

# HOLINESS

ITS NATURE, HINDRANCES,  
DIFFICULTIES, AND ROOTS

*BY*

J. C. RYLE, D.D.

*Foreword by* **D. MARTYN  
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## FOREWORD

ONE of the most encouraging and hopeful signs I have observed for many a long day in evangelical circles has been a renewed and increasing interest in the writings of Bishop J. C. Ryle.

In his day he was famous, outstanding and beloved as a champion and exponent of the evangelical and reformed faith. For some reason or other, however, his name and his works are not familiar to modern evangelicals. His books are, I believe, all out of print in this country and very difficult to obtain second-hand.

The differing fates suffered in this respect by Bishop Ryle and his near contemporary, Bishop Moule, have always been to me a matter of great interest. But Bishop Ryle is being re-discovered, and there is a new call for the re-publication of his works.

All who have ever read him will be grateful for this new edition of his great book on 'Holiness'. I shall never forget the satisfaction—spiritual and mental—with which I read it some twenty years ago after having stumbled across it in a second-hand book shop.

It really needs no preface or word of introduction. All I will do is to urge all readers to read the Bishop's own Introduction. It is invaluable as it provides the setting in which he felt impelled to write the book.

The characteristics of Bishop Ryle's method and style are obvious. He is pre-eminently and always scriptural and expository. He never starts with a theory into which he tries to fit various scriptures. He always starts with the Word and expounds it. It is exposition at its very best and highest. It is always clear and logical and invariably leads to a clear enunciation of doctrine. It is strong and virile and entirely free from the sentimentality that is often described as "devotional."

The Bishop had drunk deeply from the wells of the great classical Puritan writers of the seventeenth century. Indeed, it would be but accurate to say that his books are a distillation of true Puritan theology presented in a highly readable and modern form.

Ryle, like his great masters, has no easy way to holiness to offer us, and no "patent" method by which it can be attained; but he invariably produces that "hunger and thirst after righteousness" which is the only indispensable condition to being "filled."

May this book be widely read, that God's name be increasingly honoured and glorified.

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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 justification, 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 now-a-days 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; i Cor. ix. 26; 2 Cor. vii. i; Heb. iv. ii; xii. i.) 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" (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

\*" 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.*

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 holiness 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. I; Heb. vi. i; 2 Cor. xiii.ii.) 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*

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*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 spiritual 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." (i 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

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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.\*

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

\* 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*.

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.

(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 me*"? 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. ii.) 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 *specialty* 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." (i John iii. 24.)

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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. i.) 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.\*—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 anti-nomian 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

\* Old Sibbe's Sermon on "Victorious Violence" deserves the attention of all who have his works.—*Vol. vii. p. 30.*

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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 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, (i 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. I 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

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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.)

# HOLINESS

## SIN

*“Sin is the transgression of the law”*—i JOHN iii. 4.

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. A mistake here is most mischievous. Wrong views about holiness are generally traceable to wrong views about human corruption. I make no apology for beginning this volume of papers about holiness by making some plain statements about *sin*.

The plain truth is that a right knowledge of sin lies at the root of all saving Christianity. Without it such doctrines as justification, conversion, sanctification, are “words and names” which convey no meaning to the mind. The first thing, therefore, that God does when He makes anyone a new creature in Christ, is to send light into his heart, and show him that he is a guilty sinner. The material creation in Genesis began with “light,” and so also does the spiritual creation. God “shines into our hearts” by the work of the Holy Ghost, and then spiritual life begins. (2 Cor. iv. 6.)—Dim or indistinct views of sin are the origin of most of the errors, heresies, and false doctrines of the present day. If a man does not realize the dangerous nature of his soul's disease, you cannot wonder if he is content with false or imperfect remedies. I believe that one of the chief wants of the Church in the nineteenth century has been, and is, clearer, fuller teaching about sin.

(1) I shall begin the subject by supplying some DEFINITION of sin. We are all of course familiar with the terms “sin” and “sinners.” We talk frequently of “sin” being in the world, and of men committing “sins.” But what do we mean by these terms and phrases? Do we really know? I fear there is much mental confusion and haziness on this point. Let me try, as briefly as possible, to supply an answer.

I say, then, that “sin,” speaking generally, is, as the Ninth Article of our Church declares,” the fault and corruption of the

nature of every man that is naturally engendered of the offspring of Adam; whereby man is very far gone (*quam longissime* is the Latin) from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth alway against the spirit; and, therefore, in every person born into the world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation." Sin, in short, is that vast moral disease which affects the whole human race, of every rank, and class, and name, and nation, and people, and tongue; a disease from which there never was but one born of woman that was free. Need I say that One was Christ Jesus the Lord?

I say, furthermore, that "a sin," to speak more particularly, consists in doing, saying, thinking, or imagining, anything that is not in perfect conformity with the mind and law of God. "Sin," in short, as the Scripture saith, is "the transgression of the law." (i John iii. 4.) The slightest outward or inward departure from absolute mathematical parallelism with God's revealed will and character constitutes a sin, and at once makes us guilty in God's sight.

Of course I need not tell any one who reads his Bible with attention, that a man may break God's law in heart and thought, when there is no overt and visible act of wickedness. Our Lord has settled that point beyond dispute in the Sermon on the Mount. (Matt. v. 21-28.) Even a poet of our own has truly said, "A man may smile and smile, and be a villain."

Again, I need not tell a careful student of the New Testament, that there are sins of omission as well as commission, and that we sin, as our Prayer-book justly reminds us, by "leaving undone the things we ought to do," as really as by "doing the things we ought not to do." The solemn words of our Master in the Gospel of St. Matthew place this point also beyond dispute. It is there written, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire:—for I was an hungered, and ye gave Me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave Me no drink." (Matt. xxv. 41, 42.) It was a deep and thoughtful saying of holy Archbishop Usher, just before he died—"Lord, forgive me all my sins, and specially my sins of omission."

But I do think it necessary in these times to remind my readers that a man may commit sin and yet be ignorant of it, and fancy himself innocent when he is guilty. I fail to see any Scriptural warrant for the modern assertion that "Sin is not sin to us until we discern it and are conscious of it." On the contrary, in the 4th and 5th chapters of that unduly neglected book, Leviticus, and in the 15th of Numbers, I find Israel distinctly taught that there were sins of *ignorance* which rendered people unclean, and needed atonement. (Levit. iv. 1-35; v. 14-19; Num. xv. 25-29.) And I find our Lord expressly teaching that "the servant who knew

not his master's will and did it not," was not excused on account of his ignorance, but was "beaten" or punished. (Luke xii. 48.) We shall do well to remember, that when we make our own miserably imperfect knowledge and consciousness the measure of our sinfulness, we are on very dangerous ground. A deeper study of Leviticus might do us much good.

(2) Concerning the ORIGIN AND SOURCE of this vast moral disease called "sin" I must say something. I fear the views of many professing Christians on this point are sadly defective and unsound. I dare not pass it by. Let us, then, have it fixed down in our minds that the sinfulness of man does not begin from without, but from within. It is not the result of bad training in early years. It is not picked up from bad companions and bad examples, as some weak Christians are too fond of saying. No 1 it is a family disease, which we all inherit from our first parents, Adam and Eve, and with which we are born. Created "in the image of God," innocent and righteous at first, our parents fell from original righteousness and became sinful and corrupt. And from that day to this all men and women are born in the image of fallen Adam and Eve, and inherit a heart and nature inclined to evil. "By one man sin entered into the world."—"That which is born of the flesh is flesh."—"We are by nature children of wrath."—"The carnal mind is enmity against God."—"Out of the heart (naturally as out of a fountain) proceed evil thoughts, adulteries," and the like. (John iii. 6; Ephes. ii. 3; Rom. viii. 7; Mark vii. 21.) The fairest babe that has entered life this year, and become the sunbeam of a family, is not, as its mother perhaps fondly calls it, a little "angel," or a little "innocent," but a little "sinner." Alas! As it lies smiling and crowing in its cradle, that little creature carries in its heart the seeds of every kind of wickedness I only watch it carefully, as it grows in stature and its mind develops, and you will soon detect in it an incessant tendency to that which is bad, and a backwardness to that which is good. You will see in it the buds and germs of deceit, evil temper, selfishness, self-will, obstinacy, greediness, envy, jealousy, passion—which, if indulged and let alone, will shoot up with painful rapidity. Who taught the child these things? Where did he learn them? The Bible alone can answer these questions!—Of all the foolish things that parents say about their children there is none worse than the common saying, "My son *has a good heart at the bottom*. He is not what he ought to be; but he has fallen into bad hands. Public schools are bad places. The tutors neglect the boys. Yet he has a good heart at the bottom."—The truth, unhappily, is diametrically the other way. The first cause of all sin lies in the natural corruption of the boy's own heart, and not in the school.

(3) Concerning the EXTENT of this vast moral disease of man called sin, let us beware that we make no mistake. The only safe ground is that which is laid for us in Scripture. "Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart "is by nature" evil, and that continually."—"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked," (Gen. vi. 5; Jer. xvii. 9.) Sin is a disease which pervades and runs through every part of our moral constitution and every faculty of our minds. The understanding, the affections, the reasoning powers, the will, are all more or less infected. Even the conscience is so blinded that it cannot be depended on as a sure guide, and is as likely to lead men wrong as right, unless it is enlightened by the Holy Ghost. In short, "from the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness" about us. (Isa. i. 6.) The disease may be veiled under a thin covering of courtesy, politeness, good manners, and outward decorum; but it lies deep down in the constitution.

I admit fully that man has many grand and noble faculties left about him, and that in arts and sciences and literature he shows immense capacity. But the fact still remains that in spiritual things he is utterly "dead," and has no natural knowledge, or love, or fear of God. His best things are so interwoven and intermingled with corruption, that the contrast only brings out into sharper relief the truth and extent of *the fall*. That one and the same creature should be in some things so high and in others so low—so great and yet so little—so noble and yet so mean—so grand in his conception and execution of material things, and yet so grovelling and debased in his affections—that he should be able to plan and erect buildings like those to Carnac and Luxor in Egypt, and the Parthenon at Athens, and yet worship vile gods and goddesses, and birds, and beasts, and creeping things—that he should be able to produce tragedies like those of Æschylus and Sophocles, and histories like that of Thucydides, and yet be a slave to abominable vices like those described in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans—all this is a sore puzzle to those who sneer at" God's Word written," and scoff at us as Bibliolaters. But it is a knot that we can untie with the Bible in our hands. We can acknowledge that man has all the marks of a majestic temple about him—a temple in which God once dwelt, but a temple which is now in utter ruins—a temple in which a shattered window here, and a doorway there, and a column there, still give some faint idea of the magnificence of the original design, but a temple which from end to end has lost its glory and fallen from its high estate. And we say that nothing solves the complicated problem of man's condition but the doctrine of original or birth-sin and the crushing effects of the fall.

Let us remember, besides this, that every part of the world

bears testimony to the fact that sin is the *universal disease of all mankind*. Search the globe from east to west and from pole to pole—search every nation of every clime in the four quarters of the earth—search every rank and class in our own country from the highest to the lowest—and under every circumstance and condition, the report will be always the same. The remotest islands in the Pacific Ocean, completely separate from Europe, Asia, Africa, and America, beyond the reach alike of Oriental luxury and Western arts and literature—*islands inhabited by people ignorant of books, money, steam, and gunpowder—uncontaminated by the vices of modern civilization—these very islands have always been found, when first discovered, the abode of the vilest forms of lust, cruelty, deceit, and superstition. If the inhabitants have known nothing else, they have always known how to sin!* Everywhere the human heart is naturally “deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” (Jer. xvii. 9.) For my part, I know no stronger proof of the inspiration of Genesis and' the Mosaic account of the origin of man, than the power, extent, and universality of sin. Grant that mankind have all sprung from one pair, and that this pair fell (as Gen. iii. tells us), and the state of human nature everywhere is easily accounted for. Deny it, as many do, and you are at once involved in inexplicable difficulties. In a word, the uniformity and universality of human corruption supply one of the most unanswerable instances of the enormous” difficulties of infidelity.” After all, I am convinced that the greatest proof of the extent and power of sin is the pertinacity with which it cleaves to man even after he is converted and has become the subject of the Holy Ghost's operations. To use the language of the Ninth Article, “this infection of nature doth remain—yea, even in them that are regenerate.” So deeply planted are the roots of human corruption, that even after we are born again, renewed,” washed, sanctified, justified,” and made living members of Christ, these roots remain alive in the bottom of our hearts, and, like the leprosy in the walls of the house, we never get rid of them until the earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved. Sin, no doubt, in the believer's heart, has no longer *dominion*. It is checked, controlled, mortified, and crucified by the expulsive power of the new principle of grace. The life of a believer is a life of victory, and not of failure. But the very struggles which go on within his bosom, the fight that he finds it needful to fight daily, the watchful jealousy which he is obliged to exercise over his inner man, the contest between the flesh and the spirit, the inward “groanings” which no one knows but he who has experienced them—all, all testify to the same great truth, all show the enormous power and vitality of sin. Mighty indeed must that foe be who even when crucified is still alive!

Happy is that believer who understands it, and while he rejoices in Christ Jesus has no confidence in the flesh; and while he says, "Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory," never forgets to watch and pray lest he fall into temptation!

(4) Concerning the GUILT, VILENESS, and OFFENSIVENESS of sin in the sight of God, my words shall be few. I say "few" advisedly. I do not think, in the nature of things, that mortal man can at all realize the exceeding sinfulness of sin in the sight of that holy and perfect One with whom we have to do. On the one hand, God is that eternal Being who "chargeth His angels with folly," and in whose sight the very "heavens are not clean." He is One who reads thoughts and motives as well as actions, and requires "truth in the inward parts." (Job xv. 18; sv. 15; Psa. li. 6.) We, on the other hand—poor blind creatures, here to-day and gone to-morrow, born in sin, surrounded by sinners, living in a constant atmosphere of weakness, infirmity, and imperfection—can form none but the most inadequate conceptions of the hideousness of evil. We have no line to fathom it, and no measure by which to gauge it. The blind man can see no difference between a masterpiece of Titian or Raphael, and the Queen's Head on a village signboard. The deaf man cannot distinguish between a penny whistle and a cathedral organ. The very animals whose smell is most offensive to us have no idea that they are offensive, and are not offensive to one another. And man, fallen man, I believe, can have no just idea what a vile thing sin is in the sight of that God whose handiwork is absolutely perfect—perfect whether we look through telescope or microscope—perfect in the formation of a mighty planet like Jupiter, with his satellites, keeping time to a second as he rolls round the sun—perfect in the formation of the smallest insect that crawls over a foot of ground. But let us nevertheless settle it firmly in our minds that sin is "the abominable thing that God hateth"—that God "is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and cannot look upon that which is evil"—that the least transgression of God's law makes us "guilty of all"—that "the soul that sinneth shall die"—that "the wages of sin is death"—that God shall "judge the secrets of men"—that there is a worm that never dies, and a fire that is not quenched—that "the wicked shall be turned into hell"—and "shall go away into everlasting punishment"—and that "nothing that defiles shall in any wise enter heaven." (Jer. xliv. 4; Hab. i. 13; James ii. 10; Ezek. xviii. 4; Rom. vi. 23; Rom. ii. 16; Mark ix. 44; Ps. ix. 17; Matt. xxv. 46; Rev. xxi 27.) These are indeed tremendous words, when we consider that they are written in the Book of a most merciful God!

No proof of the fulness of sin, after all, is so overwhelming and

unanswerable as the cross and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the whole doctrine of His substitution and atonement. Terribly black must that guilt be for which nothing but the blood of the Son of God could make satisfaction. Heavy must that weight of human sin be which made Jesus groan and sweat drops of blood in agony at Gethsemane, and cry at Golgotha, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Matt, xxvii. 46.) Nothing, I am convinced, will astonish us so much, when we awake in the resurrection day, as the view we shall have of sin, and the retrospect we shall take of our own countless shortcomings and defects. Never till the hour when Christ comes the second time shall we fully realize the "sinfulness of sin." Well might George Whitfield say, "The anthem in heaven will be, What hath God wrought!"

(5) One point only remains to be considered on the subject of sin, which I dare not pass over. That point is its DECEITFULNESS. It is a point of most serious importance, and I venture to think it does not receive the attention which it deserves. You may see this deceitfulness in the wonderful proneness of men to regard sin as less sinful and dangerous than it is in the sight of God; and in their readiness to extenuate it, make excuses for it, and minimize its guilt.—"It is but a little one! God is merciful! God is not extreme to mark what is done amiss!" We mean well! One cannot be so particular! Where is the mighty harm? We only do as others! "Who is not familiar with this kind of language? — You may see it in the long string of smooth words and phrases which men have coined in order to designate things which God calls downright wicked and ruinous to the soul. What do such expressions such as "fast", "gay", "wild", "unsteady" "thoughtless" and "loose" mean? They show that men try to cheat themselves into the belief that sin is not quite so sinful as God says it is, and that they are not so bad as they really are.—You may see it in the tendency even of believers to indulge their children in questionable practices, and to bind their own eyes to the inevitable result of the love of money, of tampering with temptation, and sanctioning a low standard of family religion.—I fear we do not sufficiently realize the extreme subtlety of our soul's disease. We are too apt to forget that temptation to sin will rarely present itself to us in its true colours, saying, "I am your deadly enemy, and I want to ruin you for ever in hell." Oh, no! Sin comes to us, like Judas, with a kiss; and like Joab, with an outstretched hand and flattering words. The forbidden fruit seemed good and desirable to Eve; yet it cast her out of Eden. The walking idly on his palace roof seemed harmless enough to David; yet it ended in adultery and murder. Sin rarely seems sin at first beginnings. Let us then watch and pray, lest we fall into temptation. We may give wickedness smooth

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names, but we cannot alter its nature and character in the sight of God. Let us remember St. Paul's words: "Exhort one another daily, lest any be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." (Heb. iii. 13.) It is a wise prayer in our Litany, "From the *deceits* of the world, the flesh, and the devil, good Lord, deliver us."

And now, before I go further, let me briefly mention two thoughts which appear to me to rise with irresistible force out of the subject.

On the one hand, I ask my readers to observe what deep reasons we all have for *humiliation and self-abasement*. Let us sit down before the picture of sin displayed to us in the Bible, and consider what guilty, vile, corrupt creatures we all are in the sight of God. What need we all have of that entire change of heart called regeneration, new birth, or conversion! What a mass of infirmity and imperfection cleaves to the very best of us at our very best! What a solemn thought it is, that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord!" (Heb. xii. 14.) What cause we have to cry with the publican, every night in our lives, when we think of our sins of omission as well as commission, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" (Luke xviii. 13.) How admirably suited are the general and Communion Confessions of the Prayer-book to the actual condition of all professing Christians! How well that language suits God's children which the Prayer-book puts in the mouth of every Churchman before he goes up to the Communion Table—"The remembrance of our misdoings is grievous unto us; the burden is intolerable. Have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us, most merciful Father; for Thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, forgive us all that is past." How true it is that the holiest saint is in himself a miserable sinner, and a debtor to mercy and grace to the last moment of his existence!

With my whole heart I subscribe to that passage in Hooker's sermon on Justification, which begins, "Let the holiest and best things we do be considered. We are never better affected unto God than when we pray; yet when we pray, how are our affections many times distracted! How little reverence do we show unto the grand majesty of God unto whom we speak! How little remorse of our own miseries! How little taste of the sweet influence of His tender mercies do we feel! Are we not as unwilling many times to begin, and as glad to make an end, as if in saying, 'Call upon Me' He had set us a very burdensome task? It may seem somewhat extreme, which I will speak; therefore, let every one judge of it, even as his own heart shall tell him, and not otherwise; I will but only make a demand: If God should yield unto us, not as unto Abraham—If fifty, forty, thirty, twenty—yea, or if ten good persons could be found in a city, for their sakes this city should not be destroyed; but, and if He should make us an offer thus large,

search all the generations of men since the fall of our father Adam, find one man that hath done one action which hath passed from him pure, without any stain or blemish at all; and for that one man's only action neither man nor angel should feel the torments which are prepared for both. Do you think that this ransom to deliver men and angels could be found to be among the sons of men? The best things which we do have somewhat in them to be pardoned.”<sup>1</sup>

That witness is true. For my part I am persuaded the more light we have, the more we see our own sinfulness: the nearer we get to heaven, the more we are clothed with humility. In every age of the Church you will find it true, if you will study biographies, that the most eminent saints—men like Bradford, Rutherford, and McCheyne—have always been the humblest men.

On the other hand, I ask my readers to observe *how deeply thankful we ought to be for the glorious Gospel of the grace of God*. There is a remedy revealed for man's need, as wide and broad and deep as man's disease. We need not be afraid to look at sin, and study its nature, origin, power, extent, and vileness, if we only look at the same time at the Almighty medicine provided for us in the salvation that is in Jesus Christ. Though sin has abounded, grace has much more abounded. Yes: in the everlasting covenant of redemption, to which Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are parties—in the Mediator of that covenant, Jesus Christ the righteous, perfect God and perfect Man in one Person—in the work that He did by dying for our sins and rising again for our justification—in the offices that He fills as our Priest, Substitute, Physician, Shepherd, and Advocate—in the precious blood He shed which can cleanse from all sin—in the everlasting righteousness that He brought in—in the perpetual intercession that He carries on as our Representative at God's right hand—in His power to save to the uttermost the chief of sinners, His willingness to receive and pardon the vilest, *His* readiness to bear with the weakest—in the grace of the Holy Spirit which He plants in the hearts of all His people, renewing, sanctifying and causing old things to pass away and all things to become new—in all this—and oh, what a brief sketch it is !—in all this, I say, there is a full, perfect, and complete medicine for the hideous disease of sin. Awful and tremendous as the right view of sin undoubtedly is, no one need faint and despair if he will take a right view of Jesus Christ at the same time. No wonder that old Flavel ends many a chapter of his admirable “Fountain of Life” with the touching words, “Blessed be God for Jesus Christ.”

In bringing this mighty subject to a close, I feel that I have only touched the surface of it. It is one which cannot be thoroughly

<sup>1</sup> Hooker's “Learned Discourse of Justification.”

handled in a paper like this. He that would see it treated fully and exhaustively must turn to such masters of experimental theology as Owen, and Burgess, and Manton, and Charnock, and the other giants of the Puritan school. On subjects like this there are no writers to be compared to the Puritans. It only remains for me to point out some practical uses to which the whole doctrine of sin may be profitably turned in the present day.

(a) I say, then, in the first place, that a Scriptural view of sin is one of the *best antidotes to that vague, dim, misty hazy kind of theology* which is so painfully current in the present age. It is vain to shut our eyes to the fact that there is a vast quantity of so-called Christianity now-a-days which you cannot declare positively unsound, but which, nevertheless, is not full measure, good weight, and sixteen ounces to the pound. It is a Christianity in which there is undeniably something about Christ, and something about grace, and something about faith, and something about repentance, and something about holiness; but it is not the real thing as it in the Bible. Things are out of place, and out of proportion. As old Latimer would have said, it is a kind of "mingle-mangle," and does no good. It neither exercises influence on daily conduct, nor comforts in life, nor gives peace in death; and those who hold it often awake too late to find that they have got nothing solid under their feet. Now I believe the likeliest way to cure and mend this defective kind of religion is to bring forward more prominently the old Scriptural truth about the sinfulness of sin. People will never set their faces decidedly towards heaven, and live like pilgrims, until they really feel that they are in danger of hell. Let us all try to revive the old teaching about sin, in nurseries, in schools, in training colleges, in Universities. Let us not forget that "the law is good if we use it lawfully," and that "by the law is the knowledge of sin." (i Tim. i. 8; Rom. iii.20 vii. 7.) Let us bring the law to the front and press it on men's attention. Let us expound and beat out the Ten Commandments, and show the length, and breadth, and depth, and height of their requirements. This is the way of our Lord in the Sermon on the Mount. We cannot do better than follow His plan. We may depend upon it, men will never come to Jesus, and stay with Jesus, and live for Jesus, unless they really know why they are to come, and what is their need. Those whom the Spirit draws to Jesus are those whom the Spirit has convinced of sin. Without thorough conviction of sin, men may seem to come to Jesus and follow Him for a season, but they will soon fall away and return to the world.

(b) In the next place, a Scriptural view of sin is one of the *best antidotes to the extravagantly broad and liberal theology* which is so much in vogue at the present time. The tendency of modern

thought is to reject dogmas, creeds, and every kind of bounds in religion. It is thought grand and wise to condemn no opinion whatsoever, and to pronounce all earnest and clever teachers to be trustworthy, however heterogeneous and mutually destructive their opinions may be.—Everything forsooth is true, and nothing is false! Everybody is right, and nobody is wrong! Everybody is likely to be saved, and nobody is to be lost!—The Atonement and Substitution of Christ, the personality of the devil, the miraculous element in Scripture, the reality and eternity of future punishment, all these mighty foundation-stones are coolly tossed overboard, like lumber, in order to lighten the ship of Christianity, and enable it to keep pace with modern science.—Stand up for these great verities, and you are called narrow, illiberal, old-fashioned, and a theological fossil! Quote a text, and you are told that all truth is not confined to the pages of an ancient Jewish Book, and that free inquiry has found out many things since the Book was completed! Now, I know nothing so likely to counteract this modern plague as constant clear statements about the nature, reality, vileness, power, and guilt of sin. We must charge home into the consciences of these men of *broad* views, and demand a plain answer to some plain questions. We must ask them to lay their hands on their hearts, and tell us whether their favourite opinions comfort them in the day of sickness, in the hour of death, by the bedside of dying parents, by the grave of beloved wife or child. We must ask them whether a vague *earnestness*, without definite doctrine, gives them peace at seasons like these. We must challenge them to tell us whether they do not sometimes feel a gnawing "something" within, which all the free inquiry and philosophy and science in the world cannot satisfy. And then we must tell them that this gnawing "something" is the sense of sin, guilt, and corruption, which they are leaving out in their calculations. And, above all, we must tell them that nothing will ever make them feel rest, but submission to the old doctrines of man's ruin and Christ's redemption, and simple childlike faith in Jesus.

(c) In the next place, a right view of sin is the *best antidote to that sensuous, ceremonial, formal kind of Christianity*, which has swept over England like a flood in the last twenty-five years, and carried away so many before it. I can well believe that there is much that is attractive in this system of religion, to a certain order of minds, so long as the conscience is not fully enlightened. But when that wonderful part of our constitution called conscience is really awake and alive, I find it hard to believe that a sensuous ceremonial Christianity will thoroughly satisfy us. A little child is easily quieted and amused with gaudy toys, and dolls, and rattles, so long as it is not hungry; but once let it feel the cravings of nature within,

and we know that nothing will satisfy it *but food*. Just so it is with man in the matter of his soul. Music, and flowers, and candles, and incense, and banners, and processions, and beautiful vestments, and confessionals, and man-made ceremonies of a semi-Romish character, may do well enough for him under certain conditions. But once let him "awake and arise from the dead," and he will not rest content with these things. They will seem to him mere solemn triflings, and a waste of time. Once let him see his *sin*, and he must see his *Saviour*. He feels stricken with a deadly disease, and nothing will satisfy him but the great Physician. He hungers and thirsts, and he must have nothing less than the bread of life. I may seem bold in what I am about to say; but I fearlessly venture the assertion, that four-fifths of the semi-Romanism of the last quarter of a century would never have existed if English people had been taught more fully and clearly the nature, vileness, and sinfulness of sin.

(d) In the next place, a right view of sin is one of the *best antidotes to the overstrained theories of Perfection*, of which we hear so much in these times. I shall say but little about this, and in saying it I trust I shall not give offence. If those who press on us perfection mean nothing more than an all-round consistency, and a careful attention to all the graces which make up the Christian character, reason would that we should not only bear with them, but agree with them entirely. By all means let us aim high.—But if men really mean to tell us that here in this world a believer can attain to entire freedom from sin, live for years in unbroken and uninterrupted communion with God, and feel for months together not so much as one evil thought, I must honestly say that such an opinion appears to me very *unscriptural*.— I go even further. I say that the opinion is very dangerous to him that holds it, and very likely to depress, discourage, and keep back inquirers after salvation. I cannot find the slightest warrant in God's Word for expecting such perfection as this while we are in the body. I believe the words of our Fifteenth Article are strictly true—that "Christ alone is without sin; and that all we, the rest, though baptized and born again in Christ, offend in many things; and if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."—To use the language of our first Homily, "There be imperfections in our best works: we do not love God so much as we are bound to do, with all our hearts, mind, and power; we do not fear God so much as we ought to do; we do not pray to God but with many and great imperfections. We give, forgive, believe, live, and hope imperfectly; we speak, think, and do imperfectly; we fight against the devil, the world, and the flesh imperfectly. Let us, therefore, not be ashamed to confess plainly our state of

imperfections.”—Once more I repeat what I have said, the best preservative against this temporary delusion about perfection which clouds some minds—for such I hope I may call it—is a clear, full, distinct understanding of the nature, sinfulness, and deceitfulness of sin.

(i) In the last place, a Scriptural view of sin will prove an admirable *antidote to the low views of personal holiness* which are so painfully prevalent in these last days of the Church. This is a very painful and delicate subject, I know; but I dare not turn away from it. It has long been my sorrowful conviction that the standard of daily life among professing Christians in this country has been gradually falling. I am afraid that Christ-like charity, kindness, good-temper, unselfishness, meekness, gentleness, good-nature, self-denial, zeal to do good, and separation from the world, are far less appreciated than they ought to be, and than they used to be in the days of our fathers.

Into the causes of this state of things I cannot pretend to enter fully, and can only suggest conjectures for consideration. It may be that a certain profession of religion has become so fashionable and comparatively easy in the present age, that the streams which were once narrow and deep have become wide and shallow, and what we have gained in outward show we have lost in quality. It may be that the vast increase of wealth in the last twenty-five years has insensibly introduced a plague of worldliness, and self-indulgence, and love of ease into social life. What were once called luxuries are now comforts and necessaries, and self-denial and “enduring hardness” are consequently little known. It may be that the enormous amount of controversy which marks this age has insensibly dried up our spiritual life. We have too often been content with zeal for orthodoxy, and have neglected the sober realities of daily practical godliness. Be the causes what they may, I must declare my own belief that the result remains. There has been of late years a lower standard of personal holiness among believers than there used to be in the days of our fathers. The whole result is that THE SPIRIT IS GRIEVED I and the matter calls for much humiliation and searching of heart.

As to the best remedy for the state of things I have mentioned, I shall venture to give an opinion. Other schools of thought in the Churches must judge for themselves. The cure for Evangelical Churchmen, I am convinced, is to be found in a clearer apprehension of the nature and sinfulness of sin. We need not go back to Egypt, and borrow semi-Romish practices in order to revive our spiritual life. We need not restore the confessional, or return to monasticism or asceticism. Nothing of the kind! We must simply repent and do our first works. We must return to first principles. We

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must go back to" the old paths." We must sit down humbly in the presence of God, look the whole subject in the face, examine clearly what the Lord Jesus calls sin, and what the Lord Jesus calls "doing His will." We must then try to realize that it is *terribly possible* to live a careless, easy-going, half-worldly life, and yet at the same time to maintain Evangelical principles and call ourselves Evangelical people! Once let us see that sin is far viler, and far nearer to us, and sticks more closely to us than we supposed, and we shall be led, I trust and believe, to get nearer to Christ. Once drawn nearer to Christ, we shall drink more deeply out of His fullness, and learn more thoroughly to"live the life of faith" in Him, as St. Paul did. Once taught to live the life of faith in Jesus, and abiding in Him, we shall bear more fruit, shall find ourselves more strong for duty, more patient in trial, more watchful over our poor weak hearts, and more like our Master in all our little daily ways. Just in proportion as we realize how much Christ has done for us, shall we labour to do much for Christ. Much forgiven, we shall love much. In short, as the Apostle says,"with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor. iii. 18.) Whatever some may please to think or say, there can be no doubt that an increased feeling about holiness is one of the signs of the times. Conferences for the promotion of"spiritual life" are becoming common in the present day. The subject of"spiritual life" finds a place on Congress platforms almost every year. It has awakened an amount of interest and general attention throughout the land, for which we ought to be thankful. Any movement, based on sound principles, which helps to deepen our spiritual life and increase our personal holiness, will be a real blessing to the Church of England. It will do much to draw us together and heal our unhappy divisions. It may bring down some fresh out-pouring of the grace of the Spirit, and be"life from the dead" in these later times. 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 step towards attaining a higher standard of holiness is to realize more fully the amazing sinfulness of sin.

## II.

# SANCTIFICATION

*“Sanctify them through Thy truth”*—JOHN XXVII. 17.

*This is the will of God, even your sanctification*”—1 THESS. iv. 3.

THE subject of sanctification is one which many, I fear, dislike exceedingly. Some even turn from it with scorn and disdain. The very last thing they would like is to be a “saint,” or a “sanctified” man. Yet the subject does not deserve to be treated in this way. It is not an enemy, but a friend.

It is a subject of the utmost importance to our souls. If the Bible be true, it is certain that unless we are “sanctified,” we shall not be saved. There are three things which, according to the Bible, are absolutely necessary to the salvation of every man and woman in Christendom. These three are, justification, regeneration, and sanctification. All three meet in every child of God: he is both born again, and justified, and sanctified. He that lacks any one of these three things is not a true Christian in the sight of God, and dying in that condition will not be found in heaven and glorified in the last day.

It is a subject which is peculiarly seasonable in the present day. Strange doctrines have risen up of late upon the whole subject of sanctification. Some appear to confound it with justification. Others fritter it away to nothing, under the pretence of zeal for free grace, and practically neglect it altogether. Others are so much afraid of “works” being made a part of justification, that they can hardly find any place at all for “works” in their religion. Others set up a wrong standard of sanctification before their eyes, and failing to attain it, waste their lives in repeated secessions from church to church, chapel to chapel, and sect to sect, in the vain hope that they will find what they want. In a day like this, a calm examination of the subject, as a great leading doctrine of the Gospel, may be of great use to our souls.

I. Let us consider, firstly, *the true nature of sanctification.*

II. Let us consider, secondly, *the visible marks of sanctification.*

III. Let us consider, lastly, *wherein justification and sanctification agree and are like one another, and wherein they differ and are unlike.*

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If, unhappily, the reader of these pages is one of those who care for nothing but this world, and make no profession of religion, I cannot expect him to take much interest in what I am writing. You will probably think it an affair of "words, and names," and nice questions, about which it matters nothing what you hold and believe. But if you are a thoughtful, reasonable, sensible Christian, I venture to say that you will find it worth while to have some clear ideas about sanctification.

I. In the first place, we have to consider *the nature of sanctification*. What does the Bible mean when it speaks of a "sanctified" man?

Sanctification is that inward spiritual work which the Lord Jesus Christ works in a man by the Holy Ghost, when He calls him to be a true believer. He not only washes him from his sins in His own blood, but He also *separates* him from his natural love of sin and the world, puts a new principle in his heart, and makes him practically godly in life. The instrument by which the Spirit effects this work is generally the Word of God, though He sometimes uses afflictions and providential visitations "without the Word." (i Peter iii. i.) The subject of this work of Christ by His Spirit is called in Scripture a "sanctified" man.<sup>1</sup>

He who supposes that Jesus Christ only lived and died and rose again in order to provide justification and forgiveness of sins for His people, has yet much to learn. Whether he knows it or not, he is dishonouring our blessed Lord, and making Him only a half Saviour. The Lord Jesus has undertaken everything that His people's souls require; not only to deliver them from the *guilt* of their sins by His atoning death, but from the *dominion* of their sins, by placing in their hearts the Holy Spirit; not only to justify them, but also to sanctify them. He is, thus, not only their "righteousness," but their "sanctification." (i Cor. i. 30.) Let tis hear what

<sup>1</sup> There is mention in the Scripture of a twofold sanctification, and consequently in a twofold holiness. The first is common unto persons and things, consisting of the peculiar dedication, consecration, or separation of them unto the service of God, by His own appointment, whereby they become holy. Thus the priests and Levites of old, the ark, the altar, the tabernacle, and the temple, were sanctified and made holy; and, indeed, in all holiness whatever, there is a peculiar dedication and separation unto God. But in the sense mentioned, this was solitary and alone. No more belonged unto it but this sacred separation, nor was there any other effect of this sanctification. But, secondly, there is another kind of sanctification and holiness, wherein this separation to God is not the first thing done or intended, but a consequent and effect thereof. This is real and internal, by the communicating of a principle of holiness unto our natures, attended with its exercise in acts and duties of holy obedience unto God. This is that which we inquire after."—*John Owen on the Holy Spirit*. Vol. iii, p. 370, Works, Goold's edition.

the Bible says:” For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified.”—” Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it.”—” Christ gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”—” Christ bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness.”—” Christ hath reconciled (you) in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in His sight.” (John xvii. 19; Ephes. v. 25; Titus ii. 14; i Peter ii. 24; Coloss. i. 22.) Let the meaning of these five texts be carefully considered. If words mean anything, they teach that Christ undertakes the sanctification, no less than the justification of His believing people. *Both* are alike provided for in that” everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure,” of which the Mediator is Christ. In fact, Christ in one place is called” He that sanctifieth,” and His People,” they who are sanctified.” (Heb. ii. ii.)

The subject before us is of such deep and vast importance, that it requires fencing, guarding, clearing up, and marking out on every side. A doctrine which is needful to salvation can never be too sharply developed, or brought too fully into light. To clear away the confusion between doctrines and doctrines, which is so unhappily common among Christians, and to map out the precise relation between truths and truths in religion, is one way to attain accuracy in our theology. I shall therefore not hesitate to lay before my readers a series of connected propositions or statements, drawn from Scripture, which I think will be found useful in defining the exact nature of sanctification.

(1) Sanctification, then, is the invariable *result of that vital union with Christ* which true faith gives to a Christian.—”He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit.” (John xv. 5.) The branch which bears no fruit is no living branch of the vine. The union with Christ which produces no effect on heart and life is a mere formal union, which is worthless before God. The faith which has not a sanctifying influence on the character is no better than the faith of devils. It is a” dead faith, because it is alone.” It is not the gift of God. It is not the faith of God's elect. In short, where there is no sanctification of life, there is no real faith in Christ. True faith worketh by love. It constrains a man to live unto the Lord from a deep sense of gratitude for redemption. It makes him feel that he can never do too much for Him that died for him. Being much forgiven, he loves much. He whom the blood cleanses, walks in the light. He who has real lively hope in Christ, purifieth himself even as He is pure. (James ii. 17-20; Titus i. i; Gal. v. 6; i John i. 7; iii. 3.)

(2) Sanctification, again, is the *outcome and inseparable consequence of regeneration*. He that is born again and made a new creature, receives a new nature and a new principle, and always lives a new life. A regeneration which a man can have, and yet live carelessly in sin or worldliness, is a regeneration invented by uninspired theologians, but never mentioned in Scripture. On the contrary, St. John expressly says, that "He that is born of God doth not commit sin—doeth righteousness—loveth the brethren—keepeth himself—and overcometh the world." (i John ii. 29; iii. 9-14; v. 4-18.) In a word, where there is no sanctification there is no regeneration, and where there is no holy life there is no new birth. This is, no doubt, a hard saying to many minds; but, hard or not, it is simple Bible truth. It is written plainly, that he who is born of God is one whose "seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." (i John iii, 9.)

(3) Sanctification, again, is the only certain *evidence of that indwelling of the Holy Spirit* which is essential to salvation. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." (Rom. viii. 9.) The Spirit never lies dormant and idle within the soul: He always makes His presence known by the fruit He causes to be borne in heart, character, and life. "The fruit of the Spirit," says St. Paul, "is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance," and such like. (Gal. v. 22.) Where these things are to be found, there is the Spirit: where these things are wanting, men are dead before God. The Spirit is compared to the wind, and, like the wind, He cannot be seen by our bodily eyes. But just as we know there is a wind by the effect it produces on waves, and trees, and smoke, so we may know the Spirit is in a man by the effects He produces in the man's conduct. It is nonsense to suppose that we have the Spirit, if we do not also "walk in the Spirit." (Gal. v. 25.) We may depend on it as a positive certainty, that where there is no holy living, there is no Holy Ghost. The seal that the Spirit stamps on Christ's people is sanctification. As many as are actually "led by the Spirit of God, they," and they only, "are the sons of God." (Rom. viii. 14.)

(4) Sanctification, again, is the *only sure mark of God's election*. The names and number of the elect are a secret thing, no doubt, which God has wisely kept in His own power, and not revealed to man. It is not given to us in this world to study the pages of the book of life, and see if our names are there. But if there is one thing clearly and plainly laid down about election, it is this—that elect men and women may be known and distinguished by holy lives. It is expressly written that they are "elect through sanctification—chosen unto salvation through sanctification—predestin-

ated to be conformed to the image of God's Son—and chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world that they should be holy.”—Hence, when St. Paul saw the working” faith” and labouring” love” and patient” hope” of the Thessalonian believers, he says,” I know your election of God.” (i Peter i. 2; 2 Thess. ii. 13; Rom. viii. 29; Eph. i. 4; i Thess. i. 3, 4.) He that boasts of being one of God's elect, while he is wilfully and habitually living in sin, is only deceiving himself, and talking wicked blasphemy. Of course it is hard to know what people *really* are, and many who make a fair show outwardly in religion, may turn out at last to be rotten-hearted hypocrites. But where there is not, at least, some appearance of sanctification, we may be quite certain there is no election. The Church Catechism correctly and wisely teaches that the Holy Ghost”*sanctifieth* all the elect people of God.”

(5) Sanctification, again, is *a thing that will always be seen*. Like the Great Head of the Church, from whom it springs, it”cannot be hid.” “Every tree is known by his own fruit.” (Luke vi. 44.) A truly sanctified person may be so clothed with humility, that he can see in himself nothing but infirmity and defects. Like Moses, when he came down from the Mount, he may not be conscious that his face shines. Like the righteous, in the mighty parable of the sheep and the goats, he may not see that he has done anything worthy of his Master's notice and commendation: “When saw we Thee an hungered, and fed Thee?” (Matt. xxv. 37.) But whether he sees it himself or not, others will always see in him a tone, and taste, and character, and habit of life unlike that of other men. The very idea of a man being”sanctified,” while no holiness can be seen in his life, is flat nonsense and a misuse of words. Light may be very dim; but if there is only a spark in a dark room it will be seen. Life may be very feeble; but if the pulse only beats a little, it will be felt. It is just the same with a sanctified man: his sanctification will be something felt and seen, though he himself may not understand it. A”saint” in whom nothing can be seen but worldliness or sin, is a kind of monster not recognised in the Bible!

(6) Sanctification, again, is *a thing for which every believer is responsible*. In saying this I would not be mistaken. I hold as strongly as anyone that every man on earth is accountable to God, and that all the lost will be speechless and without excuse at the last day. Every man has power to”lose his own soul.” (Matt. xvi. 26.) But while I hold this, I maintain that believers are eminently and peculiarly responsible, and under a special obligation to live holy lives. They are not as others, dead and blind and unrenewed: they are alive unto God, and have light and knowledge, and a new

principle within them. Whose fault is it if they are not holy, but their own? On whom can they throw the blame if they are not sanctified, but themselves? God, who has given them grace and a new heart, and a new nature, has deprived them of all excuse if they do not live for His praise. This is a point which is far too much forgotten. A man who professes to be a true Christian, while he sits still, content with a very low degree of sanctification (if indeed he has any at all), and coolly tells you he "can do nothing," is a very pitiable sight, and a very ignorant man. Against this delusion let us watch and be on our guard. The Word of God always addresses its precepts to believers as accountable and responsible beings. If the Saviour of sinners gives us renewing grace, and calls us by His Spirit, we may be sure that He expects us to use our grace, and not to go to sleep. It is forgetfulness of this which causes many believers to "grieve the Holy Spirit," and makes them very useless and uncomfortable Christians.

(7) Sanctification, again, is *a thing which admits of growth and degrees*. A man may climb from one step to another in holiness, and be far more sanctified at one period of his life than another. More pardoned and more justified than he is when he first believes, he cannot be, though he may feel it more. More sanctified he certainly may be, because every grace in his new character may be strengthened, enlarged, and deepened. This is the evident meaning of our Lord's last prayer for His disciples, when He used the words, "Sanctify them"; and of St. Paul's prayer for the Thessalonians, "The very God of peace sanctify you." (John xvii. 17; i Thess. iv. 3.) In both cases the expression plainly implies the possibility of increased sanctification; while such an expression as "justify them" is never once in Scripture applied to a believer, because he cannot be more justified than he is. I can find no warrant in Scripture for the doctrine of "imputed sanctification." It is a doctrine which seems to me to confuse things that differ, and to lead to very evil consequences. Not least, it is a doctrine which is flatly contradicted by the experience of all the most eminent Christians. If there is any point on which God's holiest saints agree it is this: that they see more, and know more, and feel more, and do more, and repent more, and believe more, as they get on in spiritual life, and in proportion to the closeness of their walk with God. In short, they "grow in grace," as St. Peter exhorts believers to do; and "abound more and more," according to the words of St. Paul. (2 Pet. iii. 18; i Thess, iv. i.)

(8) Sanctification, again, is *a thing which depends greatly on a diligent use of Scriptural means*. When I speak of "means," I have in view Bible-reading, private prayer, regular attendance on public worship, regular hearing of God's Word, and regular reception of the

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Lord's Supper. I lay it down as a simple matter of fact, that no one who is careless about such things must ever expect to make much progress in sanctification. I can find no record of any eminent saint who ever neglected them. They are appointed channels through which the Holy Spirit conveys fresh supplies of grace to the soul, and strengthens the work which He has begun in the inward man. Let men call this legal doctrine if they please, but I will never shrink from declaring my belief that there are no "spiritual gains without pains." I should as soon expect a farmer to prosper in business who contented himself with sowing his fields and never looking at them till harvest, as expect a believer to attain much holiness who was not diligent about his Bible-reading, his prayers, and the use of his Sundays. Our God is a God who works by means, and He will never bless the soul of that man who pretends to be so high and spiritual that he can get on without them.

(9) Sanctification, again, is *a thing which does not prevent a man having a great deal of inward spiritual conflict*. By conflict I mean a struggle within the heart between the old nature and the new, the flesh and the spirit, which are to be found together in every believer. (Gal. v. 17.) A deep sense of that struggle, and a vast amount of mental discomfort from it, are no proof that a man is not sanctified. Nay, rather, I believe they are healthy symptoms of our condition, and prove that we are not dead, but alive. A true Christian is one who has not only peace of conscience, but war within. He may be known by his warfare as well as by his peace. In saying this, I do not forget that I am contradicting the views of some well-meaning Christians, who hold the doctrine called "sinless perfection." I cannot help that. I believe that what I say is confirmed by the language of St. Paul in the seventh chapter of Romans. That chapter I commend to the careful study of all my readers. I am quite satisfied that it does not describe the experience of an unconverted man, or of a young and unestablished Christian; but of an old experienced saint in close communion with God. None but such a man could say, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man." (Rom. vii. 22.) I believe, furthermore, that what I say is proved by the experience of all the most eminent servants of Christ that have ever lived. The full proof is to be seen in their journals, their autobiographies, and their lives.—Believing all this, I shall never hesitate to tell people that inward conflict is no proof that a man is not holy, and that they must not think they are not sanctified because they do not feel entirely free from inward struggle. Such freedom we shall doubtless have in heaven; but we shall never enjoy it in this world. The heart of the best Christian, even at his best, is a field occupied by two rival camps, and the "company

of two armies.” (Cant. vi. 13.) Let the words of the Thirteenth and Fifteenth Articles be well considered by all Churchmen:” The infection of nature doth remain in them that are regenerated.”“Although baptized and born again in Christ, we offend in many things; and if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”<sup>1</sup>

(10) Sanctification, again, is *a thing which cannot justify a man, and yet it pleases God*. This may seem wonderful, and yet it is true. The holiest actions of the holiest saint that ever lived are all more or less full of defects and imperfections. They are either wrong in their motive or defective in their performance, and in themselves are nothing better than “splendid sins,” deserving God's wrath and condemnation. To suppose that such actions can stand the severity of God's judgment, atone for sin, and merit heaven, is simply absurd.”By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified.”—”We conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.” (Rom. iii. 20-28.) The only righteousness in which we can appear before God is the righteousness of another—even the perfect righteousness of our Substitute and Representative, Jesus Christ the Lord. His work, and not our work, is our only title to heaven. This is a truth which we should be ready to die to maintain.—For all this, however, the Bible distinctly teaches that the holy actions of a sanctified man, although imperfect, are pleasing in the sight of God.”With such sacrifices God is well pleased.” (Heb. xiii. 16.)” Obey your parents, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.” (Col. iii. 20.)” We do those things that are pleasing in His sight.” (i John iii. 22.) Let this never be forgotten, for it is a very comfortable doctrine. Just as a parent is pleased with the efforts of his little child to please him, though it be only by picking a daisy or walking across a room, so is our Father in heaven pleased with the poor performances of His believing children. He looks at the motive, principle, and intention of their actions, and not merely at their quantity and quality. He regards them as members of His own dear Son, and for His sake, wherever there is a single eye, He is well-pleased. Those Churchmen who dispute this would do well to study the Twelfth Article of the Church of England.

(ii) Sanctification, again, is a thing which will be found absolutely necessary as *a witness to our character in the great day of*

<sup>1</sup>” The devil's war is better than the devil's peace. Suspect dumb holiness. When the dog is kept out of doors he howls to be let in again.”—” Contraries meeting, such as fire and water, conflict one with another.—When Satan findeth a sanctified heart, he tempteth with much importunity. Where there is much of God and of Christ, there are strong injections and firebrands cast in at the windows, so that some of much faith have been tempted to doubt.”—*Rutherford's Trial of Faith*,, p. 403.

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*judgment.* It will be utterly useless to plead that we believed in Christ, unless our faith has had some sanctifying effect, and been seen in our lives. Evidence, evidence, evidence, will be the one thing wanted when the great white throne is set, when the books are opened, when the graves give up their tenants, when the dead are arraigned before the bar of God. Without some evidence that our faith in Christ was real and genuine, we shall only rise again to be condemned. I can find no evidence that will be admitted In that day, except sanctification. The question will not be how we talked and what we professed, but how we lived and what we did. Let no man deceive himself on this point. If anything is certain about the future, it is certain that there will be a judgment; and if anything is certain about judgment, it is certain that men's "works" and "doings" will be considered and examined in it. (John v. 29; 2 Cor. v. 10; Rev. xx. 13.) He that supposes works are of no importance, because they cannot justify us, is a very ignorant Christian. Unless he opens his eyes, he will find to his cost that if he comes to the bar of God without some evidence of grace, he had better never have been born.

(12) Sanctification, in the last place, is *absolutely necessary in order to train and prepare us for heaven.* Most men hope to go to heaven when they die; but few, it may be feared, take the trouble to consider whether they would enjoy heaven if they got there. Heaven is essentially a holy place; its inhabitants are all holy; its occupations are all holy. To be really happy in heaven, it is clear and plain that we must be somewhat trained and made ready for heaven while we are on earth. The notion of a purgatory after death, which shall turn sinners into saints, is a lying invention of man, and is nowhere taught in the Bible. We must be saints before we die, if we are to be saints afterwards in glory. The favourite idea of many, that dying men need nothing except absolution and forgiveness of sins to fit them for their great change, is a profound delusion. We need the work of the Holy Spirit as well as the work of Christ; we need renewal of the heart as well as the atoning blood; we need to be sanctified as well as to be justified. It is common to hear people saying on their death-beds, "I only want the Lord to forgive me my sins, and take me to rest." But those who say such things forget that the rest of heaven would be utterly useless if we had no heart to enjoy it! What could an unsanctified man do in heaven, if by any chance he got there? Let that question be fairly looked in the face, and fairly answered. No man can possibly be happy in a place where he is not in his element, and where all around him is not congenial to his tastes, habits, and character. When an eagle is happy in an iron cage, when a sheep is happy in the water, when an owl is happy in the blaze of noonday sun, when

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a fish is happy on the dry land—then, and not till then, will I admit that the unsanctified man could be happy in heaven.<sup>1</sup>

I lay down these twelve propositions about sanctification with a firm persuasion that they are true, and I ask all who read these pages to ponder them well. Each of them would admit of being expanded and handled more fully, and all of them deserve private thought and consideration. Some of them may be disputed and contradicted; but I doubt whether any of them can be overthrown or proved untrue. I only ask for them a fair and impartial hearing. I believe in my conscience that they are likely to assist men in attaining clear views of sanctification.

II. I now proceed to take up the second point which I proposed to consider. That point is the *visible evidence of sanctification*. In a word, what are the visible marks of a sanctified man? What may we expect to see in him?

This is a very wide and difficult department of our subject. It is wide, because it necessitates the mention of many details which cannot be handled fully in the limits of a paper like this. It is difficult, because it cannot possibly be treated without giving offence. But at any risk truth ought to be spoken; and there is some kind of truth which especially requires to be spoken in the present day.

(i) True sanctification then does not consist in *talk about religion*. This is a point which ought never to be forgotten. The vast increase of education and preaching in these latter days makes it absolutely necessary to raise a warning voice. People hear so much of Gospel truth that they contract an unholy familiarity with its words and phrases, and sometimes talk so fluently about its doctrines that you might think them true Christians. In fact it is sickening and disgusting to hear the cool and flippant language which many pour out about” conversion—the Saviour—the Gospel— finding peace— free grace,” and the like, while they are notoriously serving sin or living for the world. Can we doubt that such talk is abominable in God's sight, and is little better than cursing, swearing, and taking God's name in vain? The tongue is not the only member that Christ bids us give to His service. God does not want His people to be mere empty tubs, sounding brass and tinkling cymbals. We must be sanctified, not only”in word and in tongue, but in deed and truth.” (i John iii. 18.)

<sup>1</sup>” There is no imagination wherewith man is besotted, more foolish, none so pernicious, as this,—that persons not purified, not sanctified, not made holy in their life, should afterwards be taken into that state of blessedness which consists in the enjoyment of God. Neither can such persons enjoy God, nor would God be a reward to them.—Holiness indeed is perfected in heaven: but the beginning of it is invariably confined to this world.”—*Owen on Holy Spirit*, p. 575. Goold's edition.

(2) True sanctification does not consist in temporary *religious feelings*. This again is a point about which a warning is greatly needed. Mission services and revival meetings are attracting great attention in every part of the land, and producing a great sensation. The Church of England seems to have taken a new lease of life, and exhibits a new activity; and we ought to thank God for it. But these things have their attendant dangers as well as their advantages. Wherever wheat is sown the devil is sure to sow tares. Many, it may be feared, appear moved and touched and roused under the preaching of the Gospel, while in reality their hearts are not changed at all. A kind of animal excitement from the contagion of seeing others weeping, rejoicing, or affected, is the true account of their case. Their wounds are only skin deep, and the peace they profess to feel is skin deep also. Like the stony-ground hearers, they “receive the Word with joy” (Matt, xiii. 20); but after a little they fall away, go back to the world, and are harder and worse than before. Like Jonah's gourd, they come up suddenly in a night and perish in a night. Let these things not be forgotten. Let us beware in this day of healing wounds slightly, and crying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace. Let us urge on every one who exhibits new interest in religion to be content with nothing short of the deep, solid, sanctifying work of the Holy Ghost. Reaction, after false religious excitement, is a most deadly disease of soul. When the devil is only temporarily cast out of a man in the heat of a revival, and by and by returns to his house, the last state becomes worse than the first. Better a thousand times begin more slowly, and then “continue in the word “steadfastly, than begin in a hurry, without counting the cost, and by and by look back, with Lot's wife, and return to the world. I declare I know no state of soul more dangerous than to imagine we are born again and sanctified by the Holy Ghost, because we have picked up a few religious feelings.

(3) True sanctification does not consist in *outward formalism* and external devoutness. This is an enormous delusion, but unhappily a very common one. Thousands appear to imagine that true holiness is to be seen in an excessive quantity of bodily religion—in constant attendance on Church services, reception of the Lord's Supper, and observance of fasts and saints' days—in multiplied bowings and turnings and gestures and postures during public worship—in self-imposed austerities and petty self-denials—in wearing peculiar dresses, and the use of pictures and crosses. I freely admit that some people take up these things from conscientious motives, and actually believe that they help their souls. But I am afraid that in many cases this external *religiousness* is made a substitute for inward holiness; and I am quite certain that it falls

utterly short of sanctification of heart. Above all, when I see that many followers of this outward, sensuous, and formal style of Christianity are absorbed in worldliness, and plunge headlong into its pomps and vanities, without shame, I feel that there is need of very plain speaking on the subject. There may be an immense amount of "bodily service," while there is not a jot of real sanctification.

(4) Sanctification does not consist *in retirement from our place in life*, and the renunciation of our social duties. In every age it has been a snare with many to take up this line in the pursuit of holiness. Hundreds of hermits have buried themselves in some wilderness, and thousands of men and women have shut themselves up within the walls of monasteries and convents, under the vain idea that by so doing they would escape sin and become eminently holy. They have forgotten that no bolts and bars can keep out the devil, and that, wherever we go, we carry that root of all evil, our own hearts. To become a monk, or a nun, or to join a House of Mercy, is not the high road to sanctification. True holiness does not make a Christian evade difficulties, but face and overcome them. Christ would have His people show that His grace is not a mere hot-house plant, which can only thrive under shelter, but a strong, hardy thing which can flourish in every relation of life. It is doing our duty in that state to which God has called us—like salt in the midst of corruption, and light in the midst of darkness—which is a primary element in sanctification. It is not the man who hides himself in a cave, but the man who glorifies God as master or servant, parent or child, in the family and in the street, in business and in trade, who is the Scriptural type of a sanctified man. Our Master Himself said in His last prayer, "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil." (John xvii. 15.)

(5) Sanctification does not consist in the *occasional performance of right actions*. It is the habitual working of a new heavenly principle within, which runs through all a man's daily conduct, both in great things and in small. Its seat is in the heart, and like the heart in the body, it has a regular influence on every part of the character. It is not like a pump, which only sends forth water when worked upon from without, but like a perpetual fountain, from which a stream is ever flowing spontaneously and naturally. Even Herod, when he heard John the Baptist, "did many things," while his heart was utterly wrong in the sight of God. (Mark vi. 20.) Just so there are scores of people in the present day who seem to have spasmodical fits of "goodness," as it is called, and do many right things under the influence of sickness, affliction, death in the family, public calamities, or a sudden qualm of conscience. Yet

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all the time any intelligent observer can see plainly that they are not converted, and that they know nothing of" sanctification." A true saint, like Hezekiah, will be whole-hearted. He will"count God's commandments concerning all things to be right, and hate every false way." (2 Chron. xxxi. 21; Psalm cxix. 104.)

(6) Genuine sanctification will show itself in *habitual respect to God's law*, and habitual effort to live in obedience to it as the rule of life. There is no greater mistake than to suppose that a Christian has nothing to do with the law and the Ten Commandments, because he cannot be justified by keeping them. The same Holy Ghost who convinces the believer of sin by the law, and leads him to Christ for justification, will always lead him to a spiritual use of the law, as a friendly guide, in the pursuit of sanctification. Our Lord Jesus Christ never made light of the Ten Commandments; on the contrary, in His first public discourse, the Sermon on the Mount, He expounded them, and showed the searching nature of their requirements. St. Paul never made light of the law: on the contrary, he says, "The law is good, if a man use it lawfully."—" I delight in the law of God after the inward man", (i Tim. i. 8; Rom. vii. 22.) He that pretends to be a saint, while he sneers at the Ten Commandments, and thinks nothing of lying, hypocrisy, swindling, ill-temper, slander, drunkenness, and breach of the seventh commandment, is under a fearful delusion. He will find it hard to prove that he is a saint in the last day!

(7) Genuine sanctification will show itself in a *habitual endeavour* to do Christ's will, and to live by His practical precepts. These precepts are to be found scattered everywhere throughout the four Gospels, and especially in the Sermon on the Mount. He that supposes they were spoken without the intention of promoting holiness, and that a Christian need not attend to them in his daily life, is really little better than a lunatic, and at any rate is a grossly ignorant person. To hear some men talk, and read some men's writings, one might imagine that our blessed Lord, when He was on earth, never taught anything but *doctrine*, and left practical duties to be taught by others! The slightest knowledge of the four Gospels ought to tell us that this is a complete mistake. What His disciples ought to be and to do is continually brought forward in our Lord's teaching. A truly sanctified man will never forget this. He serves a Master who said, "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you." (John xv. 14.)

(8) Genuine sanctification will show itself in an habitual desire to live up to *the standard which St. Paul sets before the Churches* in his writings. That standard is to be found in the closing chapters of nearly all his Epistles. The common idea of many persons that St. Paul's writings are full of nothing but doctrinal statements and

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controversial subjects — justification, election, predestination, prophecy, and the like—is an entire delusion, and a melancholy proof of the ignorance of Scripture which prevails in these latter days. I defy anyone to read St. Paul's writings carefully without finding in them a large quantity of plain, practical directions about the Christian's duty in every relation of life, and about our daily habits, temper, and behaviour to one another. These directions were written down by inspiration of God for the perpetual guidance of professing Christians. He who does not attend to them may possibly pass muster as a member of a church or a chapel, but he certainly is not what the Bible calls a “sanctified” man.

(9) Genuine sanctification will show itself in habitual *attention to the active graces* which our Lord so beautifully exemplified, and especially to the grace of charity. “A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have loved one to another.” (John xiii. 34, 35.) A sanctified man will try to do good in the world, and to lessen the sorrow and increase the happiness of all around him. He will aim to be like his Master, full of kindness and love to every one; and this not in word only, by calling people “dear,” but by deeds and actions and self-denying work, according as he has opportunity. The selfish Christian professor, who wraps himself up in his own conceit of superior knowledge, and seems to care nothing whether others sink or swim, go to heaven or hell, so long as he walks to church or chapel in his Sunday best, and is called a “sound member”—such a man knows nothing of sanctification. He may think himself a saint on earth, but he will not be a saint in heaven. Christ will never be found the Saviour of those who know nothing of following His example. Saving faith and real converting grace will always produce some conformity to the image of Jesus.<sup>1</sup> (Coloss. iii. 10.)

(10) Genuine sanctification, in the last place, will show itself in *habitual attention to the passive graces* of Christianity. When I speak of passive graces, I mean those graces which are especially shown in submission to the will of God, and in bearing and forbearing towards one another. Few people, perhaps, unless they

<sup>1</sup>” Christ in the Gospel is proposed to us as our pattern and example of holiness; and as it is a cursed imagination that this was the whole end of his life and death: namely, to exemplify and confirm the doctrine of holiness which He taught—so to neglect His being our example, in considering Him by faith to that end, and labouring after conformity to Him, is evil and pernicious. Wherefore let us be much in the contemplation of what He was, and what He did, and how in all duties and trials He carried Himself, until an image or idea of His perfect holiness is implanted in our minds, and we are made like unto Him thereby.”—*Owen on the Holy Ghost* p. 513. Goold's edition,

have examined the point, have an idea how much is said about these graces in the New Testament, and how important a place they seem to fill. This is the special point which St. Peter dwells upon in commending our Lord Jesus Christ's example to our notice:” Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow His steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth: Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judges righteously.” (i Peter ii. 21-23.)—This is the one piece of profession which the Lord's prayer requires us to make:” Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us”; and the one point that is commented upon at the end of the prayer.—This is the point which occupies one-third of the list of the fruits of the Spirit, supplied by St. Paul. Nine are named, and three of these, ”long-suffering, gentleness, and meekness,” are unquestionably passive graces. (Gal. v. 22, 23.) I must plainly say that I do not think this subject is sufficiently considered by Christians. The passive graces are no doubt harder to attain than the active ones, but they are precisely the graces which have the greatest influence on the world. Of one thing I feel very sure— it is nonsense to pretend to sanctification unless we follow after the meekness, gentleness, long-suffering, and forgiveness of which the Bible makes so much. People who are habitually giving way to peevish and cross tempers in daily life, and are constantly sharp with their tongues, and disagreeable to all around them—spiteful people, vindictive people, revengeful people, malicious people— of whom, alas, the world is only too full!—all such know little, as they should know, about sanctification.

Such are the visible marks of a sanctified man. I do not say that they are all to be seen equally in all God's people. I freely admit that in the best they are not fully and perfectly exhibited. But I do say confidently, that the things of which I have been speaking are the Scriptural marks of sanctification, and that they who know nothing of them may well doubt whether they have any grace at all. Whatever others may please to say, I will never shrink from saying that genuine sanctification is a thing that can be seen, and that the marks I have endeavoured to sketch out are more or less the marks of a sanctified man.

III. I now propose to consider, in the last place, the *distinction between justification and sanctification*. Wherein do they agree, and wherein do they differ?

This branch of our subject is one of great importance, though I fear it will not seem so to all my readers. I shall handle it briefly, but I dare not pass it over altogether. Too many are apt to look

at nothing but the surface of things in religion, and regard nice distinctions in theology as questions of "words and names," which are of little real value. But I warn all who are in earnest about their souls, that the discomfort which arises from not "distinguishing things that differ" in Christian doctrine is very great indeed; and I especially advise them, if they love peace, to seek clear views about the matter before us. Justification and sanctification are two distinct things we must always remember. Yet there are points in which they *agree* and points in which they *differ*. Let us try to find out what they are.

In what, then, are justification and sanctification alike?

(a) Both proceed originally from the free grace of God. It is of His gift alone that believers are justified or sanctified at all.

(b) Both are part of that great work of salvation which Christ, in the eternal covenant, has undertaken on behalf of His people. Christ is the fountain of life, from which pardon and holiness both flow. The root of each is Christ.

(c) Both are to be found in the same persons. Those who are justified are always sanctified, and those who are sanctified are always justified. God has joined them together, and they cannot be put asunder.

(d) Both begin at the same time. The moment a person begins to be a justified person; he also begins to be a sanctified person. He may not feel it, but it is a fact.

(e) Both are alike necessary to salvation. No one ever reached heaven without a renewed heart as well as forgiveness, without the Spirit's grace as well as the blood of Christ, without a meetness for eternal glory as well as a title. The one is just as necessary as the other.

Such are the points on which justification and sanctification agree. Let us now reverse the picture, and see wherein they differ.

(a) Justification is the *reckoning* and counting a man to be righteous for the sake of another, even Jesus Christ the Lord. Sanctification is the actual *making* a man inwardly righteous, though it may be in a very feeble degree.

(b) The righteousness we have by our justification is *not our own*, but the everlasting perfect righteousness of our great Mediator Christ, imputed to us, and made our own by faith. The righteousness we have by sanctification is *our own* righteousness, imparted, inherent, and wrought in us by the Holy Spirit, but mingled with much infirmity and imperfection.

(c) In justification our own works have no place at all, and simple faith in Christ is the one thing needful. In sanctification our own works are of vast importance and God bids us fight, and watch, and pray, and strive, and take pains, and labour

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Justification is a finished and complete work, and a man is perfectly justified the moment he believes. Sanctification is an imperfect work, comparatively, and will never be perfected until we reach heaven.

(e) Justification admits of no growth or increase: a man is as much justified the hour he first comes to Christ by faith as he will be to all eternity. Sanctification is eminently a progressive work, and admits of continual growth and enlargement so long as a man lives.

(f) Justification has special reference to *out persons*, our standing in God's sight, and our deliverance from guilt. Sanctification has special reference to our *natures*, and the moral renewal of our hearts.

(g) Justification gives us our title to heaven, and boldness to enter in. Sanctification gives us our meetness for heaven, and prepares us to enjoy it when we dwell there.

(h) Justification is the act of God *about* us, and is not easily discerned by others. Sanctification is the work of God *within* us, and cannot be hid in its outward manifestation from the eyes of men.

I commend these distinctions to the attention of all my readers, and I ask them to ponder them well. I am persuaded that one great cause of the darkness and uncomfortable feelings of many well-meaning people in the matter of religion is their habit of confounding, and not distinguishing, justification and sanctification. It can never be too strongly impressed on our minds that they are two separate things. No doubt they cannot be divided, and everyone that is a partaker of either is a partaker of both. But never, never ought they to be confounded, and never ought the distinction between them to be forgotten.

It only remains for me now to bring this subject to a conclusion by a few plain words of application. The nature and visible marks of sanctification have been brought before us. What practical reflections ought the whole matter to raise in our minds?

(1) For one thing, let us all awake to a sense of *the perilous state of many professing Christians.* "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord"; without sanctification there is no salvation. (Heb. xii. 14.) Then what an enormous amount of so-called religion there is which is perfectly useless! What an immense proportion of church-goers and chapel-goers are in the broad road that leadeth to destruction! The thought is awful, crushing, and overwhelming. Oh, that preachers and teachers would open their eyes and realize the condition of souls around them! Oh, that man could be persuaded to "flee from the wrath to come"! If unsanctified souls can be saved and go to heaven, the Bible is not true. Yet the Bible is true and cannot lie! What must the end be!

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(2) For another thing, let us *make sure work of our own condition*, and never rest till we feel and know that we are "sanctified" ourselves. What are our tastes, and choices, and likings, and inclinations? This is the great testing question. It matters little what we wish, and what we hope, and what we desire to be before we die. Where are we now? What are we doing? Are we sanctified or not? If not, the fault is all our own.

(3) For another thing, if we would be sanctified, our course is clear and plain— *we must begin with Christ*. We must go to Him as sinners, with no plea but that of utter need, and cast our souls on Him by faith, for peace and reconciliation with God. We must place ourselves in His hands, as in the hands of a good physician, and cry to Him for mercy and grace. We must wait for nothing to bring with us as a recommendation. The very first step towards sanctification, no less than justification, is to come with faith to Christ. We must first live and then work.

(4) For another thing, if we would grow in holiness and become more sanctified, we must *continually go on as we began*, and be ever making fresh applications to Christ. He is the Head from which every member must be supplied. (Ephes. iv. 16.) To live the life of daily faith in the Son of God, and to be daily drawing out of His fulness the promised grace and strength which He has laid up for His people—this is the grand secret of progressive sanctification. Believers who seem at a standstill are generally neglecting close communion with Jesus, and so grieving the Spirit. He that prayed, "Sanctify them," the last night before His crucifixion, is infinitely willing to help everyone who by faith applies to Him for help, and desires to be made more holy.

(5) For another thing, *let us not expect too much* from our own hearts here below. At our best we shall find in ourselves daily cause for humiliation, and discover that we are needy debtors to mercy and grace every hour. The more light we have, the more we shall see our own imperfection. Sinners we were when we began, sinners we shall find ourselves as we go on; renewed, pardoned, justified—yet sinners to the very last. Our absolute perfection is yet to come, and the expectation of it is one reason why we should long for heaven.

(6) Finally, let us never be ashamed of *making much of sanctification*, and contending for a high standard of holiness. While some are satisfied with a miserably low degree of attainment, and others are not ashamed to live on without any holiness at all—content with a mere round of church-going and chapel-going, but never getting on, like a horse in a mill—let us stand fast in the old paths, follow after eminent holiness ourselves, and recommend it boldly to others. This is the only way to be really happy.

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Let us feel convinced, whatever others may say, that holiness is happiness, and that the man who gets through life most comfortably is the *sanctified* man. No doubt there are some true Christians who from ill-health, or family trials, or other secret causes, enjoy little sensible comfort, and go mourning all their days on the way to heaven. But these are exceptional cases. As a general rule, in the long run of life, it will be found true that "sanctified people are the happiest people on earth. They have solid comforts which the world can neither give nor take away." "The ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness."—"Great peace has they that love Thy law."—It was said by One who cannot lie, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light."—But it is also written, "There is no peace unto the wicked." (Prov iii. 17; Ps. cxix. 165; Matt, xi. 30; Is. xlviii. 22.)

### P. S.

THE subject of sanctification is of such deep importance, and the mistakes made about it so many and great, that I make no apology for strongly recommending "Owen on the Holy Spirit" to all who want to study more thoroughly the whole doctrine of sanctification. No single paper like this can embrace it all.

I am quite aware that Owen's writings are not fashionable in the present day, and that many think fit to neglect and sneer at him as a Puritan! Yet the great divine who in Commonwealth times was Dean of Christ Church, Oxford, does not deserve to be treated in this way. He had more learning and sound knowledge of Scripture in his little finger than many who depreciate him have in their whole bodies. I assert unhesitatingly that the man who wants to study experimental theology will find no books equal to those of Owen and some of his contemporaries, for complete, Scriptural, and exhaustive treatment of the subjects they handle.

### III HOLINESS

“Holiness,, *without which no man shall see the Lord*”—HEB. xii. 14.

THE text which heads this page opens up a subject of deep importance. That subject is practical holiness. It suggests a question which demands the attention of all professing Christians—Are we holy? Shall we see the Lord?

That question can never be out of season. The wise man tells us, “There is a time to weep, and a time to laugh—a time to keep silence, and a time to speak” (Eccles. iii. 4, 7); but there is no time, no, not a day, in which a man ought not to be holy. Are we?

That question concerns all ranks and conditions of men. Some are rich and some are poor—some learned and some unlearned—some masters, and some servants; but there is no rank or condition in life in which a man ought not to be holy. Are we?

I ask to be heard to-day about this question. How stands the account between our souls and God? In this hurrying, bustling world, let us stand still for a few minutes and consider the matter of holiness. I believe I might have chosen a subject more popular and pleasant. I am sure I might have found one easier to handle. But I feel deeply I could not have chosen one more seasonable and more profitable to our souls. It is a solemn thing to hear the Word of God saying, “Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.” (Heb. xii. 14.)

I shall endeavour, by God's help, to examine what true holiness is, and the reason why it is so needful. In conclusion, I shall try to point out the only way in which holiness can be attained. I have already, in the second paper in this volume, approached this subject from a doctrinal side. Let me now try to present it to my readers in a more plain and practical point of view.

I. First, then, let me try to show *what true practical holiness is—what sort of persons are those whom God calls holy.*

A man may go great lengths, and yet never reach true holiness. It is not knowledge—Balaam had that: nor great profession—Judas Iscariot had that: nor doing many things—Herod had that: nor zeal for certain matters in religion—Jehu had that: nor morality and outward respectability of conduct—the young ruler had that: nor taking pleasure in hearing preachers—the Jews in Ezekiel's time

had that: nor keeping company with godly people—Joab and Gehazi and Demas had that. Yet none of these was holy ! These things alone are not holiness. A man may have any one of them, and yet never see the Lord.

What then is true practical holiness? It is a hard question to answer. I do not mean that there is any want of Scriptural matter on the subject. But I fear lest I should give a defective view of holiness, and not say all that ought to be said; or lest I should say things about it that ought not to be said, and so do harm. Let me; however, try to draw a picture of holiness, that we may see it clearly before the eyes of our minds. Only let it never be forgotten, when I have said all, that my account is but a poor imperfect outline at the best.

(a) Holiness is *the habit of being of one mind with God*, according as we find His mind described in Scripture. It is the habit of agreeing in God's judgment—hating what He hates—loving what He loves—and measuring everything in this world by the standard of His Word. He who most entirely agrees with God, he is the most holy man.

(b) A holy man will *endeavour to shun every known sin, and to keep every known commandment*. He will have a decided bent of mind toward God, a hearty desire to do His will—a greater fear of displeasing Him than of displeasing the world, and a love to all His ways. He will feel what Paul felt when he said, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man" (Rom. vii. 22), and what David felt when he said, "I esteem *all* Thy precepts concerning all things to be right, and I hate *every* false way." (Psalm cxix. 128.)

(c) A holy man will *strive to be like our Lord Jesus Christ*. He will not only live the life of faith in Him, and draw from Him all his daily peace and strength, but he will also labour to have the mind that was in Him, and to be "conformed to His image." (Rom. viii. 29.) It will be his aim to bear with and forgive others, even as Christ forgave us—to be unselfish, even as Christ pleased not Himself—to walk in love, even as Christ loved us—to be lowly-minded and humble, even as Christ made Himself of no reputation and humbled Himself. He will remember that Christ was a faithful witness for the truth—that He came not to do His own will—that it was His meat and drink to do His Father's will—that He would continually deny Himself in order to minister to others—that He was meek and patient under undeserved insults—that He thought more of godly poor men than of kings—that He was full of love and compassion to sinners—that He was bold and uncompromising in denouncing sin—that He sought not the praise of men, when He might have had it—that He went about doing good—that He was separate from worldly people—that He continued instant in

prayer—that He would not let even His nearest relations stand in His way when God's work was to be done. These things a holy man will try to remember. By them he will endeavour to shape his course in life. He will lay to heart the saying of John, "He that saith he abideth in Christ ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked" (i John ii. 6); and the saying of Peter, that "Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow His steps." (i Peter ii. 21.) Happy is he who has learned to make Christ his "all," both for salvation and example! Much time would be saved, and much sin prevented, if men would oftener ask themselves the question, "What would Christ have said and done, if He were in my place?"

(d) A holy man will follow after *meekness*, longsuffering, gentleness, patience, kind tempers, and government of his tongue. He will bear much, forbear much, overlook much, and be slow to talk of standing on his rights. We see a bright example of this in the behaviour of David when Shimei cursed him—and of Moses when Aaron and Miriam spake against him. (2 Sam. xvi. 10; Num. xii. 3.)

(e) A holy man will follow after *temperance and self-denial*. He will labour to mortify the desires of his body—to crucify his flesh with his affections and lusts—to curb his passions—to restrain his carnal inclinations, lest at any time they break loose. Oh, what a word is that of the Lord Jesus to the Apostles, "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life" (Luke xxi. 34); and that of the Apostle Paul, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." (i Cor. ix. 27.)

(f) A holy man will follow after *charity and brotherly kindness*. He will endeavour to observe the golden rule of doing as he would have men do to him, and speaking as he would have men speak to him. He will be full of affection towards his brethren—towards their bodies, their property, their characters, their feelings, their souls." He that loveth another," says Paul, "hath fulfilled the law." (Rom. xiii. 8.) He will abhor all lying, slandering, backbiting, cheating, dishonesty, and unfair dealing, even in the least things. The shekel and cubit of the sanctuary were larger than those in common use. He will strive to adorn his religion by all his outward demeanour, and to make it lovely and beautiful in the eyes of all around him. Alas, what condemning words are the 13th chapter of i Corinthians, and the Sermon on the Mount, when laid alongside the conduct of many professing Christians!

(g) A holy man will follow after a spirit of *mercy and benevolence towards others*. He will not stand all the day idle. He will not be

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content with doing no harm—he will try to do good. He will strive to be useful in his day and generation, and to lessen the spiritual wants and misery around him, as far as he can. Such was Dorcas, "full of good works and alms deeds, which she did,"—not merely purposed and talked about, *but did*. Such an one was Paul: "I will very gladly spend and be spent for you," he says, "though the more abundantly I love you the less I be loved." (Acts ix. 36; 2 Cor. xii. 15.)

(h) A holy man will follow after *purity of heart*. He will dread all filthiness and uncleanness of spirit, and seek to avoid all things that might draw him into it. He knows his own heart is like tinder, and will diligently keep clear of the sparks of temptation. Who shall dare to talk of strength when David can fall? There is many a hint to be gleaned from the ceremonial law. Under it the man who only *touched* a bone, or a dead body, or a grave, or a diseased person, became at once unclean in the sight of God. And these things were emblems and figures. Few Christians are ever too watchful and too particular about this point.

(i) A holy man will follow after *the fear of God*. I do not mean the fear of a slave, who only works because he is afraid of punishment, and would be idle if he did not dread discovery. I mean rather the fear of a child, who wishes to live and move as if he was always before his father's face, because he loves him. What a noble example Nehemiah gives us of this! When he became Governor at Jerusalem he might have been chargeable to the Jews and required of them money for his support. The former Governors had done so. There was none to blame him if he did. But he says, "So did not I, because of the fear of God." (Nehem. v. 15.)

(j) A holy man will follow after *humility*. He will desire, in lowliness of mind, to esteem all others better than himself. He will see more evil in his own heart than in any other in the world. He will understand something of Abraham's feeling, when he says, "I am dust and ashes;"—and Jacob's, when he says, "I am less than the least of all Thy mercies;"—and Job's, when he says, "I am vile;"—and Paul's, when he says, "I am chief of sinners." Holy Bradford, that faithful martyr of Christ, would sometimes finish his letters with these words, "A most miserable sinner, John Bradford." Good old Mr. Grimshaw's last words, when he lay on his death-bed, were these, "Here goes an unprofitable servant."

(k) A holy man will follow after *faithfulness in all the duties and relations in life*. He will try, not merely to fill his place as well as others who take no thought for their souls, but even better, because he has higher motives, and more help than they. Those words of Paul should never be forgotten, "Whatever ye do, do it heartily, as unto the Lord,"—"Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit,

serving the Lord.” (Col. iii. 23; Rom. xii. ii.) Holy persons should aim at doing everything well, and should be ashamed of allowing themselves to do anything ill if they can help it. Like Daniel, they should seek to give no “occasion” against themselves, except “concerning the law of their God.” (Dan. vi 5.) They should strive to be good husbands and good wives, good parents and good children, good masters and good servants, good neighbours, good friends, good subjects, good in private and good in public, good in the place of business and good by their firesides. Holiness is worth little indeed, if it does not bear this kind of fruit. The Lord Jesus puts a searching question to His people, when He says, “What do ye more than others?” (Matt. v. 47.)

(1) Last, but not least, a holy man will follow after *spiritual mindedness*. He will endeavour to set his affections entirely on things above, and to hold things on earth with a very loose hand. He will not neglect the business of the life that now is; but the first place in his mind and thoughts will be given to the life to come. He will aim to live like one whose treasure is in heaven, and to pass through this world like a stranger and pilgrim travelling to his home. To commune with God in prayer, in the Bible, and in the assembly of His people—these things will be the holy man's chiefest enjoyments. He will value every thing and place and company, just in proportion as it draws him nearer to God. He will enter into something of David's feeling, when he says, “My soul followeth hard after Thee.” “Thou art my portion.” (Psalm lxiii. 8; cxix. 57.)

Such is the outline of holiness which I venture to sketch out. Such is the character which those who are called “holy” *follow after*. Such are the main features of a holy man.

But here let me say, I trust no man will misunderstand me. I am not without fear that my meaning will be mistaken, and the description I have given of holiness will discourage some tender conscience. I would not willingly make one righteous heart sad, or throw a stumbling-block in any believer's way.

I do not say for a moment that holiness shuts out the presence of *indwelling* sin. No: far from it. It is the greatest misery of a holy man that he carries about with him a “body of death;”—that often when he would do good” evil is present with him”; that the old man is clogging all his movements, and, as it were, trying to draw him back at every step he takes. (Rom. vii. 21.) But it is the excellence of a holy man that he is not at peace with indwelling sin, as others are. He hates it, mourns over it, and longs to be free from its company. The work of sanctification within him is like the wall of Jerusalem—the building goes forward”even in troublous times.” (Dan. ix. 25.)

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Neither do I say that holiness comes to ripeness and perfection all at once, or that these graces I have touched on must be found in full bloom and vigour before you can call a man holy. No: far from it. Sanctification is always a *progressive work*. Some men's graces are in the blade, some in the ear, and some are like full corn in the ear. All must have a beginning. We must never despise "the day of small things." And sanctification in the very best is an *imperfect work*. The history of the brightest saints that ever lived will contain many a "but," and "howbeit," and "notwithstanding," before you reach the end. The gold will never be without some dross—the light will never shine without some clouds, until we reach the heavenly Jerusalem. The sun himself has spots upon his face. The holiest men have many a blemish and defect when weighed in the balance of the sanctuary. Their life is a continual warfare with sin, the world, and the devil; and sometimes you will see them not overcoming, but overcome. The flesh is ever lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and "in many things they offend all." (Gal. v. 17; James iii. 2.)

But still, for all this, I am sure that to have such a character as I have faintly drawn, is the heart's desire and prayer of all true Christians. They press towards it, if they do not reach it. They may not attain to it, but they always aim at it. It is what they strive and labour to be, if it is not what they are.

And this I do boldly and confidently say that true holiness is a great *reality*. It is something in a man that can be seen, and known, and marked, and felt by all around him. It is light: if it exists, it will show itself. It is salt: if it exists, its savour will be perceived. It is a precious ointment: if it exists, its presence cannot be hid.

I am sure we should all be ready to make allowance for much backsliding, for much occasional deadness in professing Christians. I know a road may lead from one point to another, and yet have many a winding and turn; and a man may be truly holy, and yet be drawn aside by many an infirmity. Gold is not the less gold because mingled with alloy, nor light the less light because faint and dim, nor grace the less grace because young and weak. But after every allowance, I cannot see how any man deserves to be called "holy," who wilfully allows himself in sins, and is not humbled and ashamed because of them. I dare not call anyone "holy" who makes a habit of wilfully neglecting known duties, and wilfully doing what he knows God has commanded him not to do. Well says Owen, "I do not understand how a man can be a true believer unto whom sin is not the greatest burden, sorrow, and trouble."

Such are the leading characteristics of practical holiness. Let us examine ourselves and see whether we are acquainted with it. Let us prove our own selves.

II. Let me try, in the next place, *to show some reasons why practical holiness is so important.*

Can holiness save us? Can holiness put away sin—cover iniquities—make satisfaction for transgressions—pay our debt to God? No: not a whit. God forbid that I should ever say so. Holiness can do none of these things. The brightest saints are all “unprofitable servants.” Our purest works are no better than filthy rags, when tried by the light of God's holy law. The white robe which Jesus offers, and faith puts on, must be our only righteousness—the name of Christ our only confidence—the Lamb's book of life our only title to heaven. With all our holiness we are no better than *sinners*. Our best things are stained and tainted with imperfection. They are all more or less incomplete, wrong in the motive or defective in the performance. By the deeds of the law shall no child of Adam ever be justified.” By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.” (Ephes. ii. 8, 9.)

Why then is holiness so important? Why does the Apostle say, “Without it no man shall see the Lord”? Let me set out in order a few reasons.

(a) For one thing, we must be holy, because *the voice of God in Scripture plainly commands it.* The Lord Jesus says to His people, “Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. v. 20.) “Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” (Matt. v. 48.) Paul tells the Thessalonians, “This is the will of God, even your sanctification.” (i Thess. iv. 3.) And Peter says, “As He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, “Be ye holy, for I am holy.” (i Peter i. 15, 16.) “In this,” says Leighton, “law and Gospel agree.”

(b) We must be holy, because this is one grand *end and purpose for which Christ came into the world.* Paul writes to the Corinthians, “He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again.” (2 Cor. v. 15.) And to the Ephesians, “Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it.” (Ephes. v. 25, 26.) And to Titus, “He gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” (Titus ii. 14.) In short, to talk of men being saved from the guilt of sin, without being at

the same time saved from its dominion in their hearts, is to contradict the witness of all Scripture. Are believers said to be elect!—it is”through sanctification of the Spirit.” Are they predestinated? — it is”to be conformed to the image of God's Son.” Are they chosen?—it is”that they may be holy.” Are they called? — It is”with a holy calling.” Are they afflicted?—it is that they may be”partakers of holiness.” Jesus is a complete Saviour. He does not merely take away the guilt of a believer's sin, He does more—He breaks its power, (i Peter i. 2; Rom. viii. 29; Eph. i. 4; Heb. xii. 10.)

(f) We must be holy, because this is the *only sound evidence that we have a saving faith in our Lord Jesus Christ*. The Twelfth Article of our Church says truly, that” Although good works cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's judgment, yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and do spring out necessarily of a true and lively faith; insomuch that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known as a tree discerned by its fruits.” James warns us there is such a thing as a dead faith—a faith which goes no further than the profession of the lips, and has no influence on a man's character. (James ii. 17.) True saving faith is a very different kind of thing. True faith will always show itself by its fruits—it will sanctify, it will work by love, it will overcome the world, it will purify the heart. I know that people are fond of talking about death-bed evidences. They will rest on words spoken in the hours of fear, and pain, and weakness, as if they might take comfort in them about the friends they lose. But I am afraid in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred such evidences are not to be depended on. I suspect that, with rare exceptions, men die just as they have lived. The only safe evidence that we are one with Christ, and Christ in us, is holy life. They that live unto the Lord are generally the only people who die in the Lord. If we would die the death of the righteous, let us not rest in slothful desires only; let us seek to live His life. It is a true saying of Traill's,” That man's state is naught, and his faith unsound, that find not his hopes of glory purifying to his heart and life.”

(d) We must be holy, because this is the *only proof that we love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity*. This is a point on which He has spoken most plainly, in the fourteenth and fifteenth chapters of John.”If ye love Me, keep my commandments.”—” He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me.” —” If a man love Me he will keep my words.”—” Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you.” (John xiv. 15, 21, 23; xv. 14.)—Plainer words than these it would be difficult to find, and woe to those who neglect them! Surely that man must be in an unhealthy state of soul who can think of all that Jesus suffered,

and yet cling to those sins for which that suffering was undergone. It was sin that wove the crown of thorns—it was sin that pierced our Lord's hands, and feet, and side—it was sin that brought Him to Gethsemane and Calvary, to the cross and to the grave. Cold must our hearts be if we do not hate sin and labour to get rid of it, though we may have to cut off the right hand and pluck out the right eye in doing it.

(e) We must be holy, because this is the *only sound evidence that we are true children of God*. Children in this world are generally like their parents. Some, doubtless, are more so, and some less — but it is seldom indeed that you cannot trace a kind of family likeness. And it is much the same with the children of God. The Lord Jesus says, "If ye were Abraham's children ye would do the works of Abraham."—"If God were your Father ye would love Me." (John viii. 39, 42.) If men have no likeness to the Father in heaven, it is vain to talk of their being His "sons." If we know nothing of holiness we may flatter ourselves as we please, but we have not got the Holy Spirit dwelling in us: we are dead, and must be brought to life again—we are lost, and must be found." "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they," and they only, "are the sons of God." (Rom. viii. 14.) We must show by our lives the family we belong to.—We must let men see by our good conversation that we are indeed the children of the Holy One, or our son-ship is but an empty name." "Say not," says Gurnall, "that thou hast royal blood in thy veins, and art born of God, except thou canst prove thy pedigree by daring to be holy."

(g) We must be holy, because this is the *most likely way to do good to others*. We cannot live to ourselves only in this world. Our lives will always be doing either good or harm to those who see them. They are a silent sermon which all can read. It is sad indeed when they are a sermon for the devil's cause, and not for God's. I believe that far more is done for Christ's kingdom by the holy living of believers than we are at all aware of. There is a reality about such living which makes men feel, and obliges them to think. It carries a weight and influence with it which nothing else can give. It makes religion beautiful, and draws men to consider it, like a lighthouse seen afar off. The day of judgment will prove that many besides husbands have been won "without *the word*" by a holy life, (i Pet. iii. i.) You may talk to persons about the doctrines of the Gospels, and few will listen, and still fewer understand. But your life is an argument that none can escape. There is a meaning about holiness which not even the most unlearned can help taking in. They may not understand justification, but they can understand charity.

I believe there is far more harm done by unholy and inconsistent

Christians than we are aware of. Such men are among Satan's best allies. They pull down by their lives what ministers build with their lips. They cause the chariot wheels of the Gospel to drive heavily. They supply the children of this world with a never ending excuse for remaining as they are.—"I cannot see the use of so much religion," said an irreligious tradesman not long ago;" I observe that some of my customers are always talking about the Gospel, and faith, and election, and the blessed promises, and so forth; and yet these very people think nothing of cheating me of pence and half-pence, when they have an opportunity. Now, if religious persons can do such things, I do not see what good there is in religion."—I grieve to be obliged to write such things, but I fear that Christ's name is too often blasphemed because of the lives of Christians. Let us take heed lest the blood of souls should be required at our hands. From murder of souls by inconsistency and loose walking, good Lord, deliver us! Oh, for the sake of others, if for no other reason, let us strive to be holy!

(g) We must be holy, *because our present comfort depends much upon it*. We cannot be too often reminded of this. We are sadly apt to forget that there is a close connection between sin and sorrow, holiness and happiness, sanctification and consolation. God has so wisely ordered it, that our well-being and our well-doing are linked together. He has mercifully provided that even in this world it shall be man's *interest* to be holy. Our justification is not by works—our calling and election are not according to our works—but it is vain for anyone to suppose that he will have a lively *sense* of his justification, or an *assurance* of his calling, so long as he neglects good works, or does not strive to live a holy life."Hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His command-ments."—"Hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts." (i John ii, 3; iii. 19.) A believer may as soon expect to feel the sun's rays upon a dark and cloudy day, as to feel strong consolation in Christ while he does not follow Him fully. When the disciples forsook the Lord and fled, they escaped danger, but they were miserable and sad. When, shortly after, they confessed Him boldly before men, they were cast into prison and beaten; but we are told"they rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name." (Acts v. 41.) Oh, for our own sakes, if there were no other reason, let us strive to be holy! He that follows Jesus most fully will always follow Him most comfortably.

(h) Lastly, we must be holy, *because without holiness on earth we shall never be prepared to enjoy heaven*. Heaven is a holy place. The Lord of heaven is a holy Being. The angels are holy creatures. Holiness is written on everything in heaven. The book of Revelation says expressly,"There shall in no wise enter into it

anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie." (Rev. xxi. 27.)

I appeal solemnly to everyone who reads these pages, How shall we ever be at home and happy in heaven, if we die unholy? Death works no change. The grave makes no alteration. Each will rise again with the same character in which he breathed his last. Where will our place be if we are strangers to holiness now?

Suppose for a moment that you were allowed to enter heaven without holiness. What would you do? What possible enjoyment could you feel there? To which of all the saints would you join yourself, and by whose side would you sit down? Their pleasures are not your pleasures, their tastes not your tastes, their character not your character. How could you possibly be happy, if you had not been holy on earth?

*Now* perhaps you love the company of the light and the careless, the worldly-minded and the covetous, the reveller and the pleasure-seeker, the ungodly and the profane. There will be none such in heaven.

*Now* perhaps you think the saints of God too strict and particular, and serious. You rather avoid them. You have no delight in their society. There will be no other company in heaven.

*Now* perhaps you think praying, and Scripture-reading, and hymn singing, dull and melancholy, and stupid work—a thing to be tolerated now and then, but not enjoyed. You reckon the Sabbath a burden and a weariness; you could not possibly spend more than a small part of it in worshipping God. But remember, heaven is a never-ending Sabbath. The inhabitants thereof rest not day or night, saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!" and singing the praise of the Lamb. How could an unholy man find pleasure in occupation such as this?

Think you that such an one would delight to meet David, and Paul, and John, after a life spent in doing the very things they spoke against? Would he take sweet counsel with them, and find that he and they had much in common?—Think you, above all, that he would rejoice to meet Jesus, the Crucified One, face to face, after cleaving to the sins for which He died, after loving His enemies and despising His friends? Would he stand before Him with confidence, and join in the cry, "This is our God; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation"? (Isa. xxv. 9.) Think you not rather that the tongue of an unholy man would cleave to the roof of his mouth with shame, and his only desire would be to be cast out! He would feel a stranger in a land he knew not, a black sheep amidst Christ's holy flock. The voice of Cherubim and Seraphim, the song of Angels and Archangels and all the company of heaven, would be a language he could not

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understand. The very air would seem an air he could not breathe.

I know not what others may think, but to me it does seem clear that heaven would be a miserable place to an unholy man. It cannot be otherwise. People may say, in a vague way, "they hope to go to heaven;" but they do not consider what they say. There must be a certain "meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light." Our hearts must be somewhat in tune. To reach the holiday of glory, we must pass through the training school of grace. We must be heavenly-minded, and have heavenly tastes, in the life that now is, or else we shall never find ourselves in heaven, in the life to come.

And now, before I go any further, let me say a few words by way of application.

(i) For one thing, let me ask everyone who may read these pages, *Are you holy?* Listen, I pray you, to the question I put to you this day. Do you know anything of the holiness of which I have been speaking?

I do not ask whether you attend your church regularly—whether you have been baptized, and received the Lord's Supper—whether you have the name of Christian—I ask something more than all this: *Are you holy, or are you not?*

I do not ask whether you approve of holiness in others—whether you like to read the lives of holy people, and to talk of holy things, and to have on your table holy books—whether you mean to be holy, and hope you will be holy some day—I ask something further: *Are you yourself holy this very day or are you not?*

And why do I ask so straitly, and press the question so strongly? I do it because the Scripture says, "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." It is written, it is not my fancy—it is the Bible, not my private opinion—it is the word of God, not of man—"Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." (Heb. xii. 14.)

Alas, what searching, sifting words are these! What thoughts come across my mind, as I write them down! I look at the world, and see the greater part of it lying in wickedness. I look at professing Christians, and see the vast majority having nothing of Christianity but the name. I turn to the Bible, and I hear the Spirit saying, "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord."

Surely it is a text that ought to make us consider our ways, and search our hearts. Surely it should raise within us solemn thoughts, and send us to prayer.

You may try to put me off by saying "you feel much, and think much about these things: far more than many suppose." I answer, "This is not the point. The poor lost souls in hell do as much as this. The great question is not what you *think*, and what you *feel*, but what you *DO*."

You may say, "It was never meant that all Christians should be holy, and that holiness, such as I have described, is only for great saints, and people of uncommon gifts." I answer, "I cannot see that in Scripture. I read that *every man* who hath hope in Christ purifieth himself." (i John iii. 3.)—"Without holiness *no man* shall see the Lord."

You may say, "It is impossible to be so holy and to do our duty in this life at the same time: the thing cannot be done." I answer, "*You* are mistaken. It *can* be done. With Christ on your side nothing is impossible. It *has* been done by many. David, and Obadiah, and Daniel, and the servants of Nero's household, are all examples that go to prove it."

You may say, "If I were so holy I would be unlike other people." I answer, "I know it well. It is just what you ought to be. Christ's true servants always were unlike the world around them—a separate nation, a peculiar people;—and you must be so too, if you would be saved!"

You may say, "At this rate very few will be saved." I answer, "I know it. It is precisely what we are told in the Sermon on the Mount." The Lord Jesus said so 1,900 years ago. "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." (Matt. vii. 14.) Few will be saved, because few will take the trouble to seek salvation. Men will not deny themselves the pleasures of sin and their own way for a little season. They turn their backs on an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away." "Ye will not come unto Me," says Jesus, "that ye might have life." (John v. 40.)

You may say, "These are hard sayings: the way is very narrow." I answer, "I know it. So says the Sermon on the Mount." The Lord Jesus said so 1,900 years ago. He always said that men must take up the cross daily, and that they must be ready to cut off hand or foot, if they would be His disciples. It is in religion as it is in other things, "there are no gains without pains." That which costs nothing is worth nothing.

Whatever we may think fit to say, we must be holy, if we would see the Lord. Where is our Christianity if we are not? We must not merely have a Christian name, and Christian knowledge, we must have a Christian *character* also. We must be saints on earth, if ever we mean to be saints in heaven. God has said it, and He will not go back: "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." "The Pope's calendar," says Jenkyn, "only makes saints of the *dead*, but Scripture requires sanctity in the *living*." "Let not men deceive themselves," says Owen; "sanctification is a qualification indispensably necessary unto those who will be under the conduct of the Lord Christ unto salvation. He leads none to heaven but

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whom He sanctifies on the earth. This living Head will not admit of dead members.”

Surely we need not wonder that Scripture says”Ye must be born again.” (John iii. 7.) Surely it is clear as noon-day that many professing Christians need a complete change—new hearts, new natures—if ever they are to be saved. Old things must pass away—they must become new creatures.”Without holiness no man,” be he who he may,” shall see the Lord.”

(2) Let me, for another thing, speak a little to believers. I ask you this question,”*Do you think you feel the importance of holiness as much as you should?*”

I own I fear the temper of the times about this subject. I doubt exceedingly whether it holds that place which it deserves in the thoughts and attention of some of the Lord's people. I would humbly suggest that we are apt to overlook the doctrine of growth in grace, and that we do not sufficiently consider how very far a person may go in a profession of religion, and yet have no grace, and be dead in God's sight after all. I believe that Judas Iscariot seemed very like the other Apostles. When the Lord warned them that one would betray Him, no one said,”Is it Judas?” We had better think more about the Churches of Sardis and Laodicea than we do.

I have no desire to make an idol of holiness. I do not wish to dethrone Christ, and put holiness in His place. But I must candidly say, I wish sanctification was more thought of in this day than it seems to be, and I therefore take occasion to press the subject on all believers into whose hands these pages may fall. I fear it is sometimes forgotten that God has married together justification and sanctification. They are distinct and different things, beyond question, but one is never found without the other. All justified people are sanctified, and all sanctified are justified. What God has joined together let no man dare to put asunder. Tell me not of your justification, unless you have also some marks of sanctification. Boast not of Christ's work *for you*, unless you can show us the Spirit's work *in you*. Think not that Christ and the Spirit can ever be divided. I doubt not that many believers know these things, but I think it good for us to be put in remembrance of them. Let us prove that we know them by our lives. Let us try to keep in view this text more continually:”Follow holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.”

I must frankly say I wish there was not such an excessive *sensitiveness* on the subject of holiness as I sometimes perceive in the minds of believers. A man might really think it was a dangerous subject to handle, so cautiously is it touched. Yet surely when we have exalted Christ as” the way, the truth, and the life,” we

cannot err in speaking strongly about what should be the character of His people. Well says Rutherford, "The way that crieth down duties and sanctification, is not the way of grace. Believing and doing are blood-friends."

I would say it with all reverence, but say it I must—I sometimes fear if Christ were on earth now, there are not a few who would think His preaching *legal*; and if Paul were writing his Epistles, there are those who would think he had better not write the latter part of most of them as he did. But let us remember that the Lord Jesus *did* speak the Sermon on the Mount, and that the Epistle to the Ephesians contains six chapters and not four. I grieve to feel obliged to speak in this way, but I am sure there is a cause.

That great divine, John Owen, the Dean of Christ Church, used to say, more than two hundred years ago, that there were people whose whole religion seemed to consist in going about complaining of their own corruptions, and telling everyone that they could do nothing of themselves. I am afraid that after two centuries the same thing might be said with truth of some of Christ's professing people in this day. I know there are texts in Scripture which warrant such complaints. I do not object to them when they come from men who walk in the steps of the Apostle Paul, and fight a good fight, as he did, against sin, the devil, and the world. But I never like such complaints when I see ground for suspecting, as I often do, that they are only a cloak to cover spiritual laziness, and an excuse for spiritual sloth. If we say with Paul, "O wretched man that I am," let us also be able to say with him, "I press toward the mark." Let us not quote his example in one thing, while we do not follow him in another. (Rom. vii. 24; Philip, iii. 14.)

I do not set up myself to be better than other people, and if anyone asks, "What are you, that you write in this way?" I answer, "I am a very poor creature indeed." But I say that I cannot read the Bible without desiring to see many believers more spiritual, more holy, more single-eyed, more heavenly-minded, more whole-hearted than they are in the nineteenth century. I want to see among believers more of a pilgrim spirit, a more decided separation from the world, a conversation more evidently in heaven, a closer walk with God—and therefore I have written as I have.

Is it not true that we need a higher standard of personal holiness in this day? Where is our patience? Where is our zeal? Where is our love? Where are our works? Where is the power of religion to be seen, as it was in times gone by? Where is that unmistakable tone which used to distinguish the saints of old, and shake the world? Verily our silver has become dross, our wine mixed with water, and our salt has very little savour. We are all

more than half asleep. The night is far spent, and the day is at hand. Let us awake, and sleep no more. Let us open our eyes more widely than we have done hitherto." Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us."—" Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and perfect holiness in the fear of God."—(Heb. xii. i; 2 Cor. vii. i.)" Did Christ die," says Owen," and shall sin live? Was He crucified in the world, and shall our affections to the world be quick and lively? Oh, where is the spirit of him, who by the cross of Christ was crucified to the world, and the world to him!"

XII. Let me, in the last place, offer a *-word of advice to all who desire to be holy.*

Would you be holy? Would you become a new creature? Then you must *begin with Christ*. You will do just nothing at all, and make no progress till you feel your sin and weakness, and flee to Him. He is the root and beginning of all holiness, and the way to be holy is to come to Him by faith and be joined to Him. Christ is not wisdom and righteousness only to His people, but sanctification also. Men sometimes try to make themselves holy first of all, and sad work they make of it. They toil and labour, and turn over new leaves, and make many changes; and yet, like the woman with the issue of blood, before she came to Christ, they feel" nothing bettered, but rather worse." (Mark v. 26.) They run in vain, and labour in vain; and little wonder, for they are beginning at the wrong end. They are building up a wall of sand; their work runs down as fast as they throw it up. They are baling water out of a leaky vessel: the leak gains on them, not they on the leak. Other foundation of" holiness" can no man lay than that which Paul laid, even Christ Jesus." Without Christ we can do nothing." (John xv. 5.) It is a strong but true saying of Traill's," Wisdom out of Christ is damning folly—righteousness out of Christ is guilt and condemnation—sanctification out of Christ is filth and sin—redemption out of Christ is bondage and slavery."

Do you want to attain holiness? Do you feel this day a real hearty desire to be holy? Would you be a partaker of the Divine nature? Then *go to Christ*. Wait for nothing. Wait for nobody. Linger not. Think not to make yourself ready. Go and say to Him, in the words of that beautiful hymn—

"Nothing in my hand I bring,  
Simply to Thy cross I cling;  
Naked, flee to Thee for dress;  
Helpless, look to Thee for grace."

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There is not a brick nor a stone laid in the work of our sanctification till we go to Christ. Holiness is His special gift to His believing people. Holiness is the work He carries on in their hearts, by the Spirit whom He puts within them. He is appointed a "Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance" as well as remission of sins.—"To as many as receive Him, He gives power to become sons of God." (Acts v. 31; John i. 12, 13.) Holiness comes not of blood—parents cannot give it to their children: nor yet of the will of the flesh—man cannot produce it in himself: nor yet of the will of man—ministers cannot give it you by baptism. Holiness comes from Christ. It is the result of vital union with Him, It is the fruit of being a living branch of the True Vine. Go then to Christ and say, "Lord, not only save me from the guilt of sin, but send the Spirit, whom Thou didst promise, and save me from its power. Make me holy. Teach me to do Thy will."

Would you continue holy? Then *abide in Christ*. He says Himself, "Abide in Me and I in you,—he that abideth in Me and I in him, the same beareth much fruit. (John xv. 4, 5.) It pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell—a full supply for all a believer's wants. He is the Physician to whom you must daily go, if you would keep well. He is the Manna which you must daily eat, and the Rock of which you must daily drink. His arm is the arm on which you must daily lean, as you come up out of the wilderness of this world. You must not only be rooted, you must also be *built up* in Him. Paul was a man of God indeed—a holy man—a growing, thriving Christian—and what was the secret of it all? He was one to whom Christ was "all in all." He was ever "looking unto Jesus." "I can do all things," he says, "through Christ which strengthened! me." "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. The life that I now live, I live by the faith of the Son of God." Let us go and do likewise. (Heb. xii. 2; Phil. iv. 13; Gal. ii. 20.)

May all who read these pages know these things by experience, and not by hearsay only. May we all feel the importance of holiness, far more than we have ever done yet! May our years be *holy years* with our souls, and then they will be happy ones! Whether we live, may we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, may we die unto the Lord; or if He comes for us, may we be found in peace, without spot, and blameless!

## IV

# THE FIGHT

*“Fight the good fight of faith”*—i TIMOTHY vi. 12.

IT is a curious fact that there is no subject about which most people feel such deep interest as” fighting.” Young men and maidens, old men and little children, high and low, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, all feel a deep interest in wars, battles and fighting.

This is a simple fact, whatever way we may try to explain it. We should call that Englishman a dull fellow who cared nothing about the story of Waterloo, or Inkermann, or Balaclava or Lucknow. We should think that heart cold and stupid which was not moved and thrilled by the struggles at Sedan and Strasburg, and Metz, and Paris, during the war between France and Germany.

But there is another warfare of far greater importance than any war that was ever waged by man. It is a warfare which concerns not two or three nations only, but every Christian man and woman born into the world. The warfare I speak of is the *spiritual* warfare. It is the fight which everyone who would be saved must fight about his soul.

This warfare, I am aware, is a thing of which many know nothing. Talk to them about it, and they are ready to set you down as a madman, an enthusiast, or a fool. And yet it is as real and true as any war the world has ever seen. It has its hand-to-hand conflicts and its wounds. It has its watchings and fatigues. It has its sieges and assaults. It has its victories and its defeats. Above all, it has *consequences* which are awful, tremendous, and most peculiar. In earthly warfare the consequences to nations are often temporary and remediable. In the spiritual warfare it is very different. Of that warfare, the consequences, when the fight is over, are unchangeable and eternal.

It is of this warfare that St. Paul spoke to Timothy, when he wrote those burning words,” Fight the good fight of faith; lay hold on eternal life.” It is of this warfare that I propose to speak in this paper. I hold the subject to be closely connected with that of sanctification and holiness. He that would understand the nature

of true holiness must know that the Christian is” a man of war.” If we would be holy we must fight.

I. The first thing I have to say is this: *True Christianity is a fight.*

True Christianity! Let us mind that word” true.” There is a vast quantity of religion current in the world which is not true, genuine Christianity. It passes muster; it satisfies sleepy consciences; but it is not good money. It is not the real thing which was called Christianity eighteen hundred years ago. There are thousands of men and women who go to churches and chapels every Sunday, and call themselves Christians. Their names are in the baptismal register. They are reckoned Christians while they live. They are married with a Christian marriage service. They mean to be buried as Christians when they die. But you never see any” fight” about their religion! Of spiritual strife, and exertion, and conflict, and self-denial, and watching, and warring, they know literally nothing at all. Such Christianity may satisfy man, and those who say anything against it may be thought very hard and uncharitable; but it certainly is not the Christianity of the Bible. It is not the religion which the Lord Jesus founded, and His Apostles preached. It is not the religion which produces real holiness. True Christianity is” a fight.”

The true Christian is called to be a soldier, and must behave as such from the day of his conversion to the day of his death. He is not meant to live a life of religious ease, indolence, and security. He must never imagine for a moment that he can sleep and doze along the way to heaven, like one travelling in an easy carriage. If he takes his standard of Christianity from the children of this world, he may be content with such notions; but he will find no countenance for them in the Word of God. If the Bible is the rule of his faith and practice, he will find his course laid down very plainly in this matter. He must” fight.”

With whom is the Christian soldier meant to fight? Not with other Christians. Wretched indeed is that man's idea of religion who fancies that it consists in perpetual controversy! He who is never satisfied unless he is engaged in some strife between church and church, chapel and chapel, sect and sect, faction and faction, party and party, knows nothing yet as he ought to know. No doubt it may be absolutely needful sometimes to appeal to law courts, in order to ascertain the right interpretation of a Church's Articles, and rubrics, and formularies. But, as a general rule, the cause of sin is never so much helped as when Christians waste their strength in quarrelling with one another, and spend their time in petty squabbles.

No, indeed! The principal fight of the Christian is with the world, the flesh, and the devil. These are his never-dying foes. These are the three chief enemies against whom he must wage war. Unless he gets the victory over these three, all other victories are useless and vain. If he had a nature like an angel, and were not a fallen creature, the warfare would not be so essential. But with a corrupt heart, a busy devil, and an ensnaring world, he must either "fight" or be lost.

He must fight *the flesh*. Even after conversion he carries within him a nature prone to evil, and a heart weak and unstable as water. That heart will never be free from imperfection in this world, and it is a miserable delusion to expect it. To keep that heart from going astray, the Lord Jesus bids us "watch and pray." The spirit may be ready, but the flesh is weak. There is need of a daily struggle and a daily wrestling in prayer." I keep under my body," cries St. Paul, "and bring it into subjection."—"I see a law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity."—"O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"—"They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."—"Mortify your members which are upon the earth." (Mark xiv. 38; i Cor. ix, 27; Rom. vii. 23, 24; Gal. v. 24; Coloss. iii. 5.)

He must fight *the world*. The subtle influence of that mighty enemy must be daily resisted, and without a daily battle can never be overcome. The love of the world's good things—the fear of the world's laughter or blame—the secret desire to keep in with the world—the secret wish to do as others in the world do, and not to run into extremes—all these are spiritual foes which beset the Christian continually on his way to heaven, and must be conquered." The friendship of the world is enmity with God: whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."—"If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."—"The world is crucified to Me, and I unto the world."—"Whosoever is born of God overcometh the world."—"Be not conformed to this world." (James iv. 4; i John ii. 15; Gal. vi. 14; i John v. 4; Rom. xii. 2.)

He must fight *the devil*. That old enemy of mankind is not dead. Ever since the fall of Adam and Eve he has been "going to and fro in the earth, and walking up and down in it," and striving to compass one great end—the ruin of man's soul. Never slumbering and never sleeping, he is always "going about as a lion seeking whom he may devour." An unseen enemy, he is always near us, about our path and about our bed, and spying out all our ways. A "murderer and a liar" from the beginning, he labours night and day to cast us down to hell. Sometimes by leading into super-

stition, sometimes by suggesting infidelity, sometimes by one kind of tactics and sometimes by another, he is always carrying on a campaign against our souls." Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat." This mighty adversary must be daily resisted if we wish to be saved. But" this kind goeth not out" but by watching and praying, and fighting, and putting on the whole armour of God. The strong man armed will never be kept out of our hearts without a daily battle. (Job i. 7; i Peter v. 8; John viii. 44; Luke xxii. 31; Ephes. vi. ii.)

Some men may think these statements too strong. You fancy that I am going too far, and laying on the colours too thickly. You are secretly saying to yourself, that men and women in England may surely get to heaven without all this trouble and warfare and fighting. Listen to me for a few minutes and I will show you that I have something to say on God's behalf. Remember the maxim of the wisest General that ever lived in England—" In time of war it is the worst mistake to underrate your enemy, and try to make a little war." This Christian warfare is no light matter. Give me your attention and consider what I say. What saith the Scripture?—" Fight the good fight of faith. Lay hold on eternal life. —" Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."—" Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the ruler of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand."—" Strive to enter in at the strait gate."—" Labour for the meat that endureth unto everlasting life."—" Think not that I came to send peace on the earth: I came not to send peace but a sword."—" He that hath no sword let him sell his garment and buy one."—" Watch ye, stand fast in the faith: quit you like men, be strong."—" War a good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience." (i Tim. vi. 12; 2 Tim. ii. 3; Ephes. vi. 11-13; Luke xiii. 24; John vi. 27; Matt. x. 34; Luke xxii. 36; i Cor. xvi. 13; i Tim. i. 18, 19.) Words such as these appear to me clear, plain, and unmistakable. They all teach one and the same great lesson, if we are willing to receive it. That lesson is, that true Christianity is a struggle, a fight, and a warfare. He that pretends to condemn" fighting" and teaches that we ought to sit still and" yield ourselves to God," appears to me to misunderstand his Bible, and to make a great mistake.

What says the Baptismal Service of the Church of England? No doubt that Service is uninspired, and, like every uninspired composition, it has its defects; but to the millions of people all

over the globe, who profess and call themselves English Churchmen, its voice ought to speak with some weight. And what does it say? It tells us that over every new member who is admitted into the Church of England the following words are used—"I baptize thee in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."—"I sign this child with the sign of the cross, in token that hereafter he shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully *to fight* under His banner against sin, the world, and the devil, and to continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto his life's end."—Of course we all know that in myriads of cases baptism is a mere form, and that parents bring their children to the font without faith or prayer or thought, and consequently receive no blessing. The man who supposes that baptism in such cases acts *mechanically*, like a medicine, and that godly and ungodly, praying and prayerless parents, all alike get the same benefit for their children, must be in a strange state of mind. But one thing, at any rate, is very certain. Every baptized Churchman is by his profession a "soldier of Jesus Christ," and is pledged "to fight under His banner against sin, the world, and the devil." He that doubts it had better take up his Prayer-book, and read, mark, and learn its contents. The worst thing about many very zealous Churchmen is their total ignorance of what their own Prayer-book contains.

Whether we are Churchmen or not, one thing is certain—this Christian warfare is a great reality, and a subject of vast importance. It is not a matter like Church government and ceremonial, about which men may differ, and yet reach heaven at last. Necessity is laid upon us. We must fight. There are no promises in the Lord Jesus Christ's Epistles to the Seven Churches, except to those who "overcome." Where there is grace there will be conflict. The believer is a soldier. There is no holiness without a warfare. Saved souls will always be found to have fought a fight.

It is a fight of *absolute necessity*. Let us not think that in this war we can remain neutral and sit still. Such a line of action may be possible in the strife of nations, but it is utterly impossible in that conflict which concerns the soul. The boasted policy of non-interference—the "masterly inactivity" which pleases so many statesmen—the plan of keeping quiet and letting things alone—all this will never do in the Christian warfare. Here at any rate no one can escape serving under the plea that he is a man of peace." To be at peace with the world, the flesh and the devil, is to be at enmity with God, and in the broad way that leadeth to destruction. We have no choice or option. We must either fight or be lost.

It is a fight of *universal necessity*. No rank, or class, or age, can

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plead exemption, or escape the battle. Ministers and people, preachers and hearers, old and young, high and low, rich and poor, gentle and simple, kings and subjects, landlords and tenants, learned and unlearned—all alike must carry arms and go to war. All have by nature a *heart* full of pride, unbelief, sloth, worldliness, and sin. All are living in a *world* beset with snares, traps, and pitfalls for the soul. All have near them a busy, restless, malicious *devil*. All, from the queen in her palace down to the pauper in the workhouse, all must fight, if they would be saved.

It is a fight of *perpetual necessity*. It admits of no breathing time, no armistice, no truce. On week-days as well as on Sundays—in private as well as in public—at home by the family fireside as well as abroad—in little things like management of tongue and temper, as well as in great ones like the government of kingdoms—the Christian's warfare must unceasingly go on. The foe we have to do with keeps no holidays, never slumbers, and never sleeps. So long as we have breath in our bodies we must keep on our armour, and remember we are on an enemy's ground." Even on the brink of Jordan," said a dying saint, "I find Satan nibbling at my heels." We must fight till we die.

Let us consider well these propositions. Let us take care that our own personal religion is real, genuine, and true. The saddest symptom about many so-called Christians is the utter absence of anything like conflict and fight in their Christianity. They eat, they drink, they dress, they work, they amuse themselves, they get money, they spend money, they go through a scanty round of formal religious services once or twice every week. But the great spiritual warfare—its watchings and strugglings, its agonies and anxieties, its battles and contests—of all this they appear to know nothing at all. Let us take care that this case is not our own. The worst state of soul is "when the strong man armed keepeth the house, and his goods are at peace"—when he leads men and women" captive at his will," and they make no resistance. The worst chains are those which are neither felt nor seen by the prisoner. (Luke xi. 21; 2 Tim. ii. 26.)

We may take comfort about our souls if we know anything of an inward fight and conflict. It is the invariable companion of genuine Christian holiness. It is not everything, I am well aware, but it is something. Do we find in our heart of hearts a spiritual struggle? Do we feel anything of the flesh lusting against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh, so that we cannot do the things we would? (Gal. v. 17.) Are we conscious of two principles within us, contending for the mastery? Do we feel anything of war in our inward man? Well, let us thank God for it! It is a good sign. It is strongly probable evidence of the

great work of sanctification. All true saints are soldiers. Anything is better than apathy, stagnation, deadness, and indifference. We are in a better state than many. The most part of so-called Christians have no feeling at all. We are evidently no friends of Satan. Like the kings of this world, he wars not against his own subjects. The very fact that he assaults us should fill our minds with hope. I say again, let us take comfort. The child of God has two great marks about him, and of these two we have one. HE MAY BE KNOWN BY HIS INWARD WARFARE, AS WELL AS BY HIS INWARD PEACE.

II. I pass on to the second thing which I have to say in handling my subject: *True Christianity is the fight of faith.*

In this respect the Christian warfare is utterly unlike the conflicts of this world. It does not depend on the strong arm, the quick eye, or the swift foot. It is not waged with carnal weapons, but with spiritual. Faith is the hinge on which victory turns. Success depends entirely on believing.

A *general faith in the truth of God's written Word* is the primary foundation of the Christian soldier's character. He is what he is, does what he does, thinks as he thinks, acts as he acts, hopes as he hopes, behaves as he behaves, for one simple reason—he believes certain propositions revealed and laid down in Holy Scripture.” He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.” (Heb. xi. 5.)

A religion without doctrine or dogma is a thing which many are fond of talking of in the present day. It sounds very fine at first. It looks very pretty at a distance. But the moment we sit down to examine and consider it, we shall find it a simple impossibility. We might as well talk of a body without bones and sinews. No man will ever be anything or do anything in religion, unless he believes *something*. Even those who profess to hold the miserable and uncomfortable views of the Deists are obliged to confess that they believe something. With all their bitter sneers against dogmatic theology and Christian credulity, as they call it, they themselves have a kind of faith.

As for true Christians, faith is the very backbone of their spiritual existence. No one ever fights earnestly against the world, the flesh and the devil, unless he has engraven on his heart certain great principles which he believes. What they are he may hardly know, and may certainly not be able to define or write down. But there they are, and, consciously or unconsciously, they form the roots of his religion. Wherever you see a man, whether rich or poor, learned or unlearned, wrestling manfully with sin, and trying to overcome it, you may be sure there are certain great principles

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which that man believes. The poet who wrote the famous lines:

“For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight, He  
can't be wrong whose life is in the right,”

was a clever man, but a poor divine. There is no such thing as right living without faith and believing.

*A special faith in our Lord Jesus Christ's person, work and office, is the life, heart, and mainspring of the Christian soldier's character.*

He sees by faith an unseen Saviour, who loved him, gave Himself for him, paid his debts for him, bore his sins, carried his transgressions, rose again for him, and appears in heaven for him as his Advocate at the right hand of God. He sees Jesus, and clings to Him. Seeing this Saviour and trusting in Him, he feels peace and hope, and willingly does battle against the foes of his soul.

He sees his own many sins—his weak heart, a tempting world, a busy devil; and if he looked only at them he might well despair. But he sees also a mighty Saviour, an interceding Saviour, a sympathizing Saviour—His blood, His righteousness, His everlasting priesthood—and he believes that all this is his own. He sees Jesus, and casts his whole weight on Him. Seeing Him he cheerfully fights on, with a full confidence that he will prove “more than conqueror through Him that loved him.” (Rom. viii. 37.)

*Habitual lively faith in Christ's presence and readiness to help is the secret of the Christian soldier fighting successfully.*

It must never be forgotten that faith admits of degrees. All men do not believe alike, and even the same person has his ebbs and flows of faith, and believes more heartily at one time than another. According to the degree of his faith the Christian fights well or ill, wins victories, or suffers occasional repulses, comes off triumphant, or loses a battle. He that has most faith will always be the happiest and most comfortable soldier. Nothing makes the anxieties of warfare sit so lightly on a man as the assurance of Christ's love and continual protection. Nothing enables him to bear the fatigue of watching, struggling, and wrestling against sin, like the indwelling confidence that Christ is on his side and success is sure. It is the “shield of faith” which quenches all the fiery darts of the wicked one.—It is the man who can say, “I know whom I have believed”—who can say in time of suffering, “I am not ashamed.”—He who wrote those glowing words, “We faint not,” —“Our light affliction which endureth but for a moment worketh in us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory”—was the man who wrote with the same pen, “We look not at the things

which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”—It is the man who said, “I live by the faith of the Son of God,” who said, in the same Epistle, “the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.”—It is the man who said, “To me to live is Christ,” who said, in the same Epistle, “I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content.”—“I can do all things through Christ.”—The more faith the more victory! The more faith the more inward peace! (Eph. vi. 16; 2 Tim. i. 12; 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18; Gal. ii. 20; vi. 14; Phil. i. 21; iv. n, 13.)

I think it impossible to overrate the value and importance of faith. Well may the Apostle Peter call it “precious.” (2 Pet. i. i.) Time would fail me if I tried to recount a hundredth part of the victories which by faith Christian soldiers have obtained.

Let us take down our Bibles and read with attention the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Let us mark the long list of worthies whose names are thus recorded, from Abel down to Moses, even before Christ was born of the Virgin Mary, and brought life and immortality into full light by the Gospel. Let us note well what battles they won against the world, the flesh, and the devil. And then let us remember that *believing* did it all. These men looked forward to the promised Messiah. They saw Him that is invisible.” By faith the elders obtained a good report.” (Heb. xi. 2-27.)

Let us turn to the pages of early Church history. Let us see how the primitive Christians held fast their religion even unto death, and were not shaken by the fiercest persecutions of heathen Emperors. For centuries there were never wanting men like Polycarp and Ignatius, who were ready to die rather than deny Christ. Fines, and prisons, and torture, and fire, and sword, were unable to crush the spirit of the noble army of martyrs. The whole power of imperial Rome, the mistress of the world, proved unable to stamp out the religion which began with a few fishermen and publicans in Palestine! And then let us remember that *believing* in an unseen Jesus was the Church's strength. They won their victory by faith.

Let us examine the story of the Protestant Reformation. Let us study the lives of its leading champions—Wycliffe, and Huss, and Luther, and Ridley, and Latimer, and Hooper. Let us mark how these gallant soldiers of Christ stood firm against a host of adversaries, and were ready to die for their principles. What battles they fought! What controversies they maintained! What contradiction they endured! What tenacity of purpose they exhibited against a world in arms! And then let us remember

that *believing* in an unseen Jesus was the secret of their strength. They overcame by faith.

Let us consider the men who have made the greatest marks in Church history in the last hundred years. Let us observe how men like Wesley, and Whitfield, and Venn, and Romaine, stood alone in their day and generation, and revived English religion in the face of opposition from men high in office, and in the face of slander, ridicule, and persecution from nine-tenths of professing Christians in our land. Let us observe how men like William Wilberforce, and Havelock, and Hedley Vicars, have witnessed for Christ in the most difficult positions, and displayed a banner for Christ even at the regimental mess-table, or on the floor of the House of Commons. Let us mark how these noble witnesses never flinched to the end, and won the respect even of their worst adversaries. And then let us remember that *believing* in an unseen Christ is the key to all their characters. By faith they lived, and walked, and stood, and overcame.

Would anyone live the life of a Christian soldier? Let him pray for faith. It is the gift of God; and a gift which those who ask shall never ask for in vain. You must believe before you do. If men do nothing in religion, it is because they do not believe. Faith is the first step toward heaven.

Would anyone fight the fight of a Christian soldier successfully and prosperously? Let him pray for a continual increase of faith. Let him abide in Christ, get closer to Christ, tighten his hold on Christ every day that he lives. Let his daily prayer be that of the disciples—"Lord, increase my faith." (Luke xvii. 5.) Watch jealously over your faith, if you have any. It is the citadel of the Christian character, on which the safety of the whole fortress depends. It is the point which Satan loves to assail. All lies at his mercy if faith is overthrown. Here, if we love life, we must especially stand on our guard.

III. The last thing I have to say is this: *True Christianity is a good fight.*

"Good" is a curious word to apply to any warfare. All worldly war is more or less evil. No doubt it is an absolute necessity in many cases—to procure the liberty of nations, to prevent the weak from being trampled down by the strong—but still it is an evil. It entails an awful amount of bloodshed and suffering. It hurries into eternity myriads who are completely unprepared for their change. It calls forth the worst passions of man. It causes enormous waste and destruction of property. It fills peaceful homes with mourning widows and orphans. It spreads far and

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wide poverty, taxation, and national distress. It disarranges all the order of society. It interrupts the work of the Gospel and the growth of Christian missions. In short, war is an immense and incalculable evil, and every praying man should cry night and day," Give peace in our time." And yet there is one warfare which is emphatically "good," and one fight in which there is no evil. That warfare is the Christian warfare. That fight is the fight of the soul.

Now what are the reasons why the Christian fight is a "good fight"? What are the points in which his warfare is superior to the warfare of this world? Let me examine this matter, and open it out in order. I dare not pass the subject and leave it unnoticed. I want no one to begin the life of a Christian soldier without counting the cost. I would not keep back from anyone that if he would be holy and see the Lord he must fight, and that the Christian fight though spiritual is real and severe. It needs courage, boldness, and perseverance. But I want my readers to know that there is abundant encouragement, if they will only begin the battle. The Scripture does not call the Christian fight "a good fight" without reason and cause. Let me try to show what I mean.

(a) The Christian's fight is good *because fought under the best of generals*. The Leader and Commander of all believers is our Divine Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ—a Saviour of perfect wisdom, infinite love, and almighty power. The Captain of our salvation never fails to lead His soldiers to victory. He never makes any useless movements, never errs in judgment, never commits any mistake. His eye is on all His followers, from the greatest of them even to the least. The humblest servant in His army is not forgotten. The weakest and most sickly is cared for, remembered, and kept unto salvation. The souls whom He has purchased and redeemed with His own blood are far too precious to be wasted and thrown away. Surely this is good!

(b) The Christian's fight is good, *because fought with the best of helps*. Weak as each believer is in himself, the Holy Spirit dwells in him, and his body is a temple of the Holy Ghost. Chosen by God the Father, washed in the blood of the Son, renewed by the Spirit, he does not go a warfare at his own charges, and is never alone. God the Holy Ghost daily teaches, leads, guides, and directs him. God the Father guards him by His almighty power. God the Son intercedes for him every moment, like Moses on the mount, while he is fighting in the valley below. A threefold cord like this can never be broken! His daily provisions and supplies never fail. His commissariat is never defective. His bread and his water are sure. Weak as he seems in himself, like a worm,

he is strong in the Lord to do great exploits. Surely this is good!

(c) The Christian fight is a good fight, *because fought with the best of promises*. To every believer belong exceeding great and precious promises —all Yea and Amen in Christ —promises sure to be fulfilled, because made by One who cannot lie, and has power as well as will to keep His word.” Sin shall not have dominion over you.” —” The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.”—”He that has begun a good work will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.”—” When thou passeth through the waters I will be with thee, and through the floods, they shall not overflow thee.”—” My sheep shall never perish, neither shall anyone pluck them out of my hand.”—” Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out.”—” I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” —” I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor things present, nor things to come, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus.” (Rom. vi. 14; Rom. xvi. 20; Philip, i. 6; Isa. xliii. 2; John x. 28; John vi. 37; Heb. xiii. 5; Rom. viii. 38.) Words like these are worth their weight in gold I Who does not know that promises of coming aid have cheered the defenders of besieged cities, like Lucknow, and raised them above their natural strength? Have we never heard that the promise of” help before night” had much to say to the mighty victory of Waterloo? Yet all such promises are as nothing compared to the rich treasure of believers, the eternal promises of God. Surely this is good!

(d) The Christian's fight is a good fight, *because fought with the best of issues and results*. No doubt it is a war in which there are tremendous struggles, agonizing conflicts, wounds, bruises, watchings, fastings, and fatigue. But still every believer, without exception, is” more than conqueror through Him that loved him.” (Rom. viii. 37.) No soldiers of Christ are ever lost, missing, or left dead on the battlefield. No mourning will ever need to be put on, and no tears to be shed for either private or officer in the army of Christ. The muster roll, when the last evening comes, will be found precisely the same that it was in the morning. The English Guards marched out of London to the Crimean campaign a magnificent body of men; but many of the gallant fellows laid their bones in a foreign grave, and never saw London again. Far different shall be the arrival of the Christian army in” the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” (Heb. xi. 10.) Not one shall be found lacking. The words of our great Captain shall be found true:” Of them which Thou hast given Me I have lost none.” (John xviii. 9.) Surely this is good!

(e) The Christian's fight is good, *because it does good to the soul of*

*him that fights it.* All other wars have a bad, lowering, and demoralising tendency. They call forth the worst passions of the human mind. They harden the conscience, and sap the foundations of religion and morality. The Christian warfare alone tends to call forth the best things that are left in man. It promotes humility and charity, it lessens selfishness and worldliness, it induces men to set their affections on things above. The old, the sick, the dying, are never known to repent of fighting Christ's battles against sin, the world, and the devil. Their only regret is that they did not begin to serve Christ long before. The experience of that eminent saint, Philip Henry, does not stand alone. In his last days he said to his family, "I take you all to record that a life spent in the service of Christ is the happiest life that a man can spend upon earth." Surely this is good!

(f) The Christian's fight is a good fight, *because it does good to the world.* All other wars have a devastating, ravaging, and injurious effect. The march of an army through a land is an awful scourge to the inhabitants. Wherever it goes it impoverishes, wastes, and does harm. Injury to persons, property, feelings, and morals invariably accompanies it. Far different are the effects produced by Christian soldiers. Wherever they live they are a blessing. They raise the standard of religion and morality. They invariably check the progress of drunkenness. Sabbath-breaking, profligacy, and dishonesty. Even their enemies are obliged to respect them. Go where you please, you will rarely find that barracks and garrisons do good to the neighbourhood. But go where you please, you will find that the presence of a few true Christians is a blessing. Surely this is good!

(g) Finally, the Christian's fight is good, *because it ends in a glorious reward for all who fight it.* Who can tell the wages that Christ will pay to all His faithful people? Who can estimate the good things that our Divine Captain has laid up for those who confess Him before men? A grateful country can give to her successful warriors medals, Victoria Crosses, pensions, peerages, honours, and titles. But it can give nothing that will last and endure for ever, nothing that can be carried beyond the grave. Palaces like Blenheim and Strathfield say can only be enjoyed for a few years. The bravest generals and soldiers must go down one day before the King of Terrors. Better, far better, is the position of him who fights under Christ's banner against sin, the world, and the devil. He may get little praise of man while he lives, and go down to the grave with little honour; but he shall have that which is far better, because far more enduring. He shall have "a crown of glory that fadeth not away." (i Pet. v. 4.) Surely this is good!

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Let us settle it in our minds that the Christian fight is a good fight—really good, truly good, emphatically good. We see only part of it as yet. We see the struggle, but not the end; we see the campaign, but not the reward; we see the cross, but not the crown. We see a few humble, broken-spirited, penitent, praying people, enduring hardships and despised by the world; but we see not the hand of God over them, the face of God smiling on them, the kingdom of glory prepared for them. These things are yet to be revealed. Let us not judge by appearances. There are more good things about the Christian warfare than we see.

And now let me conclude my whole subject with a few words of practical application. Our lot is cast in times when the world seems thinking of little else but battles and fighting. The iron is entering into the soul of more than one nation, and the mirth of many a fair district is clean gone. Surely in times like these a minister may fairly call on men to remember their spiritual warfare. Let me say a few parting words about the great fight of the soul.

(i) It may be *you are struggling hard for the rewards of this world*. Perhaps you are straining every nerve to obtain money, or place, or power, or pleasure. If that be your case, take care. Your sowing will lead to a crop of bitter disappointment. Unless you mind what you are about your latter end will be to lie down in sorrow.

Thousands have trodden the path you are pursuing, and have awoke too late to find it end in misery and eternal ruin. They have fought hard for wealth, and honour, and office, and promotion, and turned their backs on God, and Christ, and heaven, and the world to come. And what has their end been? Often, far too often, they have found out that their whole life has been a grand mistake. They have tasted by bitter experience the feelings of the dying statesman who cried aloud in his last hours," The battle is fought: the battle is fought: but the victory is not won."

For your own happiness' sake resolve this day to join the Lord's side. Shake off your past carelessness and unbelief. Come out from the ways of a thoughtless, unreasoning world. Take up the cross, and become a good soldier of Christ." Fight the good fight of faith," that you may be happy as well as safe.

Think what the children of this world will often do for liberty, without any religious principle. Remember how Greeks, and Romans, and Swiss, and Tyrolese, have endured the loss of all things, and even life itself, rather than bend their necks to a foreign yoke. Let their example provoke you to emulation. If men can do so much for a corruptible crown, how much more should you do for one which is incorruptible! Awake to a sense of the misery of being a slave. For life, and happiness, and liberty, arise and fight.

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Fear not to begin and enlist under Christ's banner. The great Captain of your salvation rejects none that come to Him. Like David in the cave of Adullam, He is ready to receive all who apply to Him, however unworthy they may feel themselves. None who repent and believe are too bad to be enrolled in the ranks of Christ's army. All who come to Him by faith are admitted, clothed, armed, trained, and finally led on to complete victory. Fear not to begin this very day. There is yet room for you.

Fear not to go on fighting, if you once enlist. The more thorough and whole-hearted you are as a soldier, the more comfortable will you find your warfare. No doubt you will often meet with trouble, fatigue, and hard fighting, before your warfare is accomplished. But let none of these things move you. Greater is He that is for you than all they that be against you. Everlasting liberty or everlasting captivity are the alternatives before you. Choose liberty, and fight to the last.

(2) *It may be you know something of the Christian warfare, and are a tried and proved soldier already.* If that be your case, accept a parting word of advice and encouragement from a fellow-soldier. Let me speak to myself as well as to you. Let us stir up our minds by way of remembrance. There are some things which we cannot remember too well.

Let us remember that if we would fight successfully we must put on the whole armour of God, and never lay it aside till we die. Not a single piece of the armour can be dispensed with. The girdle of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shield of faith, the sword of the Spirit, the helmet of hope—each and all are needful. Not a single day can we dispense with any part of this armour. Well says an old veteran in Christ's army, who died 200 years ago," In heaven we shall appear, not in armour, but in robes of glory. But here our arms are to be worn night and day. We must walk, work, sleep in them, or else we are not true soldiers of Christ." (Gurnall's *Christian Armour*.)

Let us remember the solemn words of an inspired warrior, who went to his rest 1,800 years ago: "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." (2 Tim. ii. 4.) May we never forget that saying!

Let us remember that some have seemed good soldiers for a little season, and talked loudly of what they would do, and yet turned back disgracefully in the day of battle.

Let us never forget Balaam, and Judas, and Demas, and Lot's wife. Whatever we are, and however weak, let us be real, genuine, true, and sincere.

Let us remember that the eye of our loving Saviour is upon

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us, morning, noon, and night. He will never suffer us to be tempted above that we are able to bear. He can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, for He suffered Himself being tempted. He knows what battles and conflicts are, for He Himself was assaulted by the Prince of this world. Having such a High Priest, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. (Heb. iv. 14.)

Let us remember that thousands of soldiers before us have fought the same battle that we are fighting, and come off more than conquerors through Him that loved them. They overcame by the blood of the Lamb; and so also may we. Christ's arm is quite as strong as ever, and Christ's heart is just as loving as ever. He that saved men and women before us is one who never changes. He is "able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him." Then let us cast doubts and fears away. Let us "follow them who through faith and patience inherit the promises," and are waiting for us to join them. (Heb. vii. 25; vi. 12.)

Finally, let us remember that the time is short, and the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. A few more battles and the last trumpet shall sound, and the Prince of Peace shall come to reign on a renewed earth. A few more struggles and conflicts, and then we shall bid an eternal good-bye to warfare, and to sin, to sorrow, and to death. Then let us fight on to the last, and never surrender. Thus saith the Captain of our salvation—"He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." (Rev. xxi. 7.)

Let me conclude all with the words of John Bunyan, in one of the most beautiful parts of *Pilgrim's Progress*. He is describing the end of one of his best and holiest pilgrims:—

"After this it was noised abroad that Mr. Valiant-for-truth was sent for by a summons, by the same party as the others. And he had this word for a token that the summons was true, 'The pitcher was broken at the fountain.' (Eccl. xii. 6.) When he understood it, he called for his friends, and told them of it. Then said he, "I am going to my Father's house; and though with great difficulty I have got hither, yet now I do not repent me of all the troubles I have been at to arrive where I am. My sword I give to him that shall succeed me in my pilgrimage, and my courage and skill to him that can get it. My marks and scars I carry with me, to be a witness for me that I have fought His battles, who will now be my rewarder.' When the day that he must go home was come, many accompanied him to the river-side, into which, as he went down, he said, "O death where is thy sting?" And as he went down deeper, he cried, "O grave, where is thy victory? 'So he passed over, and all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side."

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May our end be like this! May we never forget that without fighting there can be no holiness while we live, and no crown of glory when we die!

# V

## THE COST

“Which of you intending to build a house, sitteth not down first and counteth the cost?”—LUKE xiv. 28.

THE text which heads this page is one of great importance. Few are the people who are not often obliged to ask themselves—  
” What does it cost?”

In buying property, in building houses, in furnishing rooms, in forming plans, in changing dwellings, in educating children, it is wise and prudent to look forward and consider. Many would save themselves much sorrow and trouble if they would only remember the question—” What does it cost?”

But there is one subject on which it is specially important to” count the cost.” That subject is the salvation of our souls. What does it cost to be a true Christian? What does it cost to be a really holy man? This, after all, is the grand question. For want of thought about this, thousands, after seeming to begin well, turn away from the road to heaven, and are lost for ever in hell. Let me try to say a few words which may throw light on the subject.

I. I will show, firstly, *what it costs to be a true Christian.*

II. I will explain, secondly, *why it is of such great importance to count the cost.*

III. I will give, in the last place, *some hints which may help men to count the cost rightly,*

We are living in strange times. Events are hurrying on with singular rapidity. We never know” what a day may bring forth”; how much less do we know what may happen in a year!—We live in a day of great religious profession. Scores of professing Christians in every part of the land are expressing a desire for more holiness and a higher degree of spiritual life. Yet nothing is more common than to see people receiving the Word with joy, and then after two or three years falling away, and going back to their sins. They had not considered” what it costs” to be a really consistent believer and holy Christian. Surely these are times when we ought often to sit down and “count the cost,” and to consider the state of our souls. We must mind what we are about. If we desire to be truly holy, it is a good sign. We may thank God for putting the desire into our hearts. But still the cost ought to be counted. No doubt Christ's way to eternal life is a way of pleasantness. But it is folly to shut our eyes to the fact that His way is narrow, and the cross comes before the crown.

I. I have, first, to show *what it costs to be a true Christian*.

Let there be no mistake about my meaning. I am not examining what it costs to save a Christian's soul. I know well that it costs nothing less than the blood of the Son of God to provide an atonement, and to redeem man from hell. The price paid for our redemption was nothing less than the death of Jesus Christ on Calvary. We "are bought with a price." "Christ gave Himself a ransom for all." (i Cor. vi. 20; i Tim. ii. 6.) But all this is wide of the question. The point I want to consider is another one altogether. It is what a man must be *ready to give up* if he wishes to be saved. It is the amount of sacrifice a man must submit to if he intends to serve Christ. It is in this sense that I raise the question, "What does it cost?" And I believe firmly that it is a most important one.

I grant freely that it costs little to be a mere outward Christian. A man has only got to attend a place of worship twice on Sunday, and to be tolerably moral during the week, and he has gone as far as thousands around him ever go in religion. All this is cheap and easy work: it entails no self-denial or self-sacrifice. If this is saving Christianity, and will take us to heaven when we die, we must alter the description of the way of life, and write, "Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to heaven!"

But it does cost something to be a real Christian, according to the standard of the Bible. There are enemies to be overcome, battles to be fought, sacrifices to be made, an Egypt to be forsaken, a wilderness to be passed through, a cross to be carried, a race to be run. Conversion is not putting a man in an arm-chair and taking him easily to heaven. It is the beginning of a mighty conflict, in which it costs much to win the victory. Hence arises the unspeakable importance of "counting the cost."

Let me try to show precisely and particularly what it costs to be a true Christian. Let us suppose that a man is disposed to take service with Christ, and feels drawn and inclined to follow Him. Let us suppose that some affliction, or some sudden death, or an awakening sermon, has stirred his conscience, and made him feel the value of his soul and desire to be a true Christian. No doubt there is everything to encourage him. His sins may be freely forgiven, however many and great. His heart may be completely changed, however cold and hard. Christ and the Holy Spirit, mercy and grace, are all ready for him. But still he should count the cost. Let us see particularly, one by one, the things that his religion will cost him.

(i) For one thing, it will cost him *his self-righteousness*. He must cast away all pride and high thoughts, and conceit of his own goodness. He must be content to go to heaven as a poor sinner

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saved only by free grace, and owing all to the merit and righteousness of another. He must really feel as well as say the Prayer-book words—that he has” erred and gone astray like a lost sheep,” that he has” left undone the things he ought to have done, and done the things he ought not to have done, and that there is no health in him.” He must be willing to give up all trust in his own morality, respectability, praying, Bible-reading, church-going, and sacrament-receiving, and to trust in nothing but Jesus Christ. Now this sounds hard to some. I do not wonder.” Sir,” said a godly ploughman to the well-known James Hervey, of Weston Favell,” it is harder to deny proud self than sinful self. But it is absolutely necessary.” Let us set down this item first and foremost in our account. To be a true Christian it will cost a man his self-righteousness.

(2) For another thing, it will cost a man *his sins*. He must be willing to give up every habit and practice which is wrong in God's sight. He must set his face against it, quarrel with it, break off from it, fight with it, crucify it, and labour to keep it under, whatever the world around him may say or think. He must do this honestly and fairly. There must be no separate truce with any special sin which he loves. He must count *all* sins as his deadly enemies, and hate *every* false way. Whether little or great, whether open or secret, all his sins must be thoroughly renounced. They may struggle hard with him every day, and sometimes almost get the mastery over him. But he must never give way to them. He must keep up a perpetual war with his sins. It is written—”Cast away from you all your transgressions.”—”Break off thy sins and iniquities.”—”Cease to do evil.”— (Ezek. xviii. 31; Daniel iv. 27; Isa. i. 16.)

This also sounds hard. I do not wonder. Our sins are often as dear to us as our children: we love them, hug them, cleave to them, and delight in them. To part with them is as hard as cutting off a right hand, or plucking out a right eye. But it must be done. The parting must come.” Though wickedness be sweet in the sinner's mouth, though he hide it under his tongue; though he spare it, and forsake it not,” yet it must be given up, if he wishes to be saved. (Job xx. 12, 13.) He and sin must quarrel, if he and God are to be friends. Christ is willing to receive any sinners. But He will not receive them if they will stick to their sins. Let us set down that item second in our account. To be a Christian it will cost a man his sins.

(3) For another thing, it will cost a man *his love of ease*. He must take pains and trouble, if he means to run a successful race towards heaven. He must daily watch and stand on his guard, like a soldier on enemy's ground. He must take heed to his behaviour every hour of the day, in every company, and in every

place, in public as well as in private, among strangers as well as at home. He must be careful over his time, his tongue, his temper, his thoughts, his imagination, his motives, his conduct in every relation of life. He must be diligent about his prayers, his Bible-reading, and his use of Sundays, with all their means of grace. In attending to these things he may come far short of perfection; but there is none of them that he can safely neglect." The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat." (Prov. xiii. 4.)

This also sounds hard. There is nothing we naturally dislike so much as "trouble" about our religion. We hate trouble. We secretly wish we could have a "vicarious" Christianity, and could be good by proxy, and have everything done for us. Anything that requires exertion and labour is entirely against the grain of our hearts. But the soul can have "no gains without pains." Let us set down that item third in our account. To be a Christian it will cost a man his love of ease.

(4) In the last place, it will cost a man *the favour of the world*. He must be content to be thought ill of by man if he pleases God. He must count it no strange thing to be mocked, ridiculed, slandered, persecuted, and even hated. He must not be surprised to find his opinions and practices in religion despised and held up to scorn. He must submit to be thought by many a fool, an enthusiast, and a fanatic—to have his words perverted and his actions misrepresented. In fact, he must not marvel if some call him mad. The Master says—"Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept My saying, they will keep yours also." (John xv. 20.)

I dare say this also sounds hard. We naturally dislike unjust dealing and false charges, and think it very hard to be accused without cause. We should not be flesh and blood if we did not wish to have the good opinion of our neighbours. It is always unpleasant to be spoken against, and forsaken, and lied about, and to stand alone. But there is no help for it. The cup which our Master drank must be drunk by His disciples. They must be "despised and rejected of men." (Isa. liii. 3.) Let us set down that item last in our account. To be a Christian it will cost a man the favour of the world.

Such is the account of what it costs to be a true Christian. I grant the list is a heavy one. But where is the item that could be removed? Bold indeed must that man be who would dare to say that we may keep our self-righteousness, our sins, our laziness, and our love of the world, and yet be saved!

I grant it costs much to be a true Christian. But who in his

sound senses can doubt that it is worth any cost to have the soul saved? When the ship is in danger of sinking, the crew think nothing of casting overboard the precious cargo. When a limb is mortified, a man will submit to any severe operation, and even to amputation, to save life. Surely a Christian should be willing to give up anything which stands between him and heaven. A religion that costs nothing is worth nothing! A cheap Christianity, without a cross, will prove in the end a useless Christianity, without a crown.

II. I have now, in the second place, to explain *why* "counting the cost" is of such great importance to man's soul.

I might easily settle this question by laying down the principle, that no duty enjoined by Christ can ever be neglected without damage. I might show how many shut their eyes throughout life to the nature of saving religion, and refuse to consider what it really costs to be a Christian. I might describe how at last, when life is ebbing away, they wake up, and make a few spasmodic efforts to turn to God. I might tell you how they find to their amazement that repentance and conversion are no such easy matters as they had supposed, and that it costs "a great sum" to be a true Christian. They discover that habits of pride and sinful indulgence, and love of ease, and worldliness, are not so easily laid aside as they had dreamed. And so, after a faint struggle, they give up in despair, and leave the world hopeless, graceless, and unfit to meet God! They had flattered themselves all their days that religion would be easy work when they once took it up seriously. But they open their eyes too late, and discover for the first time that they are ruined because they never "counted the cost."

But there is one class of persons to whom especially I wish to address myself in handling this part of my subject.. It is a large class—an increasing class—and a class which in these days is in peculiar danger. Let me in a few plain words try to describe this class. It deserves our best attention.

The persons I speak of are not thoughtless about religion: they think a good deal about it. They are not ignorant of religion: they know the outlines of it pretty well. But their great defect is that they are not "rooted and grounded" in their faith. Too often they have picked up their knowledge second hand, from being in religious families, or from being trained in religious ways, but have never worked it out by their own inward experience. Too often they have hastily taken up a profession of religion under the pressure of circumstances, from sentimental feelings, from animal excitement, or from a vague desire to do like others around them, but without any solid work of grace in their hearts. Persons like these are in a position of immense danger. They are precisely

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those, if Bible examples are worth anything, who need to be exhorted” to count the cost.”

For want of” counting the cost” myriads of the children of Israel perished miserably in the wilderness between Egypt and Canaan. They left Egypt full of zeal and fervour, as if nothing could stop them. But when they found dangers and difficulties in the way, their courage soon cooled down. They had never reckoned on trouble. They had thought the promised land would be all before them in a few days. And so, when enemies, privations, hunger, and thirst began to try them, they murmured against Moses and God, and would fain have gone back to Egypt. In a word, they had” not counted the cost,” and so lost everything, and died in their sins.

For want of” counting the cost,” many of our Lord Jesus Christ's hearers went back after a time, and”walked no more with Him.” (John vi. 66.) When they first saw His miracles, and heard His preaching, they thought” the kingdom of God would immediately appear.” They cast in their lot with His Apostles, and followed Him without thinking of the consequences. But when they found that there were hard doctrines to be believed, and hard work to be done, and hard treatment to be borne, their fait gave way entirely, and proved to be nothing at all. In a word, they had not” counted the cost,” and so made shipwreck of their profession.

For want of “counting the cost,” King Herod returned to his old sins, and destroyed his soul. He liked to hear John the Baptist preach. He “observed” and honoured him as a just and holy man. He even “did many things” which were right and good. But when he found that he must give up his darling Herodias, his religion entirely broke down. He had not reckoned on this.” He had not” counted the cost.” (Mark vi. 20.)

For want of” counting the cost,” Demas forsook the company of St. Paul, forsook the Gospel, forsook Christ, forsook heaven. For a long time he journeyed with the great Apostle of the Gentiles, and was actually a” fellow-labourer.” But when he found he could not have the friendship of this world as well as the friendship of God, he gave up his Christianity and clave to the world.” Demas hath forsaken me,” says St. Paul,” having loved this present world.” (2 Tim. iv. 10.) He had not” counted the cost.”

For want of” counting the cost,” the hearers of powerful Evangelical preachers often come to miserable ends. They are stirred and excited into professing what they have not really experienced. They receive the Word with a “joy” so extravagant that it almost startles old Christians. They run for a time with such zeal and fervour that they seem likely to outstrip all others. They

talk and work for spiritual objects with such enthusiasm that they make older believers feel ashamed. But when the novelty and freshness of their feelings is gone, a change comes over them. They prove to have been nothing more than stony-ground hearers. The description the great Master gives in the Parable of the Sower is exactly exemplified." Temptation or persecution arises because of the Word, and they are offended." (Matt. xiii. 21.) Little by little their zeal melts away, and their love becomes cold. By and by their seats are empty in the assembly of God's people, and they are heard of no more among Christians. And why? They had "never counted the cost."

For want of "counting the cost," hundreds of professed converts, under religious revivals, go back to the world after a time, and bring disgrace on religion. They begin with a sadly mistaken notion of what is true Christianity. They fancy it consists in nothing more than a so-called "coming to Christ," and having strong inward feelings of joy and peace. And so, when they find, after a time, that there is a cross to be carried, that our hearts are deceitful, and that there is a busy devil always near us, they cool down in disgust, and return to their old sins. And why? Because they had really never known what Bible Christianity is, They had never learned that we must "count the cost."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I should be very sorry indeed if the language I have used above about *revivals* was misunderstood. To prevent this I will offer a few remarks by way of explanation.

For true revivals of religion no one can be more deeply thankful than I am. Wherever they may take place, and by whatever agents they may be effected, I desire to bless God for them, with all my heart." If Christ is preached," I rejoice, whoever may be the preacher. If souls are saved, I rejoice, by whatever section of the Church the word of life has been ministered.

But it is a melancholy fact that, in a world like this, you cannot have good without evil. I have no hesitation in saying, that one consequence of the revival movement has been the rise of a theological system which I feel obliged to call defective and mischievous in the extreme.

The leading feature of the theological system I refer to, is this: an extravagant and disproportionate magnifying of three points in religion,—viz., instantaneous conversion—the invitation of unconverted sinners to come to Christ,—and the possession of inward joy and peace as a test of conversion. I repeat that these three grand truths (for truths they are) are so incessantly and exclusively brought forward, in some quarters, that great harm is done.

Instantaneous conversion, no doubt, ought to be pressed on people. But surely they ought not to be led to suppose that there is no other sort of conversion, and that unless they are suddenly and powerfully converted to God, they are not converted at all.

The duty of coming to Christ at once," just as we are," should be pressed on all hearers. It is the very corner-stone of Gospel preaching. But surely men ought to be told to repent as well as to believe. They should be told why they are to come to Christ, and what they are to come for, and whence their need arises.

The nearness of peace and comfort in Christ should be proclaimed to men. But surely they should be taught that the possession of strong inward joys and high frames of mind is not essential to justification, and that there may be true faith and true peace without such very triumphant feelings. Joy alone is no certain evidence of grace.

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The defects of the theological system I have in view appear to me to be these: (i) The work of the Holy Ghost in converting sinners is far too much narrowed and confined to one single way. Not all true converts are converted instantaneously, like Saul and the Philippian jailor. (2) Sinners are not sufficiently instructed about the holiness of God's law, the depth of their sinfulness, and the real guilt of sin. To be incessantly telling a sinner to come to Christ" is of little use, unless you tell him why he needs to come, and show him fully his sins. (3) Faith is not properly explained. In some cases people are taught that mere feeling is faith. In others they are taught that if they believe that Christ died for sinners they have faith I At this rate the very devils are believers ! (4) The possession of inward joy and assurance is made essential to believing. Yet assurance is certainly not of the essence of saving faith. There may be faith when there is no assurance. To insist on all believers at once" rejoicing," as soon as they believe, is most unsafe. Some, I am quite sure, will rejoice without believing, while others will believe who cannot at once rejoice. (5) Last, but not least, the sovereignty of God in saving sinners, and the absolute necessity of preventing grace, are far too much overlooked. Many talk as if conversions could be manufactured at man's pleasure, and as if there were no such text as this/' It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." (Rom. ix. 16.)

The mischief done by the theological system I refer to is, I am persuaded, very great. On the one hand, many humble-minded Christians are totally discouraged and daunted. They fancy they have no grace because they cannot reach up to the high frames and feelings which are pressed on their attention. On the other side, many graceless people are deluded into thinking they are" converted," because under the pressure or animal excitement and temporary feelings they are led to profess themselves Christians. And all this time the thoughtless and ungodly look on with contempt, and find fresh reasons for neglecting religion altogether.

The antidotes to the state of things I deplore are plain and few. (i) Let" all the counsel of God be taught" in Scriptural proportion; and let not two or three precious doctrines of the Gospel be allowed to overshadow all other truths. (2) Let repentance be taught fully as well as faith, and not thrust completely into the background. Our Lord Jesus Christ and St. Paul always taught both. (3) Let the variety of the Holy Ghost's works be honestly stated and admitted; and while instantaneous conversion is pressed on men, let it not be taught as a necessity. (4) Let those who profess to have found immediate sensible peace be plainly warned to try themselves well, and to remember that feeling is not faith, and that ' patient continuance in well-doing" is the great proof that faith is true. (John viii. 31.) (5) Let the great duty of" counting the cost" be constantly urged on all who are disposed to make a religious profession, and let them be honestly and fairly told that there is warfare as well as peace, a cross as well as a crown, in Christ's service.

I am sure that unhealthy excitement is above all things to be dreaded in religion, because it often ends in fatal, soul-ruining reaction and utter deadness. And when multitudes are suddenly brought under the power of religious impressions, unhealthy excitement is almost sure to follow.

I have not much faith in the soundness of conversions when they are said to take places in masses and wholesale. It does not seem to me in harmony with God's general dealings in this dispensation. To my eyes it appears that God's ordinary plan is to call in individuals one by one. Therefore, when I hear of large numbers being suddenly converted all at one time, I hear of it with less hope than some. The healthiest and most enduring success in mission fields is certainly not where natives have come over to Christianity in a mass. The most satisfactory and firmest work at home does not always appear to me to be the work done in revivals.

There are two passages of Scripture which I should like to have frequently and fully expounded in the present day by all who preach the Gospel, and specially by those who have anything to do with revivals. One passage is the parable of the sower, That parable is not recorded three times over without good reason and a deep meaning. —The other passage is our Lord's teaching about" counting the cost," and the words which He spoke to the" great multitudes" whom He saw following Him. It is very noteworthy that He did not on that occasion say anything to flatter these volunteers or encourage them to follow Him. No: He saw what their case needed. He told them to stand still and" count the cost." (Luke xiv. 25, etc.) I am not sure that some modern preachers would have adopted this course of treatment.

For want of" counting the cost," the children of religious parents often turn out ill, and bring disgrace on Christianity. Familiar from their earliest years with the form and theory of the Gospel—taught even from infancy to repeat great leading texts—accustomed every week to be instructed in the Gospel, or to instruct others in Sunday schools—they often grow up professing a religion without knowing why, or without ever having thought seriously about it. And then when the realities of grown-up life begin to press upon them, they often astound every one by dropping all their religion, and plunging right into the world. And why? They had never thoroughly understood the sacrifices which Christianity entails. They had never been taught to" count the cost."

These are solemn and painful truths. But they are truths. They all help to show the immense importance of the subject I am now considering. They all point out the absolute necessity of pressing the subject of this paper on all who profess a desire for holiness, and of crying aloud in all the churches—"Count the Cost."

I am bold to say that it would be well if the duty of" counting the cost" were more frequently taught than it is. Impatient hurry is the order of the day with many religionists. Instantaneous conversions, and immediate sensible peace, are the only results they seem to care for from the Gospel. Compared with these all other things are thrown into the shade. To produce them is the grand end and object, apparently, of all their labours. I say without hesitation that such a naked, one-sided mode of teaching Christianity is mischievous in the extreme.

Let no one mistake my meaning. I thoroughly approve of offering men a full, free, present, immediate salvation in Christ Jesus. I thoroughly approve of urging on man the possibility and the duty of immediate instantaneous conversion. In these matters I give place to no one. But I do say that these truths ought not to be set before men nakedly, singly, and alone. They ought to be told honestly what it is they are taking up, if they profess a desire to come out from the world and serve Christ. They ought not to be pressed into the ranks of Christ's army without being told what the warfare entails. In a word, they should be told honestly to "count the cost."

Does any one ask what our Lord Jesus Christ's practice was in this matter? Let him read what St. Luke records. He tells us that on a certain occasion" There went great multitudes with Him: and He turned and said unto them, If any come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after Me, cannot be

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My disciple.”(Luke xiv. 25-27.) I must plainly say, that I cannot reconcile this passage with the proceedings of many modern religious teachers. And yet, to my mind, the doctrine of it is as clear as the sun at noon-day. It shows us that we ought not to hurry men into professing discipleship, without warning them plainly to” count the cost.”

Does any one ask what the practice of the eminent and best preachers of the Gospel has been in days gone by? I am bold to say that they have all with one mouth borne testimony to the wisdom of our Lord's dealing with the multitudes to which I have just referred. Luther, and Latimer, and Baxter, and Wesley, and Whitfield, and Berridge, and Rowland Hill, were all keenly alive to the deceitfulness of man's heart. They knew full well that all is not gold that glitters, that conviction is not conversion, that feeling is not faith, that sentiment is not grace, that all blossoms do not come to fruit.” Be not deceived,” was their constant cry.” Consider well what you do. Do not run before you are called. Count the cost.”

If we desire to do good, let us never be ashamed of walking in the steps of our Lord Jesus Christ. Work hard if you will, and have the opportunity, for the souls of others. Press them to consider their ways. Compel them with holy violence to come in, to lay down their arms, and to yield themselves to God. Offer them salvation, ready, free, full, immediate salvation. Press Christ and all His benefits on their acceptance. But in all your work tell the truth, and the whole truth. Be ashamed to use the vulgar arts of a recruiting sergeant. Do not speak only of the uniform, the pay, and the glory; speak also of the enemies, the battle, the armour, the watching, the marching, and the drill. Do not present only one side of Christianity. Do not keep back” the cross” of self-denial that must be carried, when you speak of the cross on which Christ died for our redemption. Explain fully what Christianity entails. Entreat men to repent and come to Christ; but bid them at the same time to” count the cost.”

III. The third and last thing which I propose to do, is *to give some hints which may help men to” count the cost” rightly.*

Sorry indeed should I be if I did not say something on this branch of my subject. I have no wish to discourage any one, or to keep any one back from Christ's service. It is my heart's desire to encourage every one to go forward and take up the cross. Let us” count the cost” by all means, and count it carefully. But let us remember, that if we count rightly, and look on all sides, there is nothing that need make us afraid.

Let us mention some things which should always enter into our

calculations in counting the cost of true Christianity. Set down honestly and fairly what you will have to give up and go through, if you become Christ's disciple. Leave nothing out. Put it all down. But then set down side by side the following sums which I am going to give you. Do this fairly and correctly, and I am not afraid for the result.

(a) Count up and compare, for one thing, *the profit and the loss*, if you are a true-hearted and holy Christian. You may possibly lose something in this world, but you will gain the salvation of your immortal soul. It is written—"What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark viii. 36.)

(b) Count up and compare, for another thing, *the praise and the blame*, if you are a true-hearted and holy Christian. You may possibly be blamed by man, but you will have the praise of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. Your blame will come from the lips of a few erring, blind, fallible men and women. Your praise will come from the King of kings and Judge of all the earth. It is only those whom He blesses who are really blessed. It is written—"Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven." (Matt. v. ii, 12.)

(c) Count up and compare, for another thing, *the friends and the enemies*, if you are a true-hearted and holy Christian. On the one side of you is the enmity of the devil and the wicked. On the other, you have the favour and friendship of the Lord Jesus Christ. Your enemies, at most, can only bruise your heel. They may rage loudly, and compass sea and land to work your ruin; but they cannot destroy you. Your Friend is able to save to the uttermost all them that come unto God by Him. None shall ever pluck His sheep out of His hand. It is written—"Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear Him, which after He hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear Him." (Luke xii. 5.)

(d) Count up and compare, for another thing, *the life that now is and the life to come*, if you are a true-hearted and holy Christian. The time present, no doubt, is not a time of ease. It is a time of watching and praying, fighting and struggling, believing and working. But it is only for a few years. The time future is the season of rest and refreshing. Sin shall be cast out. Satan shall be bound. And, best of all, it shall be a rest for ever. It is written—"Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for

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the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.” (2 Cor. iv, 17, 18.)

(e) Count up and compare, for another thing, the *pleasures of sin and the happiness of God's service* if you are a true-hearted and holy Christian. The pleasures that the worldly man gets by his ways are hollow, unreal, and unsatisfying. They are like the fire of thorns, flashing and crackling for a few minutes, and then quenched for ever. The happiness that Christ gives to His people is something solid, lasting, and substantial. It is not dependent on health or circumstances. It never leaves a man, even in death. It ends in a crown of glory that fadeth not away. It is written—” The joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment.”—” As the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool.” (Job xx. 5; Eccl. vii. 6.) But it is also written—” Peace I leave with you, my peace give I unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” (John xiv. 27.)

(f) Count up and compare, for another thing, *the trouble that true Christianity entails, and the troubles that are in store for the wicked beyond the grave*. Grant for a moment that Bible-reading, and praying, and repenting, and believing, and holy living, require pains and self-denial. It is all nothing compared to that” wrath to come” which is stored up for the impenitent and unbelieving. A single day in hell will be worse than a whole life spent in carrying the cross. The” worm that never dies, and the fire that is not quenched, “are things which it passes man's power to conceive fully or describe. It is written—” is on, remember that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and thou art tormented.” (Luke xvi. 25.)

(g) Count up and compare, in the last place, the *number of those who turn from sin and the world and serve Christ, and the number of those who forsake Christ and return to the world*. On the one side you will find thousands—on the other you will find none. Multitudes are every year turning out of the broad way and entering the narrow. None who really enter the narrow way grow tired of it and return to the broad. The footsteps in the downward road are often to be seen turning out of it. The footsteps in the road to heaven are all one way. It is written—” The way of the wicked is darkness.”—” The way of transgressors is hard.” (Prov. iv. 19; xii. 15.) But it is also written—” The path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” (Prov. iv. 8.)

Such sums as these, no doubt, are often not done correctly. Not a few, I am well aware, are ever” halting between two opinions.” They cannot make up their minds that it is worth while to serve Christ. The losses and gains, the advantages and disadvantages, the sorrows and the joys, the helps and the hindrances

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with that faith we shall set things down at their true value. Filled with that faith we shall neither add to the cross nor subtract from the crown. Our conclusions will be all correct. Our sum total will be without error.

(1) In conclusion, let every reader of this paper think seriously, *whether his religion costs him anything at present*. Very likely it costs you nothing. Very probably it neither costs you trouble, nor time, nor thought, nor care, nor pains, nor reading, nor praying, nor self-denial, nor conflict, nor working, nor labour of any kind. Now mark what I say. Such a religion as this will never save your soul. It will never give you peace while you live, nor hope while you die. It will not support you in the day of affliction, nor cheer you in the hour of death. A religion which costs nothing is worth nothing. Awake before it is too late. Awake and repent. Awake and be converted. Awake and believe. Awake and pray. Rest not till you can give a satisfactory answer to my question, "What does it cost?"

(2) Think, if you want stirring motives for serving God, *what it cost to provide a salvation for your soul*. Think how the Son of God left heaven and became Man, suffered on the cross, and lay in the grave, to pay your debt to God, and work out for you a complete redemption. Think of all this and learn that it is no light matter to possess an immortal soul. It is worth while to take some trouble about one's soul.

Ah, lazy man or woman, is it really come to this, that you will miss heaven for lack of trouble? Are you really determined to make shipwreck for ever, from mere dislike to exertion? Away with the cowardly, unworthy thought. Arise and play the man. Say to yourself, "Whatever it may cost, I will, at any rate, strive to enter in at the strait gate." Look at the cross of Christ, and take fresh courage. Look forward to death, judgment, and eternity, and be in earnest. It may cost much to be a Christian, but you may be sure it pays.

(3) If any reader of this paper really feels that he has counted the cost, and taken up the cross, I bid him *persevere and press on*. I dare say you often feel your heart faint, and are sorely tempted to give up in despair. Your enemies seem so many, your besetting sins so strong, your friends so few, the way so steep and narrow, you hardly know what to do. But still I say, persevere and press on.

The time is very short. A few more years of watching and praying, a few more tossings on the sea of this world, a few more deaths and changes, a few more winters and summers, and all will be over. We shall have fought our last battle, and shall need to fight no more.

The presence and company of Christ will make amends for all

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we suffer here below. When we see as we have been seen, and look back on the journey of life, we shall wonder at our own faintness of heart. We shall marvel that we made so much of our cross, and thought so little of our crown. We shall marvel that in "counting the cost" we could ever doubt on which side the balance of profit lay. Let us take courage. We are not far from home. **IT MAY COST MUCH TO BE A TRUE CHRISTIAN AND A CONSISTENT BELIEVER; BUT IT PAYS.**