

HOLINESS.

BEING PLAIN PAPERS ON
ITS NATURE, HINDRANCES, DIFFICULTIES AND ROOTS.

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PREFACE

The volume now in the reader's hands is an enlarged edition of a small work which appeared two 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. Anyone knows that, who has watched human nature and read descriptions of American camp-meetings and studied the curious phenomena of the "religious affections."¹ 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

¹ See the work of President Edwards on this subject.

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 anyone. 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 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 cannot be well filled without grace. But, alas, many talk nowadays 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 judgements 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 towards those who cannot conscientiously work with us is to prove ourselves very ignorant of real holiness.

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INTRODUCTION

THE twenty papers contained in this volume are a humble contribution to a cause which is exciting much interest in the present day,—I mean the cause of *Scriptural holiness*. It is a cause which everyone who loves Christ, and desires to advance His kingdom in the world, should endeavour to help forward. Everyone can do something, and I wish to add my mite.

The reader will find little that is directly controversial in these papers. I have carefully abstained from naming modern teachers and modern books. I have been content to give the result of my own study of the Bible, my own private meditations, my own prayers for light, and my own reading of old divines. If in anything I am still in error, I hope I shall be shown it before I leave the world. We all see in part, and have a treasure in earthen vessels. I trust I am willing to learn.

I have had a deep conviction for many years that practical holiness and entire self-consecration to God are not sufficiently attended to by modern Christians in this country. Politics, or controversy, or party-spirit, or worldliness, have eaten out the heart of lively piety in too many of us. The subject of personal godliness has fallen sadly into the background. The standard of living has become painfully low in many quarters. The immense importance of “adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour “(Titus ii. 10), and making it lovely and beautiful by our daily habits and tempers, has been far too much overlooked. Worldly people sometimes complain with reason that “religious” persons, so-called, are not so amiable and unselfish and good-natured as others who make no profession of religion. Yet sanctification, in its place and proportion, is quite as important as justification. Sound Protestant and Evangelical doctrine is useless if it is not accompanied by a holy life. It is worse than useless: it does positive harm. It is despised by keen-sighted and shrewd men of the world, as an unreal and hollow thing, and brings religion into contempt. It is my firm impression that we want a thorough revival about *Scriptural holiness*, and I am deeply thankful that attention is being directed to the point.

It is, however, of great importance that the whole subject should be placed on right foundations, and that the movement about it should not be damaged by crude, disproportioned, and one-sided statements. If such statements abound, we must not be surprised. Satan knows well the power of true holiness, and the immense injury which increased attention to it will do to his kingdom. It is his interest, therefore, to promote strife and controversy about this part of God’s truth. Just as in time past he has succeeded in mystifying and confusing men’s minds about justifi-

cation, so he is labouring in the present day to make men “darken counsel by words without knowledge” about sanctification. May the Lord rebuke him! I cannot however give up the hope that good will be brought out of evil, that discussion will elicit truth, and that variety of opinion will lead us all to search the Scriptures more, to pray more, and to become more diligent in trying to find out what is “the mind of the Spirit.”

I now feel it a duty, in sending forth this volume, to offer a few introductory hints to those whose attention is specially directed to the subject of sanctification in the present day. I know that I do so at the risk of seeming presumptuous, and possibly of giving offence. But something must be ventured in the interests of God’s truth. I shall therefore put my hints into the form of questions, and I shall request my readers to take them as “Cautions for the Times on the subject of holiness.”

(1) I ask, in the first place, whether it is wise to speak of *faith as* the one thing needful, and the only thing required, as many seem to do nowadays in handling the doctrine of sanctification?—Is it wise to proclaim in so bald, naked, and unqualified a way as many do, that the holiness of converted people is *by faith only, and not at all by personal exertion*? Is it according to the proportion of God’s Word? I doubt it.

That faith in Christ is the root of all holiness—that the first step towards a holy life is to believe on Christ—that until we believe we have not a jot of holiness—that union with Christ by faith is the secret of both beginning to be holy and continuing holy—that the life that we live in the flesh we must live by the faith of the Son of God—that faith purifies the heart—that faith is the victory which overcomes the world—that by faith the elders obtained a good report—all these are truths which no well-instructed Christian will ever think of denying. But surely the Scriptures teach us that in following holiness the true Christian needs personal exertion and work as well as faith. The very same Apostle who says in one place, “The life that I live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God,” says in another place, “I fight—I run—I keep under my body;” and in other places, “Let us cleanse ourselves—let us labour, let us lay aside every weight.” (Gal. ii. 20; 1 Cor. ix. 26; 2 Cor. vii. 1; Heb. iv. 11; xii. 1.) Moreover, the Scriptures nowhere teach us that faith *sanctifies* us in the same sense, and in the same manner, that *faith justifies* us! Justifying faith is a grace that “worketh not,” but simply trusts, rests, and leans on Christ. (Rom. iv. 5.) Sanctifying faith is a grace of which the very life is action: it “worketh by love,” and, like a main-spring, moves the whole inward man. (Gal. v. 6.) After all, the precise phrase “sanctified by faith” is only found once in the New Testament. The Lord Jesus said to Saul, “I send thee, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and

inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Me.” Yet even there I agree with Alford, that “*by faith*” belongs to the whole sentence, and must not be tied to the word “sanctified.” The true sense is, “that by faith in Me they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them that are sanctified.” (Compare Acts xxvi. 18 with Acts xx. 32.)

As to the phrase “holiness by faith,” I find it nowhere in the New Testament. Without controversy, in the matter of our justification before God, faith in Christ is the one thing needful. All that simply believe are justified. Righteousness is imputed “to him that worketh not but believeth.” (Rom. iv. 5 .) It is thoroughly Scriptural and right to say “faith alone justifies.” But it is not equally Scriptural and right so say “faith alone sanctifies.” The saying requires very large qualification. Let one fact suffice. We are frequently told that a man is “justified by faith without the deeds of the law,” by St. Paul. But not once are we told that we are “sanctified by faith without the deeds of the law.” On the contrary, we are expressly told by St. James that the faith whereby we are *visibly and demonstratively* justified before man, is a faith which “if it hath not works is dead, being alone.”² (James ii. 17.) I may be told, in reply, that no one of course means to disparage “works” as an essential part of a holy life. It would be well, however, to make this more plain than many seem to make it in these days.

(2) I ask, in the second place, whether it is wise to make so little as some appear to do, comparatively, of the many *practical exhortations to holiness in daily life* which are to be found in the Sermon on the Mount, and in the latter part of most of St. Paul’s epistles? Is it according to the proportion of God’s Word? I doubt it.

That a life of daily self-consecration and daily communion with God should be aimed at by everyone who professes to be a believer—that we should strive to attain the habit of going to the Lord Jesus Christ with everything we find a burden, whether great or small, and casting it upon Him—all this, I repeat, no well-taught child of God will dream of disputing. But surely the New Testament teaches us that we want something more than *generalities* about holy living, which often prick no conscience and give no offence. The *details* and particular ingredients of which holiness is composed in daily life, ought to be fully set forth and pressed on believers by all who profess to handle the subject. True holi-

² “There is a double justification by God: the one authoritative, the other declarative or demonstrative.”—The first is St. Paul’s scope, when he speaks of justification by faith without the deeds of the law. The second is St. James’ scope, when he speaks of justification by works.”—*T. Goodwin on Gospel Holiness. Works, vol. vii, p. 181.*

ness does not consist merely of believing and feeling, but of doing and bearing, and a practical exhibition of active and passive grace. Our tongues, our tempers, our natural passions and inclinations—our conduct as parents and children, masters and servants, husbands and wives, rulers and subjects—our dress, our employment of time, our behaviour in business, our demeanour in sickness and health, in riches and in poverty—all, all these are matters which are fully treated by inspired writers. They are not content with a general statement of what we should believe and feel, and how we are to have the roots of holiness planted in our hearts. They dig down lower. They go into particulars. They specify minutely what a holy man ought to do and be in his own family, and by his own fireside, if he abides in Christ. I doubt whether this sort of teaching is sufficiently attended to in the movement of the present day. When people talk of having received “such a blessing,” and of having found “the higher life,” after hearing some earnest advocate of “holiness by faith and self-consecration,” while their families and friends see no improvement and no increased sanctity in their daily tempers and behaviour, immense harm is done to the cause of Christ. True holiness, we surely ought to remember, does not consist merely of inward sensations and impressions. It is much more than tears, and sighs, and bodily excitement, and a quickened pulse, and a passionate feeling of attachment to our own favourite preachers and our own religious party, and a readiness to quarrel with everyone who does not agree with us. It is something of “the image of Christ,” which can be seen and observed by others in our private life, and habits, and character, and doings. (Rom. viii. 29.)

(3) I ask, in the third place, whether it is wise to use vague language about *perfection*, and to press on Christians a *standard of holiness*, as attainable in this world for which there is no warrant to be shown either in Scripture or experience? I doubt it.

That believers are exhorted to “perfect holiness in the fear of God”—to “go on to perfection”—to “be perfect,” no careful reader of his Bible will ever think of denying. (2 Cor. vii. 1; Heb. vi. 1; 2 Cor. xiii. 11.) But I have yet to learn that there is a single passage in Scripture which teaches that a literal perfection, a complete and entire freedom from sin, in thought, or word, or deed, is attainable, or ever has been attained, by any child of Adam in this world. A comparative perfection, a perfection in knowledge, an all-round consistency in every relation of life, a thorough soundness in every point of doctrine—this may be seen occasionally in some of God’s believing people. But as to an *absolute literal perfection*, the most eminent saints of God in every age have always been the very last to lay claim to it! On the contrary, they have always had the deepest sense of their own utter unworthiness and imperfection. The more spir-

itual light they have enjoyed the more they have seen their own countless defects and shortcomings. The more grace they have had the more they have been “clothed with humility.” (1 Peter v. 5.)

What saint can be named in God’s Word, of whose life many details are recorded, who was literally and absolutely perfect? Which of them all, when writing about himself, ever talks of feeling free from imperfection? On the contrary, men like David, and St. Paul, and St. John, declare in the strongest language that they feel in their own hearts weakness and sin. The holiest men of modern times have always been remarkable for deep humility. Have we ever seen holier men than the martyred John Bradford, or Hooker, or Usher, or Baxter, or Rutherford, or M’Cheyne? Yet no one can read the writings and letters of these men without seeing that they felt themselves “debtors to mercy and grace” every day, and the very last thing they ever laid claim to was perfection!

In face of such facts as these I must protest against the language used in many quarters, in these last days, about *perfection*. I must think that those who use it either know very little of the nature of sin, or of the attributes of God, or of their own hearts, or of the Bible, or of the meaning of words. When a professing Christian coolly tells me that he has got beyond such hymns as “Just as I am,” and that they are below his present experience, though they suited him when he first took up religion, I must think his soul is in a very unhealthy state! When a man can talk coolly of the possibility of “living without sin” while in the body, and can actually say that he has “never had an evil thought for three months,” I can only say that in my opinion he is a very ignorant Christian! I protest against such teaching as this. It not only does no good, but does immense harm. It disgusts and alienates from religion far-seeing men of the world, who know it is incorrect and untrue. It depresses some of the best of God’s children, who feel they never can attain to “perfection” of this kind. It puffs up many weak brethren, who fancy they are something when they are nothing. In short, it is a dangerous delusion.

(4) In the fourth place, is it wise to assert so positively and violently, as many do, that *the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans* does not describe the experience of the advanced saint, but the experience of the unregenerate man, or of the weak and unestablished believer? I doubt it.

I admit fully that the point has been a disputed one for eighteen centuries, in fact ever since the days of St. Paul. I admit fully that eminent Christians like John and Charles Wesley, and Fletcher, a hundred years ago, to say nothing of some able writers of our own time, maintain firmly that St. Paul was not describing his own present experience when he wrote this seventh chapter. I admit fully that many cannot see what I and

many others do see: viz., that Paul says nothing in this chapter which does not precisely tally with the recorded experience of the most eminent saints in every age, and that he does say several things which no unregenerate man or weak believer would ever think of saying, and cannot say. So, at any rate, it appears to me. But I will not enter into any detailed discussion of the chapter.³

What I do lay stress upon is the broad fact that the best commentators in every era of the Church have almost invariably applied the seventh chapter of Romans to advanced believers. The commentators who do not take this view have been, with a few bright exceptions, the Romanists, the Socinians, and the Arminians. Against them is arrayed the judgment of almost all the Reformers, almost all the Puritans, and the best modern Evangelical divines. I shall be told, of course, that no man is infallible, that the Reformers, Puritans, and modern divines I refer to may have been entirely mistaken, and the Romanists, Socinians, and Arminians may have been quite right! Our Lord has taught us, no doubt, to “call no man master.” But while I ask no man to call the Reformers and Puritans “masters,” I do ask people to read what they say on this subject, and answer their arguments, if they can. This has not been done yet! To say, as some do, that they do not want human “dogmas” and “doctrines,” is no reply at all. The whole point at issue is, “What is the meaning of a passage of Scripture? How is the Seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans to be interpreted? What is the true sense of its words?” At any rate let us remember that there is a great fact which cannot be got over. On one side stand the opinions and interpretation of Reformers and Puritans, and on the other the opinions and interpretations of Romanists, Socinians, and Arminians. Let that be distinctly understood.

In the face of such a fact as this I must enter my protest against the sneering, taunting, contemptuous language which has been frequently used of late by some of the advocates of what I must call the Arminian view of the Seventh of Romans, in speaking of the opinions of their opponents. To say the least, such language is unseemly, and only defeats its own end. A cause which is defended by such language is deservedly suspicious. Truth needs no such weapons. If we cannot agree with men, we need not speak of their views with discourtesy and contempt. An opinion which is backed and supported by such men as the best Reformers and Puritans may not carry conviction to all minds in the nineteenth century, but at any rate it would be well to speak of it with respect.

³ Those who care to go into the subject will find it fully discussed in the Commentaries of Willet, Elton, Chalmers, and Haldane, and in Owen on *Indwelling Sin*, and in the work of Stafford on the *Seventh of Romans*.

(5) In the fifth place, is it wise to use the language which is often used in the present day about the doctrine of “*Christ in us*”? I doubt it. Is not this doctrine often exalted to a position which it does not occupy in Scripture? I am afraid that it is.

That the true believer is one with Christ and Christ in him, no careful reader of the New Testament will think of denying for a moment. There is, no doubt, a mystical union between Christ and the believer. With Him we died, with Him we were buried, with Him we rose again, with Him we sit in heavenly places. We have five plain texts where we are distinctly taught that Christ is “in us.” (Rom. viii. 10; Gal. ii. 20; iv. 19; Eph. iii. 17; Col. iii. 11.) But we must be careful that we understand what we mean by the expression. That “Christ dwells in our hearts by faith,” and carries on His inward work by His Spirit, is clear and plain. But if we mean to say that beside, and over, and above this there is some mysterious indwelling of Christ in a believer, we must be careful what we are about. Unless we take care, we shall find ourselves ignoring the work of the Holy Ghost. We shall be forgetting that in the Divine economy of man’s salvation election is the special work of God the Father—atonement, mediation, and intercession, the special work of God the Son—and sanctification, the special work of God the Holy Ghost. We shall be forgetting that our Lord said, when He went away, that He would send us another Comforter, who should “abide with us” for ever, and, as it were, take His place. (John xiv. 16.) In short, under the idea that we are honouring Christ, we shall find that we are dishonouring His special and peculiar gift—the Holy Ghost. Christ, no doubt, as God, is everywhere—in our hearts, in heaven, in the place where two or three are met together in His name. But we really must remember that Christ, as our risen Head and High Priest, is *specially* at God’s right hand interceding for us until He comes the second time; and that Christ carries on His work in the hearts of His people by the special work of His Spirit, whom He promised to send when He left the world. (John xv. 26.) A comparison of the ninth and tenth verses of the eighth chapter of Romans seems to me to show this plainly. It convinces me that “Christ in us” means Christ in us “by His Spirit.” Above all, the words of St. John are most distinct and express: “Hereby we know that He abideth in us by the Spirit which He hath given us.” (1 John iii. 24.)

In saying all this, I hope no one will misunderstand me. I do not say that the expression “Christ in us” is unscriptural. But I do say that I see great danger of giving an extravagant and unscriptural importance to the idea contained in the expression; and I do fear that many use it now-a-days without exactly knowing what they mean, and unwittingly, perhaps, dishonour the mighty work of the Holy Ghost. If any readers think that I

am needlessly scrupulous about the point, I recommend to their notice a curious book by Samuel Rutherford (author of the well-known letters), called "The Spiritual Antichrist." They will there see that two centuries ago the wildest heresies arose out of an extravagant teaching of this very doctrine of the "indwelling of Christ" in believers. They will find that Saltmarsh, and Dell, and Towne, and other false teachers, against whom good Samuel Rutherford contended, began with strange notions of "Christ in us," and then proceeded to build on the doctrine antinomianism, and fanaticism of the worst description and vilest tendency. They maintained that the separate, personal life of the believer was so completely gone, that it was *Christ living in him* who repented, and believed, and acted! The root of this huge error was a forced and unscriptural interpretation of such texts as "I live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." (Gal. ii. 20.) And the natural result of it was that many of the unhappy followers of this school came to the comfortable conclusion that believers were not responsible, whatever they might do! Believers, forsooth, were dead and buried; and only Christ lived in them, and *undertook* everything for them! The ultimate consequence was, that some thought they might sit still in a carnal security, their personal accountableness being entirely gone, and might commit any kind of sin without fear! Let us never forget that truth, distorted and exaggerated, can become the mother of the most dangerous heresies. When we speak of "Christ being in us," let us take care to explain what we mean. I fear some neglect this in the present day.

(6) In the sixth place, is it wise to draw such a deep, wide, and distinct line of separation between conversion and *consecration, or the higher life*, so called, as many do draw in the present day? Is this according to the proportion of God's Word? I doubt it.

There is, unquestionably, nothing new in this teaching. It is well known that Romish writers often maintain that the Church is divided into three classes—sinners, penitents, and saints. The modern teachers of this day who tell us that professing Christians are of three sorts—the unconverted, the converted, and the partakers of the "higher life" of complete consecration—appear to me to occupy very much the same ground! But whether the idea be old or new, Romish or English, I am utterly unable to see that it has any warrant of Scripture. The Word of God always speaks of two great divisions of mankind, and two only. It speaks of the living and the dead in sin—the believer and the unbeliever—the converted and the unconverted—the travellers in the narrow way and the travellers in the broad—the wise and the foolish—the children of God and the children of the devil. *Within* each of these two great classes there are, doubtless, various measures of sin and of grace; but it is only

the difference between the higher and lower end of an inclined plane. *Between* these two great classes there is an enormous gulf; they are as distinct as life and death, light and darkness, heaven and hell. But of a division into three classes the Word of God says nothing at all! I question the wisdom of making new-fangled divisions which the Bible has not made, and I thoroughly dislike the notion of a second conversion.

That there is a vast difference between one degree of grace and another—that spiritual life admits of growth, and that believers should be continually urged on every account to grow in grace—all this I fully concede. But the theory of a sudden, mysterious transition of a believer into a state of blessedness and *entire consecration*, at one mighty bound, I cannot receive. It appears to me to be a man-made invention; and I do not see a single plain text to prove it in Scripture. Gradual growth in grace, growth in knowledge, growth in faith, growth in love, growth in holiness, growth in humility, growth in spiritual-mindedness—all this I see clearly taught and urged in Scripture, and clearly exemplified in the lives of many of God's saints. But sudden, instantaneous leaps from conversion to *consecration* I fail to see in the Bible. I doubt, indeed, whether we have any warrant for saying that a man can possibly be *converted* without being consecrated to God! More consecrated he doubtless can be, and will be as his grace increases; but if he was not consecrated to God in the very day that he was converted and born again, I do not know what conversion means. Are not men in danger of undervaluing and underrating the immense blessedness of conversion? Are they not, when they urge on believers the "higher life" as a second conversion, underrating the length, and breadth, and depth, and height, of that great first change which Scripture calls the new birth, the new creation, the spiritual resurrection? I may be mistaken. But I have sometimes thought, while reading the strong language used by many about "consecration," in the last few years, that those who use it must have had previously a singularly low and inadequate view of "conversion," if indeed they knew anything about conversion at all. In short, I have almost suspected that when they were *consecrated*, they were in reality *converted* for the first time!

I frankly confess I prefer the old paths. I think it wiser and safer to press on all converted people the possibility of continual *growth* in grace, and the absolute necessity of going forward, increasing more and more, and every year dedicating and consecrating themselves more, in spirit, soul, and body, to Christ. By all means let us teach that there is more holiness to be attained, and more of heaven to be enjoyed upon earth than most believers now experience. But I decline to tell any converted man that he needs a *second conversion*, and that he may some day

or other pass by one enormous step into a state of entire *consecration*. I decline to teach it, because I cannot see any warrant for such teaching in Scripture. I decline to teach it, because I think the tendency of the doctrine is thoroughly mischievous, depressing the humble-minded and meek, and puffing up the shallow, the ignorant, and the self-conceited, to a most dangerous extent.

(7) In the seventh and last place, is it wise to teach believers that they ought not to think so much of fighting and struggling against sin, but ought rather to “*yield themselves to God*,” and be passive in the hands of Christ? Is this according to the proportion of God’s Word? I doubt it.

It is a simple fact that the expression “yield yourselves” is only to be found in one place in the New Testament, as a duty urged upon believers. That place is in the sixth chapter of Romans, and there within six verses the expression occurs five times. (See Rom. vi. 13-19.) But even there the word will not bear the sense of “placing ourselves passively in the hands of another.” Any Greek student can tell us that the sense is rather that of actively “presenting” ourselves for use, employment, and service. (See Rom. xii. 1.) The expression therefore stands alone. But, on the other hand, it would not be difficult to point out at least twenty-five or thirty distinct passages in the Epistles where believers are plainly taught to use active personal exertion, and are addressed as responsible for doing energetically what Christ would have them do, and are not told to “yield themselves” up as passive agents and sit still, but to arise and work. A holy violence, a conflict, a warfare, a fight, a soldier’s life, a wrestling, are spoken of as characteristic of the true Christian. The account of “the armour of God” in the sixth chapter of Ephesians, one might think, settles the question.⁴—Again, it would be easy to show that the doctrine of sanctification without personal exertion, by simply “yielding ourselves to God,” is precisely the doctrine of the antinomian fanatics in the seventeenth century (to whom I have referred already, described in Rutherford’s *Spiritual Antichrist*), and that the tendency of it is evil in the extreme.—Again, it would be easy to show that the doctrine is utterly subversive of the whole teaching of such tried and approved books as *Pilgrim’s Progress*, and that if we receive it we cannot do better than put Bunyan’s old book in the fire! If Christian in *Pilgrim’s Progress* simply *yielded himself to God*, and never fought, or struggled, or wrestled, I have read the famous allegory in vain. But the plain truth is, that men will persist in confounding two things that differ—that is, justification and sanctification. In justification the word to be addressed to

⁴ Old Sibbe’s Sermon on “Victorious Violence” deserves the attention of all who have his works.—Vol. vii., p. 30.

man is believe—only believe; in sanctification the word must be “watch, pray, and fight.” What God has divided let us not mingle and confuse.

I leave the subject of my introduction here, and hasten to a conclusion. I confess that I lay down my pen with feelings of sorrow and anxiety. There is much in the attitude of professing Christians in this day which fills me with concern, and makes me full of fear for the future.

There is an amazing ignorance of Scripture among many, and a consequent want of established, solid religion. In no other way can I account for the ease with which people are, like children, “tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine.” (Eph. iv. 14.) There is an Athenian love of novelty abroad, and a morbid distaste for anything old and regular, and in the beaten path of our forefathers. Thousands will crowd to hear a new voice and a new doctrine, without considering for a moment whether what they hear is true.—There is an incessant craving after any teaching which is sensational, and exciting, and rousing to the feelings.—There is an unhealthy appetite for a sort of spasmodic and hysterical Christianity. The religious life of many is little better than spiritual dram-drinking, and the “meek and quiet spirit” which St. Peter commends is clean forgotten. (1 Peter iii. 4.) Crowds, and crying, and hot rooms, and high-flown singing, and an incessant rousing of the emotions, are the only things which many care for.—Inability to distinguish differences in doctrine is spreading far and wide, and so long as the preacher is “clever” and “earnest,” hundreds seem to think it must be all right, and call you dreadfully “narrow and uncharitable” if you hint that he is unsound! Moody and Haweis, Dean Stanley and Canon Liddon, Mackonochie and Pearsall Smith, all seem to be alike in the eyes of such people. All this is sad, very sad. But if, in addition to this, the true-hearted advocates of increased holiness are going to fall out by the way and misunderstand one another, it will be sadder still. We shall indeed be in evil plight.

For myself, I am aware that I am no longer a young minister. My mind perhaps stiffens, and I cannot easily receive any new doctrine. “The old is better.” I suppose I belong to the old school of Evangelical theology, and I am therefore content with such teaching about sanctification as I find in the *Life of Faith* of Sibbes and of Manton, and in *The Life, Walk, and Triumph of Faith* of William Romaine. But I must express a hope that my younger brethren who have taken up *new* views of holiness will beware of multiplying causeless divisions. Do they think that a higher standard of Christian living is needed in the present day? So do I.—Do they think that clearer, stronger, fuller teaching about holiness is needed? So do I. Do they think that Christ ought to be more exalted as the root and author of sanctification as well as justification? So

do I.—Do they think that believers should be urged more and more to live by faith? So do I.—Do they think that a very close walk with God should be more pressed on believers as the secret of happiness and usefulness? So do I.—In all these things we agree. But if they want to go further, then I ask them to take care where they tread, and to explain very clearly and distinctly what they mean.

Finally, I must deprecate, and I do it in love, the use of uncouth and new-fangled terms and phrases in teaching sanctification. I plead that a movement in favour of holiness cannot be advanced by new-coined phraseology, or by disproportioned and one-sided statements—or by overstraining and isolating particular texts—or by exalting one truth at the expense of another—or by allegorizing and accommodating texts, and squeezing out of them meanings which the Holy Ghost never put in them—or by speaking contemptuously and bitterly of those who do not entirely see things with our eyes, and do not work exactly in our ways. These things do not make for peace: they rather repel many and keep them at a distance. The cause of true sanctification is not helped, but hindered, by such weapons as these. A movement in aid of holiness which produces strife and dispute among God's children is somewhat suspicious. For Christ's sake, and in the name of truth and charity, let us endeavour to follow after peace as well as holiness. "What God has joined together let not man put asunder."

It is my heart's desire, and prayer to God daily, that personal holiness may increase greatly among professing Christians in England. But I trust that all who endeavour to promote it will adhere closely to the proportion of Scripture, will carefully distinguish things that differ, and will separate "the precious from the vile." (Jer. xv. 19.)