die stuk of 25 van Piper se biografiese sketse op internet. Jy sal vir seker nie spyt wees nie! Google eenvoudig: *John Piper: Biographies*. Ewe min is sy preke te versmaai.

Hieronder is Piper se aanhalings van Ryle in kursief en tussen aanhalingstekens — onderbreek deur Piper se kommentaar.

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Behind the increasing liberalism, ritualism, and worldliness that he saw in the church, Ryle saw a failure of doctrinal nerve — an unmanly failure. Dislike of dogma, he wrote:

*".... is an epidemic which is just now doing great harm, and especially among young people. . . It produces what I must venture to call . . . a "jelly-fish" Christianity . . . a Christianity without bone, or muscle, or power. . . . Alas! It is a type of much of the religion of this day, of which the leading principle is, "no dogma, no distinct tenets, no positive doctrine.*

*We have hundreds of "jellyfish" clergyman, who seem not to have a single bone in their body of divinity. They have no definite opinions . . . they are so afraid of "extreme views" that they have no views of all. We have thousands of "jellyfish" sermons preached every year, sermons without an edge, or a point, or corner, smooth as billiard balls, awakening no sinner, and edifying no saint.*

*And worst of all, we have myriads of "jellyfish" worshipers—respectable Church-gone people, who have no distinct and definite views about any point in theology. They cannot discern things that differ, any more than colorblind people can distinguish colors. . . . They are "tossed to and fro, like children, by every wind of doctrine"; . . . ever ready for new things, because they have no firm grasp on the old."*

This aversion to doctrine was the root cause of the church's maladies, and the remedy was a manly affirmation of what he called "sharply cut doctrines" recovered from the Reformation and the Puritans and the giants of the eighteenth century in England.

Mark what I say. If you want to do good in these times, you must throw aside indecision, and take up a distinct, sharply-cut, doctrinal religion. . . .

*"The victories of Christianity, wherever they have been won, have been won by distinct doctrinal theology; by telling men roundly of Christ's vicarious death and sacrifice; by showing them Christ's substitution on the cross, and His precious blood; by teaching them justification by faith, and bidding them believe on a crucified Saviour; by preaching ruin by sin, redemption by Christ, regeneration by the Spirit; by lifting up the brazen serpent; by telling men to look*

*and live—to believe, repent, and be converted. . . . Christianity without distinct doctrine is a powerless thing. . . . No dogma, no fruits!"*

The point of saying that the remedy for doctrinal indifference is a *manly* affirmation of “sharply cut doctrines” is not that women cannot or should not make such affirmations. The point is that long, hard, focused, mental labor should not be shirked by men. Men should feel a special responsibility for the life and safety and joy of the community that depends on putting these “sharply cut doctrines” in place. This issue is not what women are *able* to do, but what men *ought* to do. J. C. Ryle waited for no one. He took the brick and mortar and trowel and spent his whole life rebuilding the sharp edges of gloriously clear truth to make a place where men and women could flourish in the gospel.