

John Charles Ryle (1816-1900)



Years of Education
Eton College; Christchurch, Oxford

Ryle's Conversion

“about midsummer [1837] a severe illness...of inflammation of the chest confined me to bed for some days and brought me very low for some time. That was the time I remember distinctly when I first began to read my Bible, or began to pray...”

“Nothing I remember to this day, appeared to me so clear and distinct, as my own sinfulness, Christ’s preciousness, the value of the Bible, the absolute necessity of coming out of the world, the need of being born again, and the enormous folly of baptismal regeneration... People may account for such a change as they like, my own belief is that no rational explanation can be given of it, but that of the Bible; it was what the Bible calls ‘conversion’, and ‘regeneration’.”

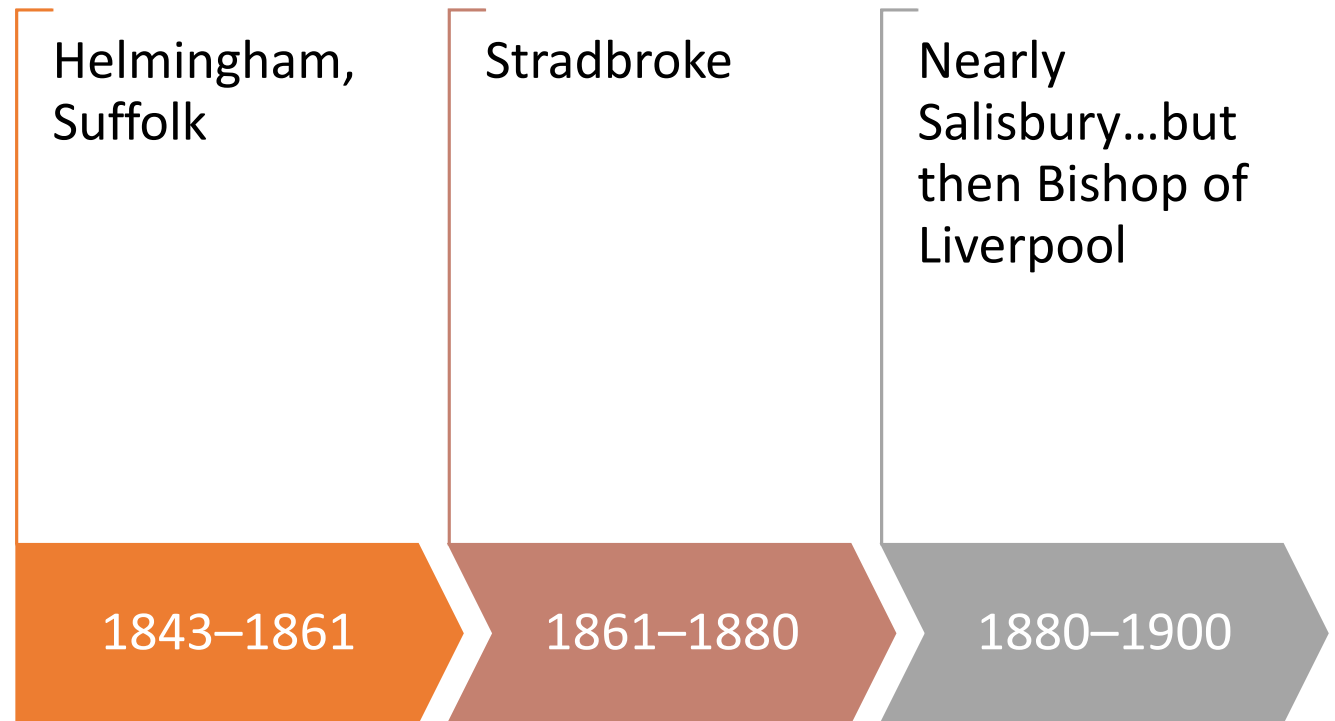
What Obstacles Did Ryle Face Immediately After Conversion?

John Henry (Cardinal) Newman and the
Tractarian Movement

Changes in personal fortune (father's
bankruptcy in June 1841; ordained,
December, 1841)

*"The immediate consequences were bitter and
painful in the extreme, and humiliating to the
utmost degree. The creditors naturally, rightly
and justly, seized everything and we children
were left with nothing but our own personal
property and our clothes."*

Ryle's Preaching Ministry



What are Ryle's Concerns in *Holiness*?

Is it wise to say that we grow holy by faith alone and not by personal effort or exertion?

Is it wise to make so little of practical exhortations to holiness?

Is it wise to use the language of perfection?

Is it wise to assert that Romans 7 cannot be describing a mature Christian?

Is it wise to use the language of 'Christ in us' in the way it [was] being used?

Is it wise to draw such a distinction between conversion and consecration or higher life?

Is it wise to advise new Christians to not think about struggling against sin, but rather 'yielding to God'?

“He that wishes to attain right views about Christian holiness, must begin by examining the vast and solemn subject of *sin*. He must dig down very low if he would build high...The plain truth is that a right knowledge of sin lies at the root of all saving Christianity.”

Definition: *What is Sin?*

“Doing, saying, thinking, or imagining, anything that is not in perfect conformity with the mind and law of God”

“...sin is lawlessness” – 1 John 3:4

“You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder...’ But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment...” – Matt 5:21-22

Sins of ignorance: “A deeper study of Leviticus might do us much good.”

Origin and
Source:
*Where does it
come from?*

“That which is born of flesh is flesh...”

– John 3:6

“...[We] were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.”

– Ephesians 2:3

“Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men... For as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners...”

– Romans 5:18a, 19a

Extent: *How far does it go?*

“The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” – Genesis 6:5

“The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately sick; who can understand it?”

– Jeremiah 17:9

“For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.” – Romans 8:7-8

“To the pure, all things are pure, but to the defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure; but both their minds and the consciences are defiled.” – Titus 1:15

Guilt, Vileness, Offensiveness: *How bad is it?*

“You who are of purer eyes than to see evil andn cannot look at wrong.”

– Habakkuk 1:13

“For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it.”

– James 2:10

“For the wages of sin is death...”

– Romans 6:23

“But nothing unclean will enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false...”

– Revelation 21:27

Deceitfulness: *How do we minimize its seriousness?*

- Euphemisms: *“Fast; thoughtless; wild”*
- Judas, Joab, David

“Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called ‘today,’ that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.”

– Hebrews 3:12-13

Implications

- Humiliation
- Thankfulness
- Theological Discernment
- Antidote to broadness and liberalism
- Antidote to ceremonial formality
- Antidote to perfectionism
- Antidote to a low view of holiness

“But sure I am, as I said in the beginning of this paper, we must begin low, if we would build high, I am convinced that the first steps towards attaining a higher standard of holiness is to realize more fully the amazing sinfulness of sin.”