

HOLINESS.

ITS NATURE, HINDRANCES, DIFFICULTIES, AND ROOTS.

BEING

A SERIES OF PAPERS ON THE SUBJECT.

BY

JOHN CHARLES RYLE, D.D.,

LORD BISHOP OF LIVERPOOL;

Author of "Expository Thoughts on the Gospels," etc.

WITH PREFACE, INTRODUCTORY ESSAY, AND SUPPLEMENTARY EXTRACTS
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PREFACE TO ENLARGED EDITION.

THE volume now in the reader's hands is an enlarged edition of a small work which appeared several years ago, and has been kindly received by the Christian public. The present volume contains so much additional matter, that it is double the size of its predecessor. In fact, the work is half new.

I venture to think that the papers contained in this volume will be found helpful by all who take interest in the subject of Scriptural holiness. I am much mistaken if they do not throw broad light on the real nature of holiness, and the temptations and difficulties which all must expect who follow it. Above all, I hope they will help to bring forward the grand truth that union with Christ is the root of holiness, and will show young believers what immense encouragement Jesus Christ holds out to all who strive to be holy.

Concerning the present position of the whole subject of holiness among English Christians, I have little to add to the introductory essay which appeared in the original edition, and now follows this preface. The older I grow the more I am convinced that real practical holiness does not receive the attention it deserves, and that there is a most painfully low standard of living among many high professors of religion in the land. But, at the same time, I am increasingly convinced that the zealous efforts of some well-meaning persons to promote a higher standard of spiritual life are often not "according to knowledge," and are really calculated to do more harm than good. Let me explain what I mean.

It is easy to get crowds together for what are called "Higher life" and "Consecration" meetings. Any one knows that, who has watched human nature, and read descriptions of American camp-meetings, and studied the curious phenomena of the "Religious affections."* Sensational and exciting addresses by strange preachers or by women, loud singing, hot rooms, crowded tents, the constant sight of strong semi-religious feeling in the faces of all around you for several days, late hours, long protracted meetings, public profession of experience,—all this kind of thing is very interesting at the time, and seems to do good. But is the good real, deeply-rooted, solid, lasting? That is the point And I should like to ask a few questions about it

Do those who attend these meetings become more holy, meek, unselfish, kind, good tempered, self-denying, and Christ-like at home? Do they become more content with their position in life, and more free from restless craving after something different from that which God has given them? Do fathers, mothers, husbands, and other relatives and friends, find them more pleasant and easy to live with? Can they enjoy a quiet Sunday and quiet means of grace without noise, heat, and excitement? Above all, do they grow in charity, and especially in charity towards those who do not agree with them in every jot and tittle of their religion?

These are serious and searching questions, and deserve serious consideration. I hope I am as anxious to promote real practical holiness in the land as any one. I admire and willingly acknowledge the zeal and earnestness of many with whom I cannot co-operate who are trying to promote it. But I cannot withhold a growing

* See the work of President Edwards on this subject.

suspicion that the great “mass-meetings” of the present day, for the ostensible object of promoting spiritual life, do not tend to promote private home religion, private Bible-reading, private prayer, private usefulness, and private walking with God. If they are of any real value, they ought to make people better husbands, and wives, and fathers, and mothers, and sons, and daughters, and brothers, and sisters, and masters, and mistresses, and servants. But I should like to have clear proofs that they do. I only know it is far easier to be a Christian among singing, praying, sympathizing Christians in a public room, than to be a consistent Christian in a quiet, retired, out-of-the-way, uncongenial home. The first position is one in which there is a deal of *nature* to help us: the second is one which can not be well filled without *grace*. But, alas, many talk now-a-days about “*Consecration*,” who seem to be ignorant of the “first principles of the oracles of God” about “*Conversion*.”

I close this preface with the sorrowful feeling that probably some who read it will not agree with me. To the young especially I can see that the great gatherings of the so-called “spiritual life” movement are sure to be attractive. They naturally like zeal, and stir, and enthusiasm, and they say, “Where is the harm?” Be it so: we must agree to differ. When I was as young as they are, perhaps I should have thought as they do. When they are as old as I am, they will very likely agree with me.

To each and all of my readers, I say in conclusion, let us exercise charity in our judgments of one another. Towards those who think holiness is to be promoted by the modern, so-called “spiritual life” movement, I feel nothing but charity. If they do good, I am thankful. Towards myself and those who agree with me, I ask them to feel charity in return. The last day will show who is right and who is wrong. In the meantime, I am quite certain that to exhibit bitterness and coldness toward those who cannot conscientiously work with us, is to prove ourselves very ignorant of real holiness.

J. C. RYLE.

EXTRACTS FROM OLD WRITERS.

THE passages I append from Traill and Brooks on the subject of Holiness appear to me so valuable that I make no apology for introducing them.

They are the product of an age when, I am obliged to say, experimental religion was more deeply studied and far better understood than it is now.

(1.) REVEREND ROBERT TRAILL, *sometime Minister of Cranbrook, Kent.*
1696.

“Concerning sanctification, there are three things that I would speak to.

“I. *What sanctification is.*

“II. *Wherein it agrees with justification.*

“III. *Wherein it differs from justification.*

“I. *What is sanctification?* It is a great deal better to feel it than to express it,

“Sanctification is the same with regeneration; the same with the renovation of the whole man. Sanctification is the forming and the framing of the new creature; it is the implanting and engraving the image of Christ upon the poor soul. It is what the Apostle breathed after—‘That Christ might be formed in them’ (Gal. iv. 19); That they might ‘bear the image of the heavenly.’ (1 Cor. xv. 49)

“There are but two men only that all the world is like; and so will it fare with them, as they are like the one, or like the other: the first Adam, and the second Adam. Every man by nature is like the first Adam and like the devil: for the devil and the first fallen Adam were like one another. ‘Ye are of your father the devil,’ saith our Lord (John viii. 44), and he was ‘a murderer from the beginning.’ All the children of the first Adam are the devil’s children, there is no difference here. And all the children of the other sort are like to Jesus Christ, the second Adam; and when His image shall be perfected in them, then they shall be perfectly happy. ‘As we have also borne the image of the earthly, so shall we also bear the image of the heavenly.’ (1 Cor. xv. 49.) Pray observe; we bear the image of the earthly by being born in sin and misery; we bear the image of the earthly by living in sin and misery; and we bear the image of the earthly by dying in sin and misery; and we bear the image of the earthly in the rottenness of the grave; and we bear the image of the heavenly Adam when we are sanctified by His Spirit. This image increases in us according to our growth in sanctification: and we perfectly bear the image of the heavenly Adam when we are just like

the Man Christ, both in soul and body, perfectly happy, and perfectly holy; when we have overcome death by His grace, as He overcame it by His own strength. It will never be known how like believers are to Jesus Christ, till they are risen again: when they shall arise from their graves, like so many little suns shining in glory and brightness. Oh, how like will they be to Jesus Christ! though His personal transcendent glory will be His property and prerogative to all eternity.

“II. *Wherein are justification and sanctification alike?* I answer, in many things.

“1st. They are like one another as they are the same in their author; it is God that justifieth, and it is God that sanctifies. ‘Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? it is God that justifieth.’ (Rom. viii. 33.) I am the Lord that doth sanctify you, is a common word in the Old Testament. (Ex. xxxi. 13; Lev. xx. 8.)

“2ndly. They are alike and the same in their rise, being both of free grace; justification is an act of free grace, and sanctification is the same. ‘Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy, He saved us by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.’ (Tit. iii. 5.) They are both of grace.

“3rdly. They are alike in that they are both towards the same persons. Never a man is justified but he is also sanctified; and never a man is sanctified but he is also justified; all the elect of God, all the redeemed, have both these blessings passing upon them.

“4thly. They are alike as to the time, they are the same in time. It is a hard matter for us to talk or think of time when we are speaking of the works of God: these saving works of His are always done at the same time; a man is not justified before he is sanctified, though it may be conceived so in order of nature, yet at the same time the same grace works both. ‘Such were some of you,’ saith the Apostle, ‘but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.’ (1 Cor. vi. 11.)

“5thly. They are the same as to the operation of them by the same means, that is, by the Word of God: we are justified by the Word, sentencing us to eternal life by the promise; and we are also sanctified by the power of the same Word. ‘Now ye are clean,’ saith our Lord, ‘through the Word that I have spoken unto you.’ (John xv. 3.) ‘That He might sanctify and cleanse His Church,’ saith the Apostle, ‘with the washing of water by the Word.’ (Eph. v. 26.)

“6th and lastly. They are the same as to their equal necessity to eternal life. I do not say as to their equal order, but as to their equal necessity: that is, as it is determined that no man who is not justified shall be saved, so it is determined that no man who is not sanctified shall be saved: no unjustified

man can be saved, and no unsanctified man can be saved. They are of equal necessity in order to the possessing of eternal life.

“III. *Wherein do justification and sanctification differ?* This is a matter of great concernment for people’s practice and daily exercise; wherein they differ. They agree in many things, as has just now been declared, but they likewise differ vastly.

“1st. Justification is an act of God about the *state* of a man’s person; but sanctification is the work of God about the *nature* of a man: and these two are very different, as I shall illustrate by a similitude. Justification is an act of God as a judge about a delinquent, absolving him from a sentence of death; but sanctification is an act of God about us, as a physician, in curing us of a mortal disease. There is a criminal that comes to the bar, and is arraigned for high treason; the same criminal has a mortal disease, that he may die of, though there was no judge on the bench to pass the sentence of death upon him for his crime. It is an act of grace which absolves the man from the sentence of the law, that he shall not suffer death for his treason—*that* saves the man’s life. But notwithstanding this, unless his disease be cured, he may die quickly after, for all the judge’s pardon. Therefore, I say, justification is an act of God as a gracious Judge, sanctification is a work of God as a merciful Physician; David joins them both together. (Ps. ciii. 3.) ‘Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases.’ It is promised, That iniquity shall not be your ruin (Ezek. xviii. 30), in the *guilt* of it; that is justification: and it shall not be your ruin, in the *power* of it; there lies sanctification.

“2ndly. Justification is an act of God’s grace upon the account of the righteousness of another, but sanctification is a work of God, infusing a righteousness into us. Now there is a great difference between these two: for the one is by imputation, the other by infusion.

“In justification, the sentence of God proceeds this way: the righteousness that Christ wrought out by His life and death, and the obedience that He paid to the law of God, is reckoned to the guilty sinner for his absolution; so that when a sinner comes to stand at God’s bar, when the question is asked, Hath not this man broken the law of God? Yes, saith God; yes, saith the conscience of the poor sinner, I have broken it in innumerable ways. And doth not the law condemn thee to die for thy transgression? Yes, saith the man; yes, saith the law of God, the law knows nothing more but this; ‘the soul that sinneth must die.’ Well, then, but is there no hope in this case? Yes, and Gospel grace reveals this hope. There is One that took sin on Him, and died for our sins, and His righteousness is reckoned for the poor sinner’s justification; and thus we are absolved. We are absolved in justification by God’s reckoning on our account, on our behalf, and for our advantage, what Christ hath done and suffered for us.

“In sanctification the Spirit of God infuses a holiness into the soul. I do not say He infuses a righteousness; for I would fain have these words, righteousness and holiness, better distinguished than generally they are. Righteousness and holiness are, in this case, to be kept vastly asunder. Our righteousness is without us; our holiness is within us, it is our own; the Apostle plainly makes that distinction. ‘Not having mine own righteousness.’ (Phil. iii. 9.) It is our own, not originally, but our own inherently; not our own so as to be of our own working, but our own because it is indwelling in us. But our righteousness is neither our own originally nor inherently; it is neither wrought out by us, nor doth it dwell in us; but it is wrought out by Jesus Christ, and it eternally dwells in Him, and is only to be pleaded by faith, by a poor creature. But our holiness, though it be not our own originally, yet it is our own inherently, it dwells in us: this is the distinction that the Apostle makes. ‘That I may be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.’ (Phil. 9.)

“3rdly. Justification is perfect, but sanctification is imperfect; and here lies a great difference between them. Justification, I say, is perfect, and admits of no degrees; admits of no decays, admits of no intermission, nor of any interruption: but sanctification admits of all these. When I say justification is perfect, I mean, that every justified man is equally and perfectly justified. The poorest believer that is this day in the world, is justified as much as ever the Apostle Paul was; and every true believer is as much justified now as he will be a thousand years hence. Justification is perfect in all them that are partakers of it, and to all eternity; it admits of no degrees. And the plain reason of it is this—the ground of it is the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ, and the entitling us to it is by an act of God the gracious Judge, and that act stands for ever; and if God justifies, who is he that shall condemn? (Rom. viii. 33.) But sanctification is an imperfect, incomplete, changeable thing. One believer is more sanctified than another. I am apt to believe that the Apostle Paul was more sanctified the first hour of his conversion, than any man this day in the world.

“Sanctification differs greatly as to the persons that are partakers of it; and it differs greatly too as to the same man; for a true believer, a truly sanctified man, may be more holy and sanctified at one time than at another. There is a work required of us—to be perfecting *holiness* in the fear of God (2 Cor. vii. 1). But we are nowhere required to be perfecting *righteousness* in the sight of God; for God hath brought in a perfect righteousness, in which we stand; but we are to take care, and to give diligence to perfect holiness in the fear of God. A saint in glory is more sanctified than ever he was, for he is perfectly so; but he is not more justified than he was. Nay, a saint in heaven is not more justified than a believer on earth is: only

they know it better, and the glory of that light in which they see it, discovers it more brightly and more clearly to them.”

From Traill's Sermons, upon 1 Pet. i. 1–3, vol. 4, p. 71. Edinburgh edition of Traill's Works, 1810.

(2.) REV. THOMAS BROOKS, *Rector of St. Margaret, Fish Street Hill, London.* 1662.

“Consider the necessity of holiness. It is impossible that ever you should be happy, except you are holy. No holiness here, no happiness hereafter. The Scripture speaks of three bodily inhabitants of heaven—Enoch, before the law; Elijah, under the law; and Jesus Christ, under the Gospel: all three eminent in holiness, to teach us, that even in an ordinary course there is no going to heaven without holiness. There are many thousand thousands now in heaven, but not one unholy one among them all; there is not one sinner among all those saints; not one goat among all those sheep; not one weed among all those flowers; not one thorn or prickle among all those roses; not one pebble among all those glistening diamonds. There is not one Cain among all those Abels; nor one Ishmael among all those Isaacs; nor one Esau among all those Jacobs in heaven. There is not one Ham among all the patriarchs; not one Saul among all the prophets; nor one Judas among all the apostles; nor one Demas among all the preachers; nor one Simon Magus among all the professors.

“Heaven is only for the holy man, and the holy man is only for heaven: heaven is a garment of glory, that is only suited to him that is holy. God, who is truth itself, and cannot lie, hath said it, that without holiness no man shall see the Lord. Mark that word ‘no man.’ Without holiness the rich man shall not see the Lord; without holiness the poor man shall not see the Lord; without holiness the nobleman shall not see the Lord; without holiness the mean man shall not see the Lord; without holiness the prince shall not see the Lord; without holiness the peasant shall not see the Lord; without holiness the ruler shall not see the Lord; without holiness the ruled shall not see the Lord; without holiness the learned man shall not see the Lord; without holiness the ignorant man shall not see the Lord; without holiness the husband shall not see the Lord; without holiness the wife shall not see the Lord; without holiness the father shall not see the Lord; without holiness the child shall not see the Lord; without holiness the master shall not see

the Lord; without holiness the servant shall not see the Lord. 'For faithful and strong is the Lord of hosts that hath spoken it.' (Josh, xxiii. 14.)

"In this day some cry up one form, some another; some cry up one Church state, some another; some cry up one way, some another; but certainly the way of holiness is the good old way (Jer. vi. 16); it is the King of kings' highway to heaven and happiness: 'And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.' (Isa. xxxv. 8.) Some men say, Lo, here is the way; other men say, Lo, there is the way; but certainly the way of holiness is the surer, the safest, the easiest, the noblest, and the shortest way to happiness.

"Among the heathen, no man could enter into the temple of honour, but must first enter the temple of virtue. There is no entering the temple of happiness, except you enter into the temple of holiness. Holiness must first enter into you, before you can enter into God's holy hill. As Samson cried out, 'Give me water, or I die'; or as Rachel cried out, 'Give me children, or I die'; so all unsanctified souls may well cry out, Lord, give me holiness, or I die: give me holiness or I eternally die. If the angels, those princes of glory, fall once from their holiness, they shall be for ever excluded from everlasting happiness and blessedness. If Adam in paradise fall from his purity, he shall quickly be driven out from the presence of Divine glory. Augustine would not be a wicked man, an unholy man, one hour for all the world, because he did not know but that he might die that hour; and should he die in an unholy estate, he knew he should be for ever separated from the presence of the Lord and the glory of His power.

"O, sirs, do not deceive your own souls; holiness is of absolute necessity; without it you shall never see the Lord. (2 Thess. i. 8-10.) It is not absolutely necessary that you should be great or rich in the world: but it is absolutely necessary that you should be holy: it is not absolutely necessary that you should enjoy health, strength, friends, liberty, life; but it is absolutely necessary that you should be holy. A man may see the Lord without worldly prosperity, but he can never see the Lord except he be holy. A man may go to heaven, to happiness, without honour or worldly glory, but he can never go to heaven, to happiness, without holiness. Without holiness here, no heaven hereafter. 'And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth.' (Rev. xxi. 27.) God will at last shut the gates of glory against every person that is without heart-purity.

"Ah, sirs, holiness is a flower that grows not in Nature's garden. Men are not born with holiness in their hearts, as they are born with tongues in their mouths: holiness is of a Divine offspring: it is a pearl of price, that is to be found in no nature but a renewed nature, in no bosom but a sanctified bosom. There is not the least beam or spark of holiness in any natural man

in the world. ‘Every imagination of the thoughts of man’s heart is only evil continually.’ (Gen. vi. 5.) ‘How can man be clean that is born of a woman?’ (Job xxv. 4.) The interrogation carries in it a strong negation, ‘How can man be clean?’ that is, man cannot be clean that is born of a woman: a man that is born of a woman is born in sin, and born both under wrath and under the curse. ‘And who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?’ ‘But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.’ (Job xiv. 4; Isa. lxiv. 6.) ‘There is none righteous, no not one; there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.’ (Rom. iii. 10, 11.) Every man by nature is a stranger, yea, an enemy to holiness. (Rom. viii. 7.) Every man that comes into this world comes with his face towards sin and hell, and with his back upon God and holiness.

“Such is the corruption of our nature, that, propound any Divine good to it, it is entertained as fire by water, or wet wood, with hissing. Propound any evil, then it is like fire to straw; it is like the foolish satyr that made haste to kiss the fire; it is like that unctuous matter which, the naturalists say, sucks and snatches the fire to it, with which it is consumed. All men are born sinners, and there is nothing but an infinite power that can make them saints. All men would be happy, and yet they naturally loathe to be holy. By all which you may clearly see that food is not more necessary for the preservation of natural life, than holiness is necessary for the preservation and salvation of the soul. If a man had the wisdom of Solomon, the strength of Samson, the courage of Joshua, the policy of Ahithophel, the dignities of Haman, the power of Ahasuerus, and the eloquence of Apollos, yet all those without holiness would never save him. The days and times wherein we live call aloud for holiness. If you look upon them as days and times of grace, what greater and higher engagements to holiness were ever put upon a people, than those that God hath put upon us, who enjoy so many ways, means, and helps to make us holy? Oh, the pains, the care, the cost, the charge, that God hath been at, and that God is daily at, to make us holy! Hath He not sent, and doth He not still send His messengers, rising up early, and going to bed late, and all to provoke you to be holy? Have not many of them spent their time, and spent their strength, and spent their spirits, and spent their lives to make you holy? O, sirs, what do holy ordinances call for, but holy hearts and holy lives? What do days of light call for, but walking in the light, and casting off the deeds of darkness? What is the voice of all the means of grace, but this, Oh, labour to be gracious? And what is the voice of the Holy Spirit, but this, Oh, labour to be holy? And what is the voice of all the miracles of mercy that God hath wrought in the midst of you, but this, ‘Be ye holy, be ye holy’? O, sirs, what could the Lord have done that He hath not done to make you holy? Hath He not lifted you up to heaven in respect of holy helps? Hath He not to this very day fol-

lowed you close with holy offers, and holy entreaties, and holy counsels, and holy encouragements, and all to make you holy? And will you be loose still, and proud still, and worldly still, and malicious still, and envious still, and contentious still, and unholy still? Oh, what is this, but to provoke the Lord to put out all the lights of heaven, to drive your teachers into corners, to remove your candlesticks, and to send His everlasting Gospel, that hath stood long a tip-toe, among a people that may more highly prize it, and dearly love it, and stoutly defend it, and conscientiously practise it, than you have done to this very day? (Rev. ii. 4, 5; Isa. xlii. 25.) I suppose there is nothing more evident than that the times and seasons wherein we live call aloud upon every one to look after holiness, and to labour for holiness. Never complain of the times, but cease to do evil, and labour to do well, and all will be well; get but better hearts and better lives, and you will quickly see better times. (Isa. i. 16–19.)

From Brooks' "Crown and Glory of Christianity; or, Holiness the only way to Happiness."—Brooks' Works, vol. 4, pp. 151–153, 187–188.—Grosart's edition. 1866.