



Articles and Sermons :: Evangelical Religion

Evangelical Religion - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2006/10/19 13:04

Evangelical Religion

J. C. RYLE

The apostle Paul says, "Approve things that are excellent" (Philippians 1:10)

I. EVANGELICAL PRINCIPLES

1. The Absolute Supremacy of Holy Scripture

Show us anything, plainly written, in that Book, we will receive it, believe it, and submit to it. Show us anything contrary to that Book, and however specious, plausible, beautiful and apparently desirable, we will not have it at any price.

2. The Doctrine of Human Sinfulness and Corruption

Man is radically diseased. I believe that ignorance of the extent of the Fall, and of the whole doctrine of original sin, is one grand reason why many can neither understand, appreciate, nor receive Evangelical Religion.

3. The Work and Office of our Lord Jesus Christ

The eternal Son of God is our Representative and Substitute. We maintain that people ought to be continually warned not to make a Christ of the Church.

We hold that nothing whatever is needed between the soul of man the sinner, and Christ the Saviour, but simple child-like faith.

4. The Inward Work of the Holy Spirit

We maintain that the things which need most to be pressed on men's attention are those mighty works of the Holy Spirit, inward repentance, faith, hope, hatred of sin, and love to God's law. We say that to tell men to take comfort in their baptism or church membership when these all-important graces are unknown, is not merely a mistake, but positive cruelty.

5. The Outward and Visible Work of the Holy Ghost in the Life of Man

We maintain that to tell a man he is "born of God" or regenerated, while living in carelessness or sin, is a dangerous delusion.

It is the position we assign to these five points which is one of the grand characteristics of Evangelical theology. We say boldly that they are first, foremost, chief and principal things in Christianity.

II. EVANGELICAL PROTESTATIONS

1. We protest against the modern practice of first personifying the Church, then deifying it, and finally idolising it.

2. We refuse to admit that Christian Ministers are in any sense sacrificing priests.

We find that sacerdotalism or priestcraft has frequently been the curse of Christianity, and the ruin of true religion.

3. We refuse to admit that Christ's Sacraments convey grace ex opere operato. We protest against the idea that in baptism the use of water, in the Name of the Trinity, is invariably and necessarily accompanied by regeneration. We protest against the theory that the Lord's Supper is a sacrifice. Above all, we protest against the notion of any local presence of Christ's body and blood in the Lord's Supper, under the forms of bread and wine, as "idolatry to be abhorred of all faithful Christians".

4. We refuse to join the cry, "No Bishop, no Church". We refuse to believe that bishops are infallible, or that their words are to be believed when they are not in harmony with the Scriptures.

5. We maintain that there can be no real unity without oneness in the faith. We protest against the idea of unity based on a common Episcopacy, and not on a common belief of Christ's Gospel. We abhor the very idea of

re-union with Rome, unless Rome first purges herself from her many false

doctrines and superstitions.

III. EVANGELICAL PERSUASIONS

1. Substitute anything for Christ, and the Gospel is totally spoiled!

2. Add anything to Christ, and the Gospel ceases to be a pure Gospel!

3. Interpose anything between man and Christ, and man will neglect Christ for the thing interposed!

4. Spoil the proportions of Christ's Gospel, and you spoil its efficacy!

5. Evangelical religion must be the Gospel, the whole Gospel and nothing but the Gospel.

IV. EVANGELICAL PRACTICES

"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong" (1 Corinthians 16:13)

1. Take heed that personal religion is thoroughly and entirely Evangelical.

The world is possessed with a devil of false charity about religion.

2. Do not compromise Evangelical principles. Watch narrowly new church decorations, new church music, and a semi-histrionic mode of going through church worship.

3. Observe that they do no good at all who attempt to mix up Evangelical preaching and a Ritual ceremonial. The world is never won by trimming and compromising; by facing both ways, and trying to please all.

4. Look the danger manfully in the face and fight with the same Word that Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley fought with.

5. The path of duty is clear, plain, and unmistakable. Union and organisation of all Protestant and Evangelical Churches; untiring exposure of the Popish dealings of our antagonists by the pulpit, the platform, and the press.

I say "No surrender! No desertion! No compromise! No disgraceful peace!"