

EXPOSITORY THOUGHTS
ON THE GOSPELS.

FOR FAMILY AND PRIVATE USE.

WITH THE TEXT COMPLETE,
And many Explanatory Notes.

BY THE REV. J. C. RYLE, B. A.,

CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD,
VICAR OF STRADBROKE, SUFFOLK;
Author of "Home Truths," etc.

ST. JOHN. VOL. II.

LONDON:
WILLIAM HUNT AND COMPANY, 23, HOLLES STREET,
CAVENDISH SQUARE.
IPSWICH: WILLIAM HUNT, TAVERN STREET.

1869AD

PREFACE TO SECOND VOLUME.

IN sending forth the second volume of my “Expository Thoughts on St. John,” I have little or nothing to add to the introduction with which I prefaced the first volume.

In the general plan of the work,— in the style of expositions, notes, and critical remarks,—in the list of Commentators employed and consulted in preparing the whole, the reader will find little difference between this volume and the one which preceded it. I have rigidly adhered to the line which I marked out to myself at first. In the notes I have gone steadily forward through every verse, endeavouring to throw light on the meaning of every word, evading no difficulty, examining every disputable point, trying to untie every knot, and carefully availing myself of help from every quarter.

The doctrinal views of religion to which I gave expression in the first volume, will be found unchanged in the second. The fourteen years which have “passed over” me since I first began writing on the Gospels, I humbly hope have not been thrown away. They have been to me years of many trials, and I may add of much work, much reading, much reflection, and not a little prayer. At the end of these fourteen years, I feel more than ever convinced that what are called “Evangelical” views of Christian truth are thoroughly Scriptural views, and will bear the test of any fair investigation. The longer I live the more firmly am I persuaded that no system of divinity is so entirely in harmony with the Bible, as the system which rightly or wrongly is called “Evangelical.”

In short, I am not ashamed of saying once more that in matters of doctrine I am an “Evangelical Churchman,” and that I am so because I can find no other doctrinal system in the New Testament, when fairly and reasonably interpreted. Let me add, once for all, that nothing so much confirms me in my opinions, as the broad fact that “Evangelical” views are those to which I see men of all schools of opinion turn for comfort when they leave the world. I observe continually that learned and zealous High Churchmen, after denouncing “Evangelicalism” as a defective system for many years, are only too happy to take refuge in simple Evangelical doctrines when they lie on their death-beds. That fact alone speaks volumes. Give me the doctrines that men cling to, and find soul-comforting in the hour of death!

I now send forth this volume with an earnest prayer that God may bless it and make it useful. Ignorance of Scripture, I feel more than ever, is the curse of these latter days. Men read many books, and yet neglect “the one Book.” If I can help to make the Bible more plain and interesting to any man's soul, I shall be abundantly content.

J. C. RYLE.

*Stradbroke Vicarage,
22d October, 1869.*

P. S. I hope, if it please God to prolong Me, health, and a moderate degree of leisure, to carry on my work on St. John without delay. A third volume will complete it. If any one will take the trouble to count all the verses in St. John's Gospel, he will find that the last nine chapters contain about the same quantity of matter as the first six, and the second six chapters. I have therefore good ground for thinking that the third volume will not exceed in length either of the two which have preceded it.

After finishing "Expository Thoughts on the Gospels," I hope to attempt "Expository Thoughts on the Acts of the Apostles."