

JUNE 27th and 28th
A MAN OF GRANITE WITH THE HEART OF A CHILD

“I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. But as for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”

2 Timothy 4:1-5

“We may give God a bowed head and a serious face, our bodily presence in His house, and a loud Amen. But until we give God our heart, we give him nothing at all.” These words were written by the first Church of England bishop in Liverpool, England. JC Ryle lived from 1816-1900, but God has used his words to impact millions with the gospel of Christ, including me. I hadn’t heard of Ryle until I moved to central PA and encountered the Banner of Truth Trust in Carlisle (also in the UK). What can God teach us through a man that’s been dead for over a hundred years?

Ryle focused on reaching the everyday man from his congregation. During his lifetime, he wrote hundreds of tracts that came from his sermons. According to Andrew Atherstone, Ryle published over 12 million copies of his short sermon tracts. Some examples of these are: Are You Forgiven? Are You Happy? and Do You Love Christ? Ryle was a master of using short, compelling illustrations. One example of these is (from Atherstone): pulling out his keys to illustrate one impact of the fall—keys and locks are only needed because of sin!

Let’s let God use Ryle from his short tract called How Do You Read the Bible (I encourage you to buy the eBook from Banner for \$3):

- a. No book in existence contains such important matter as the Bible. “We hardly know the value of the air we breathe, and the sun which shines on us, because we have never known what it is to be without them. We do not value the truths on which I have been just now dwelling, because we do not realize the darkness of men to whom these truths have not been revealed. Surely no tongue can fully tell the value of the treasures this one volume contains.”
- b. The Bible is the book which all true servants of God have always lived on and loved. “Tell me what the Bible is to a man, and I will generally tell you what he is. This is the pulse to try—this is the barometer to look at—if we would know the state of the heart. I have no notion of the Spirit dwelling in a man and not giving clear evidence of his presence. And I believe it to be signal evidence of the Spirit’s presence when the word is really precious to a man’s soul.”
- c. The Bible is the only book which can comfort a man in the last hours of his life. “Surely a dying man, in a dying world, should seriously consider whether he has got anything to comfort him when his turn comes to die. I charge you, I entreat you, for the last time, to give an honest answer to my question. What are you doing with the Bible?—Do you read it?—HOW DO YOU READ IT?” (emphasis is from Ryle)

Spend some time thanking God for His Word. Ask Him for a hunger for reading it, thinking about what you’ve read from it, and help in applying it’s truths.

For Further Reading: Hebrews 4:12

