

you also plainly that your religion is an offence to God. You are changing God's plan of salvation into a plan of your own devising. You are in effect deposing Christ from His throne, by giving the glory due to Him to another.

I care not who it is that teaches you your religion, and on whose word you build. Whether he be Pope or Cardinal, Archbishop or Bishop, Dean or Archdeacon, Presbyter or Deacon, Episcopalian or Presbyterian, Baptist or Congregationalist, Methodist or Plymouth Brother—whosoever adds anything to Christ, teaches you wrong.

I care not what it is that you add to Christ. Whether it be the necessity of joining the Church of Rome, or of being an Episcopalian, or of becoming a Free Churchman, or of giving up the liturgy, or of being immersed—whatever you may practically add to Christ in the matter of salvation, you do Christ an injury.

Reader, take heed what you are doing. Beware of giving to Christ's servants the honour due to none but Christ. Beware of giving the Lord's ordinances the honour due unto the Lord. Beware of resting the burden of your soul on anything but Christ, and Christ alone. Beware of having a religion which is of no use, and cannot save.

It is an awful thing to have no religion at all. To

have an immortal soul committed to your charge, and neglect it, this is dreadful.

But it is no less an awful thing to be content with a religion that can do you no good.

"And he said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." (Acts 16, 30-31.)



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USELESS KINDS OF RELIGION

By

The Late J. C. RYLE, D.D.

Lord Bishop of Liverpool



- **With no Religion at all**
- **A Religion with no Christ**
- **A Religion with Christ and -**

Useless Kinds of Religion

THERE are two ways by which a man may lose his own soul.

He may lose his soul by living and dying without any religion at all. He may live and die like a beast—prayerless, godless, graceless, faithless.

But he may lose his soul by taking up some useless kind of religion. He may live and die contenting himself with a false Christianity, and resting on a baseless hope.

A religion is entirely useless in which Jesus Christ is not the principal object, and does not fill the principal place. There are only too many baptised men and women who practically know nothing about Christ. Their religion consists in a few vague notions and empty expressions. "They trust they are no worse than others; they keep to their Church; they try to do their duty; they do nobody any harm; they hope God will be merciful to them; they trust the Almighty will pardon their sins, and take them to heaven when they die." This is about the whole of their religion.

But what do these people know practically about Christ? Nothing: nothing at all! What experimental acquaintance have they with His offices and work: His blood, His righteousness, His mediation, His priesthood, His intercession? None: none at all! Ask them about a saving faith—ask them about being born again of the Spirit—ask them about being sanctified in Christ Jesus. What answer will you get? You are a foreigner to them. You have asked them simple Bible questions; but they know no more about them, experimentally, than a Buddhist or a Turk. And yet this is the religion of hundreds and thousands of people who are called Christians, all over the world.

If you are a person of this kind, I warn you plainly that such Christianity will never take you to heaven. It may do very well in the eye of man; it may pass muster very decently at the vestry-meeting, in the place of business, in the House of Commons, or in the streets: but it will never comfort you; it will never satisfy your conscience; it will never save your soul.

I warn you plainly, that all notions and theories about God being merciful without Christ, and excepting through Christ, are baseless delusions and empty fancies. Such theories are as purely an idol of man's invention as the idol of Juggernaut. They are all of

the earth, earthy: they never came down from heaven. The God of heaven has sealed and appointed Christ as the one only Saviour and way of life, and all who would be saved must be content to be saved by Him, or they will never be saved at all.

Reader, take notice. I give you fair warning this day. A religion without Christ will never save your soul.

But I have another thing yet to say. A religion is entirely useless in which you join anything with Christ in the matter of saving your soul. You must not only depend on Christ for salvation, but you must depend on Christ only and Christ alone.

There are multitudes of baptised men and women who profess to honour Christ, but in reality do Him great dishonour. They give Christ a certain place in their system of religion, but not the place which God intended Him to fill. Christ alone is not "all in all" to their souls. No: it is either Christ and the Church—or Christ and the sacraments—or Christ and His ordained ministers—or Christ and their own repentance—or Christ and their own goodness—or Christ and their own prayers—or Christ and their own sincerity and charity, on which they practically rest their souls.

Reader, if you are a Christian of this kind, I warn