



DAY BY DAY WITH
J.C. RYLE

A NEW DAILY DEVOTIONAL
OF RYLE'S WRITINGS



EDITED BY | ERIC RUSSELL

CHRISTIAN
HERITAGE





J. C. Ryle

John Charles Ryle (1816–1900) was the first Bishop of Liverpool, a post he held for twenty years. His impact on the Church of his time was immense, but since his death his writings have been widely read and hugely appreciated. His life and writings stand as an example to us all of how to combine firm faith with warm Christ-like compassion.

Eric Russell

Eric Russell was ordained as a Church of England minister. He is also a college lecturer training teachers in religious studies. He has written a well-received biography of J. C. Ryle *'That Man of Granite with a Heart of a Child'* (ISBN 978-1-85792-631-6).

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PREFACE

It is longer than I care to remember when I first came across a book by J. C. Ryle. I believe it was *Knots Untied*, one of his books on Christian doctrine, and I found it so thoroughly biblical and evangelical, and his writing so clear and easy to follow, that it gave me a desire to read more of his many volumes on doctrine, *Holiness*, *Principles for Churchmen*, *Practical Religion*, his sermon in *The Upper Room*, and, of course, his *Expository Thoughts on the Gospels*. I appreciate his uncompromising stand in all his writings on the supremacy of Scripture, his clear statements on the fundamentals of evangelical faith and all in plain English.

I have had a lifelong interest in his life and ministry, during which I collected much information about this remarkable man and evangelical leader, who became the first Bishop of Liverpool. Eventually I realized I had gathered sufficient material, and I hope a sufficient understanding of his strengths and weaknesses, to write a biography of this exceptional Christian leader.

Shortly after my biography on Ryle, *That Man of Granite with the Heart of a Child*, was published by Christian Focus, I was asked if I would compile a series of Daily Readings for the Year based on Ryle's *Expository Thoughts on the Gospels*.

Ryle was a daily reader of the Bible, and in his mid-Suffolk parish he began writing comments, with the help of the Spirit, on his study of verses in St Matthew's Gospel. He wrote in 'a plain and pointed style', in language which the folks in his country parish would understand. The first volume was published in 1856, and in the Preface he explained the work was intended for private devotional reading and for use at family prayers. The work was warmly received, and as time allowed he compiled further short expositions on the rest of the Gospels, and completed his seventh and final volume on St John's Gospel in 1873. In his careful preparation of the readings he found the commentaries of



others helpful, particularly the works of Reformation and Puritan writers, but he insisted that Scripture itself must always have the supremacy, in interpreting the Word of God.

It is a 'labour of love' to read carefully through Ryle's 'Thoughts' on the ministry and teaching of Jesus in the Gospels, and I pray the reader will enjoy pondering over the selected excerpts, find encouragement and accept the challenge to be a more faithful follower of the Lord Jesus.

Eric Russell
2004





JANUARY



BECAME MAN

January 1

*And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son:
and he called his name JESUS.*

Matthew 1:25

The two names given to our Lord.

One is 'Jesus': the other 'Emmanuel'. One describes His office: the other His nature. Both are deeply interesting.

The name Jesus means 'Saviour': it is the same name as Joshua, in the Old Testament. It is given to our Lord because 'he shall save his people from their sins'. This is His special office. He saves them from the guilt of sin, by washing them in His own atoning blood; He saves them from the dominion of sin, by putting in their hearts the sanctifying Spirit; He saves them from the presence of sin, when He takes them out of this world to rest with Him: He will save them from all the consequences of sin, when He shall give them a glorious body at the last day. Blessed and holy are Christ's people! From sorrow, cross and conflict they are not saved; but they are 'saved from sin' for evermore. They are cleansed from guilt by Christ's blood: they are made meet for heaven by Christ's Spirit. This is salvation! He who cleaves to sin is not yet saved.

Jesus is a very encouraging name to heavy-laden sinners. He who is King of kings and Lord of lords might lawfully have taken some more high-sounding title. But He did not do so. The rulers of this world have often called themselves Great, Conqueror, Bold, Magnificent and the like. The Son of God was content to call Himself 'Saviour'. The souls which desire salvation may draw nigh to the Father with boldness, and have access with confidence through Christ. It is His office and His delight to show mercy. 'God sent not his son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved' (John 3:17).

Jesus is the name which is peculiarly sweet and precious to believers. It has often done them good, when the favour of kings and princes would have been heard of with unconcern; it has given them what money cannot buy – even inward peace; it has eased their consciences, and given rest to their heavy hearts.