INTRODUCTION

Preface

The purpose of this book is three-fold. First, to analyze and evaluate the status of the "holiness" message today. In this analysis the problems raised by the preaching of holiness will be faced squarely. Then, a fresh examination of the Scriptures will be attempted upon which the holiness message is based. Finally, a constructive theological statement will be proposed in which it is hoped, some of the most serious questions will find a satisfactory answer.

This is not a book for the scholar primarily though it is hoped he will find it worth his time to examine either to approve, or, preferably to be challenged to a more adequate work in this field. It is first of all a study for the thoughtful and questioning minister and laymen of whom there are so many, who, desirous of maintaining theological loyalty are beset by problems raised by the preaching of holiness. Many of our most gifted young people have felt that intellectual honesty required their withdrawal from the "holiness ranks", however emotionally reluctant they may have been, because of insurmountable rational problems. It is the conviction of the author that many of these problems have acceptable solutions.

It is, also, a study undertaken in the interest of a more effective and dynamic presentation of the holiness message to this generation. We have lived in that message, breathed it, eaten it, slept through it, cut our teeth on it, received it, doubted it, analyzed it, put our faith in it, loved, preached and taught it for all the years appropriate to these things. When personal reactions have been exhausted and the vicarious
reactions of all sorts of persons have been added, it is felt that if familiarity qualifies one to speak about a matter, at least we are qualified in that respect.

Fortunately paradox has become respectable. In most responsible thinking, two or more rather widely divergent ideas must be accepted and in some measure brought into a harmony that does not violate the integrity of either truth. There is paradox in holiness preaching and also in the experience of the analyst who attempts to commend the doctrine. The tension between a morally transforming personal religious experience and the tremendous intellectual problems involved in it, keeps the author fascinated, fearful, prayerful and restless. That tension echoes the paradox between doctrine and living experience.

Paradox and tension exist in all living situations. These are not things to be deplored. Creativity can only thrive in tension. The abortive demand for pre-mature intellectual peace is death to thinking. We are not attempting to solve difficulties but to restore them so that in the wholesome contest between doctrine and life, dynamic and productive and sanctified Christian activity may thrive and expand.

Perhaps, we had better explain this. Committed as deeply as the author is to that which the doctrine of holiness means to life, there is the most painful concern growing daily in respect of the limited hearing which the doctrine receives. We do not share the opinion of some that the holiness people have all the truth, even all the truth about holiness. We do feel that the doctrine of a "Deeper Spiritual Life", or "The Life Hid with Christ in God", or whatever name one prefers, is more adequately delineated by holiness doctrine. But "The Life" itself is shared by Christians in every tradition. Hence, the
question, Why are we not better heard?

More serious yet is the fact of a growing spiritual indifference among holiness people. Perhaps others also struggle against the weight of dis-interest but, to us, who, filled with the Holy Spirit presumably, ought to be the example of the world's solution to indifference, the lack is of particular seriousness.

In a word, the problem seems to resolve itself into a statement such as this, the doctrine of holiness has not made adequate provision for the human element in life. The paradox between theory and life has been too easily solved and the tension relaxed so that the normal and desirable ability to recognize problems and grapple with difficulties has been relegated to other areas of life and the religious life left all but isolated from reality. That holiness teaching recognizes the life problem is not denied, but only that the doctrinal provision of it is missing.

This is a harsh, bald statement but proposed here to stimulate thinking and to provide a piece de resistance with which to engage the reader and the author. This statement may not be true, but it has served to plunge the author into a fresh examination of the Scriptures. What does the Bible say about holiness? Does it resolve all tension? Can the Scriptures speak to our dilemma? Is there a directive for practical problems?

The study will first analyze the problem, as we see it. That is, where is the problem and why is it a problem? It is necessary before examining the Scriptures for an answer, secondly, to defend our reference to the Bible. Biblical interpretation has produced many religious theories. What is the Bible and how ought we to use it? Is there a
stable and universally acceptable principle of interpretation? The answer to this suggests thirdly a philosophy of holiness which is proposed as a principle of interpretation. This philosophy is the result of a wide study of Scripture and does not itself determine the interpretation of Scripture. At least that is our hope. In the examination of key Biblical words which are necessary to the answering of the proposed questions, the Scriptural analysis, we believe, both confirms the philosophy and strengthens the interpretation by the philosophy.

This is not a systematic theology, hence the choice of subjects to be discussed is determined not by logic but by immediate need. However, there is a logic to the order in which the subjects are treated. The primacy of faith to all of soteriology requires a chapter before one on the work of the Holy Spirit who administers all grace if the previous one on the Philosophy of Holiness is adequately understood. Since Sanctification is the central concern, those sub-heads relative to it each will be examined, Truth, Cleansing, Perfection and Eradication before the analysis of Holiness itself. A chapter on Sin is delayed to this point on the assumption, to be defended, that no human definition of sin ought to dominate theology but should be defined in relation to grace. The problems relative to Crisis and Second in relation to Crisis will draw in some observations about grace, human personality and the nature of moral experience. A suggested approach to the preaching of holiness will close the study.
Preliminary Definitions

Holiness is a loved and hated word. A more thorough analysis of it will be attempted in the chapter on Sanctification but this preliminary statement may help to get started. We begin with a general discussion about theological terms.

Theological "cover-words" are used freely to identify and characterize various segments of the Christian faith. It is not always so clear what the "cover words" cover. Intelligent use of these terms requires at least a minimum of understanding of such words as orthodox, fundamentalist, liberal, neo-orthodox and conservative, or whatever it is we are. At least it is doubtful whether one ought to call others liberal simply because they disagree with him. It is hoped that this chapter shall provide a basic vocabulary which will clarify conversation regarding the groups named and also shed light on the concepts Wesleyan and Arminian and "holiness" when referring to a theological point of view.

In order to engage in intelligent and fruitful conversation there must be an objective basis of judgment even for as common a term as Christian. There are two recognized standards by which to judge Christian truth; Scripture and the corporate experience of the Christian church. By definition, "Christian" must be derived from its only source of information - the Christian book. Apart from the Book it could not be Christian. The Scriptures must be the primary standard of Christian judgment. But Christian truth has another focii, that of experience. However it is not the subjective aspect of experience which is meant but the responsible thinking experience of the Church as it has worked out its apologetics and preaching problems in the light of the Book. The creeds have become the Church's interpretation of Scrip-
ture. Protestants do not feel as conscience bound to these human formulations as do Catholics to "tradition" but they do regard the creeds as expressing faithfully their Christian convictions.

But as soon as "creed" is mentioned the question must arise, "which creed?" Historically, the first seven ecumenical councils, alone, represent the formalized convictions of the Christian Church. When the East and West separated, councils were no longer ecumenical and particularly from the Reformation onward much less was each creed representative of the Church as a whole. In fact, from the time the great rifts in the church began to form each synod decree tended to widen and perpetuate the breach rather than to become the norm of Christian truth. Doctrines defined differences not harmonies. This statement would not bear the seriousness it does had the rifts only separated the Roman from the Protestant communions. The seriousness is made apparent when one recalls that Protestant groups defined themselves against each other and the demarcation was often - perhaps always - locally determined. In other words, standards of Christian orthodoxy were local, unrepresentative, often personal and lacking in historical perspective. Lutheran and various Reformed groups excluded each other by way of creeds.

What creed defines "Christian"? Only the ecumenical creeds can do so in an objective way. In the first 400 years or so of Church history the classic statements on Christology and the Trinity were painfully and painstakingly worked out. These formulations structure the peculiarly Christian faith of all the major branches of the Church, East and West. Though they are highly abstract and difficult to understand they stand as guardians around the Christian faith. No exception has ever been made to them by any group without eventual loss of Christian status. As
worded they guard against every heresy except formalism and no creed can guard against that.

Orthodoxy, in general, may only be judged against these two norms; (1) an acceptance of the Christian Scriptures as authority and (2) the ecumenical creeds formulating the conviction of the Church regarding the Divine-human nature of Christ and the tri-personal nature of God – or the Trinity, always with the underlying conviction in mind that Jesus Christ is Savior. But orthodoxy has lost this general meaning and now defines more exclusive groups on the basis of more particular but less universal articles of faith. There is a Roman Catholic and a Greek orthodoxy, the former referring to the Council of Trent and the Vatican decrees. There is a Lutheran orthodoxy, and a number of Reformed orthodoxies. But none of the Protestant orthodoxies, beyond the general Christian affirmations, are capable of bearing, with necessary conviction, the weight of that proper term, in debate with each other. It is not seriously possible to judge adversely all those who differ from a statement of belief which was intended merely to define a segment of the Christian church against another -- particularly when the segment was not representative of any significant number of people. The Synod of Dort against the Arminian remonstrants is a classic example.

It is this tendency to improperly define orthodoxy that gave rise to what has been called Fundamentalism. Fundamentalism was (or is) a spirit rather than any particular set of doctrines. It sought to determine orthodoxy without reference to the great ecumenical principles above mentioned. It was defective in several regards. It made peripheral truths central. Its historical perspective was distorted. It was
authoritarian in spirit requiring submission to the judgment of a small group of men—often to single individuals—as to what beliefs were central. Its tone was caustic, and arrogant and its nature was schismatic. By a narrow, individualistic perspective it failed to do justice to the grand basic truths of the Christian faith and it excluded from its circle of "elect men" equally good brethren whose differences of opinion were legitimate. It was reactionary. It rejected all science and any inquiry into its own doctrines. It assumed no responsibility to the culture which surrounded and supported it. It had little or no social conscience. It depended upon an enemy for its survival. If there was nothing to fight it fell apart or brethren began to fight each other. It was so busy about defining itself into isolation and restlessness that it forgot its primary purpose was to give Christ to a hungry world.

Liberalism, known also as Modernism and Rationalism and now, Humanism, was a reaction to the spirit that made Fundamentalism. Rather than retreating into exclusiveness it expanded into a world embracing Brotherhood. It disclaimed all external authority and made man the measure of truth and right. Liberalism as a religious philosophy must be distinguished however, from the more general connotation of the word. We are not now referring to that attitude of mind that holds all tradition under critical examination and which refuses to be lead around blindly by unauthorized and out-dated methods, and which is courageous and intelligent and discriminating with a mature sense of responsibility to truth. It is rather the liberal, who categorically rejects any objective authority, that we mean. He rejects the transcendency of God in favor of an immance that makes
supernaturalism and consequently special revelation impossible. He
confuses his own thinking with God's truth and brands other men's
thinking -- namely theology, as an enemy of progress. With his denials
go the deity of Christ and the Biblical idea of sin and grace. His
emphasis is on social improvement only and he majors on Ethics. The
optimism, in this view, regarding man, leads logically into humanism
and many have gone that way. Though the older unchastened liberalism
has gone "underground" for the moment, its influence is detected in any
theology that relegates evangelical sin to the status of immaturity,
cultural lag or simply the weakness which renewed courage or "belief
in God's loving forgiveness" can overcome. In its new mood it speaks
of sin but not in the sense of a final and absolute barrier to God
apart from the atoning sacrifice of Christ on the Cross. It speaks
of divine love but not holiness. It has opened the Bible but it culls
only useful phrases and cares little for exegesis. It may speak of
the noble self-giving and God-consciousness of Jesus but the difference
between Him and any of us is that of degree, not kind. The Incarnation
is often described as the embodiment of a God-like spirit—not the
union of God and man in the historic Christ. Its distrust of definitive
statements of faith lies deeper than the stated fear of absolutizing
temporal expressions from which all of us draw back. It is rather an
evidence of its fundamental antipathy to accepting the Lordship of Christ
and His authority over us and the acknowledging of our dependance upon
a stable and dependable and objectively given revelation.

Neo-Orthodoxy, in turn, is a reaction to humanism and the ration-
alism of both liberalism and fundamentalism. At every essential point
neo-orthodoxy stands opposed to liberalism but though it uses the
language of orthodoxy, roundly repudiates it basic tenets. Its purpose was to reconcile traditional theological dogma with the critical and evolutionary view of Scripture. It is thoroughly modern. Against the liberal immanance of God it stresses the Sovereignty of God to the point of absolute transcendence. God is the "Wholly Other" who will in no way permit himself to become the object of men's thought. His revelation of Himself, therefore, must always be His own experiencing of men, not in any way men's intelligible experience of God. The Bible is revered as God's Word but not in the sense of bearing in itself revelation but only in becoming the occasion of God's speaking. In this way revelation is never static but continuing. In its proper desire to emphasize the dynamic of God's relation to us and to draw us into a participation in revelation, the historic and objective aspect of revelation is virtually denied in favor of a disjunctive "Nowness". In religious matters history is simply history, past and gone. It can contain nothing of God's revelation -- even in the man Jesus. History embarrasses religion. Historical events are interpreted as symbol and all traditional terms are said to refer to ideas, symbolically, not to the metaphysically real. For instance, "the Cross" as a symbol of redemptive love is preferred to "Christ" because the latter is confused too much in the common mind with a historic personage. The Holy Spirit is a symbol of God in action. It is thoroughly pessimistic about man. It begins with sin and sin dominates its entire philosophy. The human predicament is sin and redemption is ever in principle only, never in fact. The strength of Neo-Orthodoxy is its reclamation of traditional and Biblical terms, its wholesome insistence upon the experiential dimension of Christian faith--our
personal involvement in the moral environment—, its stress on meaning and participation in revelation and its emphasis on the Word of God. Its realism and vitality has called the liberal religious world back to a measure of sanity. But its weakness is its view of the Bible and its denial of history which divorces its symbolism from stable moorings. As a result its "exegesis" is a return to allegory and its doctrines advisory only—never capable of leading men out of the morass of sin into any kind of assurance. Perhaps no system of thought is better described than this, by the Biblical statement, "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof".

May it be noted that in the cases of both liberalism and neo-orthodoxy the ultimate test of Christian validity is the attitude toward Scripture and Christ. Defects in these two areas permit corollary affirmatives and logical conclusions that in turn react back on the very life of the system. In every deviation from the standard lies the seed of its own disqualification for the rugged task of bearing the Christian message. The seed issues in death.

What shall we call the theological atmosphere which we believe is Biblical and sound and in which we humbly feel we stand and pray earnestly that we may adorn and not deface? It is conservative without being reactionary. It is evangelical without being narrow and bigoted. It is fundamental without being fundamentalistic and ignorant and obscurantistic. The standard is frighteningly high. It requires honesty and prayerfulness and devotion to Christ to maintain. It is both a spirit and an affirmation. It has both vitality and form.

1. It is self-critical and has, by the grace of God, a new humility. Spiritual and intellectual arrogance appalls it. Bragging
embarrasses and grieves it. This kind of conservatism feels a profound
obligation to truth but it would speak truth in love. It does not
glory in its own self-righteousness and claim special favors from God,
it moves forward rather on its knees asking God to keep it teachable
and useful. Its criticism is of itself not others principally, though
it has intelligent self-consciousness in the light of the norms of
Christian truth.

2. It accepts the Scriptures as the final authority for Christians.
It believes in Special Revelation. Its first responsibility is to the
Word of God which is its judge and light. Its confidence is in the
eternal truth of Scripture and in the presence of the living Christ.
It would be found faithful to the letter and to the spirit of the Word
of God. It considers the Bible to be, not an end in itself but a means
to the end, namely that men may know God, and His will for them.

3. It affirms the traditional doctrines of the Church—its
Christology and Doctrine of God, its teaching on sin and atonement in
Christ. But it holds all human formulations to be in some measure less
than divinity inspired. Theology must always be under the scrutiny of
the Bible and must be interpreted anew to every generation in its own
language and experience.

4. It accepts critical scholarship critically, not with a blind
acceptance of all the "assured findings of science". It is discriminating.
It recognizes problems. It wants a "pure text" of Scripture. It thinks
history is important.

5. It has a social sensitivity and an awareness of interpersonal
responsibility. It lives intelligently in this world, with an ear open
to its cry and its hands busy in its needs, yet with its eye measuring
values against eternity and God's will.
6. It recognizes the need for personal interdependence, not isolationism. Individuals find enlargement and enrichment in the Christian community. It does not raise false barriers to fellowship but realizes that to the point where Christians can communicate in love and faith the world will believe in Christ and God (John 17).

The Wesleyan Arminian groups must define themselves in the light of this general outline. We feel that in its best attire -- at least ideally, it stands in the last category—as do many other Protestant groups. Our distinctives from here on must be held in a Christian spirit and with our thinking structured by the deepest possible understanding of the Word of God. None of us, Calvinist, Lutheran, Wesleyan, may equate ourselves exclusively with "Christian" and exclude the others from that status. Our differences represent interpretations of Scripture and must always be held under the judgment of Scripture with an understanding of our own fallibility, as well as a commitment to a denominational insight.

When "holiness" people call themselves Wesleyan-Arminian they are obligated to define those three terms. According to the spirit of the above analysis this group hesitates to call itself by the name of any man. The heavy reliance upon Scripture for its existence as a theological point of view justifies this hesitancy. When the names of these two men are used it is done simply to identify a point of view not to rest its faith in the leadership and authority of these men. Those who follow this theological position do not build a structure of theology upon the teachings of Arminius and Wesley but try to be as faithful to the Scripture as they were and the insights which they caught have become their insights. They do not slavishly follow them.
Arminius is still, as he was in his own lifetime, grossly misunderstood. A careful reading of his exceedingly meticulous discourses will reveal that he was not Pelagian or Socinian, though in modern times these groups have attached themselves to his name and have brought it into theological disrepute. Arminius was a Calvinist by training and conviction. He rebelled against the extreme predestinarian views of Beza and Gomarus which he showed by Scripture and by reference to the church fathers not to have been the view of the Church at all. Beza out-Calvined Calvin and Gomarus followed in his steps. Arminius called the church back to the Bible and the ecumenical view of the church on the matter of God's grace and human responsibility. When an evangelical group calls itself Arminian it refers to its belief in conditional universal atonement and in the moral responsibility of men in the face of that conditionality. Men are not forced by grace but aided by it. The final choice must always lie in the hand of every man. The Sovereignty of God exaggerated to the place where He is unable to delegate moral responsibility to his creatures is not the Biblical idea of God. Arminianism simply recognizes man as a truly moral creature under the providence of God. The term Arminian is relevant to a wider theological orientation than Wesleyan. It distinguishes those who recognize a real freedom of human will (however limited it may be) from those who do not so understand human nature and God's way with men. It is quite erroneous to equate Arminianism, as such, with liberalism as is so often done. Non-evangelical groups may call themselves Arminian but historically the name ought rather to be reserved for the solidly evangelical groups who are unable to harmonize predestination with Scripture teaching.

Wesleyanism does not rest primarily in the teaching of any individual but is so called in order to identify the emphasis which Wesley so carefully delineated. Wesley was a "man of the book" and wished only
that his preachers also be thoroughly Biblical. As an identification, then, the term Wesleyan will be used to refer to those who hold the following convictions:

1. That "salvation from all sin, properly so-called" which is the love of God shed abroad in the heart, is the New Testament standard for the normal Christian life; and

2. That the realization of this relationship to God need not to take a life time to achieve but may be consummated at the moment of total commitment to God when the Holy Spirit is permitted to take full possession of the personality, properly termed a crisis experience.

In this study "holiness" theology will refer to that emphasis which Wesley revived, restated and taught. The two terms will be used interchangeably to mean the same thing.

Two explanations will be necessary however. Since "Wesleyanism" is variously interpreted we cannot presume to speak for all who call themselves by his name. The term "holiness" must define Wesleyan.

But, since "holiness" is variously understood, it too is ambiguous. In fact, it is to clarify the term that this study is engaged. When the term "holiness" is used it must be understood as the author's interpretation of what constitutes the central affirmation of the holiness bodies. It cannot carry all the connotations of the smaller segments within it. "Holiness" and "Wesleyan", then, will be used in this limited and technical sense only.

Existential simply means moral relevancy. It carries with it the deepest measure of human response and participation. Merely intellectual and formal participation is considered totally inadequate. Only the whole man, challenged to the quick by Christ in dynamic spiritual encounter can
do justice to the truths of Scripture. The depth of this spiritual di-
mension is not terminated by crisis but continues to deepen and develop
parallel to the enlargement of personality and the capacity for moral
responsibility. Existential means a full involvement in moral exper-
ience which must include, not be exhausted by, crisis.

There has been an attempt on the part of the author to avoid
steriotype language. Fresh, meaningful expressions have been sought
and utilized where-ever possible. This has been in keeping with the
spirit of the investigation.

If there are verbal likenesses to positions which we deplore, that
alone does not relate the ideas to the undesirable position. No theo-
logical system can corral words so decisively into its camp that no one
else can use them. There is rather humorous proof of this. The word
"existential" was borrowed and redressed by the "neo-orthodox" from
philosophy. Now, it is considered theological plagiarism on our part
to use the word, perhaps even theological sympathy. But the neo-orthodox
writers also borrowed words such as "sin" and "grace" and "atonement"
and all the rest of the old theological glossary and revamped them to
their purpose. Now, the liberal calls the neo-orthodox a betrayer of
the faith. By them he is relating himself embarrassingly to the funda-
mentalists. We prefer to use words which convey meaning to the con-
temporary mind and trust that the context will supply the theological
sympathy of the author.
Holiness, the most beautiful and desirable and winsome thing in a world of sin and blight and ugliness, is the central core of the Christian message. All Christian theology must and does take into account its imperative and privilege, "without holiness no man shall see God," and, "the pure in heart shall see God." But there is a wide difference of opinion as to what constitutes holiness, and when it is to be obtained and how. This difference of opinion probably lies at the base of all major divisions among Christians and the answer to the questions structures, not only theology in general but a doctrine of the church and salvation in particular.

Holiness, then, is as old a doctrine as Christianity itself and indeed, was pre-figured in Hebrew ideology and religion. But, the specific thing called "the doctrine of holiness" which distinguishes a segment of the Christian church within the main stream, is a conviction that evangelical perfection (or holiness) is obtainable in this life. The logic of the position is simple. If holiness is not to be completed after death as the Roman Catholic church teaches and death itself has no power to bestow it, it must be come by in this life. If in this life but not achieved by works as the Catholics also hold, but by faith, then it can be the work of a moment, hence, instantaneous and therefore possible "now". The defective logic arising from semantic ambiguity is not our concern at the moment (though it has to do with the whole investigation of which this book is a report), but the underlying conviction that holiness is relevant to life must be understood to be the central affirmation of those who call themselves "holiness people".
It is the concept back of "relevant" that concerns us. If holiness is relevant as we believe it is, there are different kinds of questions with which it must be qualified to deal than would be raised were it simply a philosophy or a science. No other approach to Christian faith raises the particular questions which it raises. The claim of relevancy puts it into a different frame of reference than these in which its sister Protestant theologies are required to move. The ideal must be specifically related to the practical details of human life. Theology must become experiential. Perfection must be defined so that it actually relates to fallible, imperfect, weak, ignorant men who will remain at least fallible and imperfect, and may never in this life acquire strength and knowledge in significantly measurable quantities.

This book is the written result of a life-long attempt to answer the practical problems arising in the tension between doctrine and life. The preaching of holiness arouses so much hope in the sin-tormented human heart that care must be excercized lest it seem to become a one step lift to heaven itself so that the actual practical steps of life seem to be a denial of the truth of the holiness message. Holiness is the answer to the sin problem, we believe, but how this is so becomes an enormously important matter to explain.

The practical problems lie, as has been said, in the tension between theory and practice. That there is such a tension has always been recognized by competent holiness writers. This recognition has preserved holiness doctrine from "perfectionism". Holiness theology is not perfectionism. It is its precise antithesis as will be seen. Holiness literature is seldom if ever caught deficient at the point of relating doctrine to life. But in the opinion of the writer the weakness of
holiness theology is that it has made no doctrinal provision for human fallibility and its need for growth and maturation. Consequently, the instruction given by its many interpreters in respect of human psychology has lacked consistency and has often seemed to be a denial of the ideal.

Some of the problems, too, have arisen because the language developed in a pre-scientific day has been misunderstood. Much of the terminology of doctrine is couched in terms of an older psychology which conceived of personality as quite a static, even materialistic thing. Hence sin and its "destruction" has often been interpreted corporeally in spite of the constant denial of this error by holiness teachers. Wesley had this problem. That he taught that sin could be removed as a diseased organ he vehemently denied but because of the language he used to describe freedom from sin he never quite cleared himself of this charge in the minds of his critics. Holiness theologians still deny the error but perpetuate the criticism for failure to develop an apologetic broad enough to cover both doctrine and psychology.

The question lying behind the practical problems to which reference has been made and which will be itemized presently, is of the relation between crisis and process in sanctification. This looks backwards toward doctrine and outward into human psychology. Holiness preaching emphasizes experience as a necessary adjunct to the equally essential rationality of doctrine. Crisis in this context refers to the "legal" transaction in God's mind regarding us, and the "existential" moment of being received and changed in our own conscious awareness.

What happens in this moment is very much the concern of holiness teaching. But it is here that a varying opinion about personality has caused difficulty. Some critics have felt that the psychology of crisis
has been a logical conclusion, not a Biblical teaching - that all persons cannot be supposed to react identically in such personal matters - that the methodology of crisis is not an essential part of the doctrine of holiness - or of the new birth. In other words, human personality is far more flexible in its appropriation of grace than was once supposed. The more rigid forms of Calvinism do not have this problem, because grace is not "experienced" but received. One is either saved or not according to election or faith (intellectual assent). If, on the other hand, conscious awareness plays an important part in "assurance," and there is a marked difference in persons (for whatever reason) as to how and when awareness clarifies and remains clarified, the process aspect of sanctification must be related to crisis in a commensurate and understandable way.

If these critics have properly analyzed the problem, and it is granted that they may have, it is simply needful to say clearly in what crisis consists and how process relates to it.

Holiness teaching, in general, speaks both of crisis and process as essential elements in Christian life. In this, all evangelical bodies would largely agree. But the failure to account for the experiential element which holiness theology emphasizes so centrally in its doctrine, actually sets crisis and process into logical antithesis rather than to harmonize them as it intends to do. An extreme emphasis on crisis logically leads to perfectionism, either in a legalistic and abstract way or in an unrealistic and antinomian sense. An overemphasis on process robs Christian life of any moral decisiveness and is repudiated by the holiness preacher. An attempt to relate the two requires critical definition and careful procedure.

Holiness theologians have always understood this but without the
stabilizing influence of an adequate philosophy of holiness the counter-balancing emphases between crisis and process, doctrine and life, have seemed to be antithetical elements within the ranks of holiness theologians. As one reads the scores of books which have molded "holiness" thinking, the two apparently contrary approaches give the impression of lack of unity.

If the lack of unity were only apparent there would be no problem. Actually, the particular emphasis has tended to react back on the position and two parties certainly united in central message, often somewhat estranged in spirit, have developed.

One would be optimistic, indeed, to hope by the writing of a book to effect a harmony between these two groups of persons who are, it is believed, united in Christian fellowship. It is the purpose of the study to suggest a possible underlying structure of thought, criticized at every point by Biblical exegesis, which might serve to harmonize the various elements in the doctrine and life of holiness and commend the doctrine to those who have found intellectual difficulties too great to be ignored.

To call it a philosophy of holiness is almost too ambitious though, poor as it may be it actually is an attempt at philosophy. But it is philosophy in a much broader sense - or a different sense, perhaps, - than classical or scholastic rationalizations. It will be a theory of criticism - or a search for and organization of the pre-suppositions which structure Biblical teaching and holiness doctrine. At no point in the study is there any slightest doubt about the truth of "Scriptural holiness", nor in the practical or experiential element of it. In fact,
it is precisely belief in this Biblical-experiential axis that prompts
the study and seems to make it worthwhile--in fact, imperative in the
light of the difficulties attending its teaching.