

The Way Missed

by William Edwin Boardman

The sermon emphasizes the importance of trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ as the way to salvation, and highlights the dangers of missing the way due to a lack of docility and reliance on works.

Scripture: Psalm 25:9, Proverbs 3:5, John 14:6, Romans 8:1, Ephesians 2:8

Topics: "Jesus Christ", "Sanctification"

Description

William Edwin Boardman preaches about the importance of seeking the way to God through Jesus Christ, emphasizing that Christ is the way to justification, sanctification, and glorification. Trusting in Christ and obeying His commands and promises is the means to find the way. The sermon highlights the struggles and failures of individuals who try to find the way through their own efforts, whether by seeking guidance from books, taking bold stands for truth, or relying on works or rituals for sanctification. Ultimately, the key is to humbly seek the Lord, ask for His guidance, and trust in Jesus alone for salvation and sanctification.

Transcript

BY WHOM? AND HOW?

THE WAY HAS BEEN CAST UP, A HIGHWAY. HILLS DIGGED DOWN, VALLEYS FILLED UP, TO THE LEVEL OF AN EASY GRADE. STONES GATHERED OUT -- THE WHOLE MADE PLAIN, CLEAR, OPEN. A CHILD MIGHT SEE IT. AND THE WAYFARER, THOUGH A FOOL, NEED NOT MISS IT.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the way. Christ all in all. Christ our justification, Christ our sanctification, Christ our glorification -- He is the way.

And trust in Christ -- the trust which accepts and obeys the commands, and which believes and receives the promises, is the means.

He who takes Christ for all, has all, and having all, has the peace of God passing all understanding, for he has the very God of peace with him and within him, to free him from fear, deliver him from danger, and support him in trial. With the Apostle Paul, he knows by happy experience, that "there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. Who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. For the law (power and rule) of the spirit of life, has made them free from the law (power and rule) of sin and death."

Examples, such as those of the patriarchs, and prophets, who trusted in Jehovah, (Jesus,) and the apostles and martyrs, and Luther, D'Aubigne, Baxter, Taylor, the Wesleys and Havelock, Who trusted in

Jesus, (Jehovah,) mark the way as an illustrious line of journeyers in it, and as a glorious cloud of witnesses for it.

Still, however, it is so, that honest, earnest pilgrims, seeking for it, often miss it, and for a time struggle in vain to find it. True they do find it at last, and pursue it with all the greater joy for having groped for it in darkness for awhile, like the blind.

But why is it that they miss it, and how? The answer is easy for the initiated to give, but not so easy for the uninitiated to receive. It is not difficult for one who himself has missed the way and afterwards found it, to spread upon paper a chart, both of the by-ways, and also of the highway. But it is quite another affair to give eyes to the blind wanderer in any one of the by-ways to see the highway and enter into it. This indeed it is the Lord's to do, not the writer's. And he is able to do it. Let us trust him.

Before attempting to map out any of these by-ways, it may be well to point out the cause why so many take them, and so pertinaciously keep them, when the highway is so plain. It is this - a lack of docility.

Let any one who is convinced, go directly to the Lord without conferring with flesh and blood, ink and paper; stretch forth the hand of blind helplessness, to be grasped by the hand of a seeing power, and say, O Lord, lead me -- and he will soon be led into the way.

Let him lay aside all his own preconceived notions, and in the spirit of the stricken Saul, prostrate on the Damascus road, let him cry, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" and like Saul await the answer. And then let him obey it, and then ask again -- Lord, what more must I do? and again wait the answer. And when it comes, obey that. And then again ask -- Lord, what more yet? and do that, and so on. And there is no risk of presumption in saying, that in less time than the three days of groping and fasting allotted to Saul the last answer will come and the last thing be done, the struggle will end, the scales will fall from his eyes, and the light break in upon his soul.

One of three things, these wandering, struggling ones do, instead of taking the course here indicated, they either settle firmly upon some preconceived process of their own, and pursue it until scourged out of it by disappointment after disappointment; or they go to books or men for directions in stead of going directly, first of all, to the Lord, and casting all upon him; or else if they do go first to the Lord, and look to him to map out the way for them, and put them in it, they fail because they stop after the first answer, taking the first requisition for all, when it is only the beginning whereas they should keep on asking, until they see and know for themselves that they are now in the way, and have no more need to ask for the way, but only to go forward, leaning upon the arm that has led them into it.

Another sketch from life will best illustrate this. A sketch from the experience of

A YOUNG CHRISTIAN.

She was only a lamb of the flock. Young and newly converted. A few months after her conversion, the Good Shepherd drew her out and away from the world, to lead her more fully into the riches and knowledge and love of God. As he led Moses with the flock of Jethro his father-in-law into the back side of the desert to the mount of God, and there manifested himself to him under his new name, the I AM; so he led this young disciple, by the love she bore to one whom she had recently married, out upon the borders of civilization, and there in her new wilderness home, he came to her in all the brightness of the burning bush, and in all the fulness of his love.

The evidence that convinced her was too clear to be rejected, and the experience too precious to be neglected. And in the same hour that she was convinced of its reality, her resolution was taken, by the grace of God, to find the way and walk in it. And in that same hour she began asking the way, and found it.

It was a struggle. The world had wonderful attractions for her. She herself was as bright as a May morning, and as fresh and fair, and the world was as bright to her as she was to the world. Like the broad prairies around her new home, the world to her was a garden of flowers, and to all around her she was one of the most attractive of all in the whole blooming wilderness. It was therefore no slight sacrifice when the world was laid anew, and more fully than ever, on the altar again. To leave her friends and her home in the heart of the great world, and go out into a country wild and strange, was a trial which brought many a sigh from her heart, and many a tear to her cheek; but to give up the world and turn her back upon its vanities and pleasures, and devote herself entirely and forever to God, was a far greater sacrifice, even if it did not cost as many sighs and tears.

The brand, she knew would be applied, for the world never spares those who turn their back fairly upon it.

The loss of pleasures, by no means drained to the dregs, she could not but feel keenly.

To give up her own will and her own way, for the Lord's in the new and higher relations, was a submission not easy to make.

But hardest of all it was, really to believe that the Lord Jesus would do all for her that she needed and to leave it entirely with him to do, and then rest satisfied.

Moses doubtless served the Lord cheerfully and easily, as the shepherd of the flock of his father-in-law in the land of Midian, and found it easy to believe the Lord would keep him and his flock from the wild beasts and Arabs, but to follow the Lord and trust him in the new and higher sphere, as leader of Israel, to which the Lord called him from Horeb, required a higher consecration and a greater faith than he had before.

So with this young Christian, called to a higher and a holier Christian life. But as in the case of Moses, so in hers, the communion of the one hour with the Lord himself, gave the happy result, which others, who take another course than that of going directly to the Lord and looking in childlike simplicity to him to put them in the way, reach only after months and years of fruitless toil and many sad failures.

She was alone in her new home when convinced. It was one Sabbath morning. The blessed privilege of worship with the people of God, prized when she enjoyed it, and now doubly prized when host -- was denied her. To make herself the best possible amends, she took to reading, prayer, and meditation.

Thus engaged the Lord met her and opened her eyes to see what great things he had yet in store for her if she would give herself up anew to him and accept of his promises.

The moment she was convinced she laid aside her book, and bowed upon her knees before the Lord and confessed her convictions, and asked what she must do. To this the suggestion came, "Give the world wholly up." This, of course, she had done already before at her conversion, as far as she then understood; but as yet, then, she did not know all the world, nor yet all of her own heart. But now she counted the cost as to pleasure and dress, and friends, and everything, and then most heartily responded, "Yes, Lord, I will." And then she asked again "What more must I do?" In answer to this came the suggestion, "You must confess all the Lord does for you before the church and the world." There was a circle around her, and a set of circumstances which made this a great trial. But again she responded heartily, "Yes, Lord, I will."

And then asked yet again, "What more, O Lord?" And now came the suggestion, hardest of all. "Believe, only believe." She said "It is a great thing to believe that the Lord can and will cleanse me from all sin, and keep me by his Power, and present me spotless before the throne. He never yet has, in the past delivered me from the power of the enemy entirely. Yet I know he is almighty and I will trust him. I will believe. I do believe." This settled, she asked again, "What more, O Lord?" To which the final suggestion came, "Nothing more. This is all." It was almost as hard to believe that this was all, as to believe that Christ would do all, but she did believe and was satisfied; so she thanked the Lord for his wonderful condescension and love, and rose from her knees at rest and in peace, with new light in her heart, and new light on her pathway. The hour ended, and when the clock told out that she was entering upon the next hour, she was as truly in the highway as if she had first tried every by-way of them all, and spent months and years in weary wanderings.

Now it will be said, she was a child and easily led. That is just what I say. She was a child, and childlike she never once thought of devising any way of her own, and as for church or minister she had none to inquire of, and her book even, she laid aside, and went directly to the Lord himself, and he put her at once in the way, as he always does those who go to him in this child like spirit of dependence and teachable helplessness.

Some miss the way by taking some preconceived way of their own. A peculiar instance of this sort occurred in the case of S---- a theological student, whose habits, character and experience all justify his being called

THE WORKER.

His fellow-students and the faculty, the seminary social circle, and all the churches in the region, knew S. as the worker of the seminary. They had their lazy ones -- most institutions have -- and their students, par excellence, and their praying and their talking ones. S. was the worker. If tracts were to be distributed, or a religious visitation to be undertaken, or any other work to be done around the institution, S. must be one of the party, if not the sole one to do the work. If any city churches needed a worker, and called either of the professors to mention some suitable person, S. was sure to be named. If a meeting of days was about to be undertaken, anywhere in the region, whoever might be the preachers, S. was sure to be the worker.

For this all his early training on a farm, where morning, noon, and night he was at work, in seed-time and harvest, winter and summer, had fitted him physically -- strong and well, he was able to work and to endure.

His conversion and religious training, had confirmed him and developed his bias, as a worker.

Young when led to engage in the service of God his activities from the first were called out in the work of his church, and his conscience was continually driving him up to do more and yet more, as his fellow-students had abundant occasion to know, for, mingled with his frequent confessions, in their meetings, of his own short-comings in the work of the Lord, there were lashings, not few nor far apart, nor light upon the galled backs of his wincing companions, for their indolence and inactivity. Like his own sawbuck and woodsaw, with which he eked out a meagre income, he was never idle when time and chance offered for work. And whoever fell into his hands must be cut and split to the required fitness for the Masters's service, or resist a resolute and faithful workman. He was no mincer.

Probably this, his habit and character, more than everything else led his pastor and church to urge upon him the question of becoming a minister, and more than anything else pressed him on into the great undertaking of eight or nine long years' preparation in the schools.

While in the seminary, in the first part of his three years' course, a circumstance happened which still more confirmed this inveterate characteristic. In one of the city churches a meeting had been commenced. S. was engaged as usual and at work with both hands full. After a few days a singular change came over him. He ceased his working, and began to mope. He seemed terribly cast down. Ministers and people saw it and wondered at it. By and by one day he went to Mr. A., a minister in whose wisdom he had the greatest confidence, and opened his heart. He had fallen into great doubt and distress about himself. "I have been at work for years trying to save others," he said, "and I fear I am myself a castaway. I see no other way than that I must be lost."

Mr. A. answered him, saying, "O my dear brother, leave all that to the Lord. He will take care of you. Just go forward blowing the ram's horn," -- alluding to a sermon just preached about the fall of Jericho, and the part in it taken by the Lord himself and the part given by him to the people -- "Just go forward blowing the ram's horn, and all the walls of doubt and difficulty will soon fall down before you. You will come off conqueror, and more than conqueror over all."

In an instant his mind was made up. His work was resumed. His saddened face took on its old wonted expression of resolution, and his voice was again lifted up in the old, driving, searching style and tone. Very soon, as Mr. A. had assured him it would be, his doubts disappeared and he was triumphant.

This instruction led him at the time to a practical working faith in the Lord, and delivered him from his darkness. But it led him afterwards to fly to work itself, and trust in that, as his deliverer from whatever difficulty or danger might befall him. Was he in darkness? Work was his means of getting into the light. Was he tempted? He flew to some work of mercy to put the tempter to flight. Did coldness, drowsiness, begin to creep over him? He aroused himself, put on his coat, .put on his shoes, and sallied forth to some arduous labor until his spirit was as wakeful, and his zeal as ardent as he desired. Just as he was wont, in a cold winter's day, when the fire in his room was low, and the cold came creeping over him, so that it could not be snapped off at his finger's ends by clapping his hands and swinging his arms, or stamped off by a brisk circuit time after time around his room, then instead of increasing the fire in his stove, to go out with his saw and saw-buck, and get himself all a-glow in the wood yard; just so he managed affairs in the interests and care of the heart. Work was his sovereign specific for every ill the spirit is heir to.

In this frame and habit he was, when the Lord convinced him more deeply than ever before of his guilt and pollution, and raised the great question how he was to be purified. Others around him -- not a few -- he saw who had been far below him in all the activities of the Christian life, now rising by virtue of a mysterious experience suddenly far above him in all the light and love and joy and peace of the Christian. And it took him aback, put him sadly about as the expressive Scotch phrase gives it.

To set anything more excellent before S. was to put him on the stretch for it. In his own mind there was not a moment's delay when once he was convinced of the realities of the experience in question. But he did not at once acknowledge it. His pride of superiority at first would not allow that. He had given his companions too many lashings for being so far below him, to be willing at once to admit to them that they were getting above him.

Of course there was not the least question about what must be done. Work was the only thing -- work would be sovereign. It always had been before; it would be now. So he redoubled his energies and activities. Laid upon his shoulders greater burdens than ever -- and lashed them if through weakness of the flesh they failed to bear it. Nights he studied and prayed. Days he spent abroad amongst the people at work. Failing in this process at home, he obtained leave of absence and went abroad, to attend distant meetings in progress, working as hard as Loyola, or any galley slave ever did, and with -- just as much -- not a whit more -- success in breaking his chains, and gaining release from the power of sin.

At last he returned humbled and dispirited, and sent for a fellow-student who had been somewhat useful as the Master's servant in leading the inquiring to look to him alone for relief and release.

To his question, "What must I do?" the response was, "What have you been doing?" "Working," was the substance of the answer to this. "It is trusting, not working, by which God has ordained to save sinners," was the response again. And now opened a scene such as is rare upon earth. "What!" said S., "Do you say that working to save others, will not deliver me from my own sins?" "I do -- work is not the Saviour. Jesus alone can save. Works spring from faith, not faith from works." "Do you say that praying, and fasting, and reading the Bible and teaching and leading others to do so will not, under Jesus, save my soul from the power of corruption?" "I do say just that. Your own work for yourself or others can never save your soul. You are leaning upon a broken reed, to be pierced through with many sorrows. You are rejecting Jesus the only Saviour, and putting your own imperfect and polluted work in his stead -- not, it is true, as your merit, but as the power by which God is to save you. Jesus alone is the Saviour, and trust alone in him is the condition upon which he saves.

The effect of this one moment's conversation was overwhelming to poor S. Every prop upon which he was leaning seemed to be suddenly stricken from under him. His footing from the firmness of the solid rock seemed, in one instant to have dissolved to the mobility of quicksand. He threw himself back in his armchair, clasped his hands over his face, and a convulsive shiver shook his manly frame from head to foot in every muscle. He grew pallid and horror-stricken. Rolled up his eye-balls convulsively, and exclaimed, hoarsely, huskily, catching for breath, like one in the agonies of sudden death, "I am sinking! -- I am sinking -- into hell!"

His fellow-student sat a moment confounded -- in once -- then most affectionately and urgently assured S., that the arms of everlasting mercy were beneath him. That he could not sink into hell, that Jesus was with him and would save him, and much more to the same purpose, but all in vain.

Constrained at last to leave S. to himself and the Saviour, he went to his own quarters, with a subdued and saddened spirit, to bear the poor fellow up before the mercy seat in the urgent sympathising petition of faith. Next morning calling early, he found S. pale but peaceful; stripped of his glorying and trusting in works, and resting now upon Jesus. Humbled, quiet, and subdued. The storm had passed by, and swept him from the quicksand of his works, but the hand that raised the storm had been stretched forth in the midst of it to grasp him, and set his feet upon the Rock of Ages forever.

He lives to work on, and work more and more wisely than ever. Revival after revival crowned his labors. But he will never again put his works in the place of Jesus, as his Saviour from sin.

This traces in lines clear and distinct on our chart, one of the by-ways -- that of works for others as a means of sanctifying ourselves.

Another is that of looking to books, or men, or both, for the light of the way which God alone can give.

Another is that of taking a bold stand for stigmatized truths and unpopular reforms, as a means of humbling ourselves in the dust, and so of sanctifying ourselves to the Lord.

Another is that of increased punctiliousness in the observance of rites and ceremonies, and all the minor matters of the law. The anise-and-mint-tithing way of the Pharisees of old, and the tractarian way of the Pharisees of our own day, upon the principle that perfection, in external sanctity, will sanctify the heart.

Another is that of praying for the Holy Spirit to come and work in us some certain states of mind and heart which we imagine to be sanctification, or holiness, seeking to be made consciously holy. Praying for the Spirit and prescribing to Him His work. Whereas, when he comes it is to work according to his own good pleasure -- not according to ours -- and to make us conscious of our unholiness, that we may find our holiness in Christ, not in ourselves.

Now to illustrate these by-ways one by one, each by a life sketch, would be easy, and not without interest and profit, but it would require a volume almost.

There are those who have tried nearly every by-way of them all -- run each out in turn to the bitter end of disappointment, before finally going to Jesus as the way. One such would give us a complete chart of them all in the single sketch of his own blunderings. Such a one is at hand.

THE PASTOR.

He is no blunderer either, in other matters. Few more careful, or wise, or discreet, than. Abundant success in his pastoral work shows that. And yet he calls himself -- as we shall have occasion to see in the end, in view of the long succession of blunders made in his efforts to learn the way of sanctification experimentally -- a fool. How and when and where he was convinced, is not at all essential to our chart. Possibly it may have been in connexion with a very delightful work amongst the students of another of our Theological Seminaries. Such a work there was, and in it many of the young gentlemen came to see and understand the way of sanctification by faith, and to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and the pastor knew much of this work and commended it publicly. It would be a glorious thing, if from year to year, each and all of our schools of the prophets could be baptized in this way.

Possibly it was the conscious leanness of his own soul which made him hunger and thirst for the precious things of God. Not that he was not a devoted Christian and minister. There was no apparent lack of this kind. Indeed he was far more than most others a faithful, earnest, tender, thorough, pastor and preacher, and for this very reason he would be the more likely to feel deeply his own want of this very experience of the way of sanctification. Those who are most earnest in pressing forward, come soonest into the light, which reveals their own pollutions. The laggards among the prophets, are not apt to have visions of God in his exalted purity and glory making them exclaim, "Woe is me! for I am a man of unclean lips." Such a vision -- with the live coal from the altar to take away our sins, would be a blessing of unspeakable value to every ambassador of Christ, and there are many who would welcome it, gladly. Perhaps it was the increasing desire to do good, and to learn the way to gain the power from God to do it. Such aspirations are indeed angel visitants -- not few or far between -- in the pastor's heart.

But, however it was, at the time our sketch commences, the pastor had become deeply convinced and was earnestly longing for the experience in question. He was a student, and student-like, his first resort

was to books. Whatever his own library contained, or the bookstores could supply, or other libraries could lend, he got and devoured, upon the subject of the higher forms of Christian experience. He read over the memoirs and writings of the most noted in each of the three classes we have named. Lutheran," "Wesleyan," and "Oberlinian." He ranged about and fed with the greediness of Pharaoh's lean kine, and gained -- as much -- but no more by it. He read, marked, learned, and inward-digested, the experiences of all he could hear about, who had found the way to the tree of life and fattened upon its twelve manner of fruits but he was lean as ever.

His church had reason to know something of this. If he devoured books as the silk worm does mulberry leaves, for his own food, it gave material for pulpit and the prayer meeting, which like the cocoons of the silk worm, the people had occasion to spin and weave into close fitting garments for themselves. Like others who write bitter things against themselves, he of course told his people over and over, that they were no better than they ought to be, and were in great need of a deeper work of grace as well as himself. Like Leigh Richmond under conviction, unconverted but preaching, he preached his people into convictions like his own, but had no power to point them the way out; for as yet, and for a long while, he did not know it himself.

Meanwhile, he wrote to the living, or visited them from whom he hoped to receive light. But neither the illustrious dead by their memoirs, nor the living by their words, could give him the light of the way of life. They could tell him what to do -- could tell him to consecrate himself, and to believe; but they could not make him understand. The Lord alone could do that, and he had not yet learned to go as a child and ask the way.

Strange we are so slow to learn that the Lord alone can open the eyes of the blind, unstop the ears of the deaf, and set the prisoner free!

All books, like the book in the Apocalypse, are sealed, until they are opened by Him who sits upon the throne. And the living teacher, though he were an Isaiah, is no better than the dumb, until our ears are opened by the Lord to hear, and our heart to understand his words. The word of God itself is only a dead letter to us, until we look to the living Saviour for light, and he then makes it a quickening spirit.

The pastor failed to look to Jesus directly for the light and so every book from the Bible downwards failed to give it to him.

Baffled in this quarter he turned to another. His next movement was that of humbling himself by taking a bold stand for unpopular truths and reforms. Pulpit and platform and press, groaned under his appeals. He challenged the world to say what it pleased about him, and let them know that he was not to be turned from his course, or kept back by fear of the brand. Relentlessly and heroically he pushed his crusades. Not so much, however, in hope to secure the reforms, as to humble and sanctify himself. And what was the result? Was he humbled and sanctified? No. But lifted up in the pride of his heart, so that he began to despise his brethren who did not come out and stand with him, and stand by him; and although not at all inclined to censoriousness, it was hard for him to withhold denunciations of their course. At last -- seeing as he did, the rising pride of his heart, when he looked to see it thoroughly humbled in the dust -- hope from this quarter died out and he turned to another.

It would have been strange indeed, if he had not tried making the outside of the cup and the platter clean, to sanctify the inside. He did not indeed pull up his carpets, and sell them, with every other elegance or curiosity or luxury of his house, as some have done. His tasteful and excellent wife, might have put in

some serious objections if he had proposed it. Possibly he thought so, and therefore said nothing to her about it. Another minister, who had gathered a splendid library, sold all and gave to the poor, under a similar pressure, reserving only a few devotional books, and a few absolutely indispensable.

Our pastor was wiser than that. He left his library complete. It seems not to have once occurred to him, that putting the light out of his library might bring it into his mind; at any rate he did not try it. The mint-and-anise process, of course, reached his wardrobe and person, though not to any very ridiculous extreme. He did not go as far as the lady who sold her wedding ring, and then disposed of the old watch, the heirloom of her paternal ancestry, because conscience would not down at her bidding, and because she hoped by stripping her person of the last jewels and ornaments, to bedeck her spirit with the higher graces coveted.

But whatever he did or did not do, he failed in all, and gave up hope in this quarter in turn.

He had now tried, first, inquiring of books and men for the way, and failed. Next, he had sought humility of heart by braving reproach, and failed. Next, he had tried punctilious observances; regulating dress and time, and occupations, and expenses, and intercourse with the world, and everything by rule, as a means of regulating the heart, and failed.

What next?

Now he turned to seek the Holy Spirit by prayer, to do the work which he took it for granted would be done; that is, cleanse his soul and give him to feel that he was really holy. This he pushed more urgently than all before. Every book upon prayer was searched, the Bible above all. Every example of the prevalence of man with his God, and every promise, was weighed with the care of one who is gathering and sifting gold dust for his bags. Not simply to be treasured either, but to be used, rather as bank-notes are by the holder who presents them at the counter for payment.

Through all his struggles and troubles, his church of course, shared largely, whether they knew it or not, what was passing in his heart. And more than ever he had come now, upon a course which was suitable to urge upon them. They were stirred up to pray, as they never had been before. Pray to test the power of prayer. Pray to sanctify themselves. Pray that the Lord would come down and work in pentecostal power in their own hearts and in all around them. And they did pray -- but their pastor prayed more; and more than they all. Hour after hour, alone with his God, he wrestled with the pertinacity of a Jacob, but not like Jacob to prevail.

Time passed on; day after day, week after week flew by, and yet the blessing delayed. The Spirit did not come upon either pastor or people. He was confounded, and began to inquire what it could mean. He was at last completely at his wit's end and falling before the Lord confessed it. His plans, one after one, had all been tried out and failed. He could devise nothing more; now what should he do? There was nothing more that he could do but to therefore in all this history of successive struggles inquire of the Lord what to do. For the first time he was prepared to come to the Lord himself, not to have any plan of his own confirmed and carried out, but to ask after the Lord's plan, and be led into it. And this he did most heartily. He threw himself upon the Saviour to be shown the way, and there he rested the matter.

Rising from before the Lord, he opened his Bible at the oft read seventh of Romans, and read over again the history in miniature, of his own vain struggles in the weary months and years gone by. Coming to the closing question, "O wretched man that I am who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" he read it

and re-read it with a sigh, and then passed on to the answer, "I thank God through Jesus Christ my Lord." The light flashed through his soul, that Jesus was the deliverer from sin, just as he had been his deliverer from condemnation. And springing to his feet he could scarce restrain himself from leaping for joy, exclaiming, "What a fool I have been! What a fool I have been! Strange I have never seen this before. There never has been an hour through all this time, when if I had seen any one doing to obtain forgiveness of sin what I have been doing to obtain purification from sin, that I should not have said, 'O foolish man, you are rejecting Christ the way in vain efforts to be saved in your own way.' What a fool I have been! What a fool I have been!"

Light came in a flood. His joy was tumultuous.

By and by, when it calmed down to something like the even flow of peace, he opened his Bible and ran it through and through, everywhere seeing the confirmation of the fact that sanctification like justification is by faith in the Lord Jesus, that the just shall live as well as be made alive by faith.

And now commenced a new era in his preaching and teaching. The days of scolding were over and gone. He had found green pastures for his flock, and he delighted to lead them there, and they were delighted to be led.

Now also came the beginning of a revival in that church, the end whereof has not yet been seen at this writing. Through all the days of scolding and driving, neither pastor nor people could do for the cause of the Redeemer what now it is easy for them to do. For now they have a mind to the work; and they work with a will and a wisdom new in their history. Many a dark place never ventured upon before, has now been lighted up by their presence, and many a hard piece of work, too hard for them in all the past, has now been undertaken and done. And so the wilderness all around is made glad for them and the desert begins to blossom as the rose.

With this sketch of the pastor's experience, we close these illustrations of the way to attain abiding union with Jesus.

In endeavoring to show what it is, a basis has been laid, in historical examples. And in illustrating the way, sketches from life have been given.

These sketches have all been drawn from the world of fact, not of fiction. Most of them are narratives of scenes and circumstances which have taken place under the writer's own observation.

In taking these, rather than those already on record, we have hoped both to secure greater interest and also to add to the wealth of the church in its treasures of this kind.

Strange and extraordinary experiences have not been sought, but rather the simple histories of the more frequent workings of God in salvation.

Strange things startle and arouse, but guidance and instruction come rather from scenes and circumstances not too far above us.

"You come down to me, in what you say. I can understand you. You make it plain and simple. Others bewilder me. They talk of things too high -- too wonderful for me. I cannot understand them."

This is a remark the successful teacher often hears. His is a work, not of dazzling, but of leading. And hitherto this has been our aim.

Passing now to the illustration of the progress and power gained by abiding in Jesus, the same course will be followed. The Bible, and Memoirs, and hitherto unrecorded facts, known to be facts, will be the staple of our material. God grant grace and wisdom in the work. To Him be glory, all the glory, and always the glory. Amen.

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

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