

The Harmony

by William Edwin Boardman

The harmony of Christian experience is the cumulative progress and power of advancing religious experience, where each stage of experience builds upon the previous one, and the power of faith is the crowning thing that completes the fullness of this experience.

Scripture: Psalm 119:54, Proverbs 9:10, Acts 1:8, Romans 7:7, Romans 8:2, 1 Corinthians 3:6, Philippians 1:6, Hebrews 12:2, 1 Peter 1:8, Revelation 22:17

Topics: "Christian Experience", "Sanctification"

Description

William Edwin Boardman preaches about the cumulative progress and power of Christian experience, emphasizing the stages of conviction, submission, and sanctification driven by the motives of danger, duty, and delight. He illustrates how advancing in faith and obedience accumulates power and leads to a deeper relationship with God. Boardman uses examples of individuals like Leigh Richmond and Felix Neff to show how personal experiences of danger, duty, and delight in the Lord can transform one's witness for Jesus and impact others. The sermon highlights the importance of faith in Jesus as the key to experiencing the fullness of salvation and sanctification, leading to a life of joyful service and obedience.

Transcript

DANGER, DUTY AND DELIGHT: OR, THE CUMULATIVE PROGRESS, AND CUMULATIVE POWER OF CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

"Thy statues have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage."

"Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and you shall be witnesses unto Me in Jerusalem and in all Judea and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

The contrast drawn in the seventh and eighth of Romans, between the Law and the Gospel is strong. And just, too.

The law, to those who cling to it and reject the grace of God, hoping to be saved by their own merits and works, does work bondage and death.

While the gospel, to those who receive it does work liberty and life.

Nevertheless there is no antagonism between the two, but harmony rather, and union, and power in the union.

In the husbandry of the farm, the drill and not the plow, gives the crop. If the land were left as the plow leaves it, there would be no crop, but of thistles and weeds. The plow destroys every living thing, tearing all up root and branch, and burying all under the ground. While the drill plants the seed, and under the blessing of God, ensures a golden harvest and a full garner. The farmer might plow his ground ten times, or a hundred times over, and yet never have a harvest if that were all he should do. Nevertheless there is no antagonism between the plow and the drill. It takes both to make the land yield to the diligent hand its reward.

In the husbandry of the kingdom, the law is the plow, and the gospel is the drill. And the deeper the plow is put in the better the crop, provided only that the drill follows in due time, casting in seed in abundance.

It is in the nature of Christian experience to accumulate power as it progresses from stage to stage.

There are three stages of experience in the life of every one redeemed to God. Conviction, submission, sanctification. And there are three motives corresponding, by which the Holy Spirit germinates, advances and perfects the divine life of the soul -- danger, duty and delight.

A sense of danger first startles the careless one from his senseless slumbers and arouses him to flee from the wrath to come.

A sense of duty next rises into supremacy and constrains him to submit his own works and ways to God's.

And at last a sense of delight in the Lord and his ways becomes the absorbing and dominant motive in the heart and life, perfecting obedience in love.

In each there is power, and all the power there is in each and in all is accumulated by him who gains all.

The second absorbs the first, and the third the second. The sense of danger seems to become lost when the sense of duty becomes strong, and the sense of duty seems in its turn to be lost when it is transmuted by the grace of God into delight. Nevertheless not a particle of either is lost.

Leigh Richmond began his course as a clergyman of the church while yet he was in his sins, and knew no better. After a time he was awakened to a sense of his peril and guilt. Then he began preaching in the power of his convictions, and his people were preached by him into conviction, and under condemnation like himself. There they stopped -- he could lead them no farther. He had not found the way out himself. How should he lead others out?

A year or two afterwards, however, the way was made plain to him, and right joyously he entered it. Then at once he began preaching justification by faith, and his people were soon rejoicing with him in the joys of sins forgiven.

While under conviction, but yet unconverted, he had power to preach the terrors of the Lord, and used it -- but no more. The grace of God which saves the soul from wrath, may have been to him as a sweet song in the ear, but it had no power on the heart, and neither had he power to bring it home to the hearts of others.

But by and by, when it was made of God to him the power of salvation, then it became a power to others from his lips, to break their fetters also, and fill them with songs of rejoicing.

Meanwhile Leigh Richmond lost nothing of his power in preaching the terrors of the Lord, by passing himself personally out from under their weight, but gained rather -- for now in the light of the wondrous sacrifice made to redeem sinners from exposure to the wrath to come, he could weigh with a hand more just the inconceivable weight of judgment and fiery indignation to which they are exposed.

Just so it is when the Christian is led onward into the experimental knowledge of Christ as his sanctification; it gives him not only the power to witness for Jesus what he himself has found so sweetly realized to him in his own heart and life concerning the presence of his Saviour, to subdue his sins, and keep him through faith, in all the fulness of salvation from day to day -- but his sense of the exposure of sinners to the wrath of God and the Lamb, and his sense of way of justification through faith in this Lord Jesus Christ, are also greatly enhanced; while at the same time his own love of Jesus, and love to those in peril of losing their souls, is increased a hundred-fold.

The advancing experience is not so much like a chain of equal links, added one after the other, but more like a tree in its successive stages of growth. Each stage of its progress not only sends its top higher into the regions of faith and hope, and its roots deeper into the fatness of truth and love, but adds, also in equal measure to the strength and body of all previous growth.

Felix Neff is a singular instance of the power of one who is himself under the terrors of a certain fearful looking for of judgment, to awaken others to their perilous exposure. From valley to valley he blew the trumpet, amongst the mountains as if he had just come down from the judgment seat -- and it was not until after his strength was consumed by the fire of his zeal, and he had come down from the mountains to spend the mere wasted brand of his life in the genial clime of the plains, that hope sprang up in his soul -- the sweet foretaste of joys to come.

If Felix Neff, however, had first felt the fiery condemnation of the law in his soul, and then found the sweet peace of sins forgiven, before his mission in the mountains, his trumpet would have sounded as loud and clear, and far more sweet; and great as was his success, it would have been manifold more, and his life many years longer.

Dr. Payson was a polished and powerful shaft in the hands of God. Hundreds were saved by his ministry; but much of his strength was wasted, in what he saw afterwards to have been vain strugglings. Had he known to trust in Jesus for his own soul's sanctification, and for all fitness to herald the Saviour to others, not only would he have been saved what he himself said was wasted, but his life might have been spared long to the church, and his success, great as it was, increased vastly in its measure.

The cumulative progress and power of advancing religious experience, is like to what sometimes happens in oriental life, in social, civil and domestic relations. A prince takes captives in war. They are kept under guard and in chains. They are dragged at his heels to grace his triumphal return to his capital. He holds the power of life and death in his hands, and they tremble lest he should order them killed. His eye is taken by one of their number. He orders him to be loosed from his bonds, and clothed in the livery of his household. He is installed as a servant and treated with all kindness. He in turn is dutiful and true to his master. Day by day he wins upon the regard of the prince, and step by step he is advanced in position, until at last he comes to be the confidant and adviser of the prince, in all the affairs of his household and kingdom.

At first he felt hatred only toward the prince, and that the bitterest. Then he submitted, only because he must do it or die. But now there has grown up a sense of duty to the prince so strong and deep that, rather

than betray the trust reposed in him, he would prefer to die.

By and by the prince's affections become more like a father's than a master's. He has no sons and one daughter only, a lovely creature every way worthy of her father's fondness, the pride and joy of his life. He reasons thus, "Who so faithful, and who so worthy in all my kingdom, as this my servant? Whom could I trust with the happiness of my daughter, and with the rule of my kingdom after me, so well as he? If it suits he shall have my daughter, and he be my son and heir." The arrangement is made to the joy of all parties. The former captive, a servant of late, has now become a son. The livery of the servant is changed for the habiliments of the prince. And in his heart where dread ruled at the first, and duty afterward, now love holds the sway. The interests of his father are his own, and in the house where once he was faithful as a servant, he now serves faithfully still, but no longer as a bondsman, but as a son. He knows and feels the power and authority of the prince as fully as when he himself was a captive in chains, trembling for fear of losing his life; and feels ten thousand times more desirous of sustaining him in his authority. And he knows and feels his own duty as deeply as when he was a servant in livery, and loves far better to do it. But superadded to these, he has now also the affections, and the position, and the interest of a son, in the house and the kingdom of his father soon to be his. The submission yielded in the days of his captivity, only because he must do it or die, he now yields with the cheerfulness of reverence and love. And the obedience rendered afterwards from a sense of duty is now given as the joyful service of filial affection, and honor -- the pride of his life.

Just so it is in our relations to God; the submission and service which at the first was the constraint of fear, and afterward the award of duty, becomes finally, in the fulness of faith and the fulness of salvation, an oblation of gratitude, rising out of the golden censer of a sanctified heart.

This is the crowning glory, and the crowning power, too, of the Christian religion, and of the divine life in the soul.

Other religions may induce fear as strong as death, and desire to escape from the penalty and power of sin sufficient to lead men on to toil and torture; but it is the Christian religion alone which has power to convert bonds into songs, and duties into delights.

And now how is it that this transmutation is made? What is that power, better than the philosopher's stone or the lamp of Aladdin, which works this wondrous change?

We have seen already that it is faith.

Faith: which is the assured hope of a home eternal in the heavens, and also an assured knowledge of the presence and power of Jesus to deliver us from the dominion as well as the penalty of sin, and keep as by the power of God, through faith unto salvation. The very crowning thing which completes the fulness of this faith, is the apprehension, not so much of the certainty of final salvation, as the joyful confidence of the presence of Jesus, as a present Saviour from sin, and a present captain of salvation, to direct us and sustain us in every conflict with Satan, and in every effort to extend the Kingdom of God in the world. And this is the very gist of the experience sought to be illustrated and urged in these pages.

And now, again, what is the great power of the followers of Christ for the spread of his Gospel? The power TO WITNESS FOR JESUS. And this is at once the greatest and yet the simplest and easiest power given of God to man.

To witness for Jesus. To point to the Lamb of God, and testify that he does take away the sins of the world. To hail the Captain of salvation as a present leader and commander, and inspire others with the like faith of his presence and power.

The child may wield this power if he has the faith in its fulness; but the greatest giant of intellect, or eloquence that ever electrified men by the fire of his genius, and the flash of his words, will utterly fail of this greatest of powers if he fails of the faith.

When Jesus, just then in act to ascend up to his Father from the summit of Olivet, promised the disciples that they should receive power, after that the Holy Ghost should be given them -- in the same breath he added the definition of that power, by foretelling its use, saying: And ye shall be witnesses for me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

The grand work of the Christian in the spread of the gospel, is to witness for Jesus, to tell the story of the cross. But mark ye! And mark ye well! Not that alone. That would be the story of a dead Saviour. Ours, thanks be to God is a living Saviour, ever living to make intercession for us. The story of the resurrection and ascension must be added to the story of the crucifixion and burial. But mark ye again! and mark well! not this alone -- this would be but the story of an absent Saviour -- ours, to our joy unspeakable, is a present Saviour, mighty to save, able to deliver, from all the power of the world, the flesh and the devil. The story of Pentecost must be added to that of Calvary and Olivet -- the story of the return of Jesus in omnipresence and omnipotence, by the Holy Spirit, to be with all his disciples everywhere, even unto the end of the world.

It is ours to witness for Jesus; but our testimony cannot go beyond our experience. With the apostles, we cannot but speak the things we have seen and felt; but the things we have not seen and felt we cannot speak effectively and convincingly. The Holy Ghost must first witness to us, before we can witness to others, the things of experience. The convinced soul, like Leigh Richmond in the days of his conviction, may testify for the law in its heart searching length and breadth, and the converted soul may testify for the gospel in its power to bring sweet assurance of sins forgiven and the hope of heaven, but it is only him who has also found by similar deeper experience the way of sanctification by faith, who can point to Jesus as the deliverer from sin in like manner as from its penalty.

And then, too, as we have already illustrated in each successive stage of advancement, there is new spring and strength of force given to all that has gone before.

In advancing we do not lose the things that we leave behind, as we press onward to the mark, but double the old store in gaining the new.

The apostles did not more than half understand the significance of all that Jesus was and said while he was with them in person in the days of his flesh. But afterward, when in the power of the Holy Ghost, he came to them and dwelt with them, and within them, from the day of Pentecost onward, then with all that was new to them, in this new experience of theirs, there came also such a recollection of all that Jesus had said and done, with such a new fullness of significance in all, as made it all like a new story to them.

Luther and D'Aubigne; in their after and deeper experience, found the word of God illuminated anew to them, with a richer and fuller significance of truth and grace. The things they understood before, they understood better now; and the things that came home to them with power before, came home to them with a new power now; while at the same time they saw Jesus, and felt the blessedness of his presence

and might now in a new relation entirely, viz. as their sanctification - and in all this they were witnesses for Jesus in the fullness of the new power received from God, in the new experience of his wisdom and grace in providing a way of escape from sin itself as easy and plain as the way of escape from the wrath to come.

This accounts for the new spring and power of usefulness given to these men. Useful before, they were a hundred-fold more so afterwards. Their knowledge of science was not extended. They were not advanced to new and higher posts of honor and power. Their positions and circumstances remained as they were before, but they had made new discoveries in the science of salvation, and gained new positions in the world of faith, and the fire was kindled in their hearts into a new glow of fervency and light. The waters of life came welling up anew in their souls, overflowing and flowing out in rivers, in their testimony, oral and written, from pulpit and press, concerning Jesus, to a sin ruined world.

And this accounts also for what we sometimes see - more wonderful even than the abundant usefulness of such men as these who stand in the fore-front of the line - the equally abundant, though less wide-spread and widely known usefulness of persons who from extreme infirmity or age might be expected to cease from their labors entirely:

MISS SUSAN ALLIBONE, for example. Though young, she was for years before her departure from life unable to work or walk, but she could testify for Jesus. As she was wheeled along the sidewalk in her little hand carriage, she could address the workmen and the wayfarers whom she met, in tones and words so tender and sincere, that they wondered at the gracious things which she spoke, and bore witness that she had been with him who is full of grace and truth. Their hearts were touched and moved more than by the most eloquent appeals of the giants of the pulpit. And from her hands the tract was never refused, nor yet the exacted promise to read it prayerfully, it may well be believed, often left unfulfilled.

And they who came to her bedside, as many a servant of God can testify, left it with new light in the soul, and feeling as though they had been privileged indeed beyond the common lot of man, quite on the verge of heaven.

And of her it may be said -- as indeed of all who have advanced so far -- that the faith of the presence of Jesus in all the plenitude of sanctifying power and sanctifying grace, was the crowning charm and crowning excellence of all. Self-emptied and self-abased, prostrate at the feet of Jesus, she looked up to him as her all in all, and in him, never absent, always present to her faith, she dwelt even in the midst of the deepest infirmities, and sometimes in untold agonies of suffering, yet always on the sunny slope of the hills of salvation, and like the tree of life, always bearing fruit in abundance, ripening every month and every day of the year.

Her memoirs have been written. As much may be said of

AN AGED SERVANT OF JESUS,

whose record is on high, but whose good deeds have found none to chronicle them amongst men.

At eighty his athletic frame had begun to tremble under the weight of years, and his manly form to stoop a little -- strange if it had not been so. His infirmity indeed was so great that his children would no longer willingly consent to his living apart from them or following his old occupation. "Father," they said to him, "you have done enough already. It is time you gave yourself up to rest. Come, live with us. Let us take

care of you. Enjoy the freedom of all our houses. Go where you please and when you please, and be at home wherever you go. All we have is yours. But work no more, and live no longer by yourself."

This was kind and right. The old man loved his children, and was delighted with this new evidence of their affection for him.

But no. He would not consent to their plan. For two years more he remained in his own house, and kept up his occupation and his establishment in regular routine.

Meanwhile, however, he visited every family, prayed in every house, and talked personally with every man, woman and child, of a suitable age, in a circle of five thousand inhabitants, and many were awakened by his words. He established and maintained also, a weekly union prayer meeting, changing from house to house in a circuit as large as he could extend it. And this was the beginning of a revival which embraced all the churches, and almost every family in the town in its blessed sweep. And all this was after he was eighty years old, and so infirm that his children thought it unsafe for him to keep up his home and live apart from them.

At eighty-two they prevailed. He was constrained to yield to their affectionate urgency -- closed his establishment, sold out, and went to make home with his children. Then, in another town, some forty miles from his former residence, he was thrown into a new field -- not of rest, as his children had hoped, but of activity and usefulness. Looking about him he saw a population of twenty-five hundred or more, with all the usual church privileges to be sure, but without any one -- really in the spirit of Jesus -- to care for their souls. So in the faith of an ever present Saviour, he girt about him his coat, put on his India-rubbers, filled his pockets with tracts, refreshed his spirit at the foot of the cross, and started out on foot and alone. With his staff in his hand, trembling with age, he went from house to house, here again, as he had done before, in his former abode, until here again he had entered every habitation, and left there the impressive solemnity of his affectionate warnings and importunate supplications, upon the ears and hearts of every soul.

In this instance he was not permitted to see the fruits of his work in a general revival of religion, as in the other. Not however because it did not occur, but because he was taken home to his mansion and to his Master above, before the seed so abundantly sown by his hand had ripened into the harvest. His last visit made, his last prayer offered, in the last house of the whole, he went home to his daughter's to rest for the night, to enter next day as he purposed, upon a course of revisiting such families as he thought his services most needed in.

But his work of going about like his Master to do good was done. He lived many weeks, but went abroad no more while he lived. It was the writer's privilege to see him in his room after this but some while before his death. The interview will never be forgotten. The bowed and shaking form of the decrepit but noble old patriarch made an impression not to be effaced by time, or crowded out by the images of the multitude seen since, thronging the thoroughfare of life. But if his form impressed, his words were burned in. O how glowing! How more than youthful, almost heavenly in their vivacity and energy. They were all life. Jesus had indeed given him life in another sense than the one usually conveyed by the word -- a life which only seemed the more intense as his frame wasted and chilled, and grew heavy with years.

"Ah!" said he, "for twenty years now I have thought it would be nothing to die, but gain. But I did not know. My peace was made. I had learned also that Jesus was my surety and trust for purity and spotlessness as well as for pardon. I was ready -- all ready, and waiting. And I thought that at the word, in a moment, when

the summons should come, I could joyously strike tent and away. But no. I find it very different. Not so easy as I supposed."

"Ah! How is that, sir? You are not afraid to die?"

"No, not that! Thank God, not that! "

"What then, sir?"

"O, my brother, it is not striking tent, as I supposed, this dying is not. It is pulling down this old house rather piece by piece; and as the old frame gives way, torn brace after brace and timber after timber, apart, it is terrible. And yet even in this, thanks be to God, my Saviour is with me. He does not forsake me, and his grace is sufficient for me. Sometimes the cry will rise up, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, again, always the cheerful words, Thy will, not mine, be done, well up after the others, and all is hushed and peaceful." So this venerable man conversed, while I sat charmed at his feet.

Now what was it gave him such a power to bring forth fruit in old age?

Five thousand people visited after he was fourscore years old, and twenty-five hundred more after he was fourscore and two. What was the power? I asked him. He told me. Let his words to me, as well as I can remember to repeat them, reveal his secret to all.

"I was converted young, in the place of my birth. For forty years I was a member of the church, and a Christian, too, as I verily believe, without ever having been the means, so far, as I know, of the conversion of one soul, and that, too, through all the prime and vigor of my youth and manhood, from twenty to sixty. Sometimes, when I think of it, I am overwhelmed with grief and shame. But I knew no better. I lived as others in the church did. Kept up all the duties of religion at home and in the church; kept Sabbath, prayed, read my Bible, went to the Lord's table, fasted when fast days were appointed, and sometimes when they were not, and often enjoyed the communion of the Spirit and the fellowship of Christians, and the adoption and heirship of a child of God; the Spirit witnessing with my spirit that God was my Father; thankful in prosperity, sustained in adversity, and comforted always by a good hope of glory; and yet, as I said, never in all that forty years, so far as I know, the means of saving one soul -- (and here tears stole down his furrowed cheeks, the silent witnesses to the sincerity of his deep-toned regrets, and as he proceeded, there was indescribable impressiveness in his manner: sweetness, solemnity, tenderness, made his words thrill the heart-strings like an angel voice.)

At last, when I was sixty years old, God was pleased to visit the people of Utica, where I lived, in such power as I had never before seen. Hundreds and hundreds were converted -- some from amongst the most hardened and desperate of the people, and others of the most moral and regular. There was a great shaking, too, amongst Christians. Scores gave up hope; concluded they had been deceived, and came out and took the position of newly awakened sinners, inquiring what they should do to be saved. I myself was seized with conviction -- not that I was not a Christian, but that I was a useless cumberer of the church; a barren fig-tree in the garden of God; worse, it seemed to me, than any unconverted sinner in the world. Forty years of the prime of my life spent in the church and in the nominal service of God, and yet nothing done for the cause; not one soul won to Jesus. O, the thought was too bitter too bear. It bowed me down as the sturdy oak bows under the power of the tornado. Sometimes it seemed as if it would kill me outright; and then when I thought to make amends by a life devoted earnestly to doing good, then Satan taunted me with the idea that it would be a mockery to offer the decrepit and broken remnant of a misspent

life to God, and ask him to use me in my old age to save others.

But he could not keep me from making the offer of myself to the Lord. Now, however, the struggle did but just begin; for in my first attempt to benefit others, my own heart, or rather want of heart, was revealed to me, and in the next effort the conviction of my utter unfitness was deepened, and so on and on, until the weight of my burden was not so much my past barrenness as my present unfitness to do anything more than I had done in the past.

Then came the temptation to stop, and say, "Ah! I am not fit to do anything for God; I was not made for it; and if I was, I have lived so long with using and improving my talent, that it has grown rusty -- too rusty ever to be used." Satan here again, often taunted me, saying, Too old to change! Fool to think of it! But he did not stop me. My convictions were too deep; my burden too great; I could not stop. The thought of it was worse than the thought of death. And then something whispered hope to me, and I determined never to stop. Then I cried unto God, in my distress, to give me His Spirit and strengthen me for His service. But I cannot tell you the hundredth part of my struggles and troubles. Resolutions proved vain and cries for the Holy Spirit no better, at last, one day, for the first time in my life, I saw that the work of making my heart right, and keeping it right for the work of the Lord, was Christ's, by his own presence in the power of the Holy Ghost not mine at all. Christ's to save, mine to trust and to serve.

From that hour I left the Saviour's work in His hands to do, and looked to Him to do it, in the fullest confidence that He would; rejoiced that it was in such good hands -- so trustworthy, loving and true -- and I was not disappointed. From that hour I found it easy to wear the yoke and to bear the cross; and to the praise of God's own condescending love be it said, He has blessed me in His service and prospered me in the work given me to do. Jesus has been with me every day, now these twenty-two years; and every day I have done, in my imperfect way, just the work of the day, as my Saviour has laid it out for me. And one thing I can tell you, my brother, if I have been the instrument of good, it has been the Lord with me and this Lord within me who has done it, and not I. If the truths concerning Jesus has been in me, at well of water springing up into eternal life, and a fountain from which streams of life have flowed forth, I have been no more than the earthen pitcher which carries the water, or the iron pipe which conducts it. The power is of God. To God be all the glory. He alone is worthy to receive honor and power, and might and dominion; and He alone shall have it forever and ever, Amen."

Such was the story of this aged disciple, ten times over more touching and impressive from his trembling lips, and sunlit tear-bedewed face, and speaking eyes, than from the cold pen that writes it.

As he ceased, reflections and questions came crowding up; but a moment only was left before the car-whistle must be obeyed, and the venerable man left to the quiet and peace of solitary but blessed waiting for his summons in turn.

Some word was dropped about it, and the old man's thoughts flew onward and upward. "Ah! yes," said he, "this is my depot; I have come to it at last. Here I am, and here I wait. How long, my Father in heaven only knows. But not long. The bell will soon ring -- the rush and roar of the train will soon be heard -- the sound of invisible pinions. The summons will be given. Not in the shrill voice of the steam-whistle, but in the voice of angel song, or sweeter still in the voice of Him whose words are as the sound of many waters, and as the sound of tens of thousands of harpers, harping with their harps. Ah, I long to hear it; I long to see my Redeemer; I long to be with Him where He is, and behold His glory."

O, what a lustre, as of heaven reflected, shone his face! Within myself I said, Happy, happy, happy man! Thou indeed hast found not the fable but the true fountain of life! Thou hast stooped and drank of its waters, and eternal youth is thine! I could almost, without qualification, have applied to him the prophetic address to the Messiah, then yet to come, made by the Psalmist hundreds of years before His coming, "From the womb of the morning thou hast the dew of thy youth." So youthful was the spirit, so full of the freshness of hope and the vivacity of joy that still lingered and clung to the old tenement of clay.

To me he seemed like a young and beautiful bride, brought by her beloved and loving spouse into an old mansion, crumbling into dust, and ready to tumble before the first gust that should come, but brought there only to wait until the new and noble mansion, built and furnished by the hand of provident love, should be ready to receive her; and she, ready by contrast to appreciate it, when the time for "fitting" should come.

But that which impressed itself most deeply of all, was the contrast between the forty years of barrenness, the forty best years of his life -- from twenty to sixty -- and the twenty-two years, the two last years above all of such noble fruitage to God. Forty years without the known conversion of one single soul, from his influence, and the two years after he was eighty, hundreds converted. Ah! here was a contrast to be pondered well by one like me.

And the cause of it, too. Faith -- the faith which accepted the command -- Go ye!-- that emphatic first clause of this great commission -- Go ye! and obeyed it. And the faith which accepted also the promise in both aspects -- the present and the future -- Lo! I AM with you always, and Lo! THOU SHALT be with me where I am to behold my glory.

His was the faith already spoken of before -- the faith which gives all and takes all, and therefore has all -- and all in Christ -- whom having, there is nothing more it can ask.

In parting with the venerable brother beloved and father revered, one word was dropped to try him as to the source of his complacency, whether it was in himself or in Christ. May it be forgiven if even in the slightest shade of appearance it was wanting either in sincerity or respect.

Grasping his hand with the warmth of true admiration and love, (he returned it with interest,) I said, "Well father, I must leave you to wait here in your depot for the celestial train that will take you home to glory, and go myself to meet the earthly train that carries me back to my field of toil. You are all ready, and waiting." This was said in the deepest sincerity, and the response was, "Yes, thank God, all ready. Ready, and longing for the summons."

"You have done so much for the Master and his cause, and experienced so much, that you will not be ashamed to meet him and be ushered into the presence of the Father and of this holy angels."

Looking me earnestly in the face, while a shade of sadness and surprise came over the brightness of his countenance, he grasped my hand and pressed it more warmly than ever, and then placing it between his two, as if to impress the truth upon me with a double power of pathos, he answered:

"No! No, my son, not that! not THAT! All I have done is nothing -- all I have experienced nothing. I am nothing. My righteousness is as filthy rags -- at best no better than the torn, tattered, defiled, crossed, condemned notes of a broken bank. It would be an insult to offer it. It would be madness to trust to it. No! no! no! my son! Thank God I have a better hope. Jesus is mine and I am his -- and that is enough. He who has been with me through every trial in life will be with me in death. His grace will suffice. I shall not be

ashamed to meet him, for he has bought me with his blood, and sealed me by his Spirit. And I shall not be ashamed to go into the presence of his Father and my Father, for he will change me into his own heavenly image of spotless glory, and being like Him I shall be like all who are His. Jesus is all in all. Good by -- may Jesus go with you, and be with you evermore."

So we parted.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/william-edwin-boardman/the-harmony/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net