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WILLIAM EDWIN BOARDMAN (1810-1886):
EVANGELIST OF THE HIGHER CHRISTIAN LIFE

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EVANGELIST OF THE HIGHER CHRISTIAN LIFE**

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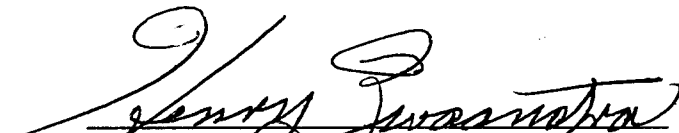
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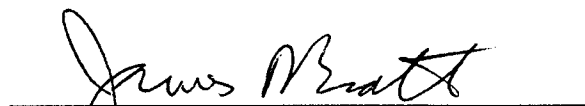
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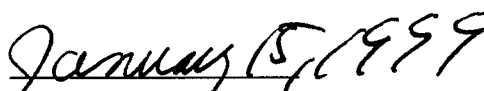
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ABSTRACT

The Presbyterian evangelist, William Edwin Boardman (1810-1886), has received limited attention in studies related to the American and British holiness movements. The attention he has received has been limited to his connection to other topics. The available analyses of his doctrine of sanctification does not clearly define the connection between his message and other nineteenth-century holiness theologies. Furthermore, these analyses of Boardman's message are generally based on a limited use of the primary sources.

The purpose of this dissertation is to analyze Boardman's doctrine of sanctification in relation to the mid-nineteenth century American and British theological milieu. Attention will be given to the similarities and differences between his understanding of the doctrine of sanctification and that of the Wesleyans, the Oberlinians, the Reformed, and other proponents of the "higher Christian life," including adherents of the Keswick Convention.

Boardman's message provided a middle ground on which the proponents of various holiness theologies could unite. He drew on these holiness theologies to formulate a doctrine of sanctification that held conflicting ideas in tension. He advanced a Trinitarian doctrine of sanctification in which he attempted to coordinate human inability and human responsibility with the work of the Holy Spirit. He affirmed both the Wesleyan doctrine of instantaneous sanctification and the Reformed doctrine of gradual sanctification. He also allowed for the possibility that Christians might enter the higher Christian life at the moment of justification, or as a result of a crisis experience subsequent to justification. Though he influenced the religious experience of many people, few joined him on this middle ground.

The first chapter introduces Boardman, his theological milieu, and the secondary literature related to him. After this introduction, Boardman's life is considered in greater detail. In the third chapter, attention is directed to Boardman's message. The fourth chapter surveys the assessment of Boardman's writings in the religious press, and his response. The final chapter defines Boardman's place in the nineteenth-century holiness movement in view of the evidence.

PREFACE

Several years ago, Timothy Smith expressed concern that students of religious history were ignoring the nineteenth-century holiness movement. He maintained that scholars did not recognize the movement's widespread influence on the religious developments of the period. They dismissed the people and ideas that contributed to the holiness movement.¹

The level of interest in the nineteenth-century holiness movement has significantly increased since Timothy Smith expressed his concern. In recent years, a number of dissertations and monographs have been produced in which the authors examine the people, ideas, and events that contributed to the holiness movement. Until now, the Presbyterian evangelist, William Edwin Boardman (1810-1886), has received only limited attention, generally in connection with other topics.

Boardman's contribution to the nineteenth-century holiness movement in the United States and Great Britain deserves more attention. He was a popular evangelist, and author. He was acquainted with Asa Mahan, Phoebe Palmer, Robert and Hannah Smith, Albert Simpson, and Evan Hopkins--well-known proponents of practical holiness in the United States and Great Britain. He also participated in events preceding the founding of the Keswick Convention (1875). In addition, he worked as a frontier missionary; served Presbyterian congregations in Michigan, New Jersey, and California; held a prominent position in the American Sunday School Union; and assisted in the operation of the United States Christian Commission during the Civil War.

Boardman's religious experience and theology were influenced by the revival atmosphere that dominated American and British Protestantism in the nineteenth century. He was a restrained yet passionate man whose commitment to divine service led him from the Wisconsin frontier, back and forth across the United States, to Great Britain, to Sweden, and back to Great Britain. His influence on the holiness movement was felt not only in these countries, but in Germany as well, where his books found interested readers.

In this study of Boardman's life and thought, I attempt to define his place in the nineteenth-century holiness movement. The first chapter introduces Boardman, his

¹Timothy L. Smith, Revivalism and Social Reform in American Protestantism on the Eve of the Civil War (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), p. 103.

theological milieu, and the secondary literature related to him. After this introduction, I examine Boardman's life in greater detail. I am particularly interested in the influences that bore upon his religious experience, and his developing doctrine of sanctification. I am also interested in his work, and the results of that work. In the third chapter, I examine the various features of his message and compare it to the then current holiness theologies. I then turn to the critics' assessment of Boardman's writings, and his response to their criticism. Lastly, I define Boardman's place in the nineteenth-century holiness movement in view of the evidence. I also compare my definition of Boardman's place in the nineteenth-century holiness movement with that found in the secondary literature.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE LIFE AND LABORS
OF WILLIAM EDWIN BOARDMAN

- 1810 Born in Smithsbourog, NY on October 11
- 1826 Apprentice in a mercantile
- 1831 Merchant near Detroit, MI
- 1832 Conversion at a protracted meeting near Detroit, MI
- 1837 Marriage to Mary Morse Adams in Detroit, MI
- 1840 Merchant in Sterling, IL
- 1841 Merchant in Potosi, Wisconsin Territory
- 1842 Enters the higher Christian life
- 1842 Revival in Potosi, Wisconsin Territory under the leadership of Revs. Stephen Peet and J. C. Holbrook (February or March)
- 1842 Assumes pastoral leadership of First Presbyterian Church, Potosi, Wisconsin Territory (February or March)
- 1842 Licensed as Pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Potosi, Wisconsin Territory by the Rock River Association, IL (June)
- 1842 Commissioned by the American Home Missionary Society (June)
- 1843 Student at Lane Theological Seminary, Walnut Hills, OH (July)
- 1846 Missionary, Greenfield, IN
- 1847 Rest in New Haven, CT
- 1848 American Sunday School Union Missionary, Oakland County, MI
- 1851 Publishes The Olive Branch with Miss I. B. Gridley, Charles V. De Land, and A. A. Dorrance in Jackson, MI

- 1852 Pastor of First Presbyterian Church of White Lake, White Lake, MI
- 1853 Joins the staff of the American Sunday School Union, Philadelphia, PA
- 1856 Pastor of the Gloucester City Presbyterian Church, Gloucester City, NJ
- 1858 Publishes The Higher Christian Life
- 1859 Pastor of the First Protestant Society of the City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA (May)
- 1862 Resigns as pastor of the First Protestant Society, Los Angeles, CA, returns to the East Coast, and is elected Executive Secretary and Delegate of the United States Christian Commission
- 1868 Travels to Germany by way of France for rest
- 1868 Embarks upon an independent ministry, arranging for his financial support by means of a business partnership
- 1869 Publishes He that Overcometh
- 1869 Travels to Great Britain for business reasons, but he is drawn into ministry
- 1869 Addresses the Mildmay Conference
- 1870 Returns to the United States and renews his commitment to full-time evangelism among Christians
- 1870 Participates in conventions for holiness under the auspices of the National Association for the Promotion of Holiness
- 1870 Delivers the closing address at the Des Plaines, Illinois Camp Meeting (August), under the auspices of the National Association for the Promotion of Holiness
- 1870 Publishes Gladness in Jesus
- 1870 Visits the Tuesday Meeting at the home of Walter and Phoebe Palmer in New York City (November)
- 1871 Attends the Round Lake (New York) Camp Meeting under the auspices of the National Association for the Promotion of Holiness
- 1871 Joins Presbyterian, Baptist, Reformed, Quaker, Episcopalian, and a few

- Methodist conferees at the Round Lake Camp Meeting in forming the Union National Camp Meeting for the Promotion of Holiness and becomes its chairman
- 1871 Publishes a revised edition of The Higher Christian Life
- 1871-72 Conducts holiness revivals in New England (Fall and Winter) under the auspices of the Union National Camp Meeting for the Promotion of Holiness
- 1872 Conducts holiness revivals with Henry Belden and Lucy Drake (Spring)
- 1872 Rest in Centerville, MA (Summer and Fall)
- 1872 Publishes Faith Work under Dr. Cullis in Boston
- 1873 Travels to Germany with Dr. and Mrs. Charles Cullis and others for rest
- 1873 Travels to Great Britain where he joins Robert Smith and resumes a limited schedule (September)
- 1873 Attends the Broadlands Conference hosted by William Cowper-Temple at his Broadlands Estate
- 1874 Participates in the Union Meeting for the Promotion for Scriptural Holiness held at Oxford (August 29-September 7)
- 1874 Leads a number of small conferences on the higher Christian life
- 1874 Robert Smith begins publication of Christian's Pathway to Power (London), a periodical devoted to the higher Christian life
- 1875 Leads a conference on the higher Christian life at Agriculture Hall, London (January)
- 1875 Embarks on a mission to Scotland (May)
- 1875 Leaves Great Britain for the United States on the opening day of the Brighton Convention for the Promotion of Scriptural Holiness (May 29-June 7)
- 1875 Returns to the United States for the purpose of re-establishing his residence, but returns to Great Britain six months later
- 1875 Publishes In the Power of the Spirit

- 1877 Convenes a weekly "Tuesday Meeting" in his London home
- 1880 Undertakes a mission to Sweden
- 1881 Publishes The Great Physician (Jehovah Rophi)
- 1882 Establishes the Bethshan Healing Home in association with Elizabeth Baxter and Marie Murray
- 1885 Leads the International Conference on Holiness and Healing at Agriculture Hall, London
- 1886 Dies at his home in London on February 4

CHAPTER 1

THE EVANGELIST'S PLACE IN THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY HOLINESS MOVEMENT RECONSIDERED

Amid the revivals that swept across the United States and Great Britain during the nineteenth century, the evangelical community became increasingly interested in the doctrine of sanctification. In the United States, this interest was fueled by the belief that happiness and godliness were essentially linked to perfection. The democratization of American Christianity and the consequent decline of Reformed orthodoxy contributed to the perceived legitimacy of the various holiness theologies propagated during this period.¹ A similar development, under different circumstances, arose in Great Britain.²

¹Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1972), pp. 477-478; Paul K. Conkin, *The Uneasy Center: Reformed Christianity in Antebellum America* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), p. 50; William Clebsch, *American Religious Thought: A History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), pp. 58, 60, 62-65; Melvin E. Dieter, *The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1980), pp. 4-5, 20-21; Douglas W. Frank, *Less than Conquerors, How Evangelicals Entered the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1986), p. 141; James E. Hamilton, "Academic Orthodoxy and the Arminianising of American Theology," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 9 (1974):52, 55; Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), pp. 3-5, 16, 21, 22; Winthrop S. Hudson, *Religion in America*, 4th ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1987), p. 320; and Timothy L. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform in American Protestantism on the Eve of the Civil War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), pp. 8-9, 102, 103-113.

²David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Unwin Hyman/Routledge, 1989; reprint ed., Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1992), pp. 152-167; Dieter, *Holiness Revival*, pp. 182-183;

The Methodists were particularly interested in practical holiness, but non-Methodists were also drawn into the holiness movement. By the end of the nineteenth century, American and British Quakers, Baptists, Episcopalians, Anglicans, Lutherans, and members from the Reformed family of churches were numbered among the participants in the holiness movement.³

A leading representative of the non-Methodist phalanx of the widening holiness movement was a Presbyterian evangelist named William Boardman (1810-1886). During the latter third of a ministerial career that began in 1847, the "higher Christian life" assumed greater prominence in his preaching. As he traveled throughout the United States, Great Britain, and Sweden, he invited Christians to encounter Jesus Christ in a "second conversion." By virtue of this experience, they obtained power to overcome temptation and received the power to serve.

Though Boardman often worked alone, he regularly cooperated with leaders of the Wesleyan holiness movement, including the influential Phoebe Palmer. He also cooperated with representatives of the non-Wesleyan phalanx of the widening holiness movement, including Asa Mahan, Robert and Hannah Smith, Albert Simpson, and Evan Hopkins. In contrast, many clergy and theologians, especially those who

and J. Edwin Orr, The Second Evangelical Awakening in Britain (London: Marshall, Morgan, and Scott, 1949), pp. 109-110, 112, 119, 124, 128-129, 164, 218, 220.

³See S. Olin Garrison, ed., Forty Witnesses. Covering the Whole Range of Christian Experience (New York: n.p., 1888), pp. 47-65, 215-219, 220-222, 223-236, 237-244; Edwin S. Gausted, Historical Atlas of Religion in America, revised ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1976), p. 122; George Hughes, Days of Power in the Forest Temple. A Review of the Wonderful Work of God at Fourteen National Camp-Meetings, from 1867 to 1872, with an Introduction by Gilbert Haven (Boston: John Bent, 1873; reprint ed., Salem, OH: The Allegheny Wesleyan Methodist Connection, 1975), pp. 30, 38, 108-109, 317, 323-324, 327; and Timothy Smith, Revivalism and Social Reform, pp. 148-149.

affirmed the Westminster Confession of Faith, criticized his message. In their opinion, he merely repeated the errors of Wesleyan holiness theology and Oberlin Perfection.

Boardman's higher Christian life provided a middle ground on which the proponents of various holiness theologies could unite. He drew on various holiness theologies to formulate a Trinitarian doctrine of sanctification that held conflicting ideas in tension. He affirmed both the Wesleyan doctrine of instantaneous sanctification and the Reformed doctrine of gradual sanctification. He attempted to coordinate human inability and human responsibility with the work of the Holy Spirit. He also allowed for the possibility that a Christian might enter what he called the higher Christian life at the moment of justification, or as a result of a crisis experience subsequent to justification. Few joined Boardman on this middle ground.

The Origin of the Non-Methodist Phalanx of the Holiness Movement

By 1837, a growing number of people within the Reformed family of churches were interested in the doctrine of sanctification and its application to life. In 1835, Edward Beecher, a Congregationalist, published a series of sermons on holiness in The American National Preacher.⁴ Beecher proposed that one "enterprise" above all others should occupy Christians' attention.

An enterprise at present not at all recognized as a great enterprise of the age, or as an enterprise at all; and on which public apathy is deep and general. Yet, on reflection, it must be seen to be the only one which deserves the first rank, and the only one to which it

⁴Edward Beecher, "The Nature, Importance, and Means of Eminent Holiness Throughout the Church," The American National Preacher 10 (1835):193-224.

is safe to give supreme and all-absorbing power in the soul, so as to compel us to view all other subjects only in their relations to it. The enterprise to which I refer is this:--THE IMMEDIATE PRODUCTION OF AN ELEVATED STANDARD OF PERSONAL HOLINESS THROUGHOUT THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH--SUCH A STANDARD OF HOLINESS AS GOD REQUIRES, AND THE PRESENT EXIGENCIES OF THE WORLD DEMAND.⁵

A contributor to Zion's Herald observed that "many Calvinists [were thinking favorably of the doctrine as held by the Methodists] and some ... [were] publicly teaching it."⁶ And Phoebe Palmer reported that Presbyterian ministers attended a Methodist camp meeting held in Ramapo Valley, New York in August 1842. She related that "Brother Hill's noble testimony had led two [of the Presbyterian ministers] into the belief of full salvation." They proceeded to testify of their experience within their constituencies. As a consequence, they were called before their Presbytery to answer charges of heresy.⁷

Congregationalist, Baptist, Episcopalian, Dutch Reformed, and Presbyterian clergy and lay people also regularly attended Palmer's Tuesday Meeting, which her sister, Sarah Lankford (1806-1896), established in 1835.⁸ Palmer collected the

⁵Beecher, "Eminent Holiness," p. 194.

⁶Zion's Herald, September 13, 1837, p. 146, quoted in Dieter, Holiness Revival, p. 67, fn. 21.

⁷Richard Wheatley, The Life and Letters of Mrs. Phoebe Palmer (New York: W. C. Palmer, 1881; reprint ed., New York: Garland, 1984), p. 267. Also see Wheatley, Life and Letters, pp. 567-568, 571-572; and Vinson Synan, The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement in the United States (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1977), pp. 68-70 for other examples of the Presbyterian interest in Wesleyan holiness theology.

⁸Wheatley, Life and Letters, p. 268; and Dieter, Holiness Revival, p. 38. On the Tuesday Meeting see Phoebe Palmer, The Way of Holiness, with Notes by the Way: Being A Narrative of Religious Experience Resulting from A Determination to be a

testimonies of several ministers from each of these denominations, and published them with those of Methodist ministers under the title Pioneer Experiences; or, The Gift of Power Received by Faith (1868).⁹

The list of non-Methodist clergy who attended the Tuesday Meeting included Asa Mahan; the Congregationalist philosopher, Thomas Upham; the Baptist evangelist, Absalom Earle; and, on November 29, 1870, a Presbyterian minister named William Boardman.¹⁰ Other Presbyterian ministers preceded Boardman into the parlor of the Lankford-Palmer home for the Tuesday afternoon testimony meeting. Presbyterian clergy were participating in the Tuesday Meeting as early as 1844.¹¹ Henry Belden, for example, visited frequently. He received the fullness of salvation under the guidance of William Hill, a fellow Presbyterian minister, who experienced

Bible Christian (New York: Palmer and Hughes, 1867), pp. 60-71; E. Dale Dunlap, "Tuesday Meetings, Camp Meetings, and Cabinet Meetings: A Perspective on the Holiness Movement in the Methodist Church in the United States in the Nineteenth Century," A. M. E. Quarterly Review / Methodist History 13 (1975):88; George Hughes, Fragrant Memories of the Tuesday Meeting and "The Guide to Holiness," and their Fifty Years Work for Jesus, with Introductions by W. F. Mallalieu and William Taylor (New York: Palmer and Hughes, 1886), pp. 1-154; Harold E. Raser, Phoebe Palmer, Her Life and Thought (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1987), pp. 79-101; Wheatley, Life and Letters, pp. 126, 624-625, 631; and Charles E. White, The Beauty of Holiness: Phoebe Palmer as Theologian, Revivalist, Feminist, and Humanitarian, with a Preface by Timothy L. Smith (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986), p. 140,.

⁹See Phoebe Palmer, ed., Pioneer Experiences; or, The Gift of Power Received by Faith. Illustrated and Confirmed by the Testimony of Eighty Living Ministers, of Various Denominations, with an Introduction by Rev. Bishop Janes (New York: W. C. Palmer, Jr., 1868; reprint ed., New York: Garland, 1984).

¹⁰Wheatley, Life and Letters, p. 151.

¹¹Wheatley, Life and Letters, p. 244.

Christian perfection under the counsel of Palmer.¹² Belden advocated Palmer's holiness theology, and was one of several non-Methodist ministers to have their testimonies recorded in Palmer's Pioneer Experiences.¹³ The appearance of his picture alongside that of Walter and Phoebe Palmer on the program commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the Tuesday Meeting symbolized his allegiance to the Palmers, Phoebe's holiness theology, and the Tuesday Meeting.¹⁴ Belden's doctrine of sanctification led to a heresy trial, and his dismissal from the Presbyterian ministry.¹⁵

Interest in the doctrine of sanctification within the non-Methodist community in the United States and Great Britain signaled the beginning of a new movement that was, according to Melvin Dieter and David Bebbington, dependent on, complementary of, and yet distinct from the Wesleyan holiness movement.¹⁶ American and British representatives of the new movement aligned themselves with a pre-existing holiness

¹²Palmer, Pioneer Experiences, pp. 109-118. See also Palmer, Pioneer Experiences, p. 236.

¹³Palmer, Pioneer Experiences, pp. 109-118.

¹⁴Hughes, Fragrant Memories, pp. 55-56, 98, 100, 104, 128.

¹⁵Wheatley, Life and Letters, pp. 578-579; and Hughes, Days of Power, p. 30.

¹⁶Dieter, Holiness Revival, p. 22; and Bebbington, Evangelicalism in Modern Britain, pp. 153-167, 172. Also see Donald W. Dayton, The American Holiness Movement: A Bibliographic Introduction (Wilmore, KY: B. L. Fischer Library, Asbury Theological Seminary, 1971), pp. 22-23; William Kostlevy, Holiness Manuscripts: A Guide to Sources Documenting the Wesleyan Holiness Movement in the United States and Canada (Metuchen, NJ: American Theological Library Association and Scarecrow Press, 1994), p. 2; William C. Miller, Holiness Works: A Bibliography, (Kansas City, MO: Nazarene Theological Seminary, 1986), p. 6; and David D. Bundy, Keswick: A Bibliographic Introduction to the Higher Life Movements (Wilmore, KY: B. L. Fischer Library, Asbury Theological Seminary, 1971), p. 17.

movement in Great Britain to strengthen a trajectory that eventually gave rise to the Keswick Convention in Great Britain (1875), and in the United States (1880).

Meanwhile, the older movement attempted to defend Wesleyan holiness theology against an attack originating within the Methodist church in the United States.¹⁷

The new movement was called "the higher Christian life movement," after Boardman delineated the crux of its teaching in a book titled The Higher Christian Life (1858). The book was well-received in the United States, and was quickly exported to Great Britain, where it met a similar reception. Boardman's critics affirmed its popularity.¹⁸ This was the first of several books that Boardman published under his name.¹⁹

¹⁷Dayton, American Holiness Movement, pp. 20-23; Bebbington, Evangelicalism in Modern Britain, p. 151; and Bundy, Keswick, pp. 118, 119-129, 133.

¹⁸Jacob J. Abbott, "Boardman's Higher Christian Life," Bibliotheca Sacra 17 (1860):508; J. B. Figgis, Keswick from Within (London: Marshall Brothers, n.d.; reprint ed., New York: Garland, 1985); and "Religious Self-Complacency," Boston Review 2 (1862):474.

¹⁹David Bundy suggests portions of Boardman's publications were written by Mrs. Boardman. (See Letter from David Bundy, April 30, 1996.) That a portion of the Boardman corpus might be the product of collaboration between the evangelist and his wife would not be surprising, given the couple's cooperative working relationship. (See Mrs. W. E. [Mary M.] Boardman, Life and Labours of the Rev. W. E. Boardman, with a Preface by Mark G. Pearse [New York: D. Appleton, 1887] passim.) Miss [Marie?] Barclay, who knew the Boardmans in their later years, reported that:

Never were there two more closely united. He loved to have her at his side to take part in his meetings; we used playfully to call them THEORY AND PRACTICE, for he would go on into spiritual rhapsodies exquisitely beautiful, but often, as she saw, far beyond the comprehension of his audience; then at first break she would interrupt with the quaintest practical illustration. (Mrs. Mary M. [Mrs. W. E.] Boardman, Mrs. Boardman's Words of Counsel, compiled by Miss [Marie?] Barclay (London: Bethshan Bookroom and Christian Herald, 1904), p. 3.

The adherents of this new movement did not introduce the expression, "the higher Christian life." Methodists used the expression prior to 1858. Neither did the adherents of this new movement obtain exclusive rights to the expression. Even after this new movement came to the fore, Wesleyans continued to use the expression "the higher Christian life."²⁰ Some who affirmed the message of the new movement

Mrs. Boardman certainly contributed to Boardman's The Great Physician. The suggestion that Mrs. Boardman was the author of all the works published under Boardman's name is inconclusive. Several issues give reason to approach Bundy's suggestion with caution. First, in Life and Labours, Mrs. Boardman quotes verbatim from autobiographical passages which appear throughout Boardman's writings. She also lifts passages from Work for Jesus, a work edited by Charles Cullis from notes taken by a mutual friend who interviewed Boardman (Charles Cullis, ed., Work for Jesus: The Experience and Teachings of Mr. and Mrs. Boardman, with an Introduction by Charles Cullis [Boston: Willard Tract Society, 1875], pp. xi-xii). Thirdly, Bundy's supposition that Mrs. Boardman is the author of the coherent passages in Boardman's writings is inconsistent with their personalities as described by Harriet Beecher Stowe, with whom the Boardman's lived for approximately three months in 1843. Stowe characterized Boardman as organized and deliberate, and Mrs. Boardman as "'ardent & executive, but not consecutive & systematic'" (Joan Hendrick, Harriet Beecher Stowe: A Life [New York: Oxford University Press, 1994], pp. 160, 159). Fourthly, Bundy's suspicions are contrary to Boardman's testimony, Mrs. Boardman's record, the recollection of George Hughes (Hughes, Days of Power, p. 30), and the admission of Cullis, who published a number of Boardman's works at the Willard Tract Repository. Lastly, the attempt to hide Mrs. Boardman's authorship of any publication ascribed to Boardman is inconsistent with the Boardman's understanding of the role of women in the church. (See Mrs. W. E. Boardman, Who Shall Publish Glad Tidings? [Boston: Henry Hoyt, 1873].) Neither had any objection to women having a teaching role in the church. Furthermore, Phoebe Palmer, Hannah Smith, and Harriet Beecher Stowe were publishing works under their names during this same period. Mrs. Boardman did the same. The male leadership of the National Association for the Promotion of Holiness, with which Boardman cooperated, appreciated the contribution of women to its objectives (Hughes, Days of Power, pp. 286-287). The external evidence would seem to defuse Bundy's suspicions. Nevertheless, if Bundy's suspicions are sustained by internal evidence, the contents of the books published under Boardman's name may be read as consistent with his beliefs.

²⁰See Alfred Cookman, Familiar Talks on the Subject of the Higher Christian Life (Chicago: Christian Witness, 1900); Jacob Hoke, Holiness: or, the Higher Christian Life (Dayton, OH: United Brethren Printing Establishment, 1870); and Wheatley, Life and Letters, p. 632; Also see Ernest A. Wall, "'I Commend Unto You Phoebe',"

disliked the expression, or preferred an alternative name.²¹ The adherents of this new movement did not assign a technical meaning to "the higher Christian life." Boardman's use of the expression as the title for his first book, for example, was merely due to the "want of another."²²

The Nineteenth-Century Holiness Theologies

The Methodists were the natural leaders of the holiness movement. Not only did they have a prominent role in the revivals of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries,²³ they also assigned the doctrine of sanctification a prominent place in their understanding of the Christian life.²⁴ The Methodist contribution to the

Religion in Life 26 (1957):396.

²¹Record of the Convention for the Promotion of Scriptural Holiness Held at Brighton, May 29th to June 7th, 1875 (Brighton: W. J. Smith and London: S. W. Partridge, 1875; reprint ed., New York: Garland, 1985), pp. 34, 55, 82, 86, 229, 424; and Hannah W. Smith, The Unselfishness of God and How I Discovered It: A Spiritual Autobiography, (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1903; reprint ed., New York: Garland, 1985), pp. 221, 261.

²²W. E. Boardman, The Higher Christian Life (Boston: Henry Hoyt and Chicago: William Tomlinson, 1858; reprint ed., New York: Garland, 1985), p. vi.

²³Hughes, Days of Power, p. 36.

²⁴At mid-century, some Methodists claimed that the doctrine of practical holiness was ignored by many of their brethren (Hughes, Days of Power, pp. 19, 20, 27, 36, 276). Some of Hughes' Methodist brethren were critical of Wesleyan holiness theology, at least as it was popularly understood (Hughes, Days of Power, p. 50; and A. Gregory Schneider, "A Conflict of Associations: The National Camp-Meeting Association for the Promotion of Holiness Versus the Methodist Episcopal Church," Church History 66 [1997]:268-283). Today, some students of Methodist history argue that by the end of the first quarter of the nineteenth-century, the Methodists waned in their commitment to practical holiness. Compare Allan Coppedge, "Entire Sanctification in Early American Methodism: 1812-1835," Wesleyan Theological Journal 13 (1978):34-50; and Kostlevy, Holiness Manuscripts, p. 1; to Donald W. Dayton, "From Christian Perfection to the 'Baptism of the Holy Ghost'," in Aspects

holiness movement was based on John Wesley's doctrine of sanctification, perfect love, or Christian perfection.

Wesley (1703-1791) began teaching the doctrine of sanctification under the banner of "Christian Perfection" in 1725. His understanding of sanctification was influenced by his reading of Scripture, as well as Jeremy Taylor's Rule and Exercises of Holy Living and Dying, Thomas á Kempis' Christian's Pattern, and William Law's A Practical Treatise upon Christian Perfection and A Serious Call to A Devout and Holy Life. He summarized the doctrine of Christian Perfection in A Plain Account of Christian Perfection (1766, 1777).²⁵ Though the tract underwent several revisions,

of Pentecostal-Charismatic Origins, pp. 39-54, ed. Vinson Synan (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1975), p. 42; and *idem.*, The Theological Roots of Pentecostalism (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan and Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1987), p. 65; Dieter, Holiness Revival, pp. 1-5, 38, 49-50, 126; Dunlap, "Tuesday Meetings," pp. 85-106; Merrill E. Gaddis, "Christian Perfectionism in America," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1929), pp. 384-397; Charles E. Jones, Perfectionist Persuasion: The Holiness Movement and American Methodism, 1867-1936 (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1974), pp. 1-15; John L. Peters, Christian Perfectionism and American Methodism (New York: Abingdon, 1956); Delbert R. Rose, Vital Holiness: A Theology of Christian Experience: Interpreting the Historic Wesleyan Message (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany Fellowship, 1975), pp. 15-78, esp. pp. 27-29; Timothy Smith, Revivalism and Social Reform, pp. 135, 148-149; and Synan, Holiness-Pentecostal Movement, *passim*. Coppedge and Kostlevy attempt to correct the treatment of the so-called holiness revival in the first half of the nineteenth-century by rejecting the notion that holiness preaching suffered a decline at the turn of the century. The latter is the argument defended by Dayton, Dieter, Dunlap, Gaddis, Jones, Peters, Smith, and Synan.

²⁵John Wesley, "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection," in The Works of John Wesley, 14 vols., 3rd ed. (London: Wesleyan Methodist Book Room, 1872; reprint ed., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1984), 11:336-356. For a thorough exposition of Wesley's doctrine of sanctification see Harald Lindstöm, Wesley and Sanctification: A Study of the Doctrine of Salvation, trans. H. S. Harvey (London: The Epworth Press, 1950). Also see Donal J. Dorr, "Wesley's Teaching on the Nature of Holiness," London Quarterly and Holborn Review 190 (1965):234-239; and Timothy L. Smith, "John Wesley and the Second Blessing," Wesleyan Theological Journal 21 (1986):137-158.

in its final revision (1777) Wesley claimed that the essence of what he taught at that time was consistent with what he taught thirty-eight years earlier.²⁶

Wesley taught that sanctification follows justification. He denied knowing of "a single instance, in any place, of a person receiving, in one and the same moment, remission of sins, the abiding witness of the Spirit, and a new clean heart."²⁷

Although Wesley acknowledged that God is sovereign and may perform this work in Christians' lives as early as he chooses, he believed that God usually sanctifies Christians subsequent to conversion. He considered conversion a second work of grace, or a second blessing.²⁸

As a result of the second blessing, Christians no longer sin necessarily. They are free from evil thoughts, evil tempers, and outward sin.²⁹ Their utmost desire is to do the will of God.³⁰ Wesley defined the perfected Christian as "one in whom is 'the mind which was in Christ,' and who so 'walketh as Christ so walked;' a man 'that hath clean hands and a pure heart,' or that is 'cleansed from all filthiness of flesh and spirit;' one in whom is 'no occasion of stumbling,' and who, accordingly, 'does not commit sin'." In other words, the perfected Christian is one who does the will of God on earth in the same manner in which it is done in heaven.³¹ He rejected the

²⁶Wesley, Works, 11:366-367, fn. 11:373.

²⁷Wesley, Works, 11:380.

²⁸Wesley, Works, 11:378, 407, 423.

²⁹Wesley, Works, 11:378.

³⁰Wesley, Works, 11:379-384.

³¹Wesley, Works, 11:384.

teaching of Reformed orthodoxy, that all Christians sin out of necessity.³²

Wesley did not believe that the second blessing marked the completion of Christians' sanctification. Sanctification is ongoing. It is both an "instantaneous," and a "gradual work of God."³³

In Wesley's view, sanctification is a product of God's grace. Christians do not merit sanctification. It is a gift graciously bestowed by God and received by faith.³⁴ To maintain the second blessing, Christians must constantly depend on Jesus Christ.³⁵

Though Wesley taught the doctrine of sanctification under the term "Christian Perfection," he did not define this concept as absolute sinlessness.³⁶ Christians who are perfected in love are still capable of sin.³⁷ They are capable of performing acts which are neither accidental nor which are the unavoidable consequence of the fall. Christians can perform acts that they know are sinful.³⁸ Wesley did not claim to have experienced Christian Perfection.³⁹

Wesley believed that though Jesus Christ sanctifies Christians,⁴⁰ they are not

³²Wesley, Works, 11:375.

³³Wesley, Works, 11:380.

³⁴Wesley, Works, 11:379, 384, 395, 403, 441, 442.

³⁵Wesley, Works, 11:395.

³⁶Wesley, Works, 11:383, 374, 395, 441, 442.

³⁷Wesley, Works, 11:395, 422.

³⁸Wesley, Works, 11:396.

³⁹Wesley, Works, 11:371.

⁴⁰Wesley, Works, 11:395.

passive in awaiting sanctification.⁴¹ His understanding of sanctification allowed no room for quietism. As Christians wait for God to perform the second work of grace in their lives, they are to constantly and aggressively keep all of the commandments, in watchfulness and painfulness. They are to deny themselves, daily taking up their cross. Finally, they are to engage in earnest prayer, fasting, and maintain "a close attendance on all the ordinances of God."⁴² He taught Methodist preachers to "make a point of preaching perfection to believers constantly, strongly, and explicitly; and all believers should mind this one thing, and continually agonize for it."⁴³

Phoebe Palmer (1807-1874)⁴⁴ was the force behind Wesleyan holiness theology in the United States and Great Britain throughout much of the nineteenth century.⁴⁵ Palmer followed Wesley on most points, but she did not consider him beyond revision.⁴⁶ The result was a revised and controversial form of Wesleyan holiness theology,⁴⁷ which captured the attention of both Methodists and non-

⁴¹Wesley, Works, 11:384.

⁴²Wesley, Works, 11:402.

⁴³Wesley, Works, 11:443.

⁴⁴On Palmer see Nancy A. Hardesty, "Phoebe Worrall Palmer (1807-1874)," in Makers of Christian Theology in America, ed. Mark G. Toulouse and James O. Duke (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1997), pp. 145-148; Raser, Phoebe Palmer, passim; White, Beauty of Holiness, passim; Wall, "I Commend Unto You Phoebe," pp. 396-408; and Wheatley, Life and Letters, passim.

⁴⁵See Dieter, Holiness Revival, p. 30.

⁴⁶Wheatley, Life and Letters, pp. 569-570, 631.

⁴⁷Hardesty, "Phoebe Palmer," p. 146; Ivan Howard, "Wesley versus Phoebe Palmer: An Extended Controversy," Wesleyan Theological Journal 6 (1971):31-40; Wheatley, Life and Letters, p. 631; and White, Beauty of Holiness, pp. 130-135, 136, 140, 141, 144.

Methodists.⁴⁸

Palmer arrived at her understanding of the doctrine of sanctification amid a determined effort to become a "Bible Christian."⁴⁹ While reading Scripture, she discovered a "shorter" route to practical holiness, subsequent to justification, that was accessible to all Christians. As a result of her own experience, she claimed that she was cleansed of all unrighteousness "now,"⁵⁰ and that she had achieved a state of constant purity.⁵¹

In contrast to the Trinitarian character of Wesley's doctrine of sanctification, Palmer made Jesus Christ the central figure in her "altar theology."⁵² On the basis of a typological interpretation of Scripture, and her own religious experience, she maintained that Jesus Christ was the altar on which Christians offer their whole selves--body, soul, and spirit--as continual sacrifices. In offering themselves on the altar, they consecrated themselves to God. Their faith, or determination, affirmed the validity of their consecration.⁵³

Palmer defined faith as a divinely enabled act of the will through which Christians are empowered to take "God at his word relying unwaveringly upon his

⁴⁸Wheatley, Life and Labours, pp. 579-582, 586-587.

⁴⁹Palmer, Way of Holiness, p. 63.

⁵⁰Palmer, Way of Holiness, pp. 2, 61, 97, 109-111, 61, 135-136,.

⁵¹Palmer, Way of Holiness, pp. 66, 67, 69-70.

⁵²Palmer, Way of Holiness, pp. 60-71; Wheatley, Life and Letters, pp. 126, 624-625, 631; White, Beauty of Holiness, p. 140, and Dunlap, "Tuesday Meetings," p. 88.

⁵³Palmer, Way of Holiness, pp. 60-71, 136, 142; Wheatley, Life and Letters, pp. 126, 624-625, 631; White, Beauty of Holiness, p. 140; and Dunlap, "Tuesday Meetings," p. 88.

truth," even if the state of their emotions indicated otherwise.⁵⁴ As long as Christians keep their whole selves on the altar, they remain consecrated to God. This, she claimed, was "the shorter, the one, and the only way."⁵⁵

The Reformed family of churches had a different understanding of the doctrine of sanctification. Robert Dabney (1820-1898), a Reformed theologian, defined sanctification as "essentially, the moral purification of the soul." Contrary to Palmer, Dabney explained that sanctification is not the result of self-discipline, will power, or ascetic mortification of natural human desires. Rather, sanctification is the outcome of an internal transformation that manifests itself in right action.⁵⁶ James Thornwell (1812-1862) and Archibald Hodge (1823-1886), both Reformed theologians, echoed Dabney's understanding of sanctification.⁵⁷

The Reformed churches taught that sanctification is a process that originates in

⁵⁴Palmer, Way of Holiness, pp. 37, 38.

⁵⁵Palmer, Way of Holiness, pp. 66, 67, 69-70.

⁵⁶Robert L. Dabney, Syllabus and Notes of the Course of Systematic and Polemic Theology taught in Union Theological Seminary, Virginia, 6th ed. (Richmond, VA: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1927), pp. 661, 661-663, 674. For a more complete treatment of the Reformed doctrine of sanctification see John W. Beardslee, "Sanctification in Reformed Theology," in New Man: Orthodox and Reformed Dialogue, ed. John Meyendorff and Joseph McLelland (New Brunswick, NJ: Agora Books, 1973), p. 139. Also see Anthony Hoekema, "The Reformed Perspective," in Five Views of Sanctification, ed. Melvin E. Dieter, et. al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1987), pp. 61-90; and Geddes MacGregor, "Holiness in the Reformed Tradition," in Man's Concern with Holiness, ed. Marina Chavchavadze (London: Hodder and Stoughton, n.d.), pp. 61-93.

⁵⁷James H. Thornwell, The Collected Writings of James Henley Thornwell, D.D., LL.D., 4 vols. (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1974), 1:367-372; and Archibald A. Hodge, Outlines of Theology, Rewritten and Enlarged (New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1895), pp. 458-460, 460-461, 521.

regeneration and that continues throughout life.⁵⁸ Only God's promise regarding justification is fulfilled in this life. Justification is instantaneous. God's promises regarding sanctification and glorification await completion. The Christian life consists of an ongoing struggle between the old nature and the new nature (Romans 7). Consequently, the Reformed doctrine of sanctification excludes an experience of Christian perfection subsequent to justification.⁵⁹

Charles Hodge (1797-1878), the leading American Reformed theologian of the nineteenth century, agreed with Dabney on this issue. Charles Hodge explained that even "the most advanced believer has need as long as he continues in the flesh, daily to pray for the forgiveness of sins." Yet Christians are not powerless in the face of wickedness. He explained that "God has in Christ made provision for the complete salvation of his people: that is, for their entire deliverance from the penalty of the law, from the power of sin, from all sorrow, pain, and death, and not only for mere negative deliverance, but for their being transformed into the image of Christ, filled with his Spirit, and glorified by the beauty of the Lord."⁶⁰ In this present life:

The inward life of the people of God to the end of their course in this world, is a repetition of conversion. It is a continued turning unto God; a constant renewal of confession, repentance and faith; a dying unto sin, and living unto righteousness.⁶¹

⁵⁸Dabney, Syllabus and Notes, pp. 663, 674-675.

⁵⁹Dabney, Syllabus and Notes, pp. 663, 667-668, 670, 671.

⁶⁰Charles Hodge, Systematic Theology, 3 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911), 3:245, 246, 247.

⁶¹Charles Hodge, Systematic Theology, 3:245, 246, 247.

Like Wesley, but in contrast to Palmer, Reformed theologians taught that sanctification depends on the work of the Trinity in the Christian's life, particularly the work of the Holy Spirit.⁶² Reformed theologians departed from Wesleyan holiness theology, however, in their belief that God usually uses means to sanctify Christians. Dabney listed three means: "God's truth, His ordinances, and His providence." In all three, Scripture is central. Christians are sanctified as God works through Scripture by these means. The efficacy of these means is appropriated through repentance and faith.⁶³

Not everyone within the Reformed family of churches agreed with Dabney, Thornwell, and the Hodges. Some argued that the Reformed doctrine of sanctification was inadequate, or, inconsistent with Scripture. A variety of holiness theologies became popular in the Reformed family of churches, though they departed from the Reformed confessions. The proponents of these holiness theologies claimed that their doctrines of sanctification corrected the Reformed doctrine of sanctification.

Charles Finney (1792-1875) and Asa Mahan (1799-1889) were Presbyterians during the early years of their ecclesiastical careers. Both became Congregationalists. Both were professors at Oberlin College in Oberlin, Ohio, though Mahan moved on to other tasks. And both were disappointed with the Reformed doctrine of sanctification. They published their doctrine of sanctification under the title "Oberlin Perfection."⁶⁴

⁶²Dabney, Syllabus and Notes, p. 665; and Archibald Hodge, Outlines of Theology, p. 523.

⁶³Dabney, Syllabus and Notes, pp. 665, 666.

⁶⁴On Charles Finney see Keith Hardman, Charles Grandison Finney, 1792-1875: Revivalist and Reformer (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1987); David L. Hollon, "Love as Holiness: An Examination of Charles G. Finney's Theology of

Two factors influenced the development of Finney's doctrine of sanctification. One was the New Haven Theology of Nathaniel Taylor (1786-1858), professor at Yale Divinity School. Taylor modified Reformed theology to fit his revivalist convictions. His theological system assigned a legitimacy to human ability not found in traditional Reformed theology.⁶⁵ The other factor influencing Finney's theological development was Wesleyan holiness theology. Though Finney testified that the terminology used in Wesleyan holiness theology was unsatisfactory, he agreed with the substance of the

Sanctification, 1830-1860" (Ph.D. dissertation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1984); and James E. Johnson, "Charles G. Finney and Oberlin Perfectionism," Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society 6 (1968):42-57, 128-138. On Asa Mahan see Edwin H. Madden and James F. Hamilton, Freedom and Grace: The Life of Asa Mahan (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1982); Edward H. Madden, "Asa Mahan on Freedom and Grace," in Spectrum of Thought: Essays in Honor of Dennis Kinlaw, ed. Michael L. Peterson (Wilmore, KY: Francis Asbury, 1982), pp. 112-122; and Barbara Brown Zikmund, "Asa Mahan and Oberlin Perfectionism" (Ph.D. dissertation, Duke University, 1969). On Finney and Mahan's disappointment with the Reformed doctrine of sanctification see Charles G. Finney, The Memoirs of Charles G. Finney: The Complete Restored Text, ed. Garth M. Rosell and Richard A. G. Dupuis (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1989), pp. 390-391; Charles G. Finney, Principles of Sanctification, ed. Louis G. Parkhurst, Jr. (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 1986), p. 119; and Asa Mahan, Scripture Doctrine of Christian Perfection (Chicago: W. B. Rose, 1918), pp. 15, 16, 41-42. And on Oberlin Perfectionism see Henry Cowles, "The Opinions of the Reformers and of Subsequent Divines on the Subject of Sanctification," in Charles G. Finney, Principles of Sanctification, ed. Louis G. Parkhurst, Jr. (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 1986), pp. 165-177; and James H. Fairchild, "The Doctrine of Sanctification at Oberlin," Congregational Quarterly 70 (1876):237-259.

⁶⁵See Sydney E. Ahlstrom, "Theology in America: A Historical Survey," in The Shaping of American Religion ed. James W. Smith and A. Leland Jamison (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961,) pp. 259-260. On Nathaniel Taylor and New Haven Theology see Sydney E. Mead, Nathaniel William Taylor, 1786-1858: A Connecticut Liberal (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1942; reprint ed., n.l.: Archon Books, 1967); and Bruce M. Stephens, "Nathaniel William Taylor," in Makers of Christian Theology in America, ed. Mark G. Toulouse and James O. Duke (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1997), pp. 101-107.

doctrine of Christian Perfection.⁶⁶

Finney tried to attain a higher level of holiness by means of various disciplines, but found them ineffective. He did not negate the value of fasting, praying, reading Scripture, and struggling in the Christian life. He argued, however, that religious acts could not take the place of faith. Both in justification and in sanctification, faith is the starting point.⁶⁷

According to Finney, Christians, who are entirely sanctified, do not sin, and will not sin. Instead, they will perfectly obey the will of God. Finney did not mean that these Christians overcome the possibility of sin as a result of entire sanctification. They do not obtain perfect knowledge, nor are they free from temptation, nor are they free from spiritual conflict. Sin remains a possibility. After being entirely sanctified, however, they are aware of their ability to conform to the will of God. By their faith and the grace of God, the "moral character of Jesus" is reproduced in their lives. Christians can enter this experience any time they choose by their "natural ability."⁶⁸

Within ten years of publishing the doctrine of Oberlin Perfection, Finney revised his doctrine of sanctification. He did so in response to theological innovations introduced by other faculty at Oberlin College. Consequently, he departed from his

⁶⁶Finney, Memoirs, p. 391; and idem., Lectures to Professing Christians. Delivered in the City of New York, in the Years 1836 and 1837 (New York: John S. Taylor, 1837; reprint ed., New York: Garland, 1985), p. 267.

⁶⁷Finney, Memoirs, p. 391; idem., Principles of Sanctification, p. 84; idem., Lectures to Professing Christians, p. 278; and idem., Lectures on Systematic Theology, ed. J. H. Fairchild, with a Preface by George Redford (New York: George H. Doran, 1878), p. 437.

⁶⁸Finney, Principles of Sanctification, pp. 55, 128-129, 138, 145; idem., Lectures to Professing Christians, pp. 252-253, 255; 262, 269; and idem., Systematic Theology, pp. 135, 405-406, 407, 408, 410, 413, 458.

original understanding of Christian perfection.⁶⁹

Mahan, the "major architect" of Oberlin Perfectionism,⁷⁰ adhered to the fundamental principles of the theory longer than did Finney. Mahan eventually aligned himself with the proponents of Wesleyan holiness theology.⁷¹

"'The strictest sect' of the Calvinist faith" provided the context for Mahan's early religious development. He later abandoned the Reformed doctrines of "decrees and unconditional election and reprobation, subjection of the will to the law of necessity, and doctrines necessarily connected with these."⁷² He also rejected the Reformed doctrine of sanctification. In his view, the principle of "gradualism" offered little relief to Christians struggling with sin. He criticized Reformed clergy who taught, in conformity with the creeds, that the best Christians can expect while living on earth is carnality, "worldlymindedness," backslidings, and shortcomings.⁷³ This "absurd dogma," he said, was "the most blighting heresy that the father of lies

⁶⁹Finney, Lectures to Professing Christians, p. 229; idem., Systematic Theology, pp. 120-121; and idem., Memoirs, p. 403, fn. 89.

⁷⁰Donald W. Dayton, "Asa Mahan and the Development of American Holiness Theology," Wesleyan Theological Journal 9 (1974):60. Also see George Boardman, A History of New England Theology (New York: A. D. F. Randolph, 1899), p. 277; Dayton, Theological Roots, p. 101; and Zikmund, "Asa Mahan," pp. vii, 109-110, 131, 148.

⁷¹Zikmund, "Asa Mahan," passim.

⁷²Asa Mahan, Autobiography: Intellectual, Moral, and Spiritual (London: T. Woolmer, 1882; reprint ed., New York: AMS Press, 1979), pp. 1-17, 70-71, 76-95, 198-200, 290, 320. Also see Madden, "Mahan on Freedom and Grace," pp. 112-116.

⁷³Asa Mahan, Out of Darkness into Light: Or, the Hidden Life Made Manifest through Facts of Observation and Experience: Facts Elucidated by the Word of God (London: Ballantyne Press, 1877; reprint ed., New York: Garland, 1985), p. 61; and idem., Autobiography, pp. 290, 325, 330.

ever introduced into Christian creed."⁷⁴ Mahan charged that those who subscribed to this concept of the Christian life trust in their own ability to live a holy life.⁷⁵

Under the title, "the more excellent way," Mahan taught that "Christ ... takes away our sins by destroying and taking away the power of those evil principles and propensities within us--principles and propensities which induce us to sin--and putting within us His own 'love of righteousness and hatred of iniquity,' and thus rendering holiness as natural to us in our new, as sin was in our old life."⁷⁶ Through faith in Jesus Christ and as a result of the operation of the Holy Spirit, Christians are "put in possession of all the moral perfections of God, as far as finite can resemble 'infinite,' which can be nothing less than entire perfection in holiness."⁷⁷

Mahan did not, however, claim that sanctified Christians are beyond the possibility of sinning. Though he freely used the expression "entire perfection in holiness," he distinguished this notion from the doctrine of absolute perfection. Mahan taught that sanctified Christians could sin, if they wavered in faith.⁷⁸

Mahan's understanding of sanctification corresponded to his understanding of justification. "Sanctification," he taught, "is a gift of grace in the same sense, and attainable on the same condition, that justification is." Christians have "no more

⁷⁴Mahan, Autobiography, p. 107. Mahan lists the "absurdities" he found in the Reformed doctrine of sanctification in idem., Autobiography, pp. 343-344.

⁷⁵Mahan, Out of Darkness, p. 141. Also see Mahan, Autobiography, p. 290; and idem., Christian Perfection, pp. 15, 16, 17, 41-42, 43, 44, 92.

⁷⁶Mahan, Out of Darkness, p. 95.

⁷⁷Mahan, Christian Perfection, p. 31.

⁷⁸Mahan, Christian Perfection, pp. 69-71, 90, 119.

direct and immediate agency in sanctification" than they do in justification. Yet justification and sanctification are distinct. Mahan taught that "justification is an act of God, an act by which our sins are remitted, and we are restored to a legal standing before Him, as if we had never sinned." He also taught that sanctification is "a work wrought in us by the Holy Spirit, 'a renewing of the Holy Ghost' by which 'the body of sin is destroyed,' that is, evil dispositions and tendencies are 'taken out of our flesh,' and we are made 'partakers of a Divine nature.'"⁷⁹ Unbelief is the only obstacle preventing Christians from appropriating God's promises.⁸⁰

Robert (1827-1889) and Hannah (1832-1911) Smith were Quakers from Philadelphia. Hannah had an evangelical conversion during the Layman's Prayer Revival (1858). In 1866, she came under the influence of Wesleyan holiness theology. From the Methodists she learned that she could achieve holiness, if she trusted Jesus Christ for her sanctification in the same way that she had trusted him for her justification. She received the "second blessing" at a Methodist camp meeting. Despite the benefit she received from Wesleyan holiness theology, Hannah Smith withheld unqualified endorsement.⁸¹ She affiliated with the Plymouth Brethren,⁸² until she was unable to tolerate their "Calvinism." Later in life, she renewed her

⁷⁹Mahan, Autobiography, p. 292.

⁸⁰Mahan, Out of Darkness, pp. 125-128.

⁸¹Hannah Smith, The Unselfishness of God and How I Discovered It: A Spiritual Autobiography (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1903; reprint ed., New York: Garland), pp. 243, 245, 286-288.

⁸²Roberta J. Stewart, "'Being a Child in the Father's House': The Life of Faith in the Published Writings of Hannah Whitall Smith" (Ph.D. dissertation, Drew University, 1990), p. 14.

membership with the Society of Friends.⁸³ She influenced many through her popular Bible readings and published works, especially The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life (1904).

Like Finney and Mahan, Hannah Smith criticized the Reformed doctrine of sanctification. She undoubtedly had the Reformed family of churches in view when she observed that "most Christians" believe that they are saved through faith in Jesus Christ, "but when it comes to living the christian [sic.] life, they lose sight of the principle, and think that having been saved by faith, they are now to live by works and efforts."⁸⁴

Hannah Smith maintained that the cycle of sin and repentance to which many Christians resigned themselves differed from the image of the Christian life revealed in Scripture. In Scripture, the Christian life is described in terms of victory. Christians follow Jesus Christ in his conquest of the enemies of righteousness. Sin was one of the enemies over which Jesus Christ was victorious. Since Christians are victorious with Jesus Christ, they need not sin.⁸⁵

Hannah Smith taught that Christians receive everything God has to offer them on the occasion of their conversion. They do not, however, immediately realize all the benefits that God has granted them. Not until sometime later, at a moment subsequent to conversion, do Christians realize the benefits of grace that they now

⁸³Stewart, "'Being A Child'," p. 34.

⁸⁴Hannah Smith, The Christian's Secret to the Happy Life (Westwood, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1952), p. 48. Also see Hannah Smith, Christian's Secret, pp. 7-8, 9-10, 12-13, 16-17, 49, 60-61, 89, 104, 108-113.

⁸⁵Hannah Smith, Christian's Secret, pp. 22, 261.

have. In this experience they allow God to do the work that he has been waiting to do since their conversion. Through the agency of the Holy Spirit, God shapes their lives as a potter shapes a lump of clay. As long as Christians trust in Jesus Christ, God continues the work. Though Hannah Smith denied sanctification resulted from effort, she did not relieve Christians of all responsibility in the process of sanctification. Sanctification involved a cooperative effort between God who sanctifies and Christians who trust. In this experience, Christians are instantly cleansed of sin and move toward Christian maturity.⁸⁶

The religious pilgrimage of Robert Smith was similar to Hannah's religious experience. He received the "second blessing" at a Methodist camp meeting two years after Hannah (1869).⁸⁷ Robert, however, affiliated with the Presbyterian Church.⁸⁸ Like Hannah, Robert never departed from his Quaker roots, though unlike his wife he never rejoined the Society of Friends.⁸⁹ Robert and Hannah Smith contributed to conferences dedicated to the promotion of practical holiness, including camp meetings sponsored by the National Association for the Promotion of Holiness, which was

⁸⁶Hannah Smith, Christian's Secret, pp. 7-8, 9-10, 12-13, 16-17, 49, 60-61, 89, 104, 108-113, 243.

⁸⁷Hannah Smith, Unselfishness of God, p. 288. Also see Melvin E. Dieter, Forward to Walking in the Light, written by Robert P. Smith (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986), p. 12.

⁸⁸Stewart, "'Being a Child'," p. 14.

⁸⁹Hannah Smith, Unselfishness of God, pp. 159-182, 190-191, 195, 280-281, 263-265, 275-276, 279, 280. See also Stewart, "'Being A Child'," p. 51. The Brighton Convention and its Doctrinal Teaching. Testimony of Evangelical Leaders, including the Letters of Dean McNeile, Dean Close, Canon Ryle, Canon Bell, Rev. G. T. Fox, and the Rev. Dr. Horatius Bonar, 2nd ed. (London: James Nisbet, 1875), p. 8. The British Library.

dedicated to promoting Wesleyan holiness theology.⁹⁰

Like Finney, Mahan, and Hannah Smith, Robert Smith criticized the Reformed doctrine of sanctification. He believed that the Reformed churches were victims of their creeds.⁹¹ He also believed that they lived under the legality of Romans 7. According to Robert Smith, Reformed clergy read the latter portion of Romans 7 as normal Christian experience. This reading, he believed, contradicted Paul's intention.⁹²

In his publications and public discourses, Robert Smith addressed two groups of Christians. One group consisted of those whose expectations were unfulfilled by the realities of Christian experience. The other group included those who repeatedly succumbed to sin's power. He found the solution to the religious quandary faced by both groups on nearly every page of the Bible. He explained that in the atonement, Jesus Christ conquered the power of sin, and that through faith in Jesus Christ Christians share in his victory now. Not only did Jesus Christ make possible sinners' redemption from sin, he also made possible their purification from sin.⁹³

According to Robert Smith, sanctification was present, practical, and full. He

⁹⁰Hughes, Days of Power, p. 279.

⁹¹Robert Smith, Holiness through Faith. Light on the Way of Holiness, rev. ed. (New York: Anson D. F. Randolph, 1870; reprint ed., New York: Garland, 1984), pp. 9-18, 36, 52, 56, 122.

⁹²Robert P. Smith, Is Romans VII. to Be the Continued Experience of the Christian (London: Morgan and Chase, n.d.), pp. 3, 7, 6. The Philadelphia Library Company.

⁹³Robert Smith, Holiness through Faith, pp. 9-33; and idem., "Walking in the Light:" Words of Counsel to Those Who Have Entered in "The Rest of Faith", with a Foreword by Melvin E. Dieter (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986), p. 31.

consequently bemoaned what he witnessed in Reformed churches. He believed that among the Reformed, "alas," sanctification was "mostly deferred till after a long and God-dishonoring experience of Wilderness failure." This delay, he determined, resulted from limited understanding.⁹⁴

Through his own religious experience, Robert Smith learned that Christians can experience full salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. He maintained that they are purified "not by effort, but by faith; not by works, but by the precious blood of Christ."⁹⁵ Sanctification is not a product of the intellect, the will, or personal effort, but is the result of dependence on Jesus Christ. As in justification, repentant sinners obtain sanctification through faith in Jesus Christ.⁹⁶

Robert Smith believed that Christians could attain perfection in obedience, which he distinguished from absolute perfection.⁹⁷ Christians do not attain "absolute perfection," but a relative perfection. Their perfection is relative to "the measure of to-day's consciousness," or, what they presently know is sinful.⁹⁸

Albert Simpson (1843-1919), a Canadian by birth, also brought the doctrine of practical holiness to the attention of the Reformed churches. While serving a Presbyterian congregation in Louisville, Kentucky, Simpson, experienced a second

⁹⁴Robert Smith, Holiness through Faith, p. 76.

⁹⁵Robert Smith, Holiness through Faith, p. 76.

⁹⁶Robert Smith, Holiness through Faith, pp. iv, 45, 47, 48-49, 51, 57, 119, 120, 124, 125; idem., "Walking in the Light", pp. 45, 46, 53; and idem., Romans VII, p. 18.

⁹⁷Robert Smith, Holiness through Faith, pp. 74, 75, 108.

⁹⁸Robert Smith, Holiness through Faith, pp. v, 10, 27, 58, 92, 105, 107. Also see Robert Smith, Romans VII, p. 29.

work of grace (1874). One factor contributing to this experience was his reading of William Boardman's book, The Higher Christian Life. Another factor was a pastor's testimony that Simpson heard at a Dwight Moody crusade in Chicago. Simpson went on to become a proponent of practical holiness. He addressed holiness conventions in the United States and Great Britain, and founded the Christian and Missionary Alliance (1887).⁹⁹

According to Simpson, Christians are sanctified by faith, not by means or by effort. Their sanctification is the result of God's gracious activity in their lives, accomplished by the Holy Spirit. The result is not mere self-improvement, but divine holiness. Christians, however, are not passive recipients in sanctification. They are sanctified as they voluntarily yield to God's call to separate from evil, both their evil acts and their evil nature. This is a definite act of dedication or consecration, subsequent to conversion. As they decide to obey God's call to separate from evil, God makes their separation good. God sanctifies them. Simultaneously, they are filled with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit then continues the work of sanctification. Christians who are sanctified wholly are separated from sin, dedicated to God, and filled with the Holy Spirit. These Christians will continue to experience temptation, but they now have the power to overcome it. As long as they trust, or abide, in Jesus

⁹⁹On Simpson see A. E. Thompson, A. B. Simpson: His Life and Work (Harrisburg, PA: Christian Publications, 1939). For a description of Simpson's religious experience see Thompson, A. B. Simpson, pp. 63-71; and Robert L. Niklaus, John S. Sawin, Samuel J. Stoesz, All for Jesus: God at Work in the Christian and Missionary Alliance over One Hundred Years (Harrisburg, PA: Christian Publications, 1986), pp. 7-9. For an exposition of Simpson's doctrine of sanctification see Gerald E McGraw, "The Doctrine of Sanctification in the Published Writings of Albert Benjamin Simpson" (Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1986); and Richard Gilbertson, The Baptism of the Holy Spirit: The Views of A. B. Simpson and his Contemporaries (Harrisburg, PA: Christian Publications, 1991).

Christ, they will be preserved blameless.¹⁰⁰

Simpson did not believe that all Christians are wholly sanctified, but all may be. He wrote of two groups of Christians. He wrote of those who had reached the "higher experience," the "highway," "God's great elevated railway," and the "struggling throngs who toil along the lower pavement." The latter are excluded from the "higher experience" by their own choice. God excludes no one. Christians themselves prevent Jesus Christ from leading them to victory over sin.¹⁰¹

British adherents of the Keswick Convention developed another doctrine of sanctification during the nineteenth century.¹⁰² The Anglican pastor, Evan Hopkins, although acquainted with Boardman, entered the higher Christian life under the direct influence of Robert Smith. He joined Boardman and Robert Smith in a number of holiness conventions which preceded the first Keswick Convention in 1875. During

¹⁰⁰A. B. Simpson, Wholly Sanctified (New York: Christian Alliance Publishing, 1893), pp. 11, 15-17, 17, 24, 40, 56, 107, 109. Also see A. B. Simpson, Christ Life (New York: Word, Work, and World, 1888), pp. 19-20, 61-63, 65, 70-71, 81, 82.

¹⁰¹Simpson, Wholly Sanctified, pp. 9, 11. Also see Simpson, Christ Life, pp. 6, 43-44, 61-62.

¹⁰²For the history of the Keswick Convention, see Steven Barabas, So Great Salvation: The History and Message of the Keswick Convention (Westwood, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1952); and J. C. Pollock, The Keswick Story: The Authorized History of the Keswick Convention (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1964). Various facets of the Keswick Convention's history, as well as its perspective on the doctrine of sanctification are explored in W. H. Aldis, ed., The Message of Keswick and its Meaning, 2nd ed., with Forewords by W. H. Aldis and Wilbur M. Smith (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1957); Bundy, Keswick, passim; *idem.*, "Keswick and the Experience of Piety," in Modern Christian Revivals, ed. Edith L. Blumhofer and Randall H. Balmer (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1993), pp. 118-144; Charles F. Harford, ed., The Keswick Convention: Its Message, Its Method and Its Men (London: Marshall Brothers, 1907); and J. Robertson McQuilken, "The Keswick Perspective," in Five Views on Sanctification, pp. 151-183, edited by Melvin Dieter, et. al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1987).

the early years of the Keswick Convention, Hopkins was among the leaders of the event, and frequently addressed the conferees. His book, The Law of Liberty in the Spiritual Life, has been described as the "text-book" of the Keswick Convention.¹⁰³

Hopkins taught that sanctification is a "process," "an act or attitude of consecration," and "a gift." Though sanctification begins at the moment of conversion and continues incomplete until death, at certain moments in this process Christians are made aware of their need to make a conscious separation from sin, and do so. These moments are marked by a crisis, a breaking of the will. As a result of the crisis, or struggle, Christians learn to cling to God. In other words, they learn to believe in God. This act is once for all, unless Christians resume control over what they previously offered to God. The result is salvation from sin. They are saved from sin not because of what they do, but because the gracious gift they receive from God. Jesus Christ is imparted to them by the Holy Spirit. Through this experience, Christians obtain the resources they need for victory over temptation, for continual spiritual growth, and for Christian service in Jesus Christ.¹⁰⁴

Hopkins taught that complete sanctification is synonymous with the filling of the Holy Spirit. When Christians are filled with the Holy Spirit, they do not receive more of the Holy Spirit. Rather, they give more of themselves to the control of the

¹⁰³Fred Mitchell, "Evan Hopkins: A Unique Gift to Keswick and the Church," in The Law of Liberty in the Spiritual Life, pp. v-viii, written by Evan H. Hopkins (Philadelphia: The Sunday School Times, 1952), p. v. On Hopkins see A Standard Bearer of Faith and Holiness: Reminiscences of Evan H. Hopkins (London: Morgan and Scott, 1919); and Alexander Smellie, Evan Henry Hopkins: A Memoir (London: Marshall Brothers, 1920).

¹⁰⁴Evan H. Hopkins, The Law of Liberty in the Spiritual Life, with an Appreciation by Fred Mitchell (Philadelphia: The Sunday School Times, 1952), pp. 64-77.

Holy Spirit. Hopkins explained that Christians receive the Holy Spirit in regeneration. When Christians yield all their body, soul, and spirit, to the Holy Spirit, they are full of the Holy Spirit. This means that they are fully under the control of the Holy Spirit. Hopkins believed that Christians who are fully under the control of the Holy Spirit are wholly sanctified.¹⁰⁵

Hopkins and other adherents of the Keswick Convention rejected the Reformed notion of mortification as well as the Wesleyan doctrine of eradication. In their place, they substituted the idea of "counter-action." Hopkins taught that the power of the flesh cannot be overcome by determination. Divine help is necessary. With the assistance of the Holy Spirit, the power of the old nature is counteracted.¹⁰⁶

From the 1840s until the end of his life in 1886, Boardman was in dialogue with proponents of each of these holiness theologies. He was acquainted with Palmer, Mahan, the Smiths, Simpson, and Hopkins, and participated in holiness conventions with all of them. What influence did their developing doctrines of sanctification have on his? What influence might Boardman's developing doctrine of sanctification have had on their ideas?

The Scholarly Assessment of the Evangelist's Place in the Nineteenth-Century

Holiness Movement

The Wesleyan holiness and the higher Christian life traditions have been

¹⁰⁵Hopkins, Law of Liberty, p. 124.

¹⁰⁶Hopkins, Law of Liberty, p. 113.

overlooked in American religious historiography.¹⁰⁷ David Bundy observes that the available monographs "relate to the more literate, middle and upper class elements of the tradition (e.g., Finney, Mahan, the Palmers, Upham, Parham,¹⁰⁸ H. W. and R. P. Smith)." He also observes that the research is dependent upon a "restrictive appropriation" of the primary sources.¹⁰⁹

William Boardman must be considered one of the "more literate, middle and upper class elements of the tradition." His place in the holiness movement has, nevertheless, escaped thorough investigation.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷Cf. Timothy Smith, Revivalism and Social Reform, pp. 78, 79, 103; and David Bundy, "The Historiography of the Wesleyan/Holiness Tradition," The Wesleyan Theological Journal 30 (1995):69-70; with Ahlstrom, Religious History, pp. 477-478; Edwin S. Gausted, A Religious History of America, new revised ed. (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1990), pp. 319-320; Mark A. Noll, A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1992), pp. 181-183, 235, 378-381; and William W. Sweet, The Story of Religion in America (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950), pp. 352-353.

¹⁰⁸According to James Goff, Jr., Charles Parham (1873-1929) was the founder of the Pentecostal Movement. See Stanley M. Burgess and Gary B. McGee, eds., Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1988), pp. 660-661. Also see Daniel G. Reid, et. al., eds., Dictionary of Christianity in America (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1990), p. 865.

¹⁰⁹Bundy, "Historiography," p. 70.

¹¹⁰See Barabas, So Great Salvation, pp. 19-27; Edith L. Blumhofer, The Assemblies of God: A Chapter in the Story of American Pentecostalism, 2 vols. (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1989), 1:27, 57-64; Frederick D. Bruner, A Theology of the Holy Spirit: The Pentecostal Experience and the New Testament Witness (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1970), pp. 43-44, 62; Bundy, Keswick, pp. 16-17, 36, 57, 123-125, 127; Raymond J. Cunningham, "From Holiness to Healing: The Faith Cure in America, 1872-1892," Church History 43 (1974):499-513; Dayton, American Holiness Movement, pp. 19-26; *idem.*, Theological Roots, pp. 67, 104, 123-127; Dieter, Holiness Revival, pp. 56-57, 61, 122, 156; John Fea, "Power from on High in an Age of Ecclesiastical Impotence: The 'Enduement of the Holy Spirit' in American Fundamentalist Thought, 180-1936," Fides et Historia 26 (1994):27; Frank, Less than Conquerors, p. 147; Gilbertson, Baptism of the Holy Spirit, p. 177; Clarence M. Loucks, "The Theological

Theodor Jellinghaus and Paul Fleisch were among the first to briefly analyze Boardman's life, work, and thought. Both scholars treat Boardman and the higher Christian life within the context of their surveys of the German holiness movement.¹¹¹

Jellinghaus, for some time a participant in the German holiness movement,¹¹² claims Boardman, Finney, Mahan, Upham, and other non-Methodist proponents of

Foundations of the Victorious Life: An Evaluation of the Theology of the Victorious Christian Life in the Light of the Present and Future Aspects of Biblical Sanctification" (Ph.D. dissertation, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1984), pp. 23, 37; McGraw, "Doctrine of Sanctification," pp. 144-162; Charles W. Nienkirchen, A. B. Simpson and the Pentecostal Movement: A Study in Continuity, Crisis, and Change (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1992), pp. 3, 7-9, 14-17, 58-59; Niklaus, Sawin, and Stoesz, All for Jesus, pp. 3-4, 7, 64, 277; Myung Soo Park, "Concepts of Holiness in American Evangelicalism, 1835-1915" (Ph.D. dissertation, Boston University, 1992), pp. 144-185; Arthur T. Pierson, Forward Movements of the Last Half Century (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1900), p. 11; Pollock, Keswick Story, pp. 13, 24, 26, 52, 61-62; Timothy L. Smith, Called unto Holiness: The Story of the Nazarenes, The Formative Years (Kansas City, MO: Nazarene Publishing House, 1962), p. 26; *idem.*, Revivalism and Social Reform, pp. 28, 77, 78-79, 113, 138, 141, 175-176, 208-209, 231-234; Synan, Holiness-Pentecostal Movement, pp. 30, 43; Mark G. Toulouse and James O. Duke, eds., Makers of Christian Theology in America (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1997), pp. 130-152; and Edith L. Waldvogel, "The 'Overcoming Life': A Study in the Reformed Evangelical Origins of Pentecostalism" (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1977), pp. 78-82.

¹¹¹See Theodor Jellinghaus, Das vollige gegenwärtige Heil durch Christum, Fünfe durchgesehene und vermehrte Anflage (Berlin: Thormann and Goetsch, 1903), pp. 723-730; and Paul Fleisch, Zur Geschichte der Heiligungsbewegung: erstes Heft: Die Heiligungsbewegung von Wesley bis Boardman (Leipzig: H. G. Wallman, 1910), pp. 122-131; and *idem.*, Die moderne Gemeinschaftsbewegung in Deutschland. Erster Band. Die Geschichte der deutschen Gemeinschaftsbewegung bis zum Austreten des Zungenredens (1875-1907), Dritte Auflage (Leipzig: H. G. Wallmann, 1912), pp. 19-21, 29-31.

¹¹²Hermann F. Bertholet, et. al., eds., Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart: Handwörterbuch für Theologie und Religionswissenschaft, 7 vols., 2nd ed. (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1928), col. 2:1752; Hans F. von Campenhausen, et. al., eds., Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart: Handwörterbuch für Theologie und Religionswissenschaft, 7 vols., 3rd ed. (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1959), 3:182; and Fleisch, Gemeinschaftsbewegung, p. 20.

practical holiness infused "new life" into the discussion of "deeper holiness."¹¹³

Jellinghaus, however, distinguishes Boardman's understanding of the doctrine of sanctification from that of Finney and Mahan. In his view, Finney and Mahan taught a doctrine of sanctification that was essentially Wesleyan in character.¹¹⁴

Boardman's doctrine of sanctification was neither Wesleyan nor Oberlinian.

According to Jellinghaus, Boardman's doctrine of sanctification was the soundest, the most scriptural, and the most influential of the nineteenth-century holiness

theologies.¹¹⁵ The popularity of his The Higher Christian Life (1858) made him

"the leading guide of the cautious and practical holiness doctrine, and by means of it

he obtained admission to all the denominations."¹¹⁶

¹¹³"Ein neue Leben kam in dies fragen nach tieferer Hieligung durch einige Männer ausserhalb der Methodistenkirche, nämlich durch die beiden Professoren ander Oberlin=Universität in Amerika, Charles G. Finney und Asa Mahan und den Professoren der Philosophie Upham, W. E. Boardman und andere." Jellinghaus, Das völlige gegenwärtige Heil, p. 722.

¹¹⁴"Asa Mahan beschreibt es ausführlich, wie er, ohne von Wesley beeinflusst zu sein ... zu dieser Erfahrung und Erkenntnis gekommen sei. Seine Darstellungsweise ist verschieden von John Wesley, aber in allen Hauptpunkten stimmt er mit Wesley überein und gebraucht auch mehrere der oben genannten starken Ausdrücke. Durch diese um 1841 von Mahan und dem gewaltigen Gottesmanne Finney ... ausgehende Bewegung kam dann auch in das Heiligungsstreben der amerikanischen Methodistenkirche ein neues Leben." Jellinghaus, Das völlige gegenwärtige Heil, pp. 722-723.

¹¹⁵"Der fefundete, schriftgemässeste, vorsichtigste und einflussreichste Lehrer der Heiligung durch den Glauben wurde W. E. Boardman ... Er sowohl wie noch lebende Frau hatten die Heiligung in der wesleyanischen Art als christliche Vollkommenheit und Ausrottung der Alten Natur nicht fasse können und hatten auch gesehen, dass durch Missverstand diesser Lehre leute in offenbare Schwärmerie gekommen waren." Jellinghaus, Das völlige gegenwärtige Heil, p. 723.

¹¹⁶"So wurde er der führende Lehrer der vorsichtigeren und praktischen Heiligungslehre, und besonders durch ihn bekam sie in Amerika und England Eingang in all evangelischen Denominationen." Jellinghaus, Das völlige gegenwärtige Heil, p. 723.

Fleisch claims that early on Boardman stood "wholly" alongside Mahan and Finney, but that Boardman later distinguished himself from the teachers of Oberlin Perfection.¹¹⁷ For example, Boardman's emphasis on the divine impulse in the life of the sanctified moderates the "ascetic dualism" characteristic of Oberlin Perfectionism.¹¹⁸ Similarly, Boardman eliminated the concept of sinlessness as well as the question of experimentation (Versuchlichkeit). Boardman's doctrine of sanctification is further distinguished from Oberlin Perfection by his making holiness a more personal affair, and his dropping the magical transformation reminiscent of Oberlin Perfectionism.¹¹⁹

Believing Boardman participated in the Brighton Convention for the Promotion of Scriptural Holiness (1875), Fleisch maintains Boardman contributed to the trajectory that gave way to the Keswick Convention. Fleisch believes "the program" at the Keswick Convention (1875) "presented literally the same instruction as that at Brighton."¹²⁰

Another early and brief analysis of Boardman's writings is provided by

¹¹⁷"Aber während er so völlig auf seiten der Oberliner steht, verwirft er doch einige Züge ihrer Lehre." Fleisch, Heiligungsbewegung, p. 122.

¹¹⁸"Das Leben des Geheiligten bekommt nun dadurch göttliche Züge (S. 76), wobei auch hier eine Abschwächung der Oberliner Lehre und ihres asketischen Dualismus eintritt." Fleisch, Heiligungsbewegung, p. 126.

¹¹⁹"Es ist klar, dass diese Anschauung viele Schwierigkeiten der Oberliner vermeidet. Der Begriff der Sündlosigkeit und die Frage der Versuchlichkeit scheidet aus, auch wird der Heilungsglaube vielmehr ein wirklich persönliches Verhältnis, und die magische Verwandlung fällt insolgedessen weg." Fleisch, Heiligungsbewegung, p. 128.

¹²⁰"Das Programm zeigt fast wörtlich die selben Anweisungen wie das Brightoner." Fleisch, Gemeinschaftsbewegung, p. 29,

Benjamin Warfield, Professor of Didactic and Polemic Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary. During the 1910s and 1920s, Warfield published a series of articles on the doctrine of perfection. These articles were subsequently published in two volumes under the title Perfectionism. He included an article on "the 'higher life' movement" in the series. Warfield identified Boardman as an adherent of this movement.¹²¹

Warfield has little regard for Boardman's character. Warfield describes Boardman as a person who grew up into a "rugged but very unstable manhood." Warfield is also critical of the short duration of Boardman's assignments as pastor, missionary, administrator, and chaplain.¹²²

Similarly, Warfield has little regard for Boardman's book, The Higher Christian Life (1858). In Warfield's view, Boardman was a proponent of Christian perfection. He locates Boardman's doctrine of sanctification along a trajectory that originates in the thought of John Wesley, passes through the Oberlin Perfectionism of Finney and Mahan, and ultimately bears fruit in the Keswick Convention.¹²³

Warfield claims that The Higher Christian Life "marked and advanced" the influence of perfectionist ideas, and inaugurated a movement "which has affected the whole Protestant world."¹²⁴ This movement reached its climax in the work of Robert and Hannah Smith, and gave rise to the Keswick Convention. The Keswick

¹²¹See Benjamin B. Warfield, Perfectionism, 2 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1931), 2:463-558.

¹²²Warfield, Perfectionism, 2:467, 468.

¹²³Warfield, Perfectionism, 2:463, 465-466, 473, 475, 464, 487-489, 513.

¹²⁴Warfield, Perfectionism, 2:465.

Convention carried forward the Smiths' ideas, along with those of Boardman.¹²⁵

In a more recent analysis of Boardman's writings on the doctrine of sanctification, Timothy Smith briefly describes Boardman as an admirer of Finney and Mahan. He believes Boardman "sought to make the experience [of scriptural holiness] more appealing to all denominations by describing it in terms which neither Methodist nor Oberlin preachers had used before."¹²⁶ Working within the theological framework of New School Presbyterian Theology, Boardman formulated an understanding of the doctrine of sanctification similar to that maintained by the Wesleyans and Oberlinians.¹²⁷

In a brief reference to Boardman, Vinson Synan calls him a co-worker in the "campaign for perfection." Similar to Timothy Smith, Synan considers Boardman's doctrine of sanctification "an attempt to interpret sanctification to those outside the Methodist tradition."¹²⁸ He adds that Boardman was one of several Americans who exported American holiness theology to Great Britain, and who contributed to the events which led to the formation of the Keswick Convention in 1875.¹²⁹

According to Melvin Dieter, Boardman "caught up in significant measure all the religious longings which were coursing through the popular temper of much of Christendom in America, Canada, and Europe at the time."¹³⁰ Dieter claims that

¹²⁵Warfield, Perfectionism, 2:465-466.

¹²⁶Timothy Smith, Called Unto Holiness, p. 11.

¹²⁷Timothy Smith, Revivalism and Social Reform, p. 28.

¹²⁸Synan, Holiness-Pentecostal Movement, p. 30.

¹²⁹Synan, Holiness-Pentecostal Movement, p. 43.

¹³⁰Dieter, Holiness Revival, p. 56.

Boardman's doctrine of sanctification combined Wesleyan holiness theology and Oberlin Perfectionism. The result was "a statement of the nature and reality of the life of holiness which was more widely received than the expositions in the more classic traditions."¹³¹ Palmer was, in Dieter's view, the vehicle through which Wesleyan holiness theology came to bear upon Boardman's statement on the higher Christian life. "Its essential dynamic was the one word heard most at the Tuesday Meetings--'definite'."¹³² Boardman consequently "continued their [Walter and Phoebe Palmer's] ministry of the Wesleyan holiness emphasis in the post-war period into numerous Baptist, Congregational, Presbyterian, Episcopal, and Lutheran churches" in the United States and Great Britain.¹³³

Dieter also observes that though Boardman shared with Robert Smith a perfectionist bent which they developed under Methodist influence,¹³⁴ Boardman's understanding of practical holiness differed from that of Robert and his wife, Hannah. Boardman and the Smiths manifested pietist or quietist tendencies. Unlike the Smiths, however, Boardman encouraged Christians to engage the world.¹³⁵

David Bundy has devoted more attention to Boardman than most students of the holiness movement, though much of his research remains unpublished. He aligns Boardman with Mahan, Robert and Hannah Smith, and other non-Wesleyan

¹³¹Dieter, Holiness Revival, p. 57.

¹³²Dieter, Holiness Revival, p. 63.

¹³³Dieter, Holiness Revival, pp. 156, 180.

¹³⁴Dieter, Foreword, pp. 13, 14.

¹³⁵Dieter, Holiness Revival, p. 122.

proponents of practical holiness. In his view, they were perfectionists and "leaned more toward Arminian than toward Calvinistic theological categories regarding Christian spirituality."¹³⁶ They articulated "the message, that by faith one can be sanctified now," in "Wesleyan/Holiness perfectionist categories."¹³⁷ Their cooperation with the Mildmay Conference¹³⁸ gave "impetus" to the Keswick Convention.¹³⁹ The Anglican leaders of the Keswick Convention modified the message of sanctification by faith to conform to their Reformed theology.¹⁴⁰

Bundy, though, distinguishes Boardman from his companions. He believes Boardman stands out as the one who "perhaps more than anyone else, raised interest in the possibility of the higher Christian life."¹⁴¹ Boardman's self-assigned mission was to transmit "the Wesleyan/Holiness understanding of sanctification to those in other traditions."¹⁴² Not only did Boardman contribute to the events which gave rise to the Keswick convention, he also influenced Albert Simpson's doctrine of sanctification.¹⁴³

¹³⁶Bundy, Keswick, p. 36.

¹³⁷Bundy, "Keswick and Evangelical Piety," p. 127. Also see Bundy, Keswick, p. 125.

¹³⁸Bundy, "Keswick and Evangelical Piety," pp. 118-123, 133-134.

¹³⁹Bundy, Keswick, pp. 36, 54.

¹⁴⁰Bundy, "Keswick and Evangelical Piety," pp. 118-119, 126-127, 131.

¹⁴¹Bundy, Keswick, p. 17.

¹⁴²Bundy, Keswick, p. 123; citing Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, pp. 134-136. Also see Bundy, Keswick, p. 57.

¹⁴³Bundy, Keswick, pp. 67, 49-50. Burgess and McGee, eds., Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, pp. 518-519.

Donald Dayton, a student of the Methodist holiness movement in the United States, affirms that "the renewed emphasis on Christian perfection" in the mid-nineteenth century developed "along classical Wesleyan lines before a theological shift occurred which diverted the focus of attention from Jesus Christ to the Holy Spirit and pentecostal language became common place."¹⁴⁴ With the shift in language and focus came a shift in the perceived goal of the "holy life." As illustrated in Mahan's writings, Dayton maintains, the goal shifted from "obedience to the moral law" to "personal 'cleansing' and 'purity'."¹⁴⁵ He lists Boardman among those who represent the renewed interest in "Christian Perfection." Dayton believes Boardman led the spread of the holiness movement into the non-Wesleyan churches in the wake of the 1857-1858 revival.¹⁴⁶ His work as a proponent of the higher Christian life contributed to the establishment of the Keswick Convention more than it did the development of the theology of the American holiness movement.¹⁴⁷

On the basis of the testimonies of Boardman, the Smiths, and Evan Hopkins, David Eby similarly classifies the "higher Christian life movement" as "essentially a Wesleyan-holiness movement within non-Methodist circles." He defines the "movement" as "a loosely connected conglomeration of Christians from Reformed and Anglican backgrounds who advocated a modified Wesleyan view of sanctification." He considers the principle of the higher Christian life to be in conflict with the

¹⁴⁴Dayton, "Asa Mahan," pp. 61, 62-67.

¹⁴⁵Dayton, "Asa Mahan," p. 66.

¹⁴⁶Dayton, "Rise of the Evangelical Healing Movement," pp. 1-18.

¹⁴⁷Dayton, American Holiness Movement, pp. 20-23.

Reformed doctrine of sanctification.¹⁴⁸

In his Boston University doctoral dissertation, Myung Soo Park, a pastor in the Korean Evangelical Holiness Church, attempts to define the various nineteenth-century American holiness theologies. He places Boardman's doctrine of sanctification in the context of the Reformed and Oberlin traditions. He disagrees with Timothy Smith, who describes Boardman's doctrine of sanctification as "quasi-Wesleyan," and with Dieter, who calls Boardman an exponent of Wesleyan holiness theology.¹⁴⁹

Park acknowledges that Wesleyan holiness theology influenced Boardman's religious experience, but insists that Boardman's doctrine of sanctification is inconsistent with the traditional Wesleyan doctrine of sanctification. He argues that the differences between Boardman's doctrine of sanctification and Wesleyan holiness theology is due to the context within which Boardman developed the higher Christian life. Boardman developed his understanding of practical holiness within the context of Reformed and not Wesleyan theology. Park, however, acknowledges that the Reformed theological context within which Boardman developed his doctrine of sanctification was inconsistent with seventeenth-century Reformed orthodoxy.¹⁵⁰

Park also claims Robert Smith repeated "Boardman's message ... with a somewhat Wesleyan color" in Holiness through Faith (1870),¹⁵¹ and that Simpson inherited his doctrine of sanctification from the higher Christian life movement, rather

¹⁴⁸David L. Eby, "The Reformed Response to the Higher Life Movement" (Th.M. thesis, Westminster Theological Seminary, 1982), p. 4.

¹⁴⁹Park, "Concepts of Holiness," pp. iv-vii, 7, 14, 88, 144-145, 157, 159, 160.

¹⁵⁰Park, "Concepts of Holiness," pp. iv-vii, 7, 14, 88, 144-145, 157, 159, 160.

¹⁵¹Park, "Concepts of Holiness," pp. 151-152.

than from Wesleyan holiness theology or from the Keswick Convention.¹⁵² In summary, Park concludes that in a way consistent with Oberlin Perfectionism, Boardman, Mahan, the Smiths, and Simpson maintained that sanctification is "basically a matter of the will: consecration or surrender of the will to God."¹⁵³

Edith (Waldvogel) Blumhofer observes that Boardman's doctrine of sanctification is, in general, consistent with the message of other non-Wesleyan proponents of practical holiness. She, however, distinguishes Boardman from the main body of this group. She believes that Boardman's doctrine of sanctification reflects a stronger influence of Wesleyan holiness theology than is characteristic of most non-Wesleyan proponents of practical holiness. Boardman, however, did not entirely abandon the Reformed tradition. Blumhofer describes Boardman as one of several non-Methodists greatly influenced by Wesleyan holiness theology who "in an effort to assert their affinity with the Reformed tradition ... referred more broadly to a quality of spirituality which, its advocates claimed, the majority of Christians lacked." Their message stressed (1) "conscious fellowship with Christ," (2) "total consecration," and (3) "the ministry of the Holy Spirit." Their general objective was to "infuse vitality into existing Protestant practices as well as to draw attention to 'neglected' passages of Scripture." In essence, the non-Methodist phalanx of the holiness movement advocated a "'higher life Reformed teaching."¹⁵⁴ Blumhofer also believes that like many other Protestants, Boardman was interested in the "essentially

¹⁵²Park, "Concepts of Holiness," pp. 15-16, 178.

¹⁵³Park, "Concepts of Holiness," p. 185.

¹⁵⁴Waldvogel, "'Overcoming Life'," pp. 78, 79 (emphasis added).

Christocentric" understanding of the Christian life promoted by Finney under the name "Christian Perfection."¹⁵⁵

Blumhofer concludes that Boardman, in concert with Robert and Hannah Smith, provided a "mediating position" between the Wesleyan and non-Methodist understanding of "holiness and spiritual power." Their work gave rise to the Keswick Convention, and had close theological ties to Simpson's concept of the Christian life.¹⁵⁶ In the wake of Robert Smith's suspected sexual impropriety and his increasingly mystical theology, the leaders of the Keswick Convention moved toward the Reformed doctrine of sanctification and consequently away from the doctrine of sanctification taught by the Smiths and Boardman.¹⁵⁷

Four people who have written on Simpson's theology briefly direct their attention to Boardman's message. Gerald McGraw, represents Boardman as a proponent of "extreme perfectionism," who invited his hearers to enter instantaneously into sanctification.¹⁵⁸ Another, Charles Nienkirchen, describes Boardman as "a guiding force" in the "interdenominational, transcontinental, higher- and deeper-life movement,"¹⁵⁹ adding that he attempted to "marry" the Wesleyan, Oberlinian, and Reformed doctrines of sanctification.¹⁶⁰ A third member of this group, Samuel

¹⁵⁵Blumhofer, Assemblies of God, 1:57-64.

¹⁵⁶Waldvogel, "'Overcoming Life'," pp. 88, 116; and Blumhofer, Assemblies of God, 1:57-64.

¹⁵⁷Waldvogel, "'Overcoming Life'," p. 121.

¹⁵⁸McGraw, "Doctrine of Sanctification," pp. 159, 144-162.

¹⁵⁹Nienkirchen, A. B. Simpson, p. 7.

¹⁶⁰Nienkirchen, A. B. Simpson, p. 8.

Stoesz, recognizes that "similarities and differences" may be found in Boardman's emphasis in the first and second editions of The Higher Christian Life, though he does not report what they are. He also finds similarities and differences between the "stress" in Boardman's doctrine of sanctification, Hannah Smith's "emphasis" in The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life (1870), and the "major themes" in the writings of Simpson through 1890. Stoesz maintains that "all the books [The Higher Christian Life (1858, 1871) and The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life] reflect the early Keswick emphasis--they are christological more than pneumatological and emphasize the transition from a self-centered life to a released Spirit-filled life, but differ in the practical concerns and needs the authors address." According to Stoesz, Boardman emphasized sanctification as a vehicle for a more effective ministry, particularly for the clergy.¹⁶¹ Finally, Richard Gilbertson claims Boardman revised the theology of the Wesleyan holiness movement and Oberlin Perfectionism. The Higher Christian Life (1858) served as a "corrective" of the perceived overemphasis on human agency. He maintains that Boardman argued that although both justification and sanctification are received at conversion, Christians often only avail themselves of the latter provision later in life.¹⁶² Gilbertson also claims that Boardman's doctrine of sanctification was "congruent" with that expressed in the early Keswick

¹⁶¹Samuel J. Stoesz, "The Doctrine of Sanctification in the Early History of the C&MA," in The Birth of A Vision: Essays on the Ministry and Thought of Albert B. Simpson, with a Preface by Dennis Kinlaw, ed. David F. Hartzfeld and Charles Nienkirchen (Regina, SK: Canadian Theological Seminary, 1986), pp. 122-123, fn. 24.

¹⁶²Gilbertson, Baptism of the Holy Spirit, p. 177.

Convention.¹⁶³

The Need to Reconsider the Evangelist's Place in the Nineteenth-Century Holiness Movement

The limited attention devoted to William Boardman in the literature regarding the Wesleyan and non-Methodist holiness movements is inconsistent with his stature as an evangelist in the United States prior to the rise of Dwight Moody,¹⁶⁴ the role he played in the holiness movement in the United States, Great Britain, and Sweden, and the popularity of his first book, The Higher Christian Life (1858).¹⁶⁵ Nor do the available analyses of Boardman's doctrine of sanctification clarify the connection between his message and other nineteenth-century holiness theologies. Furthermore, these analyses of Boardman's message are generally based on a limited use of the primary sources. Most of those who have analyzed Boardman's doctrine of sanctification limit themselves to either the first or second editions of The Higher Christian Life (1858, 1871). A number of books, tracts, and articles were published under Boardman's name over a period of thirty years. Revision of his doctrine of

¹⁶³Gilbertson, Baptism of the Holy Spirit, p. 180.

¹⁶⁴Timothy Smith, Revivalism and Social Reform, p. 141. Robert Nichols identifies Boardman as "one of the most conspicuous revivalists" during "the last half decade of the sixties." Robert H. Nichols, Presbyterianism in New York State: A History of the Synod and Its Predecessors, ed. and completed by James H. Nichols (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Historical Society and Westminster Press, 1963), p. 143.

¹⁶⁵Timothy Smith reached a similar conclusion several years ago. He listed Boardman as one of several leaders of nineteenth-century American Protestantism about whom very little is known. Timothy Smith argued that the status granted the representatives of the revivalist and perfectionist dimensions of American Christianity is inconsistent with their actual standing in the mid- and later years of the nineteenth-century. Timothy Smith, Revivalism and Social Reform, pp. 78-79.

sanctification could be expected given his continued reflection on the topic, and his interaction with others who shared his passion for practical holiness. An analysis of Boardman's thought based exclusively on what he wrote in 1858, 1865, or even 1871 does not take into account the possibility that he may have changed his mind over the years.

The purpose of this dissertation is not to present Boardman's biography, though the historical context in which he lived will not be ignored, and an attempt will be made to trace the major developments in his life. The aim of this project is to analyze his doctrine of sanctification in relation to the mid-nineteenth century American and British theological milieu, noting the similarities and differences between his understanding of the doctrine and that of the Wesleyans, the Oberlinians, the Reformed, and other proponents of the "higher Christian life."

The evidence demonstrates that William Boardman drew attention to the common truths he found in the various holiness theologies. He advanced a Trinitarian doctrine of sanctification in which he attempted to coordinate human inability and human responsibility with the work of the Holy Spirit. He affirmed both the Wesleyan doctrine of instantaneous sanctification and the Reformed doctrine of gradual sanctification. He also allowed for the possibility that Christians might enter the higher Christian life at the moment of justification, or as a result of a crisis experience subsequent to justification. Boardman's significance does not lie in the originality of his message, but in his attempt to create a middle-ground between conflicting holiness theologies. Though influential, his place in the holiness movement was obscured by the shadow of others.

CHAPTER 2

THE EVANGELIST OF THE HIGHER CHRISTIAN LIFE

William Boardman's religious experience and theology were forged in the context of the revival spirit that captured the attention of rural and urban Protestants during the nineteenth century. The religious awakening at mid-century (1857-1859),¹ provided a receptive audience for Boardman's book, The Higher Christian Life (1858). In this book, Boardman explained the religious experience that influenced his understanding of the Christian life, and the message that eventually dominated his ministry. As the nineteenth century approached its end, the doctrine of practical holiness remained a topic of interest among American and British Protestants, both Methodist and non-Methodist. Throughout this period, Boardman taught the higher Christian life, though his efforts were overshadowed by the attention devoted to more dynamic members of the non-Methodist holiness movement.

¹See John D. Hannah, "Layman's Prayer Revival of 1858," Bibliotheca Sacra 134 (1977):59-73; J. Edwin Orr, The Event of the Century: The 1857-1858 Awakening, ed. Richard O. Roberts (Wheaton, IL: International Awakening Press, 1989); and idem., The Second Evangelical Awakening in Britain (London: Marshall, Morgan, and Scott, 1949).

The Evangelist's Preparation

William Boardman² was born on October 11, 1810 in the town of Smithsborough, New York to a merchant and his wife, Isaac and Eliza Boardman.³ Reflecting on his childhood as an adult, Boardman reported that his parents did not provide him with "much religious instruction." They were "traditional believers,"

²The most complete biography, though uncritical, is the one written by Mrs. W. E. Boardman, Life and Labours of the Rev. W. E. Boardman, with a Preface by Mark G. Pearse (New York: D. Appleton, 1887). Phineas C. Headley, Evangelists in the Church from Philip, A. D. 35, to Moody and Sankey, A. D. 1875 (Boston: Henry Hoyt, 1875), pp. 407-413, reports on Boardman's early evangelistic efforts. Also see Charles Cullis, ed., Work for Jesus: The Experience and Teachings of Mr. and Mrs. Boardman, with an Introduction by Charles Cullis (Boston: Willard Tract Society, 1875); "The Late Rev. W. E. Boardman," The Life of Faith, March 1, 1886, p. 56; Daniel G. Reid, et. al., eds., Dictionary of Christianity in America (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1990), pp. 169-170; Donald M. Lewis, ed., The Blackwell Dictionary of Evangelical Biography, 1730-1860, 2 vols. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 1.112-113; and Duane V. Maxey, ed., How They Entered Canaan (Coeur d'Alene, ID: Duane V. Maxey, n.d), n.pp. The Wesleyan Church Archives and Historical Library. Information regarding Boardman's relationship with the National Association for the Promotion of Holiness is provided by George Hughes in Days of Power in the Forest Temple. A Review of the Wonderful Work of God at Fourteen National Camp-Meetings from 1867 to 1872, with an Introduction by Rev. Bishop Haven (Boston: John Bent, 1873; reprint ed., Salem, OH: The Allegheny Wesleyan Methodist Connection, 1975), pp. 120, 315-318.

³Mrs. Boardman incorrectly identifies Boardman's birthplace as Smithfield, New York. Topographical references in the autobiographical passages quoted by Mrs. Boardman and cited by Charles Cullis suggest the modern Smithboro, New York as Boardman's birthplace. At the time of Boardman's birth, the town was called Smithsborough. County records do not mention Boardman, but several references are made to Isaac Boardman, his father. Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, p. 1; Cullis, Work for Jesus, pp. 14-15, 25; and Letter from Julia A. Chaffee, October 27, 1995. Also see William B. Gay, Historical Gazetteer of Tioga County, New York, 1785-1888 (New York: W. B. Gay, 1887), pp. 52, 488-489; Henry B. Pierce, History of Tioga, Chemung, Tompkins and Schuyler Counties, New York. With Illustrations and Biographical Sketches of Some of its Prominent Men and Pioneers (Philadelphia: Everts and Ensign, 1879), pp. 197, 199, 201; and Thomas C. McEnteer, ed., Seasons of Change: An Updated History of Tioga County (Owego, NY: Tioga County Legislature, 1990), pp. 740-747.

who "were somewhat slow to follow the ancestral example of entering early the gate of life; in fact they remained unconverted until after some of their own children led the way."⁴

Boardman's childhood, however, was not void of religious influence. During these years, he occasionally attended worship services with his grandmother, who lived in a nearby town. He also witnessed the work of revivalists who visited Smithsborough. He may have even heard stories about the Methodist revivalists Lorenzo Dow and Francis Asbury, who separately conducted revivals in Smithsborough in 1805 and 1807.⁵ Boardman, nevertheless, came to the end of his youth unconvinced of the validity of Christianity. He entered adulthood as a confident adherent of a self-constructed "pantheism."⁶

Boardman formulated his early religious beliefs during an apprenticeship as a merchant's clerk in a neighboring community. An older apprentice in the same mercantile loaned him a number of books, which he read with interest. The content of these books was "less elevated in morals than in style, more elegant than chaste, but none the less fascinating on that account." In addition to threatening Boardman's "virtue," these works challenged his respect for the Bible. They also tempted him to reject organized religion altogether, and pursue his own "inclinations" without regard for propriety or consequences.⁷ He was initially checked by the religious beliefs

⁴Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, p. 3. Also see W. E. Boardman, He that Overcometh: or, A Conquering Gospel (Boston: Henry Hoyt, 1869), pp. 19-47.

⁵Gay, Historical Gazetteer, pp. 491-492; and Pierce, History, pp. 199-200.

⁶Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, pp. 1-10.

⁷Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, p. 9.

ingrained in his conscience under the limited exposure to religion he received as a child. He eventually overcame this intellectual obstacle, and adopted a belief-system that considered experimental religion the product of "sympathetic impulse and excited imagination," rather than a supernatural work. He also set aside the Bible. And "a specious philosophy of the universe, essentially pantheistic," enabled him to disregard the "future state for man."⁸ He concluded:

There is no personal God like the Jehovah of the Bible; the God of nature is Nature itself. All things are God, and God is all things.⁹

Boardman formulated these theological convictions during a five year span (1825-1830). Only when he was thoroughly convinced of their validity did he discuss them. About this time, Boardman returned to Smithsborough for a visit. Along the way, he was joined by an older brother. During their journey, Boardman unleashed his attack on experimental religion. He knew that his brother had experienced an evangelical conversion as a youth, but had since lapsed. He assumed that his brother was also a critic of experimental religion. His brother, however, knew the "truth," and was confident that his religious experience was legitimate. He quickly destroyed the younger Boardman's belief-system.¹⁰

Though shaken by the ease with which his brother destroyed his belief-system, Boardman was not moved by his brother's testimony to become a Christian.

⁸Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, p. 10. Also see W. E. Boardman, Gladness in Jesus, rev. ed. (Boston: Willard Tract Repository, 1875), p. 37.

⁹Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, p. 10.

¹⁰Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, pp. 10-13.

Boardman returned to his home near Detroit, Michigan, where he had moved and entered into business with a partner. He concentrated on his work, and in this way masked his religious need.¹¹

Boardman's religious curiosity was reawakened sometime in 1831 or 1832. During this time, a minister with whom he was previously acquainted arrived in the Detroit area to conduct a "four day meeting." Due to his acquaintance with the minister, Boardman felt obligated to attend the revival. On the last day of the revival, he was converted.¹²

Boardman's conversion did not make a lasting impression on his life. Two years later, after he had started to prepare for the ministry, he was distracted by the promise of financial prosperity, and Detroit's social life.¹³

Boardman renewed his religious commitment after he married Mary Morse

¹¹Cullis, Work for Jesus, pp. 22-23; and Stephen Peet, Letter to Charles Hall, July 20, 1842, American Home Missionary Society Papers, 1816-1894 (Glen Rock, NJ: Microfilming Corporation of American, 1975), Reel 249. Boardman may be the William Boardman who served as aid-de-camp to General Joseph Brown during the Toledo War (1835). See Portrait Biographical Album of Oakland County Containing Full Page Portraits and Biographical Sketches of Prominent and Representative Citizens of the County together with Portraits and Biographies of all the Presidents of the United States and Governors of the State (Chicago: Chapman Brothers, 1891), p. 106; and Talcott E. Wing, "Continuation of the History of Monroe," Collection of the Pioneer Society of the State of Michigan together with Reports of County Society 6 (1907):381. That Boardman was living in the Detroit area in 1835 is consistent with his marriage to Mary Morse Adams of Detroit in 1837. It also explains Mrs. Boardman's description of their move to Michigan in 1848 as a "return." Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, p. 96.

¹²W. E. Boardman, The Great Physician (Jehovah Rophi) (Boston: Willard Tract Repository, 1881), p. 3. Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, pp. 13-19. Mrs. Boardman's narrative of this portion of Boardman's life consists largely of his testimony recorded in Boardman, He that Overcometh, pp. 19-43.

¹³Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, pp. 24-25.

Adams (1818-1904),¹⁴ in February 1837. Mrs. Boardman's father was a Unitarian, but the family worshiped in Episcopal congregations during her youth. When Mrs. Boardman learned that her husband was a Presbyterian, she confronted him with the apparent inconsistency between his lifestyle and his church membership. Boardman recounted his earlier religious experience for his wife. The story of his conversion led to her conversion, and a revival of his own religious convictions. Boardman's interest in the ministry was also renewed, but financial losses prevented him from pursuing this goal.¹⁵

In an effort to reestablish himself financially, Boardman and his wife moved to Sterling, Illinois in 1838. Here he established a mercantile. Mrs. Boardman's brother later joined him in this venture.¹⁶

During the months the Boardmans lived in Sterling, Boardman worked as a volunteer lay minister. He distributed the religious literature he and Mrs. Boardman had brought with them, and he assumed leadership of an unorganized congregation under the auspices of the united Presbyterian and Congregational churches. When an ordained minister was not available, Boardman was called upon to read the sermon. After a two-week revival under the direction of Rev. Fox, a Presbyterian minister, a

¹⁴On Mary Boardman see Elizabeth Baxter, "Mrs. Boardman," Living Truths (1904):542-543; and Mrs. W. E. Boardman, Mrs. Boardman's Words of Counsel, compiled by Miss [Marie?] Barclay (London: Bethshan Bookroom and Christian Herald, 1904). Also see Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, *passim*; and Cullis, Work for Jesus, *passim*.

¹⁵Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, pp. 27, 32-38.

¹⁶Mrs. Boardman identifies this community as Stirling, Illinois. Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, pp. 38-42.

congregation was organized, and a pastor called.¹⁷

By early 1842, the Boardmans had moved to Potosi, Wisconsin Territory (1829).¹⁸ Located in the lead mining region of Wisconsin Territory, Potosi offered a market for the produce taken in payment for merchandise at the store in Sterling, which Mrs. Boardman's brother continued to operate.¹⁹

During the Boardman's residence in Potosi, they experienced "the preciousness of Jesus' indwelling," "received the baptism of the Holy Ghost," and "came to see and know Jesus as a risen, living Savior."²⁰ This experience marked their entrance into what Boardman would later call the "higher Christian life."

The Boardmans entered the higher Christian life under the influence of others. Two of the people who indirectly influenced the Boardmans' religious experience were Charles Finney and Asa Mahan. A Methodist circuit rider left a book with the Boardmans on Christian perfection, suggesting that Mrs. Boardman read it. The book contained the testimonies of Finney and Mahan.²¹

¹⁷Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, pp. 38-42.

¹⁸W. E. Boardman, Letter to Milton Badger, September 29, 1842, American Home Missionary Society Papers (Glen Rock, NJ: Microfilming Corporation of America, 1975), Reel 249; Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, pp. 43, 44. On Potosi, Wisconsin Territory see Costello N. Holford, History of Grant County Wisconsin. Including its Civil, Political, Geological, Mineralogical, Archeological and Military History. And a History of Several Towns (Lancaster, WI: The Teller Print, 1900), pp. 513-525, 532-539.

¹⁹Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, p. 43 and Charles J. Kennedy, "The Presbyterian Church on the Wisconsin Frontier," Journal of the Department of History of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. 18 and 19 (1938-1939):18:153.

²⁰Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, pp. 44-45.

²¹Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, p. 48.

About this same time, the Boardmans were visited by a long-time friend.

Fifteen years earlier this woman was dismissed from the Fourth Presbyterian Church in Albany, New York, served at the time by Edward Kirk (1802-1874).²² This woman was one of several people accused of subscribing to the doctrine of absolute perfection. The Boardmans' visitor reported that a portion of this group did embrace the doctrine of absolute perfection. Though she rejected the extremism of this faction, she also refused to join those who opposed the doctrine of Christian perfection altogether. Consequently, she was disciplined, along with the others. She answered many of the questions Mrs. Boardman had about the Christian life.²³

James Brainerd Taylor also indirectly influenced the Boardmans' religious experience. The Memoir of James Brainerd Taylor, a work read by Finney, Mahan (1836), and the absolute perfectionist John Noyes (1811-1886),²⁴ was,

²²On Kirk see Henry W. Bowden, Dictionary of American Religious Biography, 2nd ed. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1993), pp. 293-294; and Reid, et. al., eds., Dictionary of Christianity in America, p. 618.

²³Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, pp. 52-54. Also see W. E. Boardman, The Higher Christian Life (Boston: Henry Hoyt and Chicago: William Tomlinson, 1858; reprint ed., New York: Garland, 1985), pp. 70-73. The woman is probably Mrs. Boardman. Her friend is probably the one who visited the Boardmans while they lived in Potosi.

²⁴See John H. Rice and Benjamin H. Rice, Memoir of James Brainerd Taylor, 2nd ed. (New York: American Tract Society, 1833). Boardman recounts his reading of the memoir in W. E. Boardman, In the Power of the Spirit; or, Christian Experience in the Light of the Bible, (Boston: Willard Tract Repository, 1875), pp. 205-206. Finney narrates his reading of the memoir in Charles G. Finney, Lectures to Professing Christians. Delivered in the City of New York, in the Years 1836 and 1837 (New York: John S. Taylor, 1837; reprint ed., New York: Garland, 1985), pp. 266-267. Mahan reports his reading of the memoir in Asa Mahan, Scripture Doctrine of Christian Perfection (Chicago: W. B. Rose, 1918), p. 61. Regarding Finney and Mahan in this context also see Keith Hardman, Charles Grandison Finney, 1792-1875: Revivalist and Reformer (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1987), p. 330; and Merrill E. Gaddis, "Christian Perfectionism in America" (Ph.D. dissertation,

perhaps, the most important influence on the Boardmans' religious experience.²⁵

Born in Middle Haddam, Connecticut, James Brainerd Taylor (1801-1829)²⁶ was an emotionally and religiously sensitive young man who graduated from Nausau Hall. He studied briefly at Yale Divinity School before transferring to Union Theological Seminary (Virginia), where he hoped to recover from illness while continuing his preparation for ministry. He died before he achieved his goal.²⁷

Taylor was frustrated by the slow pace of his spiritual growth. He desired to know each person of the Trinity at a level of greater intimacy. He believed that intimacy with the Trinity would produce holiness in his life.²⁸ He longed for " ... complete deliverance from remaining corruption; for sanctification in soul, body, and spirit; for that perfect love which casteth out all fear "²⁹ On April 23, 1822, Taylor awoke with an awareness of Jesus Christ's presence. He wrote in his journal:

The Lord heard my cries and groans, and was witness to my tears and my desires for holiness. I pleaded and wrestled with him; and, praise to his name! after six long years I found what I had so long and so earnestly sought ... For then, through the great love and power

University of Chicago, 1929), pp. 310-335. On Noyes see Gaddis, "Christian Perfection," p. 335.

²⁵Boardman, Power of the Spirit, pp. 205-206.

²⁶On Taylor see John M'Clintock and James Strong, Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature, 10 vols. (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1891), 10:231; and James G. Wilson and John Fiske, eds., Appleton's Cyclopaedia of American Biography, 6 vols. (New York: D. Appleton, 1889), 6:45.

²⁷Rice, Memoir, pp. 353-356, 405-416.

²⁸Rice, Memoir, pp. 64, 66-67.

²⁹Rice, Memoir, p. 75.

of our Lord, my feet were set in a large place.³⁰

Taylor later described this religious experience as a "deeper work of grace," and expressed the desire that all Christians might have the same religious experience. He claimed to have no preference regarding the name of this experience. "People may call this blessing by what name they please, faith of assurance, holiness, perfect love, sanctification--it makes no difference with me whither they give it a name, or no name, it continues a blessed reality."³¹ Taylor did not consider himself to be sinless in any sense subsequent to this religious experience. From this moment on, he pursued greater holiness.³²

Taylor's testimony impressed Mrs. Boardman. When she told her husband about Taylor's religious experience, he concluded that he needed to encounter Jesus Christ in the same manner. He believed that another religious experience awaited him--a religious experience like the one encountered by Taylor. From this moment on, having this religious experience was Boardman's primary objective. Mrs. Boardman considered her husband's effort dangerous, because she feared the experience would kill him. She also considered his effort "mysterious."³³

How mysterious this seemed to me in one, who was considered by all who knew him at that time, to be a most consistent Christian, upright in all his dealings with others, full of zeal for the salvation of souls, and far ahead of most Christians in his consistent daily walk.

³⁰Rice, Memoir, pp. 81-86.

³¹Rice, Memoir, p. 92.

³²Rice, Memoir, pp. 325-326.

³³Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, pp. 46, 47.

What else could such a man need, and why should he spend month after month in this useless search for something far beyond his reach in this life?³⁴

Despite Mrs. Boardman's initial skepticism, she ultimately assisted Boardman in his effort to attain Taylor's religious experience. Mrs. Boardman's entrance into this religious experience occurred without effort. An illness required her to remain home from worship one Sunday morning. She paged through the book on the doctrine of Christian perfection that the Methodist circuit rider had left at their home. She then turned to Taylor's testimony. Taylor's testimony clarified the experience described by Finney and Mahan.³⁵

Six months passed before Boardman grasped the significance of this religious experience, and followed his wife. Though Boardman was initially confused by his wife's testimony, he eventually realized that if he was to enter this experience he would have to stop trying and trust Jesus Christ to produce the result.³⁶ Reflecting on his religious experience many years later, Mrs. Boardman commented: "He had been toiling and trying to believe for a completed work wrought in himself, a state of sanctification, in which all would be completed, so that he might take satisfaction in his own holiness, instead of in Jesus his Sanctification."³⁷ As a result of the

³⁴Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, p. 47.

³⁵Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, pp. 48-56. Also see Mrs. W. E. Boardman, Who shall Publish the Glad Tidings? (Boston: Henry Hoyt, 1873), pp. 88-90, 97. Boardman gives an account of Mrs. Boardman's experience in W. E. Boardman, Higher Christian Life, rev. ed. (Boston: Henry Hoyt, 1871), pp. 136-141.

³⁶Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, pp. 48-56.

³⁷Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, p. 56.

Boardmans' religious experiences, they discovered "the preciousness of Jesus' indwelling" and "received the baptism of the Holy Ghost." They now acknowledged Jesus Christ as "a risen, living Saviour."³⁸

Years later, a friend, Charles Cullis (1833-1892), described Boardman's discovery:

He had been looking to be made holy in himself, instead of which his eyes were opened to see and his heart to accept his own utter bankruptcy in himself and his solvency in Christ alone, and to rejoice with joy unspeakable that it was so, because it bound him indissolubly to Christ forever, by the bond of an absolutely necessary dependence for everything pertaining to life and godliness. And he had been toiling and trying to believe for a completed work and state, but was now brought to see that it was just a full and abiding union with Jesus, the beginning and not the finishing of the life more abundant: a new and better starting point for full and real progress in all time to come, all the springs for which were in Christ, not in himself.³⁹

Boardman's Potosi experience influenced his understanding of Scripture, as well as his understanding of the Christian life. From this experience, Boardman drew themes that would become prominent in the message he would preach to Christians during the latter decades of his life.

Revival fires were burning throughout Wisconsin Territory when the Boardmans began to tell their neighbors of their experience. In February, 1842, congregations in Beloit, Milwaukee, Mount Pleasant, Prairie du Lac, East Troy, Green Bay, Delavan, Gardner's Prairie, and Geneva, as well as Potosi reported

³⁸Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, pp. 44-45, 46-56. Regarding the time frame within which their experiences occurred see Boardman, Power in the Spirit, pp. 206-207.

³⁹Cullis, Work for Jesus, pp. 36-37.

revivals.⁴⁰ The Boardmans' testimonies fanned the flame.⁴¹ They were "small in stature[,] mild and soft in their manners," but able to "win and work their way amongst all, even the hardest cases."⁴² According to Cullis, "the report of what was going on in the place took wing, and lighted upon every village and cabin in all that mining region."⁴³

Sometime between February 12, and March 31, 1842,⁴⁴ two Presbyterian ministers working under the American Home Missionary Society (1826),⁴⁵ Stephen Peet and J. C. Holbrook, arrived in Potosi.⁴⁶ The missionaries found some members

⁴⁰Stephen Peet, Narrative of the State of Religion in Wisconsin [sic.] presented and adopted at the meeting of the Pres. & Cong. Convention Feb. 10, 1842, American Home Missionary Society Papers, 1816-1898 (Glen Rock, NJ: Microfilming Corporation of America, 1975), Reel 249. On the history of revival in Wisconsin Territory see Stephen Peet, History of the Presbyterian and Congregational Churches and Ministers in Wisconsin. Including an Account of the Organization of the Convention, and Plan of Union (Milwaukee, WI: Silas Chapman, 1851), p. 190 and Kennedy, "Wisconsin Frontier," 18:264, 265, 19:19, 21.

⁴¹Cullis, Work for Jesus, pp. 39-45.

⁴²Stephen Peet, Letter to Charles Hall, July 20, 1842, American Home Missionary Society Papers, 1816-1898 (Glen Rock, NJ: Microfilming Corporation of America, 1975), Reel 249.

⁴³Cullis, Work for Jesus, p. 41.

⁴⁴Compare Stephen Peet, Letter to the Secretaries of the American Home Missionary Society, February 12, 1842, American Home Missionary Society Papers, 1816-1894 (Glen Rock, NJ: Microfilming Corporation of America, 1975), Reel 249; with idem., Letter to Milton Badger, March 31, 1842, American Home Missionary Society Papers, 1816-1894 (Glen Rock, NJ: Microfilming Corporation of America, 1975), Reel 249.

⁴⁵On the activity of the American Home Missionary Society in "the great valley" see Colin B. Goodykoontz, Home Missions on the American Frontier with Particular Reference to the American Home Missionary Society (New York: Octagon Books, 1971), pp. 215-257.

⁴⁶Peet, Letter to the Secretaries of the A.H.M.S., February 12, 1842.

of the local Presbyterian church (1840):

In a most excellent state--ready for a revival, and God blessed them. But quite a number were evidently and confessedly destitute of their piety--some were selling rum, some drinking--some dancing--some swearing, some breaking the sabbath and some gone to the Mormons!!⁴⁷

Peet and Holbrook agreed to conduct a revival.⁴⁸ Their efforts resulted in twenty-five "hopeful" conversions, the addition of fifteen new members to the local Presbyterian church, the removal of thirteen errant members by mutual consent, and the solicitation of a subscription (\$700.00) dedicated to the construction of a meeting house.⁴⁹

The unavailability of a minister to serve the revived congregation brought Boardman into pastoral ministry. When the visiting ministers left at the close of the revival, the congregation pressed him into service. He preached his first sermon the following Sunday, and continued to raise money for the construction of a meeting house.⁵⁰ By the end of the year (1842), the congregation had completed construction

⁴⁷Peet, Letter to Milton Badger, March 31, 1842. Solomon Chaffee established the First Presbyterian Church in Potosi on December 20, 1840. Rev. Gallaher preached occasionally in 1840-1841. The congregation formally changed from Presbyterian to Congregational on February 29, 1876. Holford, Grant County, pp. 519, 535, 536, 537.

⁴⁸Cullis, Work for Jesus, p. 43; Boardman, Letter to Milton Badger, September 29, 1842; and Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, pp. 63-64.

⁴⁹Peet, Letter to Milton Badger, March 31, 1842; and *idem.*, History, pp. 52, 76, 149-150. Also see Kennedy, "Wisconsin Frontier," 18:157-159.

⁵⁰Peet, Letter to Charles Hall, July 20, 1842.

of the building.⁵¹

The mercantile prevented Boardman from taking full advantage of the opportunity to do pastoral work. When circumstances allowed, he sold it, and devoted all of his energy to ministry. He began service with the A.H.M.S. under the direction of Peet on June 10, 1842. In a letter to Charles Hall, Secretary of the A.H.M.S., Peet requested that Boardman be appointed to serve at Potosi and Fairplay, where he would assist fellow missionary, Alvin Dixon. Peet suggested a salary of \$200 from the A.H.M.S. and "what he may obtain from the people." Boardman was licensed by the Rock River Association (Illinois) soon after,⁵² and subsequently ordained by the Wisconsin Presbyterian and Congregational Convention.⁵³ He was the first pastor to serve the Potosi congregation as a resident minister.⁵⁴

Boardman quickly gained Peet's respect. Peet reported that Boardman possessed:

A most excellent spirit and is remarkably successful in winning souls to Christ. He is indefatigable and always has some care of anxious sinner on hand ... Attends 3 or 4 prayer meetings in different places and has had one or more conversions every week. The temperance cause he pushes on mightily. He is really accomplishing more than some half a dozen whom I could name who are drawingly

⁵¹Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, pp. 64-65.

⁵²Peet, Letter to Charles Hall, July 20, 1842.

⁵³Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, pp. 64-65. On the origins of the Wisconsin Presbyterian and Congregational Convention (1840) see Peet, History, pp. 26-37.

⁵⁴Holford, Grant County, p. 536. On the work of the Presbyterian Church in Wisconsin Territory see Kennedy, "Wisconsin Frontier," 18:139-166, 186-210, 243-274, 289-321, 323-358 and 19:1-31.

largely on your funds ... God has raised him up to work in that region where none would come to their help.⁵⁵

The Wisconsin Presbyterian and Congregational Convention was decidedly New School Presbyterian in theological orientation,⁵⁶ and was intolerant of "Oberlin [unreadable], or any other wild schemes." Writing several months after Boardman's religious experience, Peet reported that the Convention had "no sympathy" for the teachings of Finney and Mahan, and that "'the notion that absolute perfection is attained in this life' is not held by any one of the brethren that I know of." He emphasized that "most of them are decidedly & openly opposed to it." With one exception, Peet refused to place graduates of Oberlin Collegiate Institute, even when they were recommended by his friend, Henry Cowles, an instructor at Oberlin. In so doing he had "thus far managed to keep out the seed."⁵⁷ Other "clergy" in the region were not as pure in their theology, and were willing to share their views with any congregation that would listen. The latter, however, did not work under the authority of the A.H.M.S.⁵⁸

Despite Peet's claims of doctrinal purity, some of his peers questioned the

⁵⁵Peet, Letter to Charles Hall, July 20, 1842.

⁵⁶Peet, History, p. 197. On New School Presbyterian theology see George Duffield, "Doctrines of the New School Presbyterian Church," Bibliotheca Sacra 20 (1863):561-635.

⁵⁷Stephen Peet, Letter to Milton Badger, November 10, 1842, American Home Missionary Society Papers, 1816-1894 (Glen Rock, NJ: Microfilming Corporation of America, 1975), Reel 249.

⁵⁸Stephen Peet, Letter to Milton Badger, December 30, 1842, American Home Missionary Society Papers, 1816-1894 (Glen Rock, NJ: Microfilming Corporation of America, 1975), Reel 249.

orthodoxy of the A.H.M.S. missionaries working in Wisconsin Territory. Within two years of the date Peet affirmed the orthodoxy of the missionaries, two parties charged that the missionaries held to the doctrine of Oberlin Perfection. In one instance, early in 1844, Elbert Slingerland, a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church in Madison, charged the A.H.M.S. missionaries in Wisconsin Territory were adherents of the doctrine of free will and of Oberlin Perfection. At the Cleveland Convention that same year, the delegates met to "discuss and promote the different benevolent societies, including the American Home Missionary Society" (June 1844). Again, someone charged that the A.H.M.S. sheltered adherents of Oberlin Perfection.⁵⁹

The A.H.M.S. missionaries' adherence to New School Presbyterian theology prompted the charges leveled against them, but other factors also contributed to the suspicion cast upon the them. First, though some A.H.M.S. missionaries working in Wisconsin Territory viewed the Methodist circuit riders as a threat, or less than respectable,⁶⁰ others cooperated with them in local revivals.⁶¹

⁵⁹Kennedy, "Wisconsin Territory," 18:325, 326.

⁶⁰See E. G. Bradford, Letter to the Secretaries of the American Home Missions Society, August 24, 1843, American Home Missionary Society Papers, 1816-1898 (Glen Rock, NJ: Microfilming Corporation of America, 1975), Reel 249; Cyrus Nichols, Letter to Charles Hall, [1843], American Home Missionary Society Papers, 1816-1898 (Glen Rock, NJ: Microfilming Corporation of America, 1975), Reel 249; and Stephen Peet, Letter to Milton Badger, August 25, 1843, American Home Missionary Society Papers, 1816-1898 (Glen Rock, NJ: Microfilming Corporation of America, 1975), Reel 249. Peet reported that certain persons recently removed to Fon du Lac were "not satisfied with the miserable preaching they get from methodist [sic.] right from the bush & the plough."

⁶¹See A. Gaston, Letter to Milton Badger, March 5, 1842, American Home Missionary Society Papers, 1816-1898 (Glen Rock, NJ: Microfilming Corporation of America, 1975), Reel 249. Gaston, a Congregationalist, cooperated with Baptist and Methodist clergy in a revival at Turtle Prairie, Wisconsin Territory. He reported that "there was a remarkable oneness of views and feelings which nothing but the spirit of

Secondly, the A.H.M.S. missionaries who worked within the Wisconsin Presbyterian and Congregational Convention unashamedly used the "new measures" instituted by the Methodists and made famous by Finney. J. D. Stevens, A.H.M.S. missionary at Prairie du Chein, Wisconsin Territory, reported that a "series of meetings" were held, "conducted alternately" by Stevens and a "circuit preacher," presumably a Methodist. A Cumberland Presbyterian minister also participated. This series of meetings lasted three weeks.⁶² Stevens also reported that during an "inquiry meeting:"

The presence of the Holy Spirit was visible. The claims of the gospel and immediate submission to God were urged, and pressed upon the conscience. A call was then made for a decision--a declaration of purpose. If any had [unreadable] for God let them come forward and occupy a vacant front seat ... it was an hour of unutterable agony of souls.⁶³

Like Stevens, Boardman used the "new measures" in revivals. In mid-September 1842, the Boardmans travelled to Cassville, Wisconsin Territory to join Stevens in a revival. The days which followed were "full of interest," and "the presence of God was manifest in application of truth to the conviction and conversion of sinners." As a result of this effort, "some eight or ten persons professed

the Lord could have produced--Among the ministry it was almost perfect--I have seldom labored with more freedom even with brethren of my own denomination--Our peculiar denominational preferences we consented to lay aside, and labor for the glory of God in the salvation of souls." On Gaston's denominational affiliation see Peet, Narrative, February 10, 1842.

⁶²J.D. Stevens, Letter to Milton Badger, September 29, 1849, American Home Missionary Society Papers, 1816-1894 (Glen Rock, NJ: Microfilming Corporation of America, 1975), Reel 249.

⁶³Stevens, Letter to Milton Badger, September 29, 1849.

submission to God," and a Presbyterian Church was organized.⁶⁴

Boardman also used the "new measures" while working with Alvin Dixon in May 1842, at Red Dog, Wisconsin Territory. Dixon reported that the:

Meeting was a blessed occasion. The school house was deemed too small to hold the people we held the meeting on the Methodists old campground. The Holy Ghost fell upon the people. This was evinced by the falling tear, the deep sigh and by some coming to the anxious seat and others rising to express their desire to find salvation.⁶⁵

The "inquiry meeting," the "meeting of days" or the "protracted meeting," the call for an immediate decision, and the "anxious bench" were the "new measures" instituted by the Methodists during the Great Revival (1797-1805), and utilized by Finney in his revival meetings. The use of the "new measures" coupled with adherence to New School Presbyterian theology, and reports of cooperation with Methodists were reasons for Old School Presbyterians to suspect the A.H.M.S. missionaries in Wisconsin Territory of doctrinal error.

The missionaries' adherence to these beliefs and practices did not, necessarily, give way to Wesleyan holiness theology or Oberlin Perfection. Christian perfection was not a tenet of New School Presbyterian theology, nor was it a logical consequence of the credibility its proponents assigned to human ability. George Duffield was found guilty of promoting New School Presbyterian theology in 1832.⁶⁶ He taught

⁶⁴Stevens, Letter to Milton Badger, September 29, 1849.

⁶⁵Alvin Dixon, Letter to an unidentified recipient, September 20, 1842, American Home Missionary Society Papers, 1816-1898 (Glen Rock, NJ: Microfilming Corporation of America, 1975), Reel 249.

⁶⁶Barbara M. Cross, ed. The Autobiography of Lyman Beecher, 2 vols. (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1961), p. 264, fn. 1.

that human accomplishments, no matter how upright the people involved, or the sincerity of their efforts, fall short of the perfection demanded by the law.⁶⁷ Seth Williston, an adherent of New School Presbyterian theology, wrote a book the title of which reflects his views regarding Christian perfection: Christian Perfection: Lectures in the Moral Imperfection of Christians; Designed to show that While Sinless Perfection is Obligatory to All, it is attained by None (1846).⁶⁸

Likewise, the implementation of "new measures" did not demand adherence to Oberlin Perfectionism. Long before Finney and Mahan conceived their doctrine of sanctification, Presbyterian revivalists used the "new measures," without thought of Christian perfection.⁶⁹

Boardman knew his preparation for ministry was inadequate. In 1843, he sought an opportunity to leave Potosi in order to pursue formal training for the ministry. The opportunity arose when he sided with a representative from the Wisconsin Anti-Slavery Society. Many people in the area were pro-slavery. When

⁶⁷Duffield, "Doctrine of the New School Presbyterian Church," pp. 613-615. Also see Edwin H. Madden and James F. Hamilton, Freedom and Grace: The Life of Asa Mahan (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1982), p. 66; and Barbara B. Zikmund, "Asa Mahan and Oberlin Perfectionism" (Ph.D. dissertation, Duke University, 1969), pp. iv, 228-229.

⁶⁸Zikmund, "Asa Mahan," pp. 228-229.

⁶⁹The "new measures" were used by James McGready, a Presbyterian minister, in "sacramental occasions" in Kentucky. The critics of "the great revival" did not charge McGready or his colleagues with teaching Christian perfection. See Sydney E. Ahlstrom, A Religious History of the American People (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1972), pp. 432-434; Winthrop S. Hudson, Religion in America, 4th ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1987), pp.131-134; Mark A. Noll, A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1992; William W. Sweet, The Story of Religion in America (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1930), pp. 226-234.

Boardman's position became known, "the tide of popular feeling turned and ceased to set towards the church, and Mr. Boardman saw at once that this was the opportunity for which he had been longing."⁷⁰ During his tenure, fifty-four new members were added to the church.⁷¹

When Charles French, Boardman's successor, arrived in the Fall, he learned that the church was "in great measure, scattered to the four winds" due "in part at least, of [sic.] the discussion of the subject of the abolition of slavery." The congregation was "nominally" Presbyterian or Congregational, and had not gathered for "meetings of any description for a considerable length of time." A few of the members were worshipping with the Methodists, while most of the members did not attend worship at all. On French's first Sunday in the village, four members of the congregation were baptized by "a Cambellite preacher." Only thirty or forty people, half the previous congregation, assembled for worship under his direction. He found some cause for optimism upon learning that the last time Boardman administered the Lord's Supper only six or seven people attended. The congregation "expressed no desire" for French to remain. He reported:

⁷⁰Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, pp. 69, 70; W. E. Boardman, Letter to Milton Badger and Charles Hall, June 10, 1842 [1843], American Home Missionary Society Papers (Glen Rock, NJ: Microfilming Corporation of America, 1975), Reel 249. Boardman did not initially anticipate the controversy caused by abolition would be insurmountable. Also see Stephen Peet, Letter to Milton Badger, July 25, 1843, American Home Missionary Society Papers (Glen Rock, NJ: Microfilming Corporation of America, 1975), Reel 249; and Alvin M. Dixon, Letter to Milton Badger, August 28, 1843, American Home Missionary Society Papers, 1819-1898 (Glen Rock, NJ: Microfilming Corporation of America, 1975), Reel 249.

⁷¹Stephen Peet, History, pp. 52, 76, 149-150; and Kennedy, "Wisconsin Frontier," 18:157-159.

As a general thing in the mining region, the people are very fluctuating: they go with the current. And the current there at that time, seemed to flow to the Methodist church: & carried along with it the Presbyterian or congregational.⁷²

French made no mention of Oberlin Perfectionism in his report. Nor did he suggest Wesleyan holiness theology was an issue in the community. The A.H.M.S. immediately reassigned French to Geneva.⁷³

Peet recommended that Boardman attend Lane Theological Seminary (1832) in Walnut Hills, Ohio.⁷⁴ Significantly, he did not recommend Oberlin College (1833), the center of Oberlin Perfection. Boardman heeded Peet's advice.⁷⁵ In the Spring of 1844, at the age of thirty-four, Boardman entered Lane Theological Seminary.⁷⁶

⁷²Charles French, Letter to the A.H.M.S., December 2, 1843, American Home Missionary Society Papers, 1816-1898 (Glen Rock, NJ: Microfilming Corporation of America, 1975), Reel 249.

⁷³French, Letter to the A.H.M.S., December 2, 1843. Also see Stephen Peet, Letter to Milton Badger, April [unreadable], 1844, American Home Missionary Society Papers, 1816-1898 (Glen Rock, NJ: Microfilming Corporation of America, 1975), Reel 249. The A.H.M.S. consciously avoided the slavery debate. French's indifference toward Boardman's abolitionist activity reflected the inconsistent anti-slavery position of the A.H.M.S. Later, the American Missionary Association was organized (1846) to protest the alleged complicity between the A.H.M.S. and Southern slaveholders. French, Letter to the A.H.M.S., December 2, 1843; Zikmund, "Asa Mahan," p. 208; and Gardiner H. Shattuck, Jr., A Shield and Hiding Place: The Religious Life of the Civil War Armies (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1987), p. 21.

⁷⁴Stephen Peet, Letter to Milton Badger, September 25, 1843, American Home Missionary Society Papers, 1816-1894 (Glen Rock, NJ: American Microfilming Corporation of America, 1975), Reel 249.

⁷⁵Dixon, Letter to Badger, August 28, 1843. Dixon, who preached at Potosi, at Fairplay, and at Red Dog in cooperation with Boardman, also decided to attend Lane. See Dixon, Letter to Badger, August 28, 1843.

⁷⁶Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, pp. 69-70.

The revivalist Lyman Beecher (1775-1863),⁷⁷ a Congregational minister, was president of Lane Theological Seminary. Beecher wished to construct educational institutions throughout the West that functioned as agencies of revival. His goal was to convert students and then train them to convert others. The objective was a refined revival, a revival free from the fanatical behavior witnessed in the work of Finney.⁷⁸

Beecher also was a proponent of New School Presbyterian theology. The modifications he imposed on Reformed orthodoxy were at issue when he was charged with heresy and tried by the Presbytery in Cincinnati in 1834-1835 and 1838.⁷⁹ Beecher's critics distinguished the New England Theology of Jonathan Edwards and Timothy Dwight, out of which came New School Presbyterian theology, from the New Haven Theology of Nathaniel Taylor and Finney. When Beecher refused to denounce Taylor and Finney, his critics suspected he sympathized with New Haven Theology.⁸⁰

Like Beecher, Lane Theological Seminary was decidedly New School Presbyterian in its theological orientation.⁸¹ Boardman studied theology under Beecher, biblical literature under Calvin Stowe, and sacred rhetoric and pastoral

⁷⁷See Milton J. Coalter, "Lyman Beecher (1775-1863)," in Makers of Theology in America, ed. Mark G. Toulouse and James O. Duke (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1997), pp. 108-114.

⁷⁸James W. Fraser, Pedagogue for God's Kingdom: Lyman Beecher and the Second Great Awakening (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1985), pp. 150-151.

⁷⁹Fraser, Pedagogue for God's Kingdom, pp. 124-125, 95.

⁸⁰Cross, Autobiography of Lyman Beecher, p. 283.

⁸¹Fraser, Pedagogue for God's Kingdom, pp. 124-125, 95.

theology under D. Howe Allen.⁸²

The school was not a center for the teaching of practical holiness, though Harriet Beecher Stowe, wife of Professor Stowe, may have experienced a second work of grace in the early 1840s.⁸³ Like Boardman, she read James Taylor's Memoir, and she later wrote on practical holiness.⁸⁴ Despite her openness to a deeper religious experience subsequent to conversion, she did not appreciate the notions of Christian Perfection or entire sanctification. In these matters, her position was similar to Boardman's.⁸⁵

The Boardmans lived in the Stowe home for approximately three months in 1843.⁸⁶ This was prior to the publication of Harriet Stowe's articles on the higher Christian life. The language she used to characterize the religious experience as described by Thomas Upham in his The Interior Life: Or, Primitive Christian Experience is interesting in light of the language Boardman later used in his writings on the higher Christian life. Musing on the possibility of a religious experience subsequent to conversion, Harriet Stowe described this experience as a "new

⁸²Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Lane Theological Seminary, 1842-1843 (Cincinnati, OH: Wilson and Drake, 1843), p. 4. The Cincinnati Historical Society.

⁸³Patricia R. Hill, "Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-1896)," in Makers of Christian Theology in America, ed. Mark G. Toulouse and James O. Duke (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1997), p. 149.

⁸⁴Harriet B. Stowe, "The Interior Life: Or, Primitive Christian Experience," New-York Evangelist, April 24, 1845, p. 61; and idem., "The Interior or Hidden Life," New-York Evangelist, June 19, 1845, p. 97.

⁸⁵Stowe, "Interior or Hidden Life," p. 97.

⁸⁶Joan Hendrick, Harriet Beecher Stowe: A Life (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 159, 160.

conversion" and a "second regeneration."⁸⁷ Boardman later used the expression "second conversion" in the same way. Boardman may have persuaded Harriet Stowe to enter the higher Christian life.

Boardman's efforts to win converts to practical holiness within the seminary community aroused the suspicion of the faculty, particularly professor Allen, and some of the students.⁸⁸ William Blanchard, a classmate, may have had Boardman's evangelistic efforts in mind when he recalled several years later that Boardman had "marked weaknesses, & many strong excellencies."⁸⁹ According to Mrs. Boardman, some students received the fullness of salvation through full trust in Christ under Boardman's influence, in spite of the criticism.⁹⁰

During Boardman's student years (1844-1847), he became convinced that the Christian community needed to be evangelized. In his opinion, the clergy were only preaching half the gospel. The half they were not preaching was that part to which Finney, Mahan, and Taylor testified, and that the Boardmans had experienced while living in Potosi. Specifically, the message that Jesus Christ saves sinners from sin.⁹¹ Years later, Cullis, reported that "now, therefore, there was laid upon him [Boardman] the necessity for evangelistic work amongst Christians, and especially

⁸⁷Beecher, "Interior Life," p. 61.

⁸⁸Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, p. 75; and Cullis, Work for Jesus, p. 50.

⁸⁹William W. Blanchard, Letter to Rev. J[onathan] Blanchard, April 1, 1886 (emphasis added). Wheaton College Archives.

⁹⁰Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, pp. 71-80.

⁹¹Cullis, Work for Jesus, pp. 48-49.

amongst the young men preparing for the ministry, if anything should be effectually done."⁹²

The Evangelist's Contribution

After Boardman completed his studies at Lane Theological Seminary, he and his wife went West to undertake mission work. They stopped briefly in Indianapolis, Indiana to seek advice from Henry Beecher regarding a place of service. The Boardmans met Beecher while living in the home of his sister, Harriet, and her husband, Professor Calvin Stowe, in Walnut Hills.⁹³ Beecher suggested Greenfield, Indiana, a rugged place twenty miles east of Indianapolis. Without any consideration, Boardman decided Greenfield would be the headquarters of their labors.⁹⁴

Boardman's ministry in Greenfield was probably undertaken independently of the Presbytery of Indianapolis, with which the Greenfield Presbyterian Church (1825) was affiliated. He is not listed as having come into the Presbytery, nor is he listed among the delegates attending Presbytery meetings. Nor is he identified as a "supply," a number of whom served the Greenfield Presbyterian Church during the late 1840s and early 1850s.⁹⁵

Approximately one year later, the Boardmans moved East at the advice of their

⁹²Cullis, Work for Jesus, p. 49.

⁹³Hendrick, Harriet Beecher Stowe, pp. 158-167.

⁹⁴Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, p. 81.

⁹⁵L. C. Rudolph, Hoosier Zion: The Presbyterians in Early Indiana (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1963), p. 136; and Letter from Dennis Kovener, November 13, 1995.

doctor. They needed rest and time to recuperate from illnesses they contracted during their hard labor in Indiana.⁹⁶ They chose New Haven, Connecticut as their resting place, largely due to Boardman's interest in attending a series of lectures offered by Nathaniel Taylor at Yale Divinity School.⁹⁷

While living in New Haven, Boardman was invited to serve as a missionary with the American Sunday School Union in Oakland County, Michigan.⁹⁸ After a period of fund raising, the Boardmans left Boston for Detroit on June 6, 1848.⁹⁹

Boardman was not a stranger to the Sunday school work. His work in Wisconsin Territory, in Walnut Hills, and in Indiana included Sunday school work "most of the time." He believed that the Sunday school was of "vital" and "vast importance ... to the west, to our country, and to the world."¹⁰⁰ He embraced this

⁹⁶Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, pp. 81-82, 91-93. Dennis Kovener, Archivist at Hanover College, Hanover Indiana, reports that the early records of the Greenfield Presbyterian Church (founded in 1825) begin with the year 1855. No mention is made of a William Boardman having served the congregation. Nor do the records of the Presbytery of Indianapolis for 1845-1850 list Boardman as having been a member of the Presbytery. See Letter from Dennis Kovener, November 13, 1995. On the origin of the Greenfield Presbyterian Church see Rudolph, Hoosier Zion, p. 136.

⁹⁷Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, pp. 92-96; and Cullis, Work for Jesus, pp. 59-60.

⁹⁸Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, p. 96. A number of reports written by Boardman and Mrs. Boardman, on his behalf, to the Temple Street Sabbath School Missionary Association in Newburyport, Massachusetts provide information regarding his work as an American Sunday School Missionary. These reports are housed at the Bentley Historical Library at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

⁹⁹W. E. Boardman, Letter to the Temple Street Sabbath School Missionary Society, June 6, 1848. Bentley Historical Library, The University of Michigan.

¹⁰⁰W. E. Boardman, Letter to the Temple Street Sabbath School Missionary Society, March 22, 1848. Bentley Historical Library, The University of Michigan.

work enthusiastically. In a report to the Temple Street Sabbath School Missionary Association in Newburyport, Massachusetts dated September 15, 1849, Boardman wrote:

God is showing us that he means to have the great S. S. work for the West done.--And it must be done.--I do not say it is highly desirable, greatly needed, but it must be done. The wandering lambs, the lost sheep must be folded and fed, ere they are devoured. The multitude of wastes in the west must have the pioneer, the John the Baptist, the Union S. S. to pave the way for gospel institutions, while it scatters around the heavenly light of God's holy word.¹⁰¹

Using the village of Pontiac as a center of operation, Boardman "visited and helped & formed in all nearly forty S. Schools and put in circulation 3900 vols S. S. books."¹⁰² In June 1849, he reported that he had distributed approximately ten thousand religious books and had visited between eighty and one hundred Sunday schools.¹⁰³ In an attempt to be more centrally located in the region, the Boardmans moved to Jackson in late October or early November 1849.¹⁰⁴ Boardman travelled from the shore of Lake Huron in the East, to the shore of Lake Michigan in the West,

¹⁰¹W. E. Boardman, Letter to the Temple Street Sabbath School Missionary Association, September 15, 1849. Bentley Historical Library, The University of Michigan.

¹⁰²W. E. Boardman, Letter to the Temple Street Sabbath School Missionary Association, August 29, 1848. Bentley Historical Library, The University of Michigan.

¹⁰³W. E. Boardman, Letter to C. M. Bayley, June 11, 1849. Bentley Historical Library, The University of Michigan.

¹⁰⁴W. E. Boardman, Letter to the Temple Street Sabbath School Missionary Association, November 9, 1849. Bentley Historical Library, The University of Michigan.

twice,¹⁰⁵ and to Sault Saint Marie in the Upper Peninsula.¹⁰⁶

The work of an A.S.S.U. missionary, however, was not strictly evangelistic. If people were to read the Bibles and other books he left, they had to first learn how to read. Boardman's Sunday school work included this effort.¹⁰⁷

Mrs. Boardman does not record Boardman's work as pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in White Lake, Michigan. Boardman reportedly assumed this post early in 1852,¹⁰⁸ but the first mention of him in the congregation's record is dated March 18, 1854, where he is identified as Moderator.¹⁰⁹ The First Presbyterian Church was organized in August 1835. From the beginning, the congregation witnessed occasional revivals. This tradition continued after Boardman resigned.¹¹⁰

In 1854, Boardman was called to assume the post of "special field or traveling secretary" for the A.S.S.U. In this capacity he oversaw student missionaries

¹⁰⁵W. E. Boardman, Letter to Captain C. W. Bayley, May 24, 1849. Bentley Historical Library, The University of Michigan.

¹⁰⁶W. E. Boardman, Letter to Captain Bayley, July 22, 1850. Bentley Historical Library, The University of Michigan.

¹⁰⁷Boardman, Letter to Temple Street, March 22, 1848.

¹⁰⁸Samuel W. Durant, History of Oakland County, Michigan, with Illustrations Depictive of its Scenery, Palatial Residences, Public Buildings, Fine Blocks, and Important Manufactories, from Original Sketches by Artists of the Highest Ability, 1817-1877 (Philadelphia: L. H. Everts, 1877), p. 187.

¹⁰⁹First Presbyterian Society of White Lake, Oakland Co., Michigan, The Church Record of the First Presbyterian Society of White Lake, Oakland Co., Michigan, Book 2nd, 1854, p. 156. (Handwritten.) White Lake Presbyterian Church.

¹¹⁰Durant, History of Oakland County, p. 187.

employed by the A.S.S.U. during the summer,¹¹¹ a program Mrs. Boardman called the "Students' Mission Service." According to Mrs. Boardman, "more than five thousand Sunday Schools were organized during the three years of this service, and as many more were supplied with workers." This post required the Boardmans to relocate to Philadelphia, where Boardman worked out of the A.S.S.U. headquarters.¹¹²

After Boardman had served as secretary of the Student's Mission Service for three years, the A.S.S.U. suffered "financial embarrassment," undoubtedly an outcome of the collapse of the nation's economy that same year (1857). The financial limitations imposed upon the A.S.S.U. forced the administration to instruct Boardman to "curtail" the Students' Mission Service. Boardman refused to comply. In his opinion, the opportunity was too great. Boardman resigned his post, and retired from the A.S.S.U.¹¹³

The Boardmans subsequently moved across the Delaware River to Gloucester City, New Jersey. Here Boardman served as pastor of a small, working-class Presbyterian congregation. Many of the inhabitants of this community were reluctant to attend worship services. Boardman engaged in the traditional work of an evangelist, visiting people in their homes. He did not serve the Gloucester City

¹¹¹Edwin W. Rice, The Sunday-School Movement (1780-1917) and the American Sunday-School Union (1817-1917) (Philadelphia: American Sunday-School Union, 1917), p. 243.

¹¹²Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, pp. 100, 101, 102. Also see Rice, Sunday-School Movement, p. 243; and Alfred Nevin, History of the Presbytery of Philadelphia and of the Philadelphia Central (Philadelphia: W. S. Fortescue, 1888), p. 41.

¹¹³Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, p. 101.

congregation very long. Mrs. Boardman developed respiratory problems due to the damp environment.¹¹⁴ Her doctor advised the Boardmans to move to California, which they did.¹¹⁵

During their brief residence in Gloucester City, Boardman published The Higher Christian Life.¹¹⁶ Mrs. Boardman claimed that demand for the book exceeded supply. "People thronged, and even waited outside the store in order to obtain the book, and while it was thus called for in America, it found its way across the great Atlantic, and was taken up in London by several publishers, who gave it wings in England and other countries."¹¹⁷

By the time the early reviews of The Higher Christian Life were published, the Boardmans were living in Los Angeles, California.¹¹⁸ Boardman apparently applied for and received an appointment to the Presbyterian Board of Home Missions. The Board of Home Missions sent him to Los Angeles in response to the request of five people living in the village.¹¹⁹ According to Mrs. Boardman, she and her husband were told about the negative reviews the book received in letters from friends. She

¹¹⁴Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, pp. 102-107.

¹¹⁵Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, pp. 106-107.

¹¹⁶Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, pp. 102-107.

¹¹⁷Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, p. 104.

¹¹⁸Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, pp. 106-107.

¹¹⁹Gregory H. Singleton, Religion in the City of Angels: American Protestant Culture and Urbanization, Los Angeles, 1850-1930 ([Ann Arbor, MI]: UMI Research Press, 1979), p. 17. On the state of Protestant churches in Los Angeles at mid-century see Marco R. Newmark, "The Story of Religion in Los Angeles," The Quarterly 28 (1946):43-45; and Eldon G. Ernst with Douglas F. Anderson, Pilgrim Progression: The Protestant Experience in California (Santa Barbara, CA: Fithian Press, 1993), pp. 67-77.

expressed relief that they were far away from the criticism. This, she believed, not only preserved them from the grief that anyone subjected to criticism experiences, but also inhibited a defensive response. Regardless, Boardman could not be moved to respond to his opponents. He told Mrs. Boardman: "The Lord has given the book, and He can take care of His own truth."¹²⁰

Despite the criticism, Boardman went about his labors as a missionary of the Presbyterian Board of Home Missions. In cooperation with the A.H.M.S., he "sought to establish an inter-denominational congregation serving the adherents of American Protestantism." On May 4, the "Constitution of the First Protestant Society of the City of Los Angeles" was drawn up by seventeen people.¹²¹

Mrs. Boardman did not exaggerate when she claimed that Boardman was the only Protestant minister within four hundred miles of the town.¹²² The April 1857 issue of The Home Missionary, the official organ of the A.H.M.S., reported that J. W. Douglas, who preceded Boardman in Los Angeles, was engaged in what was considered "in many respects a foreign mission, inasmuch as it required him to pass

¹²⁰Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, p. 106.

¹²¹Singleton, City of Angels, p. 17; and Michael E. Engh, Frontier Faiths: Church, Temple, and Synagogue in Los Angeles 1846-1888 (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1992), pp. 16-19. Note Engh's attention to the non-sectarian character of the First Protestant Society of Los Angeles. Engh, Frontier Faiths, pp. 17-18, 67. See First Protestant Society of the City of Los Angeles, Constitution of the First Protestant Society of the City of Los Angeles, May 4, 1859. (Handwritten.) The Huntington Library. Also see H. D. Barrows, "Early Clericals of Los Angeles," Annual Publication of the Historical Society of Southern California 5 (1902):130.

¹²²Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, p. 113.

months isolated from such society as an American minister would find agreeable."¹²³

Southern California proved resistant to the efforts of every Protestant denomination to establish congregations in the region. The Methodists surrendered their efforts in the region in 1858. The Baptists did not establish a congregation in Southern California until 1861. Boardman's Presbyterian predecessors also failed.¹²⁴ Under Boardman's efforts, however, the inter-denominational congregation grew, and observers were optimistic of the forthcoming organization of the congregation, and the construction of a meeting house.¹²⁵

Boardman quickly earned the respect of his peers, who were aligned with the orthodox Old School Synod of the Pacific and the Presbytery of Stockton.¹²⁶ The

¹²³Edward A. Wicher, The Presbyterian Church in California, 1849-1927 (New York: Frederick Hitchcock, 1927). The population of Los Angeles in 1860 was 4,385. Robert M. Fogelson, Fragmented Metropolis: Los Angeles, 1850-1930 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), pp. 21, 78, 79; cited in Engh, Frontier Faiths, p. 54. Laurie Maffly-Kipp reports that in 1860: "New York had one church for every 734 of its citizens, and Ohio boasted a national high of one for every 449. California, in contrast, had one church for every 1,297 people. Even if only the Euro-American population in the state ... were counted, there was no more than one church for every 1,103 inhabitants. Religious leaders in Iowa, another frontier region that was settled and evangelized at roughly the same time as California had managed to construct a church for every 711 settlers." Laurie F. Maffly-Kipp, Religion and Society in Frontier California (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), pp. 5-6. Also see Barrows, "Early Clericals," pp. 127-130.

¹²⁴Orr, Event of the Century, p. 151; and Singleton, City of Angels, p. 17.

¹²⁵"Rev. W. E. Boardman," The Pacific Expositor, March 1860, p. 419. Engh believes that some of Boardman's success was due to his willingness to avoid rigid denominational statements in his preaching. Engh, Frontier Faiths, pp. 29, 67.

¹²⁶The Pacific Expositor, July 19, 1866, [n.pg.]; quoted in Wicher, Presbyterian Church in California, p. 136; and James L. Woods, California Pioneer Decade of 1849: The Presbyterian Church with Some Mention of other Churches, and Incidental Reference to Current Events and Civil Affairs of Early and Later Date. An Historical Contribution Supplemental to the Synod's Official History by Rev. James S. McDonald. (San Francisco: Hansen, 1922; reprint ed., Fresno, CA: Pioneer, 1981),

editors of The Pacific Expositor reported in March, 1860 that:

From various notices in the papers that have fallen under our eye, we should judge that the labors of this man [Rev. W. E. Boardman] are abundant and highly appreciated at Los Angeles. He is deservedly popular amongst all classes and with all denominations. We hope soon to be able to record that his congregation is organized, and that a house of worship is in the process of construction.¹²⁷

Boardman's doctrine of sanctification was not an issue among the Old School constituency on the West Coast. The editor of The Pacific Expositor recommended The Higher Christian Life to his subscribers. He also reported that The Higher Christian Life was for sale in religious book stores in the region. Years later, when Boardman was mentioned in conjunction with The Higher Christian Life, the editor of The Pacific Expositor did not offer any commentary.¹²⁸ Boardman apparently did not make the doctrine of sanctification an issue among the Old School brethren, perhaps taking the lead of his former teacher, Lyman Beecher, who compromised his preferences in order to preserve unity.¹²⁹ In the Preface to the second edition of The Higher Christian Life (1871), Boardman confessed that after sounding forth the principle of the higher Christian life, he kept silent for fourteen years. Boardman was

pp. 29, 92, 93.

¹²⁷"Rev. W. E. Boardman," The Pacific Expositor, p. 419.

¹²⁸"The Higher Life," The Pacific Expositor, April 1860, p. 470; The Pacific Expositor, April 1867, [n.pg.]; quoted in Wicher, Presbyterian Church, p. 137. The holiness movement reached California by mid-century. See Sandra S. Frankiel, California's Spiritual Frontiers: Religious Alternatives in Anglo-Protestantism, 1850-1910 (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 103-104.

¹²⁹Coalter, "Lyman Beecher," p. 113.

in California for a portion of this fourteen year period.¹³⁰

Three factors contributed to the Boardmans' decision to leave Los Angeles. One factor was a reversal in Mrs. Boardman's health. The California climate ceased to have a positive effect, and the affliction from which she suffered when they arrived reoccurred.¹³¹

Another factor was the impatience of the Presbyterian Home Mission Board. Though Boardman accomplished more than his predecessors, he was only partially successful in meeting the Board's expectations. As a result of Boardman's efforts, the cornerstone for the first Protestant meeting house in the village was laid in June 1861, and construction was completed within a year. The congregation, however, remained unorganized.¹³²

By 1862, only three years after the founding of the First Protestant Society of Los Angeles, the interest of the Presbyterian Board and the American Home Mission Society was exhausted. The

¹³⁰Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1871), p. 18.

¹³¹Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, p. 116.

¹³²Wicher, Presbyterian Church, p. 135. The editor of The Pacific Expositor, citing an article from the Los Angeles Star, reported that the foundation stone for the " ... first Presbyterian church ... " in the city was laid during a ceremony on April 29, 1861. The members of the local Masonic lodge presided over the ceremony. Boardman delivered the address. The Los Angeles Star identified Boardman as the pastor of the congregation. According to the report related by The Los Angeles Star, Boardman defined the objective of the congregation as being " ... to worship God according to the forms of Protestantism." Boardman reportedly said that "the work was undertaken in no sectarian spirit--in no antagonism to other religionists; it was begun, to wipe away the stain which had so justly and so long attached so [sic.] our citizens of the Protestant faith who, heretofore, have been as sheep without a shepherd; it was undertaken for the purpose of establishing a place of worship for and concentrating in religious exercises, all those who did not worship God according to the forms of the Catholic Church." "Presbyterian Church in Los Angeles," The Pacific Expositor, June 1861, p. 542.

projected desires of subsequent migrants did not materialize, and Boardman was withdrawn from his Los Angeles position.¹³³

A third factor was Boardman's anti-slavery position. The Boardmans once again found themselves in disagreement with popular opinion. Though each side was polite toward the other, the tension was evident.¹³⁴ James Woods, Superintendent of Missions for the Synod of California, found "some personal disaffection in Dr. Boardman's congregation" when he delivered the sermon on March 17, 1861. Woods' son did not define this "personal disaffection," but did make an immediate reference to "the early convulsions of the Civil War," which "were severely felt and troubles increased." Apparently the Boardmans' abolitionist views put them at odds with the populace. They sailed for the East Coast in March 1862.¹³⁵

Soon after the outbreak of the Civil war, George H. Stuart, a Philadelphia merchant and Presbyterian layperson, organized the United States Christian Commission.¹³⁶ The objective of this organization was to respond to the physical

¹³³Singleton, City of Angels, p. 17.

¹³⁴Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, p. 116.

¹³⁵Woods, California Pioneer Decade, p. 71; and Wicher, Presbyterian Church, p. 136.

¹³⁶Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, pp. 116, 117-119. See William Boardman's contribution to Christ in the Army: A Selection of Sketches of the Work of the U. S. Christian Commission (Philadelphia: J. B. Rodgers, 1865), pp. 4-12, and his Letter to an Unnamed Recipient, April 1864, State Historical Society of Wisconsin. Also, M. Hamlin Cannon, "The United States Christian Commission," The Mississippi Valley Historical Review 38 (1951-1952): 61-80; James O. Henry, "The United States Christian Commission in the Civil War," Civil War History 6 (1960):374-88; Lemuel Moss, Annals of the United States Christian Commission (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippencott, 1868); Shattuck, A Shield and Hiding Place, pp. 24-33; and W. C. Wilkinson, "The History of the Christian Commission," The Baptist Quarterly 2 (1868):194-227.

and spiritual needs of Union soldiers. Stuart was elected president of the U.S.C.C. After returning from California, Boardman made himself available for service with the new organization. Boardman oversaw the day to day operation of the Commission, including the organization of the 1,375 delegates who served at various times throughout the war. The delegates provided pastoral care, undertook evangelistic efforts, distributed reading materials, and food, and provided medical care. Dwight Moody was among those who served as delegates.¹³⁷

After the Confederate army surrendered, the U.S.C.C. ceased to exist. Exhausted from his labors, Boardman and his wife travelled to Germany for rest. In Germany, they benefited from the water treatments offered at Ems.¹³⁸

After returning to the United States via Great Britain, Boardman worked as an itinerant evangelist. A business venture provided support for his work.¹³⁹ Boardman's business interest required him to travel to Great Britain in 1869. Ministry immediately took priority over business.¹⁴⁰

In the wake of a series of successful revivals in the United States and Great Britain (1868-1870), Boardman renewed his commitment to an evangelistic mission within the church. This marked the formal beginning of his career as an independent

¹³⁷Christ in the Army, pp. 5-12; Edward P. Smith, Incidents of the United States Christian Commission (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippencott, 1869), pp. 60, 63, 71-72; and Orr, Event of the Century, pp. 217-218, 220-221.

¹³⁸Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, pp. 129-133.

¹³⁹Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, p. 134.

¹⁴⁰Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours. pp. 134-136.

revivalist dedicated to the higher Christian life.¹⁴¹

After returning to the United States, Boardman devoted himself to his renewed mission. Some of his work in 1870 and 1871 was done in conjunction with the National Association for the Promotion of Holiness (1867). The N.A.P.H. was originally named the National Camp Meeting for the Promotion of Christian Holiness. Its objective was to revive the doctrine and experience of "Entire Holiness." The origin of the National Camp Meeting lay within the Methodist holiness movement, and its leaders were Methodist clergy. The National Camp Meeting, however, welcomed members of non-Methodist denominations at its gatherings. From the beginning, Presbyterians, Baptists, Congregationalists, Episcopalians, and Quakers attended the camp meetings. In time, ministers of non-Methodist denominations were given the opportunity to address the conferees on the subject of full salvation. The central message of the N.A.P.H. was that the experience of entire sanctification occurred subsequent to justification and regeneration, and resulted in perfect love for God and neighbor. Disputation of varying doctrines of sanctification was expressly forbidden.¹⁴²

Boardman's participation in camp meetings under the auspices of the N.A.P.H. brought him in contact with the leading voices of Wesleyan holiness theology: John Inskip, Matthew Simpson, William McDonald, Alfred Cookman, and the Palmers, among others. Boardman's participation in these gatherings also brought him in

¹⁴¹Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, pp. 136, 142-152, 155-175, 187-216.

¹⁴²Hughes, Days of Power, pp. 38, 39, 40, 49, 51, 55-56, 59, 61, 69, 72, 78, 89-90, 92-94, 95-96. On one occasion, Albert Simpson was tempted to interrupt a speaker at a holiness convention, but restrained himself. See A. B. Simpson, Christ Life (New York: Word, Work, and World, 1888), pp. 58-59.

contact with non-Methodists whose religious experience had been affected by Wesleyan holiness theology, namely fellow Presbyterian Henry Belden, Reformed Church minister Isaac See, and the Quakers, Robert and Hannah Smith. He was also thoroughly exposed to Wesleyan holiness theology.¹⁴³

Boardman did not merely attend the N.A.P.H. camp meetings. He was also an occasional speaker at the gatherings. He delivered the closing address at the Des Plaines, Illinois camp meeting in August, 1870. George Hughes, a close associate of the Palmers, reported that Boardman's terminology differed from that of the Methodists, but his message was the same. Hughes believed that Boardman and the Methodists shared a common objective.¹⁴⁴

During the camp meeting convened by the N.A.P.H. at Round Lake, New York in August 1871, a number of Presbyterian, Baptist, Reformed, Quaker, Episcopalian, and a few Methodist conferees met to plan a new organization. Boardman was named chairman of the Union National Camp Meeting for the Promotion of Holiness.¹⁴⁵ Mrs. Boardman identified this organization as the Association for Holding Union Holiness Conventions. Working closely with See, Cullis, and a Presbyterian elder from Newark, New Jersey, Dr. Ward, Boardman conducted conventions in Newark, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., and Wilmington. Several of these events were held in conjunction with the Y.M.C.A. The Union National Camp Meeting reorganized the following winter, and Boardman organized

¹⁴³Hughes, Days of Power, pp. 55, 66, 69, 72, 76, 109-110, 120, 121, 172, 315-318.

¹⁴⁴Hughes, Days of Power, p. 120.

¹⁴⁵Hughes, Days of Power, pp. 315-318.

another series of conventions. He held conventions in New York City, Brooklyn, Williamsburg, Syracuse, Providence, and Boston.¹⁴⁶

When support for the Union National Camp Meeting waned, Boardman withdrew and conducted revivals with Dr. and Mrs. Ward, independently, and later in association with Henry Belden and a Lucy Drake. During this period, Boardman traveled throughout New England and to the Midwest, including Oberlin, Ohio.¹⁴⁷

The Boardmans travelled to Germany a second time in the Spring of 1873. Boardman was exhausted from his work. He and Mrs. Boardman again sought the medicinal benefits of the waters at Ems. Dr. and Mrs. Cullis and others joined them.¹⁴⁸ The company with which they traveled hampered Boardman's recovery. In September, he and Mrs. Boardman left their companions and travelled to Great Britain. There they found Robert and Hannah Smith. Robert Smith recently returned from the continent, where he addressed gatherings of Christians interested in the higher Christian life. Upon returning to Great Britain, he resumed his work as a leader of holiness conventions.¹⁴⁹

Boardman joined Robert Smith in his labors "in a moderate way," taking care to rest when he became tired.¹⁵⁰ Their work built upon a native holiness movement

¹⁴⁶Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, pp. 142-152, 155-175, 187-216; Cullis, Work for Jesus, p. 81; and Hughes, Days of Power, pp. 315-318.

¹⁴⁷Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, pp. 142-152, 155-175, 187-216; and Cullis, Work for Jesus, pp. 84-85.

¹⁴⁸Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, p. 155.

¹⁴⁹Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, p. 155.

¹⁵⁰Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, pp. 155-156.

in Great Britain.¹⁵¹ T. B. Smithies invited Boardman and Robert Smith to speak at a series of Saturday breakfast meetings to which the clergy of London were invited.¹⁵² They were joined by British evangelist Henry Varley, a Baptist.¹⁵³ The purpose of these meetings was to introduce Boardman, Robert Smith, and the doctrine of the higher Christian life to the London clergy.¹⁵⁴ Other evangelical leaders hosted similar meetings featuring Boardman and Robert Smith in the London suburbs.¹⁵⁵ Evan Hopkins, a Church of England minister, was present at a meeting held at Curzon Hall, Mayfair with sixteen others. He had read Boardman's The Higher Christian Life, and on this occasion was persuaded by Robert Smith to trust Jesus Christ for his full salvation.¹⁵⁶ Years later, Hopkins assumed the editorship of The Christian's Pathway of Power, and led the Keswick Convention during its early years.

Boardman and Robert Smith also cooperated in a number of public meetings. These meetings were not well attended, but "the interest felt in these meetings ... was

¹⁵¹David D. Bundy, Keswick: A Bibliographic Introduction to the Higher Life Movements (Wilmore, KY: B. L. Fischer Library, Asbury Theological Seminary, 1975), pp. 119-128.

¹⁵²Cullis, Work for Jesus, p. 88.

¹⁵³On Varley see Headley, Evangelists in the Church, pp. 416-418; and Henry Varley, Henry Varley: The Powerful Evangelist of the Victorian Era [by his son] (London: Pickering and Inglis, n.d.).

¹⁵⁴Headley, Evangelists in the Church, p. 412; and Steven Barabas, So Great Salvation: The History and Message of the Keswick Convention (Westwood, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1952), p. 19.

¹⁵⁵Cullis, Work for Jesus, p. 91.

¹⁵⁶A Standard Bearer of Faith and Holiness: Reminiscences of Evan H. Hopkins (London: Morgan and Scott, 1919), p. 13.

maintained communion with God, and uniform victory over sin.¹⁶²

Though the Oxford Union Meeting was promoted under the Methodist sounding banner of "scriptural holiness," Isaac Page, a Methodist, did not associate its message with the Wesleyan doctrine of Christian Perfection. He pointed out that the name of only one Methodist appeared on the slate of speakers, that of William Arthur. Though those who spoke from the platform spoke of "definiteness," Page claimed it was not an emphasis, nor was its meaning synonymous with its use in Wesleyan holiness theology. These differences distinguished the teaching of the Oxford Union Meeting from that of the Methodists. Page thought that "a little Methodist theology would have mixed well with it."¹⁶³ Some of the Methodist ministers in attendance were, nevertheless, affected by the message.¹⁶⁴

Robert Smith chaired the Oxford Union Meeting, and served as principle speaker. Not all were pleased with this arrangement. Page believed that Boardman and Asa Mahan, who were both present, were better suited to this role. Page suspected that Robert Smith felt threatened by Boardman and Mahan. Page also believed that Boardman and Mahan's thoughtful approach to the higher Christian life would corrupt the atmosphere Robert Smith wished to establish.¹⁶⁵ The Smith's granddaughter, Barbara Strachey, supported her grandfather's role at the Oxford

¹⁶²Account of the Union Meeting, p. 17.

¹⁶³Isaac Page, "The Oxford Meeting for the Promotion of Scriptural Holiness," The Methodist Recorder, September 4, 1874, p. 527 and September 11, 1874, p. 537.

¹⁶⁴Page, "The Oxford Meeting," p. 537.

¹⁶⁵Isaac Page, A Long Pilgrimage, p. 154; cited in Madden and Hamilton, Freedom and Grace, pp. 198-199.

Union Meeting. She believed that Robert Smith " ... had an advantage over other revivalists in that he was handsome, well mannered and far more 'gentlemanly' than most."¹⁶⁶

Boardman, however, was not excluded from the proceedings. On the first day of the Oxford Union Meeting, Boardman "held a conversational meeting on consecration."¹⁶⁷ Page described the scene:

He sat alone on the platform as the people entered, with his Bible beside him. What a pleasant face he has! His prayer was very simple and familiar, almost conversational in tone; but it carried us toward God, and seemed to bring God very near. His address was based on some verses in Romans xii., and he was led out at some length, evidently without pre-arrangement, in speaking of the consecration of the Aaronic priesthood, and the tabernacle of Moses. There was a little obscurity, we thought at times, but, as a whole, the address was telling and accompanied with blessed influence.¹⁶⁸

Thomas Harford-Battersby also attended the Oxford Union Meeting. He was Vicar of St. John's, Keswick. Though initially resistant, Harford-Battersby embraced the doctrine of the higher Christian life by the end of the convention. A few weeks later, at the conclusion of the Brighton Convention for the Promotion of Scriptural Holiness, he and his friend, Robert Wilson, decided to hold a convention similar in format and message at Keswick.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁶Barbara Strachey, Remarkable Relations, p. 20; quoted in Roberta J. Stewart, "'Being a Child in the Father's House': The Life of Faith in the Published Writings of Hannah Whitall Smith" (Ph.D. dissertation, Drew University, 1990), p. 20.

¹⁶⁷Page, "The Oxford Meeting," p. 527.

¹⁶⁸Page, "The Oxford Meeting," p. 527.

¹⁶⁹Barabas, So Great Salvation, pp. 19, 21, 25, 25.

After Oxford, Boardman either led or was the principle speaker at a number of conferences on the higher Christian life.¹⁷⁰ At these conferences, the "power of God was present to save the unconverted, and to sanctify Christians'."¹⁷¹ Boardman received more invitations than he was capable of meeting. The demand for his message was so great in London that he was forced to concentrate his efforts in that city. The outlying villages, however, were not completely ignored. Boardman held conventions at Broadlands, Urbridge Slough, and Clitheater in Yorkshire.¹⁷²

One conference was held in a small working-class Congregational church on Huston Road in London. Julia M'Nair Wright, an American tourist, regularly attended the two week conference at which the Boardmans were the "chief leaders." She reported in The Presbyterian that "Mrs. Boardman was admirable, both in matter and manner; she always took high orthodox grounds and frankly avowed herself a Calvinist of the strictest sort."¹⁷³ She added:

We never went to these gatherings without hearing something good and sound from either Dr. or Mrs. Boardman. We could quite agree with all that Mrs. Boardman said, and all that the Doctor meant, though occasionally he did not show such a happy faculty as might be wished, of saying exactly what he thought and guarding his statements against wrong interpretations.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁰Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, pp. 161-165.

¹⁷¹Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, p. 165.

¹⁷²Cullis, Work for Jesus, pp. 100-101.

¹⁷³Julia M'Nair Wright, "Christian Conferences in London: Huston Road, " The Presbyterian, August 28, 1875, p. 2.

¹⁷⁴Wright, "Huston Road," p. 2.

The Boardmans, along with Rev. Graham, pastor of a church at Shepherd's Bush, "were careful to guard against any teaching, direct or indirect, of perfectionism."¹⁷⁵

In summary, the "general teachings" of this conference were consistent with those published in The Presbyterian.¹⁷⁶

Wright was so impressed by the Boardmans, that when an announcement was made that Boardman would preside over "a similar meeting held on each of the four Mondays in December," and that Graham and Admiral Fishbourn would be participating, she and her party decided to be "regularly present." These meetings were held at the Canon Street Hall, and "became the great religious meetings previous to the arrival of Messrs. Moody and Sankey: indeed, they deserve an article by themselves, that their spirit, speakers and teachings may be described."¹⁷⁷ People of all social classes were in attendance at the Huston Road and the Canon Street Hall meetings.¹⁷⁸

Wright also reported that Mahan was present at the Canon Street Hall meetings. She remarked that though she and her party admired him, they expected to disagree "on many points ... until he has reached heaven and changed his mind." In her opinion, Mahan preached perfectionism.¹⁷⁹ Though Boardman did not hold the

¹⁷⁵Wright, "Huston Road," p. 2.

¹⁷⁶Wright, "Huston Road," p. 2.

¹⁷⁷Wright, "Huston Road," p. 2.

¹⁷⁸Wright, "Huston Road," p. 2; and idem., "London Religious Conferences: Canon Street Hall," The Presbyterian, September 4, 1875, p. 3.

¹⁷⁹Wright, "Canon Street Hall," p. 3.

chair, he participated in a similar meeting at Agriculture Hall in January 1875.¹⁸⁰

William Sloan, a member of the evangelistic committee that sponsored Moody and Ira Sankey, invited the Boardmans to Edinburgh and Glasgow, Scotland. They arrived for a visit of these two cities in May 1875.¹⁸¹ In Glasgow, Boardman addressed the congregation served by Andrew Bonar.¹⁸² During a service held in this congregation, Sloan testified to his entrance into the higher Christian life. He claimed "deliverance from sins, burdens, and cares." He also claimed "the fullness of God in Christ by the Holy Spirit." His testimony impressed several attending the service, who also testified to their experience.¹⁸³

Contrary to assumption,¹⁸⁴ Boardman did not attend the Brighton Convention. On the first day of the Brighton Convention, May 29, 1875, Robert Smith announced that "our beloved brother, Mr. Boardman, would have been with us here, but for engagements to a similar meeting across the ocean." Smith explained that the Boardmans had left that afternoon for the United States. He told the conferees:

There are many here who owe to him [Boardman] more than wealth, more than possessions, more than all worldly surroundings bring to them. That good man for over thirty years has walked, as Enoch did, 'with God;' and deeply and constantly feeling my own

¹⁸⁰Julia M'Nair Wright, "London Religious Conferences: Agriculture Hall, " The Presbyterian, September 11, 1875, pp. 2-3.

¹⁸¹Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, p. 151.

¹⁸²Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, p. 175.

¹⁸³Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, p. 175.

¹⁸⁴Madden and Hamilton, Freedom from Grace, p. 201.

deficiencies in personal character, it has always been a great joy to me to look to dear Mr. Boardman, with the hope that I might be yet as near in my walk to Christ as he is. I have been associated with him in Christian work for many years, and have seen him in many and trying circumstances, yet I have never seen his soul's sabbath broken. I have never seen self expressed in any action. I remember on one occasion, when he was grossly insulted in public, you might have watched his countenance, and you would have supposed that the person was paying him a compliment rather than otherwise; it did not seem to penetrate him at all, so abiding was he in the Lord Jesus Christ. In some such cases as his, we see the reality and the maturity of this life that is hid with Christ in God. I am sure that you will join with me in silent and grateful prayer to God for our dear brother Boardman.¹⁸⁵

Sufficient was Boardman's influence upon developments in the British holiness movement to this point that even though he was not present at the Brighton Convention, he could not be forgotten. Yet Robert Smith, by means of the General Meeting, and Hannah Smith, through her popular Bible Readings, dominated the podium at the Brighton Convention.¹⁸⁶

Among those present at Brighton were Abraham Kuyper, Frans Lion Cachet, Gerth van Wijk, Adama van Scheltema, and Baron von Boetzelaar, all from the Netherlands. Robert Smith's message impressed Kuyper. Under its influence, Kuyper entered the higher Christian life. Together with other members of the Dutch delegation, Kuyper began to publish a periodical titled De weg ter Godzaligheid in August 1875. Kuyper used the periodical to spread the ideal of "'sanctification by faith through entire sanctification'." Several factors quickly squelched Kuyper's interest in the higher Christian life. First, Kuyper learned that several people

¹⁸⁵Brighton Convention, pp. 46-47.

¹⁸⁶On the Brighton Convention for the Promotion of Scriptural Holiness also see J. B. Figgis, "The Brighton Convention," The Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle (1875):505-512.

suspected Robert Smith of moral impropriety after his private meeting with a woman in a London hotel room. In addition, Robert Smith's increasingly mystical understanding of the Christian life proved problematic. Thirdly, Kuyper suspected that his emotional state may have made him vulnerable to Robert Smith's message. Lastly, Kuyper undertook a study of holiness in Scripture and Protestant theology. As a result of his study he determined Robert Smith was guilty of error. From March 17 to August 4, 1878, Kuyper published eighteen articles critical of the doctrine of perfection in his Sunday paper, De Heraut. He also retracted his earlier support of Robert Smith.¹⁸⁷

The Broadlands, Oxford, and Brighton Conferences were early recognized as contributing to the Keswick Convention.¹⁸⁸ Edna Jackson, a conferee at many Broadlands conferences, believed that "the Broadlands Conferences were the starting-point of many important movements." Not only did the Broadlands Conference

¹⁸⁷Bundy, Keswick, p. 130; and James D. Bratt, ed., Abraham Kuyper: A Centennial Reader (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans and Carlisle, Cumbria: Paternoster Press, 1998), pp. 141-142. The eighteen articles were titled Volmaakbaarheid. They were later published in book form under the same title as part 2 of Uit het Woord: Stichtelijke Bijbelstudien, 3rd series, 2nd ed. (Amsterdam: Höveker and Wormser, 1879), pp. 61-13. See Bratt, Abraham Kuyper, pp. 142, 143-163.

¹⁸⁸On the history of the Keswick Convention see W. H. Aldis, ed., The Message of Keswick and its Meaning, 2nd ed., with Forewords by W. H. Aldis and Wilbur M. Smith (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1957); Barabas, So Great Salvation, passim; Charles F. Harford, ed., The Keswick Convention: Its Message, Its Method and Its Men (London: Marshall Brothers, 1907); J. B. Figgis, Keswick from Within (London: Marshall Brothers, n.d.; reprint ed., New York: Garland, 1985. Handley C. G. Moule, et. al., eds., Holiness by Faith: A Manual of Keswick Teaching (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1906), pp. 9-30, 33-75; Arthur T. Pierson, Foreword Movements of the Last Half Century (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1903), pp. 2-76; J. C. Pollock, The Keswick Story: The Authorized History of the Keswick Convention (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1964); and Walter B. Sloan, These Sixty Years (London: Pickering and Inglis, [1935]).

(1873) lead to the conferences at Oxford and Brighton, it also contributed to the Keswick Convention. Jackson acknowledged, however, that Oxford, Brighton, and Keswick, were conducted on "somewhat different lines and not so wide in their scope."¹⁸⁹

Neither the Boardmans nor the Smiths were present at the inaugural Keswick Convention. Robert Smith was scheduled to preside over the convention and Hannah Smith was invited to deliver Bible readings, but they were forced to cancel their appearance when Robert's moral and theological lapse became known. The Boardmans were in the United States on the occasion of the first Keswick Convention.¹⁹⁰

When the Boardmans were unable to find a place of ministry in the United States, they decided to establish permanent residence in Great Britain.¹⁹¹ Mrs. Boardman provided a clue as to why she and her husband were unable to find a place of ministry in the United States in a letter written to an American friend from England

¹⁸⁹Jackson, Life that is Life Indeed, p. 249. Also see Pierson, Forward Movements, pp. 13-41; and Evan Hopkins, "Preliminary Stages," in The Keswick Convention: Its Message, Its Method and Its Men, pp. 23-34, ed. Charles F. Harford (London: Marshall Brothers, 1907), pp. 25-32.

¹⁹⁰For a contemporary account see "A Danger of the 'Higher Life'," The Presbyterian, January 22, 1876, pp. 8-9; and "Mr. Pearsall Smith," The Presbyterian, February 19, 1876, p. 9. Regarding the doctrine of sanctification as generally understood in the Keswick Convention see Handley C. G. Moule, "Holiness by Faith," in Holiness by Faith: A Manual of Keswick Teaching, ed. Handley C. G. Moule, et. al., eds., (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1906), pp. 9-30; and Arthur T. Pierson, The Keswick Movement in Precept and Practice (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1903). On the Keswick Convention's doctrine of sanctification in the context of nineteenth and twentieth century evangelicalism see Douglas W. Frank, Less than Conquerors: How Evangelicals Entered the Twentieth Century (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1986), pp. 103-106.

¹⁹¹Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, pp. 176-184.

in 1875. Mrs. Boardman was frustrated with American spirituality. She wrote:

Oh this half-way! I am sick of it! I want to see those entering this rest taking up their arms and doing battle for God. As you say the superficial way of American Christians is sickening. It is fearful the way our people love sensational religion, and their superficial knowledge of the Bible.

We can do more for Jesus here in one week than we could in a month at home, because our people are so ignorant of first principles, and there is so little separation from the world. It would, indeed, be hard to go back to do no more than we have done; not see more, I mean of the glory of God.¹⁹²

Back in Great Britain, Boardman resumed his conference work. He held conferences in Dunstable, Scarborough, Manchester, Nottingham, Sunderland, Glasgow, Camberwell, Uxbridge, and other locations.¹⁹³ In subsequent years other conventions would be held throughout Great Britain. At the Union Conference in March 1877, Boardman was joined by several people who spoke at the earlier Oxford Union Meeting for the Promotion of Scriptural Holiness. In attendance were Mahan, Cowper-Temple, Fishbourne, and Varley. A Methodist pastor, William Haslam, also attended.¹⁹⁴

The Boardmans began a weekly afternoon meeting in their home in January 1877. The theme of these meetings was "Christ is all in all to meet every need in the daily walk as fully as He meets us at the commencement of our Christian life: the aim is to help each and all those whom the Lord sends." Though unsaved people who

¹⁹²Mrs. Boardman, Words of Counsel, p. 78.

¹⁹³Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, pp. 182, 183.

¹⁹⁴"The Union Conference," Evangelical Christendom. Christian Work, and The News of the Churches ns 18 (1877):113-114.

attended "found Jesus as their Saviour," the meetings were intended to "'feed the flock of God' ".¹⁹⁵

In 1879, the Boardmans were invited to Sweden. They did not accept this invitation until June of the next year. When Boardman embarked upon his mission to Sweden, he did not bring a message that was foreign to the Swedish people. Methodism preceded Boardman by several decades and, though dwarfed by the national church, was well established by the time of his visit. Indeed, by the late 1860s, Swedish Methodists in America were sending missionaries to the homeland.¹⁹⁶

Following the Boardmans' landing in Gothenburg, they participated in a number of holiness conferences throughout the country. They worked in conjunction with independent, Baptist, Methodist, and Lutheran ministers. The Boardmans planned to stay in Sweden until September, but when the time for their departure came, Boardman's ministry was still in demand. They decided that Mrs. Boardman would return to London and Boardman would remain. Mrs. Boardman did not actually leave the country until mid-October. Boardman returned sometime after December 11, 1880.¹⁹⁷

William Boardman spent the final ten years of his life working as a spiritual

¹⁹⁵Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, p. 184.

¹⁹⁶See Carol M. Norén, "Origins of Wesleyan Holiness Theology in Nineteenth Century Sweden," Methodist History 33 (1955):112-122. On a related topic see Heribert Jansson, "Keswick and Södertälje: Lord Radstock's Legacy in Sweden," in Vocation and Victory: An International Symposium Presented in Honour of Erick Wickberg, LL.D., ed. J. W. Winterhauer and Arnold Brown (Bàsle: Brunnen, 1970), pp. 108-113).

¹⁹⁷Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, pp. 184-220.

counselor, revivalist, and as co-founder of the Bethshan Healing Home in London. He and Mrs. Boardman founded the Home at Number 10, Drayton Park, Holloway Road in 1883. Their friends Miss Murray and Mrs. Michael Baxter joined the Boardmans in the effort. For Boardman, and other non-Wesleyan proponents of practical holiness, divine healing was a natural outgrowth of their soteriology. They maintained that God's provision of full salvation extended to Christians' bodies.¹⁹⁸ Cullis and Albert Simpson agreed, as did the Baptist, Adonirum Gordon.¹⁹⁹

In conjunction with Boardman's work at Bethshan, he published a paper titled The Lord that Healeth Thee. An advertisement for the paper promised reports of the meetings at Bethshan and of healings in various parts of the world, as well as articles by leaders of the holiness and divine healing movements. Presumably the book, The Lord that Healeth Thee, which was also published under the title The Great Physician, contains the content of the paper.²⁰⁰

Andrew Murray, a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa,

¹⁹⁸Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, pp. 230-231, 234-235; and Barclay, "Mrs. Boardman," p. 544; "The Prayer Cure," The Call, March 11, 1883, p. 3. California State Library; and "Our Times: Bethshan Healing House," Christian Herald, April 21, 1886, n.p.. Islington Council: Library and Information Service.

¹⁹⁹Raymond J. Cunningham, "From Holiness to Healing: The Faith Cure in America, 1872-1892," Church History 43 (1974):500; Also see Charles E. Jones, Perfectionist Persuasion: The Holiness Movement and American Methodism, 1867-1936 (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1974), pp. 50, 57. Carrie Judd Montgomery (1858-1946) worked with Boardman, Cullis, Simpson, and Mrs. Michael Baxter in the divine healing movement. Boardman invited Montgomery to the International Convention on Holiness and Healing (1885), but she was unable to attend. Burgess and McGee, Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, pp. 626-628.

²⁰⁰Advertisement. Islington Council: Library and Information Service. See W. E. Boardman, The Great Physician (Jehovah Rophi) (Boston: Willard Tract Repository, 1881); and *idem.*, The Lord that Healeth Thee (Jehovah Rophi) (London: Morgan and Scott, [1880]).

was among those who stayed at the Bethshan Home and came under Boardman's influence. Though Murray would only preach at one Keswick Convention, his publications were popular among the convention's followers. Murray later established a similar movement in his homeland.²⁰¹

Under the auspices of the Bethshan Healing Home, Boardman convened the International Convention on Holiness and Healing in 1885. This conference, "the first of its kind,"²⁰² was held at the Agriculture Hall in London. Mahan and Simpson were invited to address the conferees, though Mahan was unable to attend due to illness.²⁰³

On January 27, 1886 Boardman suffered a stroke at his home in London. He died a few days later on February 4, 1886. Mrs. Boardman remained in London after his death and continued to be active in the affairs of the Bethshan Healing Home. She died in 1904.²⁰⁴

²⁰¹J. DuPlesis, The Life of Andrew Murray of South Africa (London: Marshall Brothers, 1919 [?]), pp. 340, 342-345, 352. Boardman's influence on Murray's theology was limited to divine healing. According to DuPlesis, Murray emphasized divine healing for only a few years after his visit to the Bethshan Home. Also see W. J. Hollenweger, The Pentecostals: The Charismatic Movement in the Churches, trans. R. A. Wilson (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1971), pp. 113-114.

²⁰²"International Conference on Holiness and Healing," The Christian: A Weekly Record of Christian Life, Christian Testimony, and Christian Work [London], June 11, 1885, p. 11.

²⁰³See [Mrs. Michael Baxter], Record of the International Conference on Divine Healing and True Holiness Held at the Agricultural Hall, London, June 1 to 5, 1885 (London: J. Snow and Bethshan, n.d. [1885]). Also see "Holiness and Healing," The Christian: A Weekly Record of Christian Life, Christian Testimony, and Christian Work [London], June 11, 1885, p. 2.

²⁰⁴Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, pp. 241-243; and Baxter, "Mrs. Boardman," pp. 542-543.

Throughout his life, William Boardman was affected by the revival spirit that captured the attention of rural and urban Protestants during the nineteenth century. He witnessed revivals as a boy growing up in rural New York state. He underwent an evangelical conversion experience in a protracted meeting while living near Detroit, Michigan. He cooperated with Presbyterian revivalists and led revivals while working as a lay minister in Potosi, Wisconsin Territory. He received formal theological training in an institution dedicated to the promotion of revivals. And, as an evangelist, he participated in revivals in the United States, Great Britain, and Sweden.

Though Boardman entered the higher Christian life in 1842, and committed his life to the evangelization of the Christian community in 1847, the message of The Higher Christian Life (1858) did not become the focal point of his ministry until 1871. Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, American and British Protestants were keenly interested in practical holiness. Boardman rode that interest. He may have even fueled that interest, with his writings and sermons devoted to the topic.

Boardman's contribution to the American and British holiness movement is often overlooked. His efforts are largely overshadowed by the more charismatic non-Wesleyan contributors to the holiness movement, such as, Charles Finney, Asa Mahan, Robert and Hannah Smith, Albert Simpson, Evan Hopkins, F. B. Meyer, and Andrew Murray. Nevertheless, Boardman's career brought him in contact with some of the leaders of the evangelical community in the United States and Great Britain. He also filled prominent positions in the A.S.S.U. and the U.S.C.C. He addressed a number of congregations throughout the United States and Great Britain. Lastly, Boardman wrote a number of books, most of which were published serially in various

periodicals. Though he did not attract a large following, he was a prominent figure in the holiness movement. Boardman, therefore, deserves a position alongside his contemporaries as an evangelist of the higher Christian life.

CHAPTER 3

THE EVANGELIST'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE HIGHER CHRISTIAN LIFE

William Boardman wrote The Higher Christian Life (1858) for Christians who believed that doubt was the norm of the Christian life, for those who believed that the Christian life consisted of a series of highs and lows, for those who were afraid they might violate biblical and confessional orthodoxy in their pursuit of a deeper experience of God's grace, and for those who labored incessantly to free themselves from besetting sin.¹ According to Boardman, Christians who endured these religious difficulties did not fully trust in Jesus Christ, and, therefore, they only partially benefitted from his redemptive work. Their religious experience was not the norm. He drew attention to other Christians who had a different religious experience. They were not burdened by doubt, fear, or legalism. Not only did they trust Jesus Christ as their deliverer from past sin, they also trusted him as their "present Savior from sin." Jesus Christ was for them a full-Savior, and through faith in Jesus Christ they obtained "full-salvation." This was the higher Christian life.²

Boardman developed his understanding of the higher Christian life in the

¹W. E. Boardman, The Higher Christian Life (Boston: Henry Hoyt and Chicago: William Tomlinson, 1858; reprint ed., New York: Garland, 1985), pp. 15-18. Also see W. E. Boardman, He that Overcometh; or, A Conquering Gospel (Boston: Henry Hoyt, 1869), pp. 102, 106.

²Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1858), p. 76; and *idem.*, The Higher Christian Life, rev. ed. (Boston: Henry Hoyt, 1871), pp. 68-79.

context of his own religious experience, by reading Scripture, in conversation with the proponents of practical holiness, and in reaction to what he perceived as the limitations of the Reformed doctrine of sanctification. He taught that Christians did not have to live in doubt, that they did not have to resign themselves to a seemingly endless cycle of sin and repentance, and that they did not have to fear the challenges of Christian ministry. God promised to save, to give victory over sin, and to give power for ministry. Through faith in Jesus Christ, Christians obtained everything that God promised.

Over the years, the structure within which Boardman presented the higher Christian life remained the same, but certain details of the principle underwent revision. Throughout, he avoided the Oberlinian emphasis on human ability, the Methodist doctrine of the eradication of the sinful nature, the perceived legalism of the Reformed doctrine of sanctification, and the innovative doctrine of "counteraction" proposed by the Keswickians. At the same time, he cooperated with proponents of each principle. Boardman also attempted to hold in tension the Reformed doctrine of gradualism and the Wesleyan idea of definiteness.

The Underlying Philosophy of Christian Experience

Two "facts" underlay William Boardman's understanding of the higher Christian life. First, he claimed that Jesus Christ alone is the source of "pardon" and "purity," or "full-salvation" through "full-trust."³ He considered human effort of no value in regard to justification and sanctification. Not even when human effort is

³Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1858), pp. 45, 47. Also see Boardman, He that Overcometh, p. 79.

conjoined to the redemptive labors of Jesus Christ is it of any value. Jesus Christ does not help sinners obtain full salvation, Jesus Christ himself alone is their justification and sanctification. Any cooperative effort between sinners and Jesus Christ results in "self-deliverance," not full salvation.⁴ Only by means of absolute dependence on the person of Jesus Christ are sinners united with Jesus Christ, and only then do they obtain "pardon" and "purity."⁵

Sinners have access to full salvation because of Jesus Christ's atoning sacrifice. In the atonement, Jesus Christ bore the sins of all sinners, took away the condemnation they deserved, fulfilled the demands of the law, and defeated sin and death. In so doing, Jesus Christ fulfilled sinners' obligations.⁶ Jesus Christ is all sinners need. He is "all in all."⁷

When Jesus Christ, who is "complete" in himself, is taken as "all in all" sinners are made "complete" in him.⁸ Regarding those who trust Jesus Christ, Boardman wrote:

They look to Jesus, and are justified, pardoned, saved, redeemed, and sanctified, and will be glorified in Him; they look to Jesus, and though halt, maimed, palsied, they are lifted up by His hand, and led onward, upheld by His right hand, and walk without weariness, and run without fainting to the end; they look to Jesus, and see that no power but His will avail, and so call upon Him, and He answers them,

⁴Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1871), p. 95.

⁵Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1858), pp. 45, 47; and idem., Higher Christian Life (1871), pp. 62, 95.

⁶Boardman, He that Overcometh, pp. 88, 106-107.

⁷Boardman, He that Overcometh, p. 94.

⁸Boardman, He that Overcometh, p. 94.

and His name is glorified; they look to Jesus, and see that no tongue is like the tongue of fire, and wait upon Him for it until it comes, and they have power to witness for Him with the promised signs attending their words; they look to Jesus, and He opens their hands to give, and to give more freely, more abundantly, or, if need be, they call for more to give, and he bestows it; they look to Jesus, and, in short, are wholly clad with His glorious armour, head, heart, feet hands, tongue, and purse, and so they are His disciples, and can glorify His name, for they wear His uniform, and bear His image, and work His work, and show forth His power and presence.⁹

Boardman's emphasis on the centrality of Jesus Christ was consistent with the holiness movement in general. In the United States and Great Britain, proponents of scriptural holiness assigned Jesus Christ a prominent place in their theology and religious experience. Boardman, however, as an adherent of the church's historic statement on the doctrine of the Trinity,¹⁰ was afraid that this emphasis might be exaggerated and lead to confusion. Someone reading his account of Jesus Christ's role in the higher Christian life might conclude that he incorporated "all the offices, attributes and relations of the Godhead--as we are interested in them--in the Son of God alone." He responded: "God forbid that there should be even in appearance any robbery of the glory due to the Father and the Spirit."¹¹

Though Boardman named Jesus Christ as the source of sanctification, Boardman did not believe Jesus Christ works in isolation from the other persons of the Trinity. Jesus Christ works in concert with the Father and the Holy Spirit. The Father gave himself to the believing community in Jesus Christ and in the Holy Spirit,

⁹Boardman, He that Overcometh, p. 134.

¹⁰Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1858), p. 214.

¹¹Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1858), pp. 95, 109.

the third person of the Trinity.¹² Sanctification is predicated on the redemptive work of Jesus Christ.¹³ The Holy Spirit, working directly on and within Christians, brings sanctification to fruition. He is the sanctifier. Through the Holy Spirit, the Father channels his power to all Christians.¹⁴ Therefore, each person of the Godhead has a role in the sanctification of Christians.¹⁵

The Father gives Himself to us as manifested in the Son. The Son comes to us by the Spirit, and manifests Himself and His Father in Him in our hearts. The Spirit, given by the Son from the Father, comes in all the fullness of the Godhead--Father, Son and Holy Ghost--to abide in us and unite us to God by an actual inner union, than which no other union imaginable can be more perfect.¹⁶

A second fact underlying Boardman's philosophy of Christian experience was that "there is a second experience, distinct from the first,"¹⁷ a second and deeper work of grace¹⁸ "--sometimes years after the first--and as distinctly marked, both as to time and circumstances and character, as the first--a second conversion, as it is

¹²W. E. Boardman, In the Power of the Spirit; or, Christian Experience in the Light of the Bible (Boston: Willard Tract Repository, 1875), p. 113.

¹³Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1871), pp. 88-94, 122.

¹⁴Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1871), pp. 88-94, 122.

¹⁵Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1871), pp. 87, 88.

¹⁶Boardman, Power of the Spirit, pp. 1-7, 108. Also see Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1858), pp. 99, 105, 109-110. Archibald Hodge quotes Boardman on the Trinity in Outlines of Theology, rewritten and enlarged (New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1895), pp. 193-194.

¹⁷Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1858), p. 47.

¹⁸Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1858) p. 139; and idem., Power of the Spirit, p. 17.

often called."¹⁹ He understood the "second conversion" to be synonymous with what was formally known as "assurance of salvation," and what was popularly known as "full-salvation."²⁰

Christians who enter the second experience, find the "stores of grace" hidden in Jesus Christ. Boardman explained that "redeemed before, they are now endowed; bought already with a price, and clothed with garments of salvation, they are now filled with the Spirit--brought into abiding union with Jesus and made temples of the Holy Ghost." In other words, "by the first experience we are born into the family of God, and receive the spirit of adoption; by the second we come to manhood, and

¹⁹Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1858), p. 47. Boardman was not enthusiastic about the conversion language he used in his early writings to distinguish between justification and sanctification. In later years, under the influence of the growing interest in the Holy Spirit that captured the attention of American and British evangelicals, he replaced the conversion language with baptism language. The "first conversion" was subsequently identified as "the baptism of repentance," and the "second conversion" as the "baptism of the Holy Spirit." Simultaneous with this shift in terminology, and again responding to trends in evangelical theology, Boardman shifted the meaning of the second experience from "cleansing from sin" to "victory over the power of sin." See W. E. Boardman, Gladness in Jesus, rev. ed. (Boston: Willard Tract Repository, 1878), p. 83. On the renewed interest on the Holy Spirit see William Arthur, The Tongue of Fire; or, the True Power of Christianity, ed. Thomas O. Summers (Cincinnati, OH: Curts and Jennings; New York: Eaton and Mains, n.d.); Wilbur Chapman, Received Ye the Holy Ghost, in Late Nineteenth Century Revivalist Teachings on the Holy Spirit, with a Preface by Donald W. Dayton (New York: Garland, 1985); D. L. Moody, Secret Power, or the Secret of Success in Christian Life and Work, in Late Nineteenth Century Revivalist Teachings on the Holy Spirit, with a Preface by Donald W. Dayton (New York: Garland, 1985); R. L. Stanton, The Mission of the Comforter Illustrating the Doctrine of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost; Being the Substance of a Paper Read before the Presbyterian Ministerial Association of Cincinnati; January 31, 1881 with Notes and Additional Observations (Cincinnati, OH: Walden and Stowe, 1881); and R. A. Torrey, The Baptism with the Holy Spirit, in Late Nineteenth Century Revivalist Teachings on the Holy Spirit, with a Preface by Donald W. Dayton (New York: Garland, 1985).

²⁰Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1858), p. 57. For Boardman's understanding of the assurance of salvation see Boardman, He that Overcometh, pp. 102-109.

enter upon our inheritance as heirs of God."²¹

What transpires in the second conversion is largely analogous to what transpires in justification. In the second conversion, Jesus Christ is apprehended as the "way" to cleansing from sin, even as in the "first conversion" Jesus Christ is apprehended as the "way" to pardon from sin.²² Years later, Boardman revised his understanding of the higher Christian life to incorporate an increasingly popular notion that the beneficiaries of this experience also obtain victory over the power of sin.²³ Later still, Boardman claimed that in the second experience Jesus Christ is apprehended as the source of power for ministry. The exception baring a complete analogy between justification and sanctification was that in the first conversion, or, in justification, sin is pardoned instantaneously, whereas in the second conversion, or, in the higher Christian life, sin is purged by way of a process of indefinite length.²⁴ This idea contradicted the immediateness of Phoebe Palmer's "altar theology."

Though justification and sanctification were "distinct experiences," Boardman did not distinguish the former from the latter so as to dissolve any link between them. Though distinct, the two experiences remain connected. Salvation, biblically understood, incorporates justification and sanctification.²⁵ God created humans to live in union with God, "in all his [God's] principles, affections, and ways, and to use

²¹Boardman, Power of the Spirit, pp. 15, 16, 17.

²²Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1858), p. 116.

²³Boardman, Gladness in Jesus, p. 21.

²⁴Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1858), pp. 116, 117.

²⁵Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1858), p. 51.

all things for good to himself and others." Prior to the fall, the first humans were "temples of the living God." In every aspect of their lives and in every attitude, they "reflected" the character of God. They wholly "enjoyed" God. After the fall, after they shifted the object of their affection from God to Satan and the world, they became "deserted temples." They lived "to fear and dread His presence and His justice." In others words, "they ceased to live in God, and God, in them, and so were dead while yet alive; dead to God, dead to life eternal." The "new birth is a reunion between God and the soul."²⁶ By means of justification, sinners are redeemed from the guilt of sin, but not the power of sin. Redemption from the power of sin occurs in sanctification. Only when sanctified do Christians enjoy the complete work of Jesus Christ.²⁷

Boardman defended the distinction between justification and sanctification, or the expectation of a two-fold conversion, on the ground that it was consistent with the two-fold need of salvation. Sinners have a two-fold need for which Jesus Christ provides in his redemptive work. The sinner:

Must be just in the eye of the law, justified before God. And he must also be holy in heart and life, or he cannot be saved.²⁸

Jesus Christ provided what Boardman, and the Methodists, called the "double cure."²⁹

²⁶Boardman, He that Overcometh, pp. 8-18.

²⁷Boardman, Power of the Spirit, p. 71.

²⁸Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1858), p. 52.

²⁹Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1858), p. 51.

Boardman found further support for his thesis in the alleged practical and theological distinction between the apprehension of justification and sanctification. He reasoned that:

Practically always perhaps, and theologically often, we separate between the two in our views and efforts, to secure them to ourselves, until we are experimentally taught better. We have one process for acceptance with God, that is faith; and another for progress in holiness, that is works. After having found acceptance in Jesus by faith we think to go on to perfection by struggling and resolves, by fastings and prayers, not knowing the better way of taking Christ for our sanctification, just as we have already taken him for our justification.³⁰

Sinners are justified and sanctified through faith in Jesus Christ.³¹

Though God's work in justification and sanctification was practically and theologically distinct, God did not necessarily perform these works on two separate occasions. Boardman did not teach that two distinct experiences were absolutely necessary. The objective of the higher Christian life was not experience, but, as stated by Boardman early on, cleansing from sin, and, as he told it later, freedom from the power of sin and acquiring power for service. Contrary to the proponents of Wesleyan holiness theology, the adherents of Oberlin Perfectionism, and Albert Simpson, Boardman maintained that whether Christians are cleansed from sin in one experience or two was not important.³² What did matter was that all Christians:

Come to the point of trusting in the Lord for purity of heart to be prepared for heaven ... For there is no other way under heaven to be

³⁰Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1858), p. 52.

³¹Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1858), p. 52.

³²Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1858), pp. 35-54.

purified but by faith in the Lord. And none but the pure in heart shall see God in peace.³³

The "second conversion" marks the "definite beginning" of a "distinct plane" of religious experience.³⁴ Though Boardman allowed for the possibility that Christians might enter the higher Christian life at the same time that they are justified, he believed that the majority of Christians would have this experience subsequent to justification. He also believed that the experience depended on Christians consecrating themselves to God in response to the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit made them willing to consecrate themselves to God.³⁵ He called this beginning a "Pentecostal beginning." Even as the Apostles instantly received the gift of God through faith in the promise of Jesus Christ, so modern Christians obtain "the gift of God in a moment ... by faith in the promise of our Lord Jesus Christ."³⁶

Despite Boardman's belief that the higher Christian life was marked by a definite beginning, he did not altogether abandon the Reformed principle of "gradualism." He attempted to reconcile the principles of "definiteness" and "gradualism." He taught that believing Christians obtain "the power to make progress" through faith,³⁷ and envisioned the Christian life as a series of successive

³³Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1858), p. 206.

³⁴Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1871), pp. 167, 173, 175-177, 178-179, 180, 182, 184-185, 186-188, 192-200.

³⁵Boardman, Power of the Spirit, p. 64; and *idem.*, Higher Christian Life (1871), p. 107.

³⁶Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1871), p. 184.

³⁷Boardman, Gladness in Jesus, p. 21.

steps. Each step is "a higher, deeper, fuller unfolding of God to the soul."³⁸

Achieving complete rest in Jesus Christ is a process which is not finalized upon an initial experience. Christians enter into the higher Christian life one area of life at a time. Sounding a theme reminiscent of Robert Smith, Boardman taught that as time passes, Christians are made aware of needs in their lives which have been:

Lying dormant, hidden and unknown ... And each of these in their turn may be unfolded to us, and apprehended by us, creating intense unrest, absorbing desire, oppressive weariness, until for each in turn, the heart comes to its precious rest in Jesus.³⁹

The advance from one stage to the next is marked by an "occasion for advancement," an idea similar to the principle of "crisis" in the writings of Simpson and his colleague, George Pardington.⁴⁰ As understood by Boardman, an "occasion for advancement" consists of "any contest or peril on land or sea, or anything which sends a man out of himself to God as the only trustworthy source of help, and gives him a positive reliance upon the Lord, and brings him deliverance " This incident "may prove--nay, must prove--the occasion of an increase of faith, and joy, and love."⁴¹ He believed that "this fact, that underneath the outward shell of personal, social, or political incident there may be found, in many an event in the life of many a child of God, a spiritual life, expanding, bursting, budding, growing toward the

³⁸Boardman, He that Overcometh, p. 82.

³⁹Boardman, Gladness in Jesus, p. 35.

⁴⁰See George P. Pardington, The Crisis of the Deeper Life (Harrisburg, PA: Christian Publications, n.d.), p. 54. Also see George P. Pardington, Outline Studies in Christian Doctrine (Harrisburg, PA: Christian Publications, 1926), pp. 320-329.

⁴¹Boardman, He that Overcometh, p. 75.

fullness of power and joy,--this fact, if borne in mind, cannot fail to add a new vein of golden truth to God's precious word for us from the beginning to the end."⁴²

Boardman clearly stated that the occurrence of an "occasion for advancement" was under God's control.⁴³

Boardman argued that these definite stopping points are consistent with the notion of gradual sanctification. Drawing an analogy between sanctification and the growth of plants, Boardman explained that even though plants grow gradually, their growth is periodically interrupted. At no point during this process is growth complete. The periodic interruptions merely mark stages of growth.⁴⁴ In the same way, the process of sanctification also features stages of growth.

Conversion is a new and a higher starting point, from which plant-like the Christian's life unfolds, joint after joint, leaf after leaf, stretching upward and onward for fruitage and fulness of stature, until at last it gains the fruit-bearing status of true Christian manhood and majority and liberty, and rejoices in that stage of its progress marked by our Saviour as "the corn."

Having now learned the way to live by faith, it goes on ripening its fruit for the golden harvest, and the heavenly garner of its Lord, and becomes in due time the "full corn on the ear," ready for the sickle of the angel reapers.⁴⁵

The Means of Obtaining Full Salvation

Boardman thought that many Christians failed to realize the fulfillment of

⁴²Boardman, He that Overcometh, p. 76.

⁴³Boardman, He that Overcometh, p. 75.

⁴⁴Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1858), p. 194.

⁴⁵Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1858), pp. 194-195.

God's promise of full salvation, because they did not believe God was able to fulfill his promise. Rather than trust God to continue the work he began in regeneration, they trusted in their ability to conform to his will. Boardman compared these Christians to the Israelites, who God liberated from slavery in Egypt. When the Israelites had the opportunity to possess the Promised Land they were immobilized by unbelief. They looked to their ability and decided the Canaanites were too powerful. As a result, they wandered in the wilderness for forty years. Boardman taught that Christians who trust in their ability to conform to God's will wander in a spiritual wilderness. Those, however, who trust in God's promise of full salvation realize the fulfillment of his promise.⁴⁶

Boardman criticized the Reformed doctrine of sanctification because he believed that it taught Christians to rely on their own ability, rather than to believe in God's faithfulness. On this point, the Reformed doctrine of sanctification was inconsistent with the Reformed doctrine of justification. Reformed clergy taught that sinners are justified by faith in Jesus Christ. When the same ministers turned their attention to the doctrine of sanctification, however, they taught that Christians are sanctified by works, individual effort, or self-control. That anyone who trusted in Jesus Christ for justification would resort to individual effort to defeat the power of sin was incomprehensible to Boardman. Obtaining sanctification was, in his view, a "simple thing." It is simple relative to the works sinners must perform to obtain

⁴⁶Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1858), p. 142; and idem., Higher Christian Life (1871), p. 94.

sanctification under the Reformed scheme.⁴⁷

Boardman's criticism of the Reformed community's reliance on works, or means, to obtain sanctification echoed an earlier criticism voiced by the proponents of New England Theology. The proponents of New England Theology admitted that sinners could not turn from their sin apart from the means of grace. They were concerned, however, that the emphasis placed on the means of grace by the proponents of Reformed orthodoxy might leave sinners with the impression that the Christian life consisted of reading Scripture, prayer, attendance at worship, and moral living.⁴⁸

Adherents of New England Theology substituted a doctrine of immediateness for the means of grace. They urged sinners to repent immediately. They disregarded the need for some means to bring sinners from the point of hearing the command to the point of obedience. Since God requires sinners to immediately repent, sinners could immediately obey upon hearing the command. God never requires an impossibility.⁴⁹

The idea that God never requires an impossibility was important in the thought of Charles Finney and Asa Mahan. Boardman did not press this idea to the extreme found in Oberlin Perfection. He did not altogether reject means. He believed that means contribute to the sanctification of Christians, but they were not a formula by

⁴⁷Boardman, He that Overcometh, pp. 102-109; and idem., Higher Christian Life (1871), p. 87.

⁴⁸George N. Boardman, A History of New England Theology (New York: A. D. F. Randolph, 1899), pp. 169, 172, 180, 188, 190.

⁴⁹George Boardman, New England Theology, pp. 193-194.

which Christians appropriate sanctification. Ultimately, justification and sanctification are received by faith alone.⁵⁰

Boardman identified different kinds of faith.⁵¹ As he understood it, "true and saving" faith involves something other than intellectual assent, or the mere acknowledgment of a doctrinal confession.⁵² He believed that many Protestants defined faith in terms of intellectual assent to doctrines. Their objective was to teach others correct belief, rather than introduce them to the person of Jesus Christ. According to Boardman, the knowledge of doctrinal truth without personal experience inhibited both the progress and the power of the Protestant Reformation.⁵³

Contrary to the common Protestant understanding of faith, Boardman understood true and saving faith as rest in Jesus Christ. This faith requires Christians to give their "all" to Jesus Christ. They are to surrender their will to the "new theocracy," or Jesus Christ's authority.⁵⁴ True and saving faith, however, also entails receiving. Not only are Christians required to give all, they are also required to receive all. The person who believes in this way obeys the commands of God and accepts the promises of God. According to Boardman, two complementary acts, giving and receiving, were essential to true and saving faith.⁵⁵

⁵⁰Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1871), pp. 147, 187.

⁵¹Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1858), pp. 124-125.

⁵²Boardman, Gladness in Jesus, p. 117.

⁵³Boardman, Gladness in Jesus, pp. 107-108; idem., He that Overcometh, pp. 153, 154.

⁵⁴Boardman, He that Overcometh, pp. 153, 154.

⁵⁵Boardman, Gladness in Jesus, pp. 132, 136-137; idem., He that Overcometh, p. 153; and idem., Higher Christian Life (1858), pp. 124-125.

Boardman had an unwavering confidence in God. The strength of his faith was based on God's faithfulness to his promises. What God willed to do in the lives of Christians was revealed in his promises.⁵⁶ God is a covenant God.⁵⁷ God's promises are a "deed," or a "will and testament."⁵⁸ What God promises to do, is as good as done.⁵⁹

God promised that through faith in Jesus Christ, Christians can overcome the power of sin. If the gift God offers is to be possessed, like any gift, it must be received.⁶⁰ The only barrier preventing admission into the higher Christian life is unwillingness to receive what God gives, or a "defective faith."⁶¹

Boardman criticized passive concepts of faith. He pointed to a "lady of distinction" to illustrate its dangers. This woman accepted the promises of God, but did not realize lasting joy. Boardman knew the reason:

Simply because she did not yield herself a living sacrifice unto God. She gave herself up as a dead, a passive sacrifice merely. She consecrated herself to receive merely, and not to do. God requires of his intelligent voluntary creatures an intelligent active consecration to himself, heart and soul yielded to do his will, as well as receive his

⁵⁶Boardman, Gladness in Jesus, p. 117; and idem., Power of the Spirit, pp. 93-94, 109, 113-114.

⁵⁷Boardman, He that Overcometh, p. 73.

⁵⁸Boardman, Power of the Spirit, p. 113.

⁵⁹Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1871), pp. 102, 103.

⁶⁰Boardman, Power of the Spirit, p. 114.

⁶¹Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1871), p. 120; idem., He that Overcometh, p. 92; idem., Power of the Spirit, pp. 228, 253; and idem., "Our Element," in Mrs. Boardman's Words of Counsel and Comfort, pp. 192-200, compiled by Miss [Marie?] Barclay (London: Bethshan Bookroom and Christian Herald, 1904), pp. 196-197.

gifts of grace and mercy.⁶²

Christians do not embark upon the higher Christian life by waiting for God to act on them. Any thought that Boardman understood God's sanctifying work in Christians' lives as God working on them is dispelled by his strong statement that " ... in point of fact, in every case, if the reader will examine, it will be seen that it is only the earnest and the active Christian, the working, struggling one, who comes to the knowledge of Christ in his fullness."⁶³ Though critical of what he perceived as an overemphasis on Christian activity in the Reformed doctrine of sanctification, Boardman stood closer to the Reformed position on this point than he did to his Quaker colleague, Hannah Smith.

Despite the subjective orientation of the verbs Boardman used to define the act of faith, he taught that faith is ultimately a gift of God. He believed that faith is the product of the Holy Spirit's operation in the lives of repentant sinners.⁶⁴ Contrary to the proponents of Oberlin Perfection and Palmer, Boardman taught that "the reception of Christ in the heart" is not the result of will-power.⁶⁵ Humans, due to the effect of the fall on human nature, are incapable of willing faith. In Adam, all humans fell into sin. As a consequence of the fall, the influence of the "image of God" on human action was "destroyed."

⁶²Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1858), p. 130.

⁶³Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1858), pp. 49-50.

⁶⁴Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1871), p. 84.

⁶⁵Boardman, Power of the Spirit, p. 43.

Man, seduced by Satan, was turned from God to self. God was excluded from His rightful place as an indwelling one. Self was enthroned, and selfhood, which is the strength of the kingdom of darkness, took the place of God. Thus he ceased to bear the image of God, who is love, holiness, peace and became selfish, sensual, devilish.⁶⁶

Boardman believed that though human nature was "perverted" as a result of the fall, a trace of the image of God remained fixed in the human soul. He taught that "the moral image" in which humans were created, was perverted in the fall. The "form and features of the soul," however, still "bear the stamp and signature of God." He wrote that, "the likeness of God indelibly remains stamped upon our faculties and powers, even though wholly defaced from the principle by which they are governed[.]"⁶⁷ This indelible likeness of God is the foothold God utilizes to redeem sinners.

According to Boardman, no positive benefit is to be gained from "belittling" the will. The will is a powerful force to be reckoned with, but "that which is most vital to peace and happiness does not obey our own will at all." The "innermost part" of the human being, the "heart," is not "under the direct power of our will." It is "under the direct and complete control of the Spirit when we give ourselves up to Christ and He comes to dwell in us."⁶⁸

Boardman believed that the function of the spiritual heart is analogous to the function of the physical heart. Even as the muscle is essential to the quality of one's

⁶⁶Boardman, Power of the Spirit, p. 157.

⁶⁷Boardman, He that Overcometh, pp. 95-96.

⁶⁸Boardman, Power of the Spirit, p. 43.

life, so the innermost part of one's being is essential to the quality of one's spiritual life. The heart is made to be "God's own seat."⁶⁹

As Christians allow Jesus Christ to have authority over their wills, their wills are conformed to the will of God.⁷⁰ Jesus Christ sits on the throne of Christians' hearts in response to their invitation. Jesus Christ enthrones himself only after calling "a congress or parliament of all the faculties," laying "before it [*sic.*] the questions of allegiance, whether it shall be given to Him or not: and the motive, whether it shall be love or selfishness; and when they are weighed, the right clearly seen, the cost fairly counted, and the debate concluded, He puts the question, and gains the decision by a hearty concurrence of the entire voluntary nature."⁷¹

The Support for the Principle

Adherents of the higher Christian life, claimed to teach a "scriptural" understanding of holiness. This was the banner under which conferees gathered at Oxford, Brighton, and Keswick. They were advocates of biblical Christianity.⁷²

As was true of many who embraced the principle of practical holiness, William Boardman's reading of Scripture was influenced by the belief that sanctification was central to the Bible's message, and that explaining the meaning of Scripture by means

⁶⁹Boardman, Power of the Spirit, p. 44.

⁷⁰Boardman, Power of the Spirit, pp. 44-45.

⁷¹Boardman, He that Overcometh, pp. 160-161.

⁷²Walter B. Sloan, These Sixty Years: The Story of the Keswick Convention (London: Pickering & Inglis, n.d.), p. 15.

of religious experience was a legitimate exercise.⁷³

Boardman cited the Old Testament and the New Testament to support the principle of the higher Christian life, though he admitted its presentation in the first differed from its presentation in the latter. "The Old Testament shadows it forth in its very first pages by beautiful symbols;" while "the New Testament declares it amongst the earliest things it records, in striking figures."⁷⁴ He considered the Old Testament and the Gospels "prospective" of the higher plane of Christian experience. The Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles provided "historical" validation of the experience. The "symbol, prophecy and promise" of the Old Testament and the Gospels, yield to "fulfillment and fruitage."⁷⁵

The epistles of the apostles are wonderfully full of this matter to the eyes of all who have themselves come into the experience of it. Their whole tenor accords with it; and their main aim seems to be, to bring all Christians into it.⁷⁶

Specifically, Boardman found support in Scripture for the distinction between justification and sanctification. In the Old Testament, Abraham entered the land of

⁷³Handley C. G. Moule, "Holiness by Faith," in Holiness by Faith: A Manual of Keswick Teaching, ed. Handley C. G. Moule, et. al. (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1906), p. 12; Melvin E. Dieter, The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1980), pp. 44-45; and Leon O. Hynson, "The Wesleyan Quadrilateral in the American Holiness Tradition," Wesleyan Theological Journal 20 (1985):19-33; cited in Stephen J. Lennox, "Biblical Interpretation in the American Holiness Movement, 1875-1920" (Ph.D. dissertation, Drew University, 1992), p. 197.

⁷⁴Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1871), p. 169.

⁷⁵Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1871), p. 185.

⁷⁶Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1871), p. 193.

promise in two stages: first from Ur to Haran, and then from Haran to Canaan. The Feast of Passover, which represented "atonement for sin, and immunity from judgment," was followed by the Feast of Pentecost, which represented "endowment with resurrection-life and power in Jesus by the baptism of the Holy Ghost."⁷⁷

In the New Testament, John the Baptizer preached the first experience while pointing to Jesus Christ whom he promised would preach the second. Jesus Christ affirmed the message preached by John the Baptizer, and prophesied that the Apostles, persons who had undergone the first experience, would soon have the second experience,⁷⁸ and, they did. Having had a salvific encounter with Jesus Christ during the period of his earthly life, the disciples gathered in Jerusalem to "receive" the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost.⁷⁹ Peter and John travelled to Samaria to pray for those converted under the ministry of Philip that they might receive the Holy Spirit.⁸⁰ Paul, at Ephesus, in a circumstance similar to the one Peter and John found in Samaria, met twelve converts who had not yet "received" the Holy Spirit.⁸¹ The "fellow disciples," similarly, recognized a distinction between justification and sanctification. Apollos, for example, entered a deeper experience under the influence of Aquila and Priscilla "after having become already a true Christian, zealous for

⁷⁷Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1858), p. 140; and idem., Power of the Spirit, p. 17.

⁷⁸Boardman, Power of the Spirit, p. 18.

⁷⁹Boardman, Power of the Spirit, p. 18. Also see Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1858), p. 111.

⁸⁰Boardman, Power of the Spirit, p. 18.

⁸¹Boardman, Power of the Spirit, p. 18.

Christ, eloquent in the gospel, and mighty in the Scriptures."⁸²

Boardman referred to the manner in which God took possession of the temple Solomon built in Jerusalem as evidence that a "distinct plane of experience" with a "definite beginning" was accessible to all Christians.⁸³ He explained that the temple, while under construction, was "the Lord's." The temple was "built for him [God] on the spot he designated, and in the form and manner he prescribed, out of materials and with money he had supplied; yet it was not taken possession of by the Lord, and filled with his glory until formally and fully turned over to him by King Solomon in the presence of the people."⁸⁴ This was a picture of what transpires between the Christian and God: "So it is with the Christian: he is already the Lord's and acknowledges it; yet it is only when he [the Christian] gives himself up in unreserved dedication to be occupied and filled and kept by him, that he really practically becomes a temple of God."⁸⁵

Turning to the New Testament, Boardman pointed to John the Baptizer.⁸⁶ "JOHN THE BAPTIST sets it [the distinct plane of experience with a definite beginning] forth under the figure of the two baptisms." John the Baptizer "preached change of mind, and predicted that Jesus would bestow a deeper gift in the baptism of the Holy Ghost and office [*sic.*]."⁸⁷ Jesus Christ alluded to this idea frequently, "but

⁸²Boardman, Power of the Spirit, pp. 18, 19.

⁸³Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1871), p. 167.

⁸⁴Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1871), p. 171.

⁸⁵Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1871), p. 172.

⁸⁶Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1871), p. 167.

⁸⁷Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1871), p. 180.

on the occasion when he instituted the supper, being the closing hour of his unfettered presence with his disciples in the body, he unfolded to them the whole matter more fully, and assured them particularly of the fact, that he should soon come to them in his invisible presence, with the Father and the Spirit, to dwell with them and in them perpetually."⁸⁸ Drawing upon the words Jesus Christ spoke to the disciples as he instituted the Lord's Supper and the prayer he prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, Boardman concluded that in the words of Jesus Christ was found:

The direct teaching of the Lord himself, that there is an experimental plane of life for the Christian, in which he in fact becomes the temple of God, is filled with his living presence and abiding peace and love; and that brings him into union with his fellow-Christians so deep and so sweet, that all the world may take knowledge of them, and become convinced that Jesus is the Christ to the glory of God the Father.⁸⁹

Unlike Mrs. Boardman, Boardman does not identify the commentaries he consulted in his effort to understand Scripture. Students at Lane Theological Seminary were encouraged to read the works of John Lightfoot, and the commentaries of John Calvin and Philip Doddridge, among many others. Neither Boardman nor his wife indicate that he used any of these works. Mrs. Boardman refers to Archibald Alexander and Lightfoot, among others. With the exception of Lightfoot, none of these commentators appear in the reading list given to students at Lane Theological Seminary.⁹⁰

⁸⁸Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1871), p. 182.

⁸⁹Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1871), pp. 184-185.

⁹⁰Mary [Mrs. W. E.] Boardman, Who shall Publish the Glad Tidings? (Boston: Willard Tract Repository, 1875), pp. 7, 8, 16, 37, 38, 65; and Catalogue of the

Boardman also appealed to religious experience in support of his message. In so doing, he claimed that he followed the pattern established by the biblical writers. Since they appealed to religious experience in support of their message, this clearly was "God's method" and was, therefore, "the best."⁹¹ He presumed that experience and fact were synonymous. What was experienced, was fact. Scripture explained or validated experience. Experience, specifically the experience of the higher Christian life, became scriptural. In addition, personal testimony superseded the pronouncements of the academic community.⁹²

Boardman's use of religious experience to support his theses was not uncommon. Many proponents of practical holiness utilized this method in their writings on the subject. Collections of personal testimonies were common.⁹³ So were spiritual autobiographies.⁹⁴ Boardman's list of witnesses included Martin

Officers and Students of Lane Theological Seminary, Cincinnati, Ohio. 1844-5
(Cincinnati, OH: George L. Weed, 1845), pp. 10-11.

⁹¹Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1858), pp. 19, 20.

⁹²Boardman, Gladness in Jesus, p. xi.

⁹³See S. Olin Garrison, ed., Forty Witnesses. Covering the whole Range of Christian Experience, with an Introduction by Cyril Foss (New York: n.p., 1888); George Hughes, Days of Power in the Forest Temple. A Review of the Wonderful Work of God at Fourteen National Camp-Meetings, from 1867-1872, with an Introduction by Bishop Haven (Boston: John Bent, 1873; reprint ed., Salem, OH: The Allegheny Wesleyan Methodist Connection, 1975), pp. 111, 280, 339-355; and Phoebe Palmer, ed., Pioneer Experiences, or, The Gift of Power Received by Faith, Illustrated and Confirmed by the Testimony of Eighty Living Ministers, of Various Denominations, with an Introduction by Rev. Bishop Janes (New York: W. C. Palmer, Jr., 1868; reprint ed., New York: Garland, 1984).

⁹⁴See Asa Mahan, Autobiography: Intellectual, Moral, and Spiritual (London: T. Woolmer, n.d.; reprint ed., New York: AMS Press, 1979); *idem.*, Out of Darkness into Light; Or, the Hidden Life Made Manifest through Facts of Observation and Experience: Facts Elucidated by the Word of God (London: Ballantyne Press, 1877;

Luther, Jean D'Aubigne, Richard Baxter, Jonathan Edwards and his wife, James Brainerd Taylor, Asa Mahan, Charles Finney, and Mrs. Boardman. These witnesses who "have been born again and have clearly apprehended their justification by faith, seek and find the latter and deeper experience under one or other of various names."⁹⁵

Boardman was aware of the inconsistency between the religious consciousness of some of his sources, and the testimony that he assigned to them. He was particularly aware of this inconsistency in regard to the testimonies he assigned to Luther and D'Aubigne. Boardman admitted that neither claimed to experience a "second conversion," but actually condemned the notion. Boardman, nevertheless, found evidence in their testimonies that led him to conclude that whatever they called it, they experienced a "second conversion."⁹⁶

Boardman was so confident of the basis underlying the theory of the higher Christian life that he dared anyone "to produce a single instance of any Christian who has truly complied with the simple, distinct terms upon which it is promised,--full consecration to Christ, and full trust in him as a living, present, delivering, keeping Saviour, and has yet failed to enter upon the higher plane of experience." In addition, he challenged "if any converted one doubts, let him try it for himself,--put it to the

reprint ed., New York: Garland, 1985); Phoebe Palmer, The Devotional Writings of Phoebe Palmer: The Way of Holiness and Faith and Its Effects (New York: Garland, 1985); and Hannah Smith, The Unselfishness of God and How I Discovered It: A Spiritual Autobiography (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1903; reprint ed., New York: Garland, 1985).

⁹⁵Boardman, Power of the Spirit, pp. 3-4, 19.

⁹⁶Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1858), pp. 39, 38-41, 47; and idem., Higher Christian Life (1871), p. 168.

test and he will assuredly prove it in his own experience to be true, and he will find all that has been told him about it and all he has ever known before joy and peace in believing, and of satisfaction in the Word of God and in prayer, and of sweetness in communion with God and his children, more than doubled over to him."⁹⁷

The Effect of the Principle Applied

Union with Christ

William Boardman defined sanctification as "an entire setting apart of ourselves to the Lord, and a complete possession of us by the Lord."⁹⁸ "Christ in all his fullness" or "Christ as all in all" was the gift Christians received in sanctification. He insisted that Christians do not attain holiness. To the contrary, they attain:

Nothing but a sense of self-emptiness, and vileness, and helplessness. Nothing but a sense of unholiness, and a full consciousness that all efforts and resolutions, and struggling and cries for holiness of heart, are just as vain as the attempts of a leopard or an Ethiopian to bathe white in any waters. This with an absolute dependence upon Christ for holiness of heart and life, just as for the forgiveness of sin is the sum and substance of the soul's attainment ... there is on the other hand just as deep a sense of the all-sufficiency and perfect loveliness of Christ, and a realization of the fullness of his love, and an assurance of his ability to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us. And a confidence that he will do it, according to the plan of God.⁹⁹

The objective of sanctification, therefore, is not moral reform, as in Oberlin

⁹⁷Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1871), p. 168.

⁹⁸Boardman, Power in the Spirit, pp. 128-129.

⁹⁹Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1858), pp. 58-59.

Perfection. Rather, the objective of sanctification is union with Jesus Christ. Moral reform would naturally follow union with Jesus Christ.¹⁰⁰

When Boardman first sought a deeper work of divine grace, he set his sight on perfection. Upon entering the higher Christian life, he "at once and forever ... dropped the theory of perfectionism and the terms ... as misnomers of the experience " At the same time, Mrs. Boardman resisted the efforts of local Methodists to persuade her to profess perfection after testifying of her religious experience.¹⁰¹ Boardman distinguished between "having a perfect Saviour," the object of the higher Christian life, and "being perfect one's self." These, he believed, were "two very different things." The former he believed; the latter he rejected.¹⁰²

Boardman resolutely stated that entrance into the higher Christian life did not mark the culmination of sanctification. Entrance into this experience marked the beginning of sanctification. This was merely a "new starting point." One in which Christians reached a "new and higher level" in the "light" of which "all things take on a new loveliness," and "the race becomes swifter and yet easier." Jesus Christ's "work according to our faith" follows entrance into this experience. Christians become like clay in the hands of a potter, and Jesus Christ shapes them into the people he desires.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰Boardman, Power of the Spirit, pp. 134-135.

¹⁰¹Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1858), pp. 65, 67, 69-73; and idem., Higher Christian Life (1871), pp. 60, 61.

¹⁰²Boardman, Power of the Spirit, p. 238.

¹⁰³Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1858), pp. 59, 60.

The Anointing of Gladness

Boardman testified that on the occasion of his first conversion, he entered a state of indescribable gladness. The effect of this experience was superseded ten years later when he entered the higher Christian life.¹⁰⁴ On the occasion of his first conversion, "the wrath of God for sin, as declared in the first of Romans, had been heavy upon me," but on the occasion of his second conversion, "the bondage of sin as illustrated in the seventh of Romans, was heavier still, and I experienced the full bitterness of soul which wrings out the cry, 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death'."¹⁰⁵

When the Boardmans moved to New Haven, Connecticut in 1842, they hoped to have a ministry among the students of Yale Divinity School like the one they had among the students of Lane Theological Seminary. The people of New Haven, however, were not as responsive to the higher Christian life as were those of Walnut Hills, Ohio. Mrs. Boardman complained that "the mass of Christians were quite satisfied to go on in the usual way, and live in the seventh of Romans, instead of stepping on into the eighth."¹⁰⁶ According to the Boardmans, Paul, in Romans 8, detailed the experience of Christians who realized the futility of striving to conform to the law, and surrendered to Jesus Christ, coming under grace. By means of "death to self, life in Christ by faith; or, death to sin and life to God through faith in Jesus,"

¹⁰⁴Boardman, Gladness in Jesus, p. viii.

¹⁰⁵Boardman, Gladness in Jesus, pp. 39-40.

¹⁰⁶Mrs. W. E. [Mary M.] Boardman, Life and Labours of the Rev. W. E. Boardman, with a Preface by Mark G. Pearse (New York: D. Appleton, 1887), p. 93.

Christians move from the experience of Romans 7 to the experience of Romans 8.¹⁰⁷

Proponents of scriptural holiness frequently cited Romans 7 and 8 in support of their convictions.¹⁰⁸ Boardman was no different. Though he was not a Bible scholar, he was aware of the different interpretations of this passage.¹⁰⁹ As understood by Boardman, the "gist of the question" was: "Did Paul write about himself and his present religious experience in Romans 7?"¹¹⁰

Boardman answered that in Romans 7, Paul wrote about himself as a representative of all Christians, but that he had his past rather than his present experience in view. Paul wrote about that period in his Christian experience when he lived as "a wretched bondman under the law."¹¹¹ The fact that Paul did not report his effort to be delivered from sin on the basis of conformity to the law, did not concern Boardman. He found evidence that Paul experienced deliverance from sin in Paul's teaching regarding the use of the law as an instrument of enlightenment, the law's inadequacy to deliver sinners from sin, and the portrait of the bondman found in Romans 7:7-25.¹¹² The issue of interest to Paul was not, "What then is my own present condition in this salvation of which I [Paul] have been speaking?" Rather, the

¹⁰⁷Boardman, Gladness in Jesus, pp. 56-57, 71-72.

¹⁰⁸See H. M., The Rest of Faith: A Narrative of Christian Experience (Boston: Willard Tract Repository, n. d.), p. 10. The Philadelphia Library Company; Robert P. Smith, Is Romans VII. to be the Continued Experience of the Christian (London: Morgan and Chase, n.d.). The Philadelphia Library Company; and Pardington, Crisis of the Deeper Life, pp. 50-57.

¹⁰⁹Boardman, Gladness in Jesus, p. 64.

¹¹⁰Boardman, Gladness in Jesus, pp. 67, 75.

¹¹¹Boardman, Gladness in Jesus, pp. 70, 77, 82, 84-85, 75.

¹¹²Boardman, Gladness in Jesus, p. 83.

issue of interest to the apostle was, "Is the law sin?"¹¹³

According to Boardman, when Paul wrote Romans 7 and 8, he was living in the experience he described in the latter chapter. He wrote "from his own high position as a happy freeman, under the gospel, looking back and looking down upon the struggling bondman under the law."¹¹⁴ According to Boardman, when Romans 7 and 8 were read together, Paul is understood to see and accept:

The fact, that the law brings condemnation, and the gospel alone brings justification; the law aggravates rebellion, perversion, corruption; the gospel alone creates peace with God, and hope and joy in the Lord; the law develops, but cannot break our bondage in the service of sin, and the gospel only can break the chains of sin, and set the soul at liberty to live in sweet union with God, and that in fact the law must die, as a husband must die before his wife can be married to another man, in order that we may be married to Christ, and so be brought into living union with God.¹¹⁵

Boardman divided the Christian community into two classes on the basis of Romans 7 and 8. Christians who belong to the first class read the seventh chapter of Romans as a description of their present experience on earth. They are continually pulled in different directions by the flesh and the Spirit. This is a struggle they inevitably and repeatedly lose, even when they rely on God for assistance. According to them, the victory described in Romans 8 is future. Christians who belong to the second class read Romans 7 as a description of their lives before being converted to the higher Christian life. Their present experience is described in Romans 8. The

¹¹³Boardman, Gladness in Jesus, pp. 71, 72, 73, 85.

¹¹⁴Boardman, Gladness in Jesus, p. 77.

¹¹⁵Boardman, Gladness in Jesus, p. 80.

first class of Christians are the "unhappy sevenths," because of the burden the law puts on their souls. Those of the second class are the "happy eighths," because they are free from the burden of the law, and experience the joy of salvation.¹¹⁶

The Rest of Faith

Many proponents of practical holiness in the nineteenth century, read the biblical record of the captivity of the Israelites in Egypt, their liberation, and their journey to the Promised Land as a type of the Christian life.¹¹⁷ Boardman was no exception. His reading of the exodus led him to conclude that the Israelites' lack of faith prevented them from moving directly to the promised rest in Canaan. Similarly, Christians are not allowed to enter into the spiritual rest promised by God until they trust God to fulfill his promise. No manner of works (praying, reading Scripture, nor fasting) will allow Christians to find rest.¹¹⁸

As the Israelites approached the Jordan River, an obstacle greater than the flooded Jordan River lay in their path. They had to demonstrate their confidence in

¹¹⁶Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1858), pp. 267-268; *idem.*, Gladness in Jesus, pp. 49-59; and [Mrs. Michael Barclay], Record of the International Conference on Divine Healing and True Holiness Held at the Agricultural Hall, London, June 1 to 5, 1885 (London: J. Snow and Bethshan, [1885]), pp. 168, 169, 170, 171.

¹¹⁷See Martin W. Knapp, Out of Egypt into Canaan; or Lessons in Spiritual Geography, 4th ed. (Cincinnati, OH: Cranston and Stowe, 1888); Record of the Convention for the Promotion of Scriptural Holiness Held at Brighton, May 29th to June 7th, 1875 (Brighton: W. J. Smith, 1875), pp. 27-34, 70-73, 73-76, 113-119, 152, 153-156; Pardington, Crisis of the Deeper Life, pp. 46-57; Charles E. Jones, Perfectionist Persuasion: The Holiness Movement and American Methodism, 1867-1936 (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1974), p. 43; and Lennox, "Biblical Interpretation," pp. 169-170.

¹¹⁸Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1871), p. 118.

God. Words alone were no longer sufficient. Not only did they have to verbally affirm God's faithfulness, they now had to act out their profession of faith. The Israelites had to step into the Jordan River before the water would part.¹¹⁹

Boardman applied this experience of the Israelites to the Christian's experience:

So with you. You must not only say 'Yes,' but act it. You must venture upon the promise, put yourself in the hands of Jesus Christ, to go forward at his bidding, and keep step with him as your leader and commander, nor allow a negative ever to have place in your heart for a moment, in regard to any promise or any command of his.¹²⁰

Boardman's own religious experience and the testimonies of others, taught him that the journey of the Israelites from Egypt to Canaan typified the "usual course of Christian experience." He knew that not all Christians had crossed the Jordan. Some Christians, especially those belonging to the Reformed churches, believed that Christians did not cross the Jordan until death. Boardman disagreed. The Jordan could be crossed in this life. He concluded that their understanding of Christian experience "simply shows that the Lord has not yet brought them thus far."¹²¹

Though the Exodus illustrates the "usual course of Christian experience," it is not the only way. Some Christians are led by God to journey the "Gaza route," the direct, short, easy route. Those traveling this route are "few among the many."¹²²

Boardman himself was "led out of Satan's bondage by the long, roundabout,

¹¹⁹Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1871), p. 123.

¹²⁰Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1871), p. 123.

¹²¹Boardman, Power of the Spirit, pp. 217-218.

¹²²Boardman, Power of the Spirit, pp. 217-218, 219.

hard way." In reading about Israel's exodus, he realized why he was required to travel the longer route. The Israelites had to follow the long route because "they needed not only the thorough break which actually occurred between them and the Egyptians when they went out, but also a Red Sea experience to separate them from Egypt." This was the reason for his own religious experience:

Ah! yes, they needed a Red Sea and a terrible Wilderness and a Jordan between them and Egypt, to keep them from repenting and returning, not one whit more than I did. The world was wonderfully attractive to me. Self-indulgence in Egypt, over against enduring hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, looked amazingly fascinating. Others may not need these experiences as a gulf between them and the world, but I am sure I did; and I thank God on this account for the way, and for all the way in which he has led me.¹²³

If Boardman's description of the "Gaza route" as the direct, short, easy route was an allusion to Phoebe Palmer's experience of sanctification, he distinguished his experience of the higher Christian life from her experience on the altar. He believed that his experience was biblical and illustrative of the experience of most Christians.

Boardman lamented that "some who have escaped the bondage of condemnation and death in sin by a Red Sea deliverance are stopped in the way at the border of the full rest in Jesus from the bondage of sin itself."¹²⁴ Their inability to cross over Jordan limits them to a life of wandering in the wilderness. This life is their choice. They either "WILL NOT" or they "BELIEVE NOT." In a word, they say "No" to the privilege God offers.¹²⁵

¹²³Boardman, Power of the Spirit, pp. 213-214.

¹²⁴Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1871), p. 118.

¹²⁵Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1871), p. 119-120.

Seeming to surrender to the Reformed doctrine of sanctification, Boardman admitted that ultimately all Christians will experience a "second conversion," even if not until the time of their death. Those Christians who have not entered the higher Christian life prior to death will forsake "all hope of making one's self what one ought to be to meet the requirements of the law" at the time of death, and then one will give one's "case ... to Jesus entirely and immediately." In the moment of death "one is led into perfect rest in Christ, with a sweet foretaste of the rest above."¹²⁶

The New Pentecost

Boardman's concept of the higher Christian life was pietistic in tone. He did not, however, consider this experience as exclusively spiritual and internal. The higher Christian life actually heightened Christians' awareness of their mission in the world.¹²⁷ The higher Christian life is not only the means of freedom from the power of sin; it is also the means of power for ministry. As Christians enter the higher Christian life they receive the power to "witness for Jesus" as Savior and Sanctifier.¹²⁸

Two years after entering the higher Christian life, Boardman discovered the principle had implications for Christian service. Reflecting upon his Christian service prior to entering the higher Christian life, he recalled that he had previously viewed his efforts as "task-work." His Christian service "often seemed hard, and the yoke

¹²⁶Boardman, Power of the Spirit, p. 225.

¹²⁷Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1871), p. 223.

¹²⁸Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1871), p. 223; and idem., Higher Christian Life (1858), pp. 245-247, 289, 290.

galled" him and "pressed heavily upon" him. Since entering the higher Christian life and learning about "gladness in His [God's] service," Boardman found "rest" even when engaged in ministry.¹²⁹

Boardman believed that Christians obtain power for service through the person and work of the Holy Spirit.¹³⁰ Later in his ministry, he used the term "baptism" or "filling" of the Holy Spirit to identify this work of the Holy Spirit. "Baptism of the Holy Spirit," he explained, was the term used by Jesus Christ and the Apostles.¹³¹ Boardman considered this term all-inclusive. It identified various aspects of God's work in the Christian's life.¹³² The expression "baptism of the Holy Spirit" became for Boardman the authoritative term for that experience he previously called "the higher Christian life," or "second conversion." He also preferred this term to the terms "sanctification," "perfect love," and "rest of faith." He explained that "unquestionably each one of these names expresses some one phase of the blessed experience into which the Christian comes by receiving the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, and therefore each name has a peculiar expressiveness, yet no one of them is all-inclusive."¹³³ Boardman, however, did not demand that specific terms be used to describe and teach the higher Christian life. He recognized that proponents of the higher Christian life came from a variety of denominations, and used different words

¹²⁹Boardman, Gladness in Jesus, pp. 33, 34.

¹³⁰Boardman, Gladness in Jesus, p. 117.

¹³¹Boardman, Gladness in Jesus, p. 83; and *idem.*, Power of the Spirit, pp. ix, 28.

¹³²Boardman, Gladness in Jesus, p. 83; and *idem.*, Power of the Spirit, p. 28.

¹³³Boardman, Power of the Spirit, pp. 5, 6. Also see Boardman, Gladness in Jesus, p. ix.

to describe this experience.¹³⁴

In view of the ongoing nature of the primary task to which Christians are called, witnessing, repeated baptisms of the Holy Spirit are necessary.¹³⁵ Boardman found biblical support for repeated baptisms of the Holy Spirit in Peter and John's encounter with the Jewish authorities, who arrested and threatened them before releasing them. When Peter and John rejoined the apostolic company "the place was shaken by power divine, and all were filled with the Holy Ghost." As a result of this renewal of the Pentecost experience, "they were baptized afresh, and all spoke the Word of God with fresh force and greater boldness than ever, whilst the apostles bore witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus with great power, and great grace was upon them all."¹³⁶

Boardman called this experience "a new Pentecost." This was not the last time the Pentecostal experience was renewed. "And this is but one of a constantly recurring series of similar renewals and advancements, by which the plans of God were unfolded, His work advanced, and Christians made stronger and bolder, and kept in the dew of freshness during all the primitive period of the Christian era."¹³⁷ Boardman called these encounters with the Holy Spirit subsequent to the initial baptism in the Holy Spirit, "refreshings, renewings, girdings, or fillings." He

¹³⁴Boardman, Power of the Spirit, p. 123.

¹³⁵Boardman, Power of the Spirit, pp. 30-31, 32.

¹³⁶Boardman, He that Overcometh, p. 122.

¹³⁷Boardman, He that Overcometh, p. 122.

distinguished these "after-works of the indwelling Spirit" from the baptism of the Holy Spirit.¹³⁸

For Boardman, Christian service included social relief. The Christian's responsibility to engage in this task complemented his responsibility to preach the gospel. Social relief was not secondary. It was, indeed, "that great key to the hearts of men which opened them so freely to the blessed Savior during His earthly mission."¹³⁹ In a manner consistent with the Reformed family of churches, Boardman taught that commitment to service does not stem from a sense of duty, but from a sense of gratitude.¹⁴⁰

The Unity of the Church

As Christians enter the higher Christian life, they are "filled with his [Jesus Christ's] living presence and abiding peace and love." In addition, Christians are brought "into union" with other Christians. This union is "so deep and so sweet, that all the world may take knowledge of them, and become convinced that Jesus is the Christ to the glory of God the Father."¹⁴¹ When Christians enter the higher Christian life, not only does their relationship with God change, but so does their relationship with the Christian community.

Boardman was a churchman. He had a heart for the church, and a message for

¹³⁸Boardman, Power of the Spirit, pp. 30-32.

¹³⁹Boardman, He that Overcometh, pp. 232-233, 272.

¹⁴⁰Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1871), p. 227.

¹⁴¹Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1871), p. 184.

the church. Though ordained by the Presbyterian church, and a minister in Presbyterian congregations in White Lake, Michigan, Gloucester City, New Jersey, and Los Angeles, California, Boardman sensed no obligation to limit his ministry either with people or to people within the denomination. He had no patience for "sectarian strife and division." While working as an A.S.S.U. missionary in Michigan in 1848, Boardman witnessed the debilitating effect of sectarian strife and division. A community in the area was "divided, sub-divided, sub-sub-divided & sub-sub-sub-divided--until as one told me 'no two would pull together'."¹⁴² Boardman considered himself free to serve anywhere and with anyone, even with those with whom he might disagree on certain points of doctrine. He overlooked these differences in order to proclaim the higher Christian life.

Boardman maintained that before the church began to abandon the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the church did not suffer "permanent distraction or division." He also believed that the unity of the church was not lost forever, but that it could be realized anew. Key to the revival of the church's unity would be the principle of the higher Christian life.¹⁴³

Boardman believed that Jesus Christ's prayer for the unity of the church would be answered during the latter half of the nineteenth century. He did not anticipate a dissolution of denominations. Nor did he foresee the creation of a single ecclesiastical organization, though he did not criticize this goal. Rather, he anticipated cooperation

¹⁴²W. E. Boardman, Letter to The Temple Street Sabbath School Missionary Association, August 29, 1848. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

¹⁴³Boardman, Power of the Spirit, p. 100.

between the denominations.¹⁴⁴

The rise of the modern mission movement, initiated by William Carey, stirred Boardman's anticipation of cooperation between the denominations and the different theological parties. After Carey declared his willingness to leave Great Britain as a foreign missionary, various denominations cooperated in providing support.

Boardman found further encouragement in the organization of the World Protestant Alliance, as well as in the formation of voluntary societies, which brought together people from various denominations to address a particular need. Though realistic about the present situation, Boardman remained optimistic.¹⁴⁵

If Christian unity was to be achieved on a universal scale, Boardman believed that every Christian would have to experience the higher Christian life. Apart from this experience, any united effort on the part of the denominations would be mere form.¹⁴⁶

Boardman's concern for the unity of the church was also demonstrated in his attempt to avoid controversy. During the International Conference on Holiness and Healing (1885), for example, at which Boardman presided, a conferee asked a question about entire sanctification, or the eradication of sin. An observer reported that Boardman replied in effect:

I am not going to discuss that here. In such a conference as this we should drop terms that are not understood. Let us have essential realities. Let us not be inquiring critically as to this or that shibboleth.

¹⁴⁴Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1858), pp. 227-228, 230, 231.

¹⁴⁵Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1858), pp. 229-230.

¹⁴⁶Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1858), p. 234.

I am quite sure that in the main there is not essential difference between us, except in the shibboleth and in the understanding of the shibboleth. I do believe in God as an entire Sanctifier, and in Jesus as an entire Sanctification. He is able to fill his temples and shut the devil out. That is the great essential truth and that is quite enough.¹⁴⁷

Boardman disagreed with the Methodist doctrine of the eradication of sin. The question provided him a prime opportunity to correct this notion. Another objective, however, took precedence.

William Boardman was not an original thinker. Nor was he a professional theologian. He did not claim to be either. He was an evangelist. As an evangelist his primary task was to preach the gospel. Traditionally, preaching the gospel entailed preaching to sinners, or, those outside the church. Though Boardman preached the gospel to those outside the Christian community, his primary audience was those already in the church.

Many Christians sought freedom from religious doubt, fear, and the plague of besetting sin. Boardman was personally acquainted with their plight. He, too, suffered doubt, fear, and the plague of besetting sin. He found cleansing, victory, and power through faith in Jesus Christ. As an evangelist, he purposed to tell the Christian community about the full salvation that was theirs through faith in Jesus Christ.

Boardman taught that Christians do not have to live in doubt, that they do not have to resign themselves to a seemingly endless cycle of sin and repentance, and that they do not have to fear the challenges of Christian ministry. God promised to save,

¹⁴⁷"International Conference on Holiness and Healing," The Christian: A Weekly of Christian Life, Christian Testimony, and Christian Work [London], June 11, 1885, p. 11.

to give victory over sin, and to give power for ministry. Through faith in Jesus Christ, Christians obtain everything that God promised.

Boardman discovered these truths within the context of his own religious experience. Ten years after his first conversion, or "first baptism," he experienced a second conversion, or a "second baptism." In this experience he received cleansing, victory, and power through faith in Jesus Christ. Boardman came into this experience under the influence of James Brainerd Taylor, Charles Finney, and Asa Mahan. He developed his understanding of this experience within the context of New School Presbyterian theology, and in interaction with Wesleyan and non-Wesleyan adherents of practical holiness. His course of study at Lane Theological Seminary gave him freedom to press the limits of Reformed theology. Over the years, Boardman's basic ideas regarding the higher Christian life remained the same, but certain details of the principle underwent revision.

Boardman's doctrine of sanctification, or the higher Christian life, escapes easy identification. It reflects traces of Oberlinian perfectionism and Wesleyan holiness theology, but Boardman was critical of both schools, and rejected Christian perfection, or the eradication of the sinful nature. Neither was his doctrine of sanctification consistently Reformed. His belief that sanctification might occur in a crisis experience subsequent to justification put him in disagreement with the Reformed confessions. Nor did Boardman embrace the teaching of the Keswick Convention.

Boardman's doctrine of sanctification might best be described as a churchly doctrine of sanctification. First, Boardman manifested "churchliness" in the non-sectarian character of his message. He did not draw on one holiness theology at the exclusion of another, nor, at least in his mature years, did he advance a particular

holiness theology against another. He recognized truth in each of the nineteenth-century holiness theologies. His objective was to communicate truth.

Secondly, Boardman did not separate from those Christians who endorsed ideas he rejected. He measured the value of any difference of opinion according to the essential truth on which proponents of practical holiness agreed. They agreed with the essential truth regarding Jesus Christ as full Savior, and that is all that mattered to Boardman. In spite of their differences, unity could be preserved.

Thirdly, Boardman manifested churchliness in his attempt to apply the higher Christian life to the divisions within the church. He believed that Christians who experience the higher Christian life have the ability to overcome the barriers to unity.

Lastly, Boardman did not attempt to build a distinctive organization. His mission was to communicate the full gospel of a full Savior to all Christians. He did not attempt to forge new boundaries in the church, nor did he acknowledge the legitimacy of existing barriers. His work frequently required him to cross denominational lines in order to tell Christians about the fullness of salvation available through full trust in Jesus Christ. Though he played a role in the religious experience of Albert Simpson and Evan Hopkins, these men developed their doctrines of sanctification independent of Boardman's direct influence.

CHAPTER 4

THE EVANGELIST'S CRITICS, AND HIS RESPONSE

William Boardman reluctantly contributed to the growing body of literature dedicated to practical holiness. According to Asa Mahan, Boardman anticipated that "when done and presented to the public, it [The Higher Christian Life] would close the doors of honor and power in the Church" against him.¹ Mahan reported that Boardman also believed that he would be deposed from the ministry when The Higher Christian Life was published, because of opposition to the message of practical holiness within the Presbyterian church.²

The record justified Boardman's concern. Some Presbyterian ministers who

¹W. E. Boardman, The Higher Christian Life, rev. ed. (Boston: Henry Hoyt, 1871), p. 17.

²Asa Mahan, Out of Darkness into Light (London: Wesleyan Conference Office, 1877; reprint ed., New York: Garland, 1985), p. 192. The critics devoted many pages to Boardman's message, but the attention they devoted to the matter may not have been as voluminous as suggested by Mary Boardman, the evangelist's wife. Henry Boardman, one of Boardman's critics, complained that prior to 1877 the critics only analyzed certain aspects of the message promulgated by the proponents of the higher Christian life. He offered his The "Higher Life" Doctrine of Sanctification, Tried by the Word of God as the first book-length critique of the principle. In addition, Boardman was seldom the sole target of the critics in their reviews of his writings. In several reviews, as in Henry Boardman's book, Boardman's writings on the higher Christian life were considered along with writings of others on the same topic. Though Boardman was considered the prominent representative of the higher Christian life by Henry Boardman, the critique of his views was a piece of a larger effort to dismiss the notion of the higher Christian life. Henry A. Boardman, The "Higher Life" Doctrine of Sanctification, Tried by the Word of God (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1877), pp. 5-6, 71, 79, 85, 86.

affirmed a doctrine of practical holiness were expelled from the Presbyterian ministry. Henry Belden, with whom Boardman travelled for a brief time, was one who suffered this fate.³

Boardman was not charged with heresy by the Presbyterian church. To the contrary, Mahan claimed that in the 1870s "an open door" was "everywhere before him and his works and doctrines, even in that denomination."⁴ One of Boardman's critics affirmed Mahan's claim. According to this critic, Boardman's ideas were prevalent in Presbyterian churches.⁵

Not everyone was satisfied with Boardman's ideas. His critics represented virtually every Protestant denomination in the United States and Great Britain. The majority of his critics, however, were aligned with the Reformed family of churches within the United States, or the Reformed party within the Church of England in Great Britain.⁶

³George Hughes, Days of Power in the Forest Temple. A Review of the Wonderful Work of God at Fourteen National Camp-Meetings, from 1867 to 1872, with an Introduction by Rev. Bishop Haven (Boston: John Bent, 1873; reprint ed., Salem, OH: The Allegheny Wesleyan Methodist Connection, 1975), p. 30; Phoebe Palmer, ed., Pioneer Experiences, or, The Gift of Power Received by Faith. Illustrated and Confirmed by the Testimony of Eight Living Ministers, of Various Denominations, with an Introduction by Rev. Bishop Janes. New York: W. C. Palmer, Jr., 1868; reprint ed., New York: Garland, 1984; and Richard Wheatley, The Life and Letters of Mrs. Phoebe Palmer (New York: W. C. Palmer, 1881; reprint ed., New York: Garland, 1984), pp. 578-579.

⁴Mahan, Out of Darkness, p. 192.

⁵"Religious Self-Complacency," Boston Review 2 (1862):482.

⁶Several clergy and theologians criticized the higher Christian life in general. See "A Danger of the 'Higher Life'," The Presbyterian, January 22, 1876, pp. 8-9; "A Higher Life," The Christian [Boston], February 1871, p. 12; Horatius Bonar, God's Way of Holiness (London: James Nisbet, 1886); The Brighton Convention and its Doctrinal Teaching. Testimony of Evangelical Leaders, including the Letters of Dean

Few people came to Boardman's defense. Some affirmed the essence of his message, but distanced themselves from its presentation.

Boardman did not ignore the criticism. Between 1858 and 1886, he revised his doctrine of sanctification, in part in response to the critics. Theological developments within the evangelical community also contributed to Boardman's decision to revise his message.

In revising his message, Boardman clarified his relationship to the nineteenth-century holiness movement. His doctrine of sanctification was different from the other nineteenth-century holiness theologies. Ultimately, Boardman positioned himself

McNeile, Dean Close, Canon Ryle, Canon Bell, Rev. G. T. Fox, and the Rev. Dr. Horatius Bonar (London: Nisbet, 1875); John Chester, "'Grace for Grace': The Presbyterian 'Higher Christian Life'," The Presbyterian, September 4, 1875, p. 2; J. M. Crowell, "The Higher Christian Life, No. I," The Presbyterian, January 13, 1877, p. 7; idem., "The Higher Christian Life, No. II," The Presbyterian, January 20, 1877, p. 7; idem., "The Higher Christian Life, No. III," The Presbyterian, January 27, 1877, p. 7; idem., "The 'Higher Life'," The Presbyterian, February 17, 1877, p. 7; idem., "The 'Higher Life'," The Presbyterian, February 24, 1877, p. 7; idem., "The 'Higher Life'," The Presbyterian, March 3, 1877, p. 7; "The 'Higher Life'," The Presbyterian, January 2, 1875, pp. 8-9; "The 'Higher Life'," The Presbyterian, February 20, 1875, p. 1; "The 'Higher Life'," The Presbyterian, September 18, 1875, p. 1; "The 'Higher Life'," The Presbyterian, September 18, 1875, p. 5; "The 'Higher Life'," The Presbyterian, May 26, 1877, pp. 2-3; "The 'Higher Life' Again," The Presbyterian, March 18, 1876, p. 8; "The 'Higher Life' Again," The Presbyterian, June 10, 1876, p. 8; "The 'Higher Life' Movement," The Presbyterian, March 4, 1876, p. 9; Alvah Hovey, The Doctrine of the Higher Christian Life Compared with the Teaching of the Holy Scriptures (Boston: Henry A. Young, 1876); Alexander Moody-Stuart, Recent Awakenings and Higher Holiness: The Opening and Closing Addresses in the Free Church General Assembly, 1875 (Edinburgh: Maclaren and Macniven, 1875). The Free Church of Scotland College; "Moody and Sankey's Revivalism, and Pearsall Smith's Perfectionism," The Gospel Standard (London) 41 (1875):211-223; Benjamin W. Newton, Thoughts on Scriptural Subjects (London: Houlston and Sons, 1871), p. 301; "Mr. Pearsall Smith," The Presbyterian, February 19, 1876, p. 9; "Mr. R. Pearsall Smith: His Experience. Parts I and II," The Christian Observer 75 (1875):830-840, 916-926; "Mr. R. Pearsall Smith: His Errors and Misapprehensions," The Christian Observer 76 (1876):60-75; "Public Affairs," The Christian Observer and Advocate 75 (1875):559-560; and "Religious Self-Complacency," pp. 468-485.

on the middle ground between the proponents of instantaneous and entire sanctification, on the one hand, and the proponents of progressive sanctification, on the other.

The Critique of the Message

William Boardman's critics were clergy and theologians in the United States and Great Britain. They represented Old and New School Presbyterian churches, Congregational churches, the Church of England, Methodist churches, and Baptist congregations. A number of the American critics, for example, Jacob Abbott, Lyman Atwater, Henry Boardman, and Thomas Smith, had close ties to Princeton Theological Seminary, the mid-century stronghold of Reformed orthodoxy in the United States.⁷ Similarly, in Great Britain, a number of Boardman's critics were aligned with the Reformed party within the Church of England, and the Free Church of Scotland.⁸

The critics charged Boardman with several offenses. One of Boardman's

⁷Jacob Abbott, "Boardman's Higher Christian Life," Bibliotheca Sacra and Biblical Repository 17 (1860):508-535; Lyman H. Atwater, "The Higher Life and Christian Perfection," The Presbyterian Quarterly and Princeton Review 22 (1887):389-419; Henry Boardman, "Higher Life" Doctrine, *passim*; Archibald A. Hodge, "'The Higher Life': No. I," The Presbyterian, March 25, 1876, p. 2; *idem.*, "The 'Higher Life': No. II," The Presbyterian, April 1, 1876, pp. 2-3; *idem.*, "The 'Higher Life': No. III," The Presbyterian, April 15, 1876, pp. 2-3; *idem.*, "The 'Higher Life': No. IV," The Presbyterian, April 15, 1876, pp. 2-3; *idem.*, "The 'Higher Life': No. V," The Presbyterian, April 22, 1876, pp. 2-3; and Thomas Smith, "Means and Measure of Holiness," The British and Foreign Evangelical Review 25 (1876):251-280.

⁸See Brighton Convention and its Doctrinal Teaching, *passim*; "The Brighton Convention and its Opponents," London Quarterly Review 45 (1875):84-128; George T. Fox, Perfectionism. Being a Review of "Gladness in Jesus" by the Rev. W. E. Boardman, and "Holiness through Faith" by R. P. Smith (London: William Hunt, 1873); and Moody-Stuart, Recent Awakenings, *passim*.

offenses was ambiguity. After reading The Higher Christian Life, Jacob Abbott, a professor at Princeton Theological Seminary, complained that Boardman did not intelligibly define the higher Christian life, or the second conversion.⁹ Abbott also found it difficult to determine if Boardman adhered to a doctrine of instantaneous and entire sanctification, or to a doctrine of progressive sanctification. Abbott was confused because in some passages Boardman seemed to echo the doctrine of entire and instantaneous sanctification taught by Charles Finney, Asa Mahan, and Phoebe Palmer. In other passages, he taught progressive sanctification, a view reminiscent of the Reformed doctrine of sanctification. Abbott finally concluded that Boardman held to a doctrine of instantaneous and entire sanctification. Abbott based his conclusion on the number of statements the evangelist made in favor of each theory. Boardman's statements in support of instantaneous and entire sanctification outnumbered his statements in support of the principle of progressive sanctification.¹⁰

Henry Boardman also complained about the ambiguity of Boardman's message. He thought that it was "misty and perplexing to the common mind." Boardman's idea that Jesus Christ is "the believer's holiness" was particularly problematic. Henry Boardman concluded that whatever the evangelist meant by this expression, its meaning was not the same as that given the expression by the seventeenth-century mystics or representatives of Eastern Orthodoxy. The seventeenth-century mystics and the Eastern Orthodox used the expression in an intelligible manner. Boardman used it

⁹Abbott, "Boardman's Higher Christian Life," pp. 511, 516.

¹⁰Abbott, "Boardman's Higher Christian Life," pp. 509, 514, 515-518.

in an unintelligible manner.¹¹

Even those sympathetic with Boardman's message, complained about its ambiguity.¹² In 1859, the editors of The Presbyterian Quarterly Review published a review of The Higher Christian Life. The editorial board, comprised of Albert Barnes, Thomas Brainerd, John Jenkins, and Joel Parker and assisted by the faculties of Union (New York), Auburn, and Lane Theological Seminaries, was New School Presbyterian in theological orientation. As a student at Lane Theological Seminary, Boardman was schooled in this tradition, and his theology in general echoed its distinctive features. The author of the review was generally pleased with Boardman's effort, though he admitted the work suffered from ambiguities, which he did not define.¹³

The critics found further reason to criticize Boardman's message as they examined its particular themes. For example, Boardman's understanding of the means of sanctification aroused criticism. Abbott objected to Boardman's thesis that Christians obtain sanctification by faith alone. Abbott agreed that faith was necessary to sanctification, but he disagreed that it was all that was required to obtain sanctification. Consistent with the Reformed doctrine of sanctification, Abbott taught that "instrumental means" contribute to a Christian's sanctification. He taught that God sanctifies Christians as they read Scripture, pray, fast, worship, participate in the

¹¹Henry Boardman, "Higher Life" Doctrine, pp. 86-89. Also see John A. Todd, "Law of Spiritual Growth," The Biblical Repository and Princeton Review 32 (1860):627; and "Boardman vs. Boardman," The Presbyterian, July 21, 1877, p. 2.

¹²"Boardman's Higher Christian Life," The New Englander 17 (1859):532-533.

¹³Review of The Higher Christian Life, by W. E. Boardman, in The Presbyterian Quarterly Review 7 (1859):660-661.

Lord's Supper, and face the struggles of Christian living in a fallen world. Abbott considered Boardman's view unreasonable and contrary to Scripture.¹⁴

Henry Boardman agreed with Abbott. He drew attention to Boardman's neglect of John 17:17: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." Henry Boardman claimed he understood why the evangelist excluded these words of Jesus Christ: they overthrew the claim central to his theory that Jesus Christ is the Christian's holiness.¹⁵

Archibald Hodge does not mention Boardman by name in his review of the higher Christian life, but he was familiar with the evangelist's ideas on the subject. The younger Hodge voiced an opinion similar to that of Henry Boardman. Like Henry Boardman, he drew attention to the importance of Scripture in God's sanctification of Christians.¹⁶ George Fox, a minister in the Church of England, charged that Boardman's deprecation of any means (scripture, the Lord's Supper, and prayer) suggested that he viewed them as meritorious rather than instrumental.¹⁷ Henry Boardman and many of the other critics concluded that in Boardman's scheme, the traditional means of acquiring holiness were no longer necessary.¹⁸

The critics not only disagreed with the exclusive role Boardman assigned to

¹⁴Henry Boardman, "Higher Life" Doctrine, pp. 86-89; and Abbott, "Boardman's Higher Christian Life," pp. 511, 513, 514.

¹⁵Henry Boardman, "Higher Life" Doctrine, pp. 86-89. Also see Abbott, "Boardman's Higher Christian Life," p. 513.

¹⁶Archibald Hodge, "'Higher Life:' No. IV," p. 3.

¹⁷Fox, Perfectionism, pp. 70-71.

¹⁸Henry Boardman, "Higher Life" Doctrine, pp. 81-83.

faith in sanctification, they also criticized his understanding of faith. Though Horatius Bonar did not name Boardman, the evangelist's understanding of faith was consistent with the view described and criticized by the Scottish divine. Bonar implied that the proponents of the higher Christian life confused the work of Jesus Christ "for" Christians with the Holy Spirit's work "in" Christians. They stressed the "quality and quantity" of faith. Quoting from the correspondence between Philip Melancthon and Brentius, Bonar pointed out that faith does not justify, neither does it sanctify. Faith has "no inherent virtue belonging to it." Jesus Christ justifies, and Jesus Christ sanctifies. Sinners are justified and Christians are sanctified "solely on account of its [faith's] reference to Christ."¹⁹ Bonar wrote: "The Gospel does not command us to do anything in order to obtain life, but it bids us live by that which another has done; and the knowledge of its life-giving truth is not labour but rest,--rest which is the root of all true labour; for in receiving Christ we do not work in order to rest, but we rest in order to work."²⁰

Similarly, Benjamin Newton denied that Christians can resist and mortify evil "simply by an act of faith similar to that by which we cast ourselves on God's free grace in Christ for salvation."²¹ According to Newton, justifying faith differs from sanctifying faith. Justifying faith is passive, while sanctifying faith is active. He charged that the proponents of the higher Christian life maintained that sanctifying

¹⁹Bonar, God's Way of Holiness, p. 42.

²⁰Bonar, God's Way of Holiness, p. 47.

²¹Newton, Thoughts on Scriptural Subjects, p. 365. Though the ideas propagated by Robert Smith were specifically in Newton's view, the criticism applied to Boardman as well due to the similarity of their views on this point.

faith, like justifying faith, is passive.²² Newton argued that Christians do not advance in practical holiness "simply by an act of faith towards God."²³

The critics also disputed what they alleged Boardman made the object of faith. Abbott claimed that Boardman taught Christians to believe something "about" themselves. Abbott taught that the object of faith is the revelation of Jesus Christ in Scripture. Christians have warrant to believe only those principles supported by direct statements in Scripture. No one has warrant to claim they are justified or sanctified because no where in Scripture does God reveal "William Boardman is justified," or "Jacob Abbott is sanctified." Boardman's belief that Christians could know that they are justified and sanctified substituted what they wanted to believe about themselves for the teaching of Scripture.²⁴

The critics also concluded that Boardman, and the other proponents of the higher Christian life, emphasized the role of Jesus Christ in the Christian's life to the point of excluding the Holy Spirit. That Boardman spoke of Jesus Christ indwelling the Christian was not the problem. Henry Boardman acknowledged that all evangelical Christians taught that Jesus Christ indwells every Christian. Henry Boardman's problem with Boardman's explanation of Jesus Christ's role in the higher Christian life was that the evangelist excluded the Holy Spirit.²⁵ In his estimation,

²²Newton, Thoughts on Scriptural Subjects, p. 365.

²³Newton, Thoughts on Scriptural Subjects, p. 365.

²⁴Abbott, "Boardman's Higher Christian Life," pp. 515, 516.

²⁵Henry Boardman, "Higher Life" Doctrine, pp. 83-85.

Boardman was fixated on the person of Jesus Christ.²⁶

Henry Boardman explained that Jesus Christ indwells every Christian, but not personally. Jesus Christ indwells every Christian by the Holy Spirit. This was a common expression among evangelical Christians. "And yet," Henry Boardman complained, "in the whole series of books and tracts, the cardinal doctrine of which is the indwelling of Christ in the believer, its laws, its fruits, its priceless joys, and how it is to be maintained, I have not met with the formal statement in a single instance, that 'Christ dwells in the believer by His Holy Spirit'." Ultimately, Boardman was guilty of making Jesus Christ ubiquitous.²⁷

The critics not only questioned the content of Boardman's message, they also objected to his methodology. They agreed that Boardman's principle of the higher Christian life lacked biblical support, or was at best the result of a misuse of Scripture.²⁸ Abbott charged that Boardman relied on reason supported by experience rather than direct statements of Scripture.²⁹ The so-called "Evangelical Leaders" of the Church of England called on the proponents of the higher Christian life to present Scripture that clearly taught their theory of Christian living. Though not unfavorably disposed toward Boardman and the other teachers of the higher Christian life, the

²⁶Henry Boardman, "Higher Life" Doctrine, pp. 155, 156.

²⁷Henry Boardman, "Higher Life" Doctrine, pp. 83-85.

²⁸Abbot, "Boardman's Higher Christian Life," pp. 511-512, 513, 527; Atwater, "Higher Life and Christian Perfection," pp. 394-395, 401; Todd, "Spiritual Growth," pp. 625-627; "Brighton Convention and its Opponents," pp. 92-94; and Henry Boardman, "Higher Life" Doctrine, p. 78.

²⁹Abbot, "Boardman's Higher Christian Life," pp. 513, 520.

author of a review of literature for and against the experience issued a similar call.³⁰

Henry Boardman concluded that Boardman, and the other proponents of the higher Christian life, derived their theory from religious experience, not Scripture. Henry Boardman considered this a precarious foundation for their theory. He required direct biblical support for any theological claim.³¹

Boardman's treatment of Romans 7:25 was singled-out for criticism.³² Henry Boardman described it as disingenuous, "unscrupulous," and "arbitrary."³³

In addition to Scripture, Boardman used religious experience to support his doctrine of sanctification. Fox considered the testimonies Boardman cited atypical rather than typical of Christian experience.³⁴ Other critics were not as kind. Abbott charged that Boardman misrepresented the religious experience of Martin Luther, Richard Baxter, Jonathan Edwards, James Brainerd Taylor, and others. John Todd agreed.³⁵ Yet as far as Henry Boardman was concerned, even if the narratives presented were accurate, experience is not the foundation for truth. Theological claims must be proved by Scripture.³⁶

The implications of the higher Christian life also aroused concern. Proponents

³⁰"Brighton Convention and its Opponents," p. 90.

³¹Henry Boardman, "Higher Life" Doctrine, p. 247.

³²Abbott, "Boardman's Higher Christian Life," p. 527.

³³Henry Boardman, "Higher Life" Doctrine, pp. 130-131.

³⁴Fox, Perfectionism, p. 18.

³⁵See Abbot, "Boardman's Higher Christian Life," pp. 520-523; Todd, "Spiritual Growth," pp. 614, 616, 618-622; and "Religious Self-Complacency," pp. 473, 478-482.

³⁶Henry Boardman, "Higher Life" Doctrine, p. 247.

of the higher Christian life were charged with promoting a mystical spirituality.³⁷

Archibald Hodge explained that a mystical spirituality emphasizes emotions over intellect, claims direct communion with God, and may reject dependence upon Scripture as the basis for "objective revelation." He also said that a mystical spirituality denigrates the means of grace, the sacraments, ecclesiastical authority, and the regular ministry. Those who adhere to a mystical spirituality are guilty of ambiguity. They understand Jesus Christ not as a person but as a force that merges with their lives.³⁸

Henry Boardman considered Boardman's understanding of the Christian's rest in Jesus Christ evidence of mystical spirituality. Henry Boardman concluded that Boardman believed that Jesus Christ takes absolute control of the Christian. According to Henry Boardman, Boardman taught that Jesus Christ now lives Christians' lives for them. Boardman's reasoning suggested a "deification of man's nature," similar to that promoted by the seventeenth-century Roman Catholic mystic Miguel de Molinos (1640-1697) and his disciple Jeanne-Marie Bouvier de la Mothe Guyon (1648-1717).³⁹

Critics on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean considered Boardman a proponent of Christian perfection. They disagreed regarding the extent to which Boardman's representation of the higher Christian life entailed Christian perfection. Todd, for

³⁷See Atwater, "Higher Life and Christian Perfection," p. 392; and Archibald Hodge, "'Higher Life:' No. IV," p. 3.

³⁸Archibald Hodge, "'Higher Life:' No. IV," pp. 2-3. Also see John B. Shearer, Modern Mysticism: or, The Covenants of the Spirit, Their Scope and Limitations (Richmond, VA: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1905).

³⁹Henry Boardman, "Higher Life" Doctrine, pp. 81-83.

example, characterized Boardman's understanding of the higher Christian life as a "nondescript perfectionism."⁴⁰ Similarly, Henry Boardman distinguished Boardman's brand of Christian perfection from that promoted under the banner of Oberlin Perfectionism. Unlike the Oberlinians, Boardman, and others who promoted the higher Christian life, did not claim that absolute holiness could be achieved in this life. They did, however, claim to be cleansed from all known sin.⁴¹ Atwater, in contrast, found the doctrine of Christian perfection "expressly" stated in Boardman's writings.⁴² The author of an article appearing in the Boston Review agreed.⁴³ Fox also agreed. He speculated that though Boardman did not claim to live a sinless life after entering the higher Christian life, he hoped to leave the reader of Gladness in Jesus with the impression that he did. Fox rejected Boardman's claim that he did not teach sinless perfection.⁴⁴

The critics of Christian perfection often charged that its adherents were guilty of pride. The critics believed that Christian perfection and pride were inseparably linked.⁴⁵ Because the higher Christian life was perceived to be a form of Christian perfection, Boardman could not escape this charge.⁴⁶ Henry Boardman thought that

⁴⁰Todd, "Spiritual Growth," p. 627.

⁴¹Henry Boardman, "Higher Life" Doctrine, pp. 5-6, 33, 34.

⁴²Atwater, "Higher Life and Christian Perfection," pp. 395, 415.

⁴³"Religious Self-Complacency," pp. 473, 477, 478.

⁴⁴Fox, Perfectionism, pp. 7-8, 11, 15, 16, 17, 33-34, 46, 68, 69-70.

⁴⁵Henry Boardman, "Higher Life" Doctrine, pp. 5-6, 33, 34.

⁴⁶Abbott, "Boardman's Higher Christian Life," p. 529; Atwater, "Higher Life and Christian Perfection," p. 390; and "Religious Self-Complacency," pp. 473, 477, 478.

Boardman was particularly culpable. In Henry Boardman's judgment, Boardman, and others, who shared his ideas, expressed a superior attitude toward those Christians who had not entered into the experience.⁴⁷

The critics found further evidence of pride in Boardman's claim to have discovered a truth hidden from clear view for eighteen centuries.⁴⁸ Todd was amazed that Boardman claimed that the doctrine of the higher Christian life had been hidden for so long. In Todd's view, Boardman appeared to ignore the Protestant confessional tradition. Todd countered that throughout the history of the Protestant movement, its adherents consistently confessed sanctification by faith as a "fundamental truth." Noting that other examples might be mentioned, Todd cited the Belgic Confession and the Westminster Confession of Faith as examples of the Protestant commitment to the doctrine of sanctification.⁴⁹

Closely related to the charge that the higher Christian life produced pride was the concern voiced by some of the critics that the theory would divide the Christian community⁵⁰ into the "haves and the have nots," and would evoke an elitist attitude among those who claimed to have entered the experience. According to Henry Boardman, if those who claimed to enter this experience exalt themselves over those who have not, they may not have had the experience. To the contrary, those who

⁴⁷Henry Boardman, "Higher Life" Doctrine, pp. 21-23, 103-104.

⁴⁸Abbott, "Boardman's Higher Christian Life," pp. 529-531, 534-535; and Henry Boardman, "Higher Life" Doctrine, pp. 19-28.

⁴⁹Todd, "Spiritual Growth," pp. 622-623. Also see Smith, "Means and Measure," p. 255.

⁵⁰See Brighton Convention and its Doctrinal Teaching, p. 23; and "The 'Higher Life'," The Presbyterian, February 20, 1875, p. 5.

experience the higher Christian life should be meek, gentle, lowly, self-sacrificing, and loving.⁵¹

Perhaps the most serious charge levelled against Boardman was that the higher Christian life was "essentially Antinomian." Atwater devoted little specific attention to Boardman, even though The Higher Christian Life was included in his review, "The Higher Christian Life and Christian Perfection" (1877). He did, however, give particular attention to what he perceived to be evidence of antinomianism in Boardman's explanation of the higher Christian life.⁵²

Atwater explained that antinomians lowered the standard of holiness. Proponents of Christian perfection were guilty of this error. They lowered the standard of holiness when they substituted an individual's profession of holiness for obedience to God's law. According to Atwater, claiming to be perfect was insufficient. In his opinion, the law of God provided the standard by which to measure perfection. The proponents of Christian perfection also lowered the standard of holiness by redefining sin.⁵³

Atwater believed that any doctrine of Christian perfection was "essentially, or would become, Antinomian." In his judgement, Boardman's higher Christian life was a doctrine of perfection. Boardman, therefore, was at least implicitly guilty of promoting antinomianism.⁵⁴ Similarly, Archibald Hodge believed that all systems of

⁵¹W. E. Boardman, In the Power of the Spirit; or, Christian Experience in Light of the Bible (Boston: Willard Tract Repository, 1875), p. 211.

⁵²Atwater, "Higher Life and Christian Perfection," pp. 189, 403.

⁵³Atwater, "Higher Life and Christian Perfection," pp. 403, 405-407.

⁵⁴Atwater, "Higher Life and Christian Perfection," pp. 189, 403.

perfection were antinomian. He explained that all doctrines of perfection had in common the belief in the possibility of perfect freedom from sin and entire conformity to the law.⁵⁵ Though he does not specify Boardman, he classified the higher Christian life as a perfectionist doctrine.⁵⁶ What Atwater and Archibald Hodge implied, Abbott directly stated.⁵⁷

The Defense of the Message

Few people came forward to defend Boardman's doctrine of sanctification against the critics. Almost all who did qualified their defense. A reviewer with an affinity for New School Presbyterian theology voiced agreement with Boardman's assessment of the general state of Christian life among Christians, and the potential Christians have to rise to a higher level of Christian experience. The reviewer particularly appreciated Boardman's attention to Christian liberty over against legalism. In sounding this theme, Boardman stood with the "old divines." The reviewer also set Boardman apart from those within the holiness movement who claimed perfection in the present life. This same reviewer, however, criticized Boardman's use of conversion language to describe entrance into the higher Christian life. He also disliked Boardman's crisis theology, and doubted some of the claims

⁵⁵Archibald A. Hodge, Outlines of Theology, rewritten and enlarged (New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1895), pp. 528-529.

⁵⁶Archibald Hodge, Outlines of Theology, p. 526. Archibald Hodge called Christian perfection, and the higher Christian life, "neo-nomianism." Archibald A. Hodge, "Sanctification and Good Works; Higher Life," The Presbyterian, March 27, 1886, p. 5.

⁵⁷Abbott, "Boardman's Higher Christian Life," p. 518.

Boardman made regarding the effect of this experience.⁵⁸

Another expression of qualified support for the ideas Boardman espoused in the pages of The Higher Christian Life (1858) was published in The New Englander.

This periodical originated from the halls of Yale University, where the intellectual presence of Nathaniel Taylor was still felt. Though critical of the way the publisher marketed the book, the apparent haste with which the text seemed to have been sent to press, and Boardman's "infelicities of expression," the reviewer was satisfied with the effort.⁵⁹

In 1875, The London Quarterly Review published a review of books dedicated to the higher Christian life. Some were written by critics of the theory. The reviewer did not have any of Boardman's publications specifically in view. He did, however, critically review the message presented at the Union Meeting for the Promotion of Scriptural Holiness held at Oxford (1874). Boardman delivered at least one address at the convention. Due to his contribution, the reviewer's general observations apply to Boardman. The reviewer dismissed the charge that the proponents of the higher Christian life were Pelagian or semi-Pelagian in their theology. He admitted, however, that the advocates of the higher Christian life prompted these charges because they were careless in explaining the experience.⁶⁰ Still, he added:

Whatever confusion there may be and whatever overestimation of the human will and power, and whatever excess of liberality in the interpretation of the charter of grace, we would rather err with these

⁵⁸Review of The Higher Christian Life, pp. 660-661.

⁵⁹Review of The Higher Christian Life, pp. 532-533.

⁶⁰"Brighton Convention and its Opponents," p. 101.

singled out Boardman in this regard.⁶⁵

Dale differed with the critics' analyses of the importance assigned to emotion by the proponents of the higher Christian life. The critics were also incorrect in charging that the advocates of the higher Christian life were antinomian, though he preferred that the "laws of Christ" received more attention. Dale defended the doctrine of sanctification by faith because through it "the destruction of sin, as well as the forgiveness of sin is immediately connected with the death of Christ." This, he observed, was what Paul taught in Romans 6, 7, and 8.⁶⁶ Finally, Dale wrote "it seems to me very difficult to resist the conclusion that at these meetings [Oxford and Brighton] there must have been taught some great truth, or some aspect of a great truth, the power of which was too divine to be impaired, the glory of which was too bright to be obscured, by the imperfections of the manner in which it was sometimes expressed and illustrated."⁶⁷

The speakers at Oxford and Brighton, Boardman included, could not, however, claim Dale as an unqualified ally. He charged that their message was ambiguous. He also said that the speakers at Oxford and Brighton misused Scripture, and that their concept of "Christian character" lacked "vigour and robustness."⁶⁸

Prior to 1876 when the Boardmans settled in London, the longest period of Boardman's ministry in Great Britain occurred at the same time as the Dwight Moody

⁶⁵Dale, "Doctrine of Sinless Perfection," pp. 578, 584.

⁶⁶R. W. Dale, "Sanctification by Faith," The Congregationalist ns 8 (1876):655, 656.

⁶⁷Dale, "New Testament Theory of Sanctification," p. 93.

⁶⁸Dale, "New Testament Theory of Sanctification," pp. 86-90.

and Ira Sankey crusades. The British critics of the higher Christian life were less critical of Moody and Sankey than they were of Boardman and Robert Smith. Francis Close, a minister in the Church of England, and critic of the higher Christian life, opened his arms wide to Moody and Sankey. He was satisfied that their theology was orthodox.⁶⁹

Moody was aware of the "higher Christian life movement" and its effect on the evangelical community in Great Britain. On the day Robert Smith opened the Brighton Convention for the Promotion of Scriptural Holiness, Moody and Sankey were conducting an evangelistic crusade in London. Moody encouraged his audience to pray for the Brighton Convention, and sent a telegram to Robert Smith. Robert Smith read it to the conferees gathered at Brighton. Moody wrote, "Moody and 8000 persons at the closing meeting at the Opera House have specially prayed for the Convention, that great results may follow."⁷⁰

Despite Moody's willingness to pray for the Brighton Convention, he was not an adherent of the higher Christian life. Neither did he interpret his religious experience in 1871 in terms of the higher Christian life. His view of sanctification differed from that of Boardman, and other proponents of the higher Christian life. Moody maintained that sanctification was a process, and that it was dependent on the use of means. He was openly critical of Christians who believed that they could advance in the Christian life by passively trusting God. He believed that Christians cooperate with God in their sanctification. Though faith in God is essential,

⁶⁹Brighton Convention and its Doctrinal Teaching, p. 30.

⁷⁰Walter B. Sloan, These Sixty years: The Story of the Keswick Convention (London: Pickering & Inglis, n.d.), p. 15.

Christians must employ means to defeat the old nature.⁷¹

The most favorable reviews of Boardman's understanding of the higher Christian life came from people aligned with the holiness movement. One of these was J. Townley Crane. Crane, a Methodist and a participant in denominational discussions of the holiness question, claimed to be one of a number of Methodists who rejected the doctrine of Christian Perfection, at least in the form in which it was represented in the churches. He denied that Christian perfection was a second blessing subsequent to conversion, and that those who had this experience advanced toward sinless perfection. Undoubtedly alluding to Phoebe Palmer's "altar theology," Crane denied that Christians who claim they are cleansed from sin are necessarily sanctified.⁷²

Crane approved of Boardman's The Higher Christian Life (he did not indicate

⁷¹D. L. Moody, The Overcoming Life and Other Sermons (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1896), pp., 5, 7, 10, 13, 14-15. Also see David Bebbington, Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s (London: Unwin Hyman/Routledge, 1989; reprint ed., Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1992), p. 163; quoting King's Highway, June 1874, p. 213. Bebbington reports that "at no point did Moody endorse distinctive holiness teaching, let alone proclaim it." After a religious experience in 1871 "not unlike a second conversion," Moody emphasized the importance of seeking such an "endowment with power." While in Britain, he published a collection of sermons called Power from on High. Bebbington explains that "although this way of describing a second (or subsequent) blessing was common in holiness circles, it did not necessarily set its users within them. Moody could be found deprecating obsession with the higher Christian life, rebuking those who held (with extreme holiness teachers) that they had passed beyond a life of moral struggle, and (in his farewell address at Liverpool) advising young converts that they would not lose their sinful natures until the end of their earthly pilgrimage. In later years, although he welcomed Keswick teachers to America and spoke from the Keswick platform in 1892, he was to deny teaching entire sanctification as such." Also see Donald W. Dayton, The Theological Roots of Pentecostalism (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan and Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1987), p. 105.

⁷²J. Townley Crane, "Christian Perfection and the Higher Life," Methodist Quarterly Review 38 (1878):695, 697.

which edition) in a review presented in the Methodist Quarterly Review. Though Crane was most interested in the Methodist discussion of the holiness question, he devoted considerable space to what members of the Reformed denominations were saying about holiness. Crane claimed that Henry Boardman and Atwater failed to prove their case against Boardman. Their failure was the basis of Crane's defense of Boardman.⁷³ Crane attempted to refute Henry Boardman's and Atwater's critique of Boardman's message on the basis of Scripture, the Westminster Confession of Faith, reason, and the similarity between the Reformed understanding of the doctrine of sanctification and the Roman Catholic view of the Christian life--the very arguments, Crane claimed, Henry Boardman and Atwater used against Boardman.⁷⁴

Wade Robinson, one time pastor of the Union Street Chapel in Brighton, offered, perhaps, the most favorable review of the higher Christian life, though not without some reservation. Robinson did not mention Boardman, or any other proponent of the higher Christian life, in his defense of the message published at the Oxford and Brighton Conventions. Boardman was, however, one of several who addressed the Oxford Convention, and Robinson's understanding of the higher Christian life was consistent with Boardman's message.⁷⁵

Robinson disregarded the charges brought against the proponents of the higher Christian life. The charges were, he said, "as false as they were absurd--absurd, that

⁷³See Atwater, "Higher Life and Christian Perfection," pp. 389-417; and Henry Boardman, "Higher Life" Doctrine, pp. passim.

⁷⁴Crane, "Christian Perfection," pp. 688-715.

⁷⁵Wade Robinson, The Philosophy of the Atonement and Other Sermons (London: Hodder and Stoughton), pp. 170-173.

is, in the hearing of those who know what the teaching really is."⁷⁶ He argued:

That a truer, a more scriptural, and a more philosophical presentation of the Christian life underlies the teachings at Oxford and Brighton than is to be found, as a rule, in the churches. And further, that this true presentation of the Christian life has not taken its rise at Brighton or at Oxford, or within this century, or the century before; but that it has been known more or less, to the purest spirits that have breathed in the Christian atmosphere since first our Master prayed for the sanctification of his followers.⁷⁷

Robinson concluded that the higher Christian life was consistent with the Reformed doctrine of progressive sanctification, with one exception. The higher Christian life added to the Reformed doctrine of sanctification what he called "the attitude of complete surrender to God and faith in God." Progressive sanctification, he maintained, was only possible when this attitude was present. In Robinson's opinion, the higher Christian life, as it was presented at the Oxford and Brighton Conventions, represented a positive revision of Reformed orthodoxy.⁷⁸

The pages of The Presbyterian were guarded by the Old School. They gave the proponents of the higher Christian life little opportunity to defend their position. Prior to June 1876, the editors of the weekly paper received several defenses of the higher Christian life, but only published one of them.⁷⁹ Its author was J. W. White, a Presbyterian minister.⁸⁰

⁷⁶Robinson, Philosophy of the Atonement, pp. 169-170.

⁷⁷Robinson, Philosophy of the Atonement, p. 170.

⁷⁸Robinson, Philosophy of the Atonement, pp. 172-173, 174.

⁷⁹"Higher Life, Again," p. 8.

⁸⁰"Higher Life," p. 2.

White disliked the expression, "the higher life." In concert with the British brethren who affirmed the message heard at Oxford and Brighton, and later under the Keswick Convention, White preferred to call it the "normal" Christian life. He also rejected the charge that the higher Christian life was an idea of recent origin.⁸¹

The issues prompting the criticism of the higher Christian life, according to White, did not pertain to essential doctrine. He stated the issues as: "First--A profound, abiding, and growing insufficiency." "Second--A knowledge of Christ as Emmanuel, in whom all fulness, dwells." "Third--A faith which grasps Christ and his fulness and yields the entire being to his control." White maintained that all Christians agreed that these beliefs are true, and everyone who consented to them could live the higher Christian life, though they might use different terms to describe their experience.⁸²

White admitted that Christians gradually grow in grace from the moment of their conversion. As Christians grow in grace they learn general principles that help them live the Christian life. Victory, however, isn't experienced until Christians learn one principle in particular. Echoing Boardman's understanding of the higher Christian life, White wrote: "It is not enough to receive Christ: The new convert or the older Christian must learn to abide in Him, to be filled with His Spirit, to undertake every duty in His strength, to overcome the world through faith, and to receive from Christ's fulness what his every day needs require." According to White, this experience was synonymous with the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and generally

⁸¹J. W. White, "Higher Life," The Presbyterian, June 10, 1876, p. 2.

⁸²White, "Higher Life," p. 2.

occurred subsequent to conversion. Some Christians may have this experience the moment after their conversion. Others will enter it sometime later. At some point, all Christians will have this experience.⁸³

The editors of The Christian warned Boardman and his critics of potential error, though of different kinds. They appreciated the emphasis on divine healing and practical holiness at the International Conference of Divine Healing and True Holiness (1875), which Boardman hosted. They, nevertheless, expressed concern about the direction of the movement. They concluded that the movement needed "help, guidance, and correction." Godly "men" needed to come forward and provide the needed assistance. This, of course, the editors advised, would require humility on the part of these godly men, many of whom publicly criticized the movement. The editors of The Christian suggested that the movement should not be categorically dismissed.⁸⁴

The Revision of the Message in View of the Criticism

In the Preface to the second edition of The Higher Christian Life (1871), William Boardman admitted that the first edition of this work was faulty. He did not explain how he arrived at this conclusion, nor did he specify its faults.⁸⁵

Boardman knew that some Protestants objected to his doctrine of sanctification.

⁸³White, "Higher Life, p. 3.

⁸⁴"Holiness and Healing," The Christian (June 11, 1885), p. 5.

⁸⁵Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1871), p. 6.

He claimed that he did not respond to the critics.⁸⁶ Mrs. Boardman later reiterated her husband's claim.⁸⁷ If the Boardmans meant that Boardman did not debate his critics in the pages of the religious press, their description is accurate. Boardman did not directly defend his message against the charges of the critics. He was not, however, unmoved by the criticism. Boardman's later writings, those published after 1870, indicate that he rethought his views, at least the way in which he expressed them. Indeed, in the opening pages of the revised edition of The Higher Christian Life, Boardman reported he had changed his mind.⁸⁸

Boardman's response to his critics is, perhaps, most evident in his expanded explanation of Christian perfection and antinomianism inserted in the second edition of The Higher Christian Life. The critics accused Boardman of promoting a doctrine of Christian perfection and, consequently, antinomianism.⁸⁹

Boardman understood the link between Christian perfection and antinomianism, but he distinguished the higher Christian life from Christian perfection. He also distinguished the higher Christian life from antinomianism. In his view, the higher Christian life and Christian perfection were "entirely distinct, and widely different from each other."⁹⁰ Boardman defined antinomianism as the belief that:

⁸⁶Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1871), pp. 6, 7.

⁸⁷Mrs. W. E. [Mary M.] Boardman, Life and Labours of the Rev. W. E. Boardman, with a Preface by Mark G. Pearse (New York: D. Appleton, 1887), p. 106.

⁸⁸Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1871), p. 7.

⁸⁹Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1871), pp. 60-62, 66.

⁹⁰Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1871), pp. 60-62, 66.

Through faith in Christ, as an indwelling Saviour, all of the Christian's thoughts and acts are those of Christ himself, in so much that the Christian cannot think or act wrong in any wise: indeed that he himself does not think or act at all, but only Christ in him, and that he is therefore beyond the need of Bible or sabbath or church or ordinances, and has in himself all things in Christ⁹¹

Boardman considered antinomianism "... a most specious and deadly delusion"⁹²

In clarifying his message, he explained that he did not teach that Jesus Christ takes the place of the soul, as the antinomians taught, nor did he teach that Christians are perfected in themselves, as the perfectionists taught.⁹³

Boardman did not change his mind regarding the time-frame within which Christians are sanctified. He continued to teach that sanctification is an event and a process. The critics who examined Boardman's early writings found his explanation of this idea ambiguous. In their view, Boardman contradicted himself. In one passage, he defined sanctification as an event, in another, he defined it as a process.

Though Boardman did not change his mind regarding the time-frame within which Christians are sanctified, he did make an effort to clarify his position. He introduced the "law of spiritual progress." He explained that spiritual progress is two-fold: "... a law of steps and of growth, a law of progress from step to step." He compared spiritual growth to plant growth. Plants gradually grow, but their growth can be plotted in "stages of progress." The stages of progress mark the stopping

⁹¹Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1871), p. 61.

⁹²Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1871), p. 61.

⁹³Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1871), pp. 60-62, 66.

places along the way to maturity. Spiritual growth follows a similar pattern.⁹⁴

The first stage of progress begins with conviction. Conviction marks the beginning of spiritual growth. In time, conviction gives way to conversion. Conversion marks the beginning of another stage of progress. Boardman defined conversion as "a new and the true starting point, from which, plant-like the Christian life unfolds, joint after joint, leaf after leaf, stretching upward and onward for fruitage and fullness of stature, until at last it gains the fruit bearing status of true Christian manhood and majority and liberty, and rejoices in that stage of its progress, marked by our Saviour as the corn."⁹⁵

Early on, Boardman maintained that justification and sanctification were distinct experiences. He identified these two distinct experiences as conversions, a first-conversion and a second-conversion. The critics found this language confusing. By 1871, Boardman discontinued using conversion language to identify these two distinct experiences.⁹⁶ He now identified justification and sanctification as experiences, or, employing what he claimed to be the biblical terminology, baptisms: "the Baptism of Repentance" and "the Baptism of the Holy Ghost."⁹⁷

In Boardman's later writings, he assigned the Holy Spirit a more visible place in the higher Christian life. From the beginning, he explained that the three persons of the Godhead were involved in the sanctification of Christians. Yet the role of the

⁹⁴Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1871), p. 203.

⁹⁵Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1871), p. 204.

⁹⁶Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1871), pp. 116-117.

⁹⁷Boardman, Power of the Spirit, p. 29.

Son was prominent in Boardman's explanation of the experience. Some of Boardman's critics believed that the Son was too prominent, at the expense of the Holy Spirit.⁹⁸

Boardman did not dispute the role of the Holy Spirit in sanctification. The stress he placed on the role of the Son in the higher Christian life was intentional, and, he believed, biblical. He explained that in the Acts of the Apostles, the Holy Spirit points to Jesus Christ as the object of faith. The teaching of Jesus Christ confirmed this view (John 7:37-39; 16:13-15). Furthermore:

Literally and strictly the Holy Spirit and not Christ is the justifier, and sanctifier, and glorifier, for he it is who is the actual worker, the power that worketh in us, preparing the heart producing the faith, and effecting the salvation in every step ... in the sense doubtless intended, Jesus is both justifier, sanctifier and glorifier; that is, he is the object of faith alike for each and all. And as the giver of the Holy Spirit he is the worker also of all.⁹⁹

Boardman was not surprised that the critics objected to the prominence he assigned the Son in the higher Christian life. He anticipated that someone might misunderstand this feature of the higher Christian life. Boardman's early explanation of this idea proved inadequate, at least as far as the critics were concerned.¹⁰⁰ Perhaps in response to the critics, Boardman explicitly assigned the Holy Spirit the primary role in sanctification in the second edition of The Higher Christian Life. In so doing, Boardman did not change his mind. This clarification merely accurately

⁹⁸Henry Boardman, "Higher Life" Doctrine, pp. 86, 97.

⁹⁹Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1858), pp. 97-98.

¹⁰⁰Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1858), pp. 86-110.

reflected what he believed all along.¹⁰¹

Boardman's understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit in sanctification did change in respect to one topic. Between the publication of the first and second editions of The Higher Christian Life, Boardman embraced the increasingly popular idea of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Boardman rejected the idea that the baptism of the Holy Spirit was intended for the Apostolic Period alone. In support of his position, he pointed to Acts 2:1-4, 16-17, 37-39. He believed that Peter's citation of Joel 2:28 applied to the "last dispensation" (last days) and to "all men" (all humanity). According to Boardman, Peter does not leave his meaning in doubt "for when those convinced cry out 'What must we do?' he answers, 'Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ; for the remission of sins, (first) and (then) ye shall receive the gift (baptism) of the Holy Ghost (as we have done); for the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, (in place or time,) even as many as the Lord, our God, shall call.'" Boardman concluded: "Thus on the very day of its fulfillment, the apostle settles it forever, that the promise, whatever it is, is for all the children of God who accept the call."¹⁰²

Boardman also rejected the suggestion that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is "the gift of certain miraculous powers,--called by the apostles gifts of the Spirit, tongues, prophecy, healing and the like." Drawing upon the writings of John (John 17:20; 14:16, 17:26; 14:18, 19:23; 16:13, 14; 15:26), Boardman concluded that Jesus

¹⁰¹Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1871), p. 206.

¹⁰²Boardman, Power of the Spirit, pp. 84-85.

Christ made "a very distinct promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit Himself; not of special gifts from Him." Furthermore, Jesus Christ did not promise the Holy Spirit would dispense miraculous gifts as his only ministry.¹⁰³ Rather, Jesus Christ promised that the Holy Spirit would teach them everything, lead them, guide them into all the truth, bring those truths taught to them by Jesus Christ to their remembrance, glorify Christ, "take of the things that were His and show [these things] unto them [the apostles]," and testify of Christ.¹⁰⁴ So, too, in the writings of Paul (Ephesians 3:16-19):

Here are the blessed offices of the Spirit, as Teacher, Guide, Leader, remembrancer, Glorifier of Christ, Witness for the Son of God, and Strengtheners of the Saints. Yet in all this, not one word about special miraculous gifts.¹⁰⁵

The third part of The Higher Christian Life underwent significant revision. The first chapter of Part 3 of the second edition, "The True Starting Point," is new material. Boardman now provided additional biblical support for his position. The critics demanded this support.¹⁰⁶

The critics were both horrified and amused by Boardman's claim to have discovered anew an old truth. A rationale underlay Boardman's claim. He maintained a progressive, even evolutionary, view of history. His reading of the

¹⁰³Under "miraculous gifts" Boardman listed what the apostles called "gifts of the Spirit, tongues, prophecy, healing, and the like." Boardman, Power of the Spirit, pp. 85, 86.

¹⁰⁴Boardman, Power of the Spirit, p. 86.

¹⁰⁵Boardman, Power of the Spirit, p. 87.

¹⁰⁶Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1871), pp. 167-200.

history of doctrine conformed to his view of history. The progress of Christian doctrine was marked by "timeliness," as are "all the works and ways of God." He explained that "the great truths which now have their unchangeable position in the faith and formulas of the Church have been born into the world one by one, and one by one have taken their position in orderly array in the great family of truths." This understanding of the history of doctrine is supported by a truthful and graphic "biography of each one of the great evangelical truths comprising the faith."¹⁰⁷

Boardman explained that the progress of doctrine did not represent a continuation of revelation. Revelation had its stages, but it was now complete. The completion of revelation, however, did not negate the ongoing "development and application" of doctrine. The ongoing development and application of doctrine did not produce new doctrine. Rather, it brought truth into view.¹⁰⁸

Boardman considered the doctrine of full salvation as one of the truths that had undergone development and application after revelation was completed. Full salvation was not a new doctrine. It had been revealed in the course of time along with other doctrines of the Christian faith. Only recently, however, had circumstances allowed it to come to the fore.¹⁰⁹

The questions raised by the critics regarding Boardman's explication of the higher Christian life, in his view, could be summarized in one question "Can we not

¹⁰⁷Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1871), pp. 285-288.

¹⁰⁸Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1871), pp. 288-289.

¹⁰⁹Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1871), pp. 288-290.

theorize it away?" They could, he thought, so they did.¹¹⁰

William Boardman's writings on the higher Christian life provoked a response, but they did not incite a controversy. Rather than engaging his critics in the religious press, Boardman quietly reflected on their observations.

Boardman admitted that his understanding of the higher Christian life changed over the years. The critics contributed to the changes. The increased attention to the work of the Holy Spirit within the evangelical community also contributed to these changes. Even though Boardman changed his mind on some of the details, he remained true to his original objective and message. The changes clarified what was originally ambiguous.

Boardman did not stand with either the Oberlinians or the Wesleyans as a proponent of entire and instantaneous Christian perfection. Neither, however, did he stand alongside the Reformed or the Keswickians as a proponent of progressive sanctification. Ultimately, Boardman stood alone. No one from outside the circle of people who promoted practical holiness arose to defend him against his critics. Prominent American and British clergy who were drawn into the holiness movement under Boardman's influence seemingly separated themselves from his understanding of the higher Christian life. For whatever reason, Boardman now lost whatever leadership role he had in the non-Wesleyan holiness movement prior to 1875. He was now a follower.

¹¹⁰Boardman, Power of the Spirit, p. 82.

CHAPTER 5

THE REVISION OF THE EVANGELIST'S PLACE IN THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY HOLINESS MOVEMENT

At the midpoint of the nineteenth century, Protestants in the United States and Great Britain were offered a variety of holiness theologies. Some Protestants embraced the Reformed doctrine of sanctification. Others adopted Wesleyan holiness theology. Another group took up Oberlin Perfection. As the century entered its final quarter, the Keswick Convention offered Protestants another alternative.

Proponents of each of these holiness theologies explained their understanding of the doctrine of sanctification in the religious press. Some sounded a polemical tone as they defended their chosen doctrine of sanctification against the criticisms of others. All who wrote on the doctrine of sanctification sought to persuade Christians to embark on a higher level of Christian living.

The Wesleyans, Oberlinians, and Keswickians called Christians to a life of practical holiness. They were convinced that Christians accepted sin, guilt, and fear as normal. Though their definitions of this experience differed, they believed that through faith in Jesus Christ they were victorious over temptation, cleansed of their sin, and empowered for ministry. This was the central idea of the message that William Boardman brought to American and British Christians through his sermons, articles, and books on the higher Christian life.

Boardman was a Presbyterian evangelist who participated in the holiness

movement on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. He drew attention to the common truth he found in the various holiness theologies. He advanced a Trinitarian doctrine of sanctification in which he attempted to coordinate human inability and responsibility with the work of the Holy Spirit. He also tried to find room for both the doctrine of instantaneous sanctification and the doctrine of gradual sanctification. Boardman's significance does not lie in the originality of his message, but in his attempt to create a middle-ground between conflicting holiness theologies. Though influential, his place in the holiness movement was obscured by the shadow of others.

The Analysis of the Evangelist's Life, Work, and Thought

Students of American and British religious history have recently recognized the nineteenth-century holiness movement as a worthy topic of research. One by one, the leading contributors to the movement are being introduced to students of the religious history of these two countries. William Boardman can now be added to the list.

Boardman's place in the nineteenth-century holiness movement is briefly addressed in a handful of studies dedicated to the movement's development, ideas, and leaders. To date, the analysis of Boardman's place in the movement has been limited to his impact on other topics. His biography and the bulk of his writings have not been thoroughly examined.

Some scholars identify Boardman's place in the nineteenth-century holiness movement in terms of the then current holiness theologies. In these studies, Boardman is considered a proponent of a modified Reformed doctrine of sanctification, of Wesleyan holiness theology, of Oberlin Perfection, or of the message of the Keswick Convention. Edith Blumhoffer, for example, groups Boardman with

Charles Finney. She believes that like Finney, Boardman taught a Christocentric doctrine of experiential sanctification within the Reformed family of churches. She acknowledges that Wesleyan holiness theology significantly influenced Boardman's doctrine of sanctification, but argues that he affirmed the Reformed understanding of the Christian life. In summary, Boardman taught what Blumhofer calls a "higher life Reformed teaching" that mediated between the Wesleyan and non-Wesleyan holiness theologies.¹

Similarly, Timothy Smith and Myung Soo Park place Boardman's message within a Reformed theological context. Timothy Smith acknowledges that Wesleyan holiness theology influenced the development of Boardman's understanding of the doctrine of sanctification. Despite the quasi-Wesleyan character of Boardman's message, Timothy Smith identifies him as a "Revivalistic Calvinist."²

Though Park maintains Boardman developed his message in a Reformed theological context, he distinguishes that context from seventeenth-century Reformed orthodoxy. The Reformed theological context within which Boardman developed his message was Reformed in the broadest sense. This context included Finney, Asa Mahan, Robert and Hannah Smith, Albert Simpson, and the early leaders of the Keswick Convention. Park credits Boardman, and the Smiths, with developing the

¹Edith Waldvogel, "The 'Overcoming Life': A Study in the Reformed Origins of Pentecostalism" (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1977), pp. 78-79 (emphasis added). Also see Edith L. Blumhofer, The Assemblies of God: A Chapter in the Story of American Pentecostalism, 2 vols. (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 1:57-64.

²Timothy Smith, Revivalism and Social Reform in American Protestantism on the Eve of the Civil War (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), pp. 28, 32-33.

positive side of Reformed theology, which he defines as sanctification by faith through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.³

Not everyone agrees that Boardman's message was consistent with the Reformed doctrine of sanctification. Melvin Dieter places Boardman's doctrine of sanctification within a Wesleyan theological context. He acknowledges that Boardman's doctrine of sanctification was not exclusively Wesleyan. Oberlin Perfection also influenced Boardman's view. Dieter, however, considers Oberlin Perfection an essentially Wesleyan doctrine. He believes Boardman's higher Christian life and Phoebe Palmer's "altar theology" are similar. According to Dieter, Boardman was one of several people who "continued" Walter and Phoebe Palmers' ministry among the non-Wesleyan denominations.⁴

Dieter also considers the Smiths proponents of Wesleyan holiness theology. Though Boardman and the Smiths affirmed an essentially Wesleyan doctrine of sanctification, they did not preach the same message. Unlike the Smiths, Boardman's view of sanctification did not move in a pietistic or quietistic direction.⁵

David Bundy's analysis is similar to Dieter's judgment. According to Bundy, Boardman leaned more toward Wesleyan than Reformed theological ideas. He groups Boardman with Mahan and the Smiths as a proponent of instantaneous sanctification

³Myung Soo Park, "Concepts of Holiness in American Evangelicalism, 1835-1915" (Ph.D. dissertation, Boston University, 1992), pp. 14, 62-64, 70-76, 87-88, 159.

⁴Melvin E. Dieter, The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth-Century (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1980), pp. 38, 57, 63, 120, 121-122, 156, 186-187.

⁵Dieter, Holiness Revival, pp. 38, 57, 63, 120, 121-122, 156, 186-187.

resulting in Christian perfection, as understood in Wesleyan holiness theology.⁶ Gerald McGraw concurs with Bundy regarding the main point of Boardman's message. McGraw also considers Boardman a proponent of Christian perfection. Unlike Bundy, however, McGraw classifies Boardman's Christian perfection as "extreme." According to McGraw, Boardman invited his hearers to instantaneously enter into sanctification. This theme in Boardman's message, along with his description of the higher Christian life as a "distinct plane of experience with a definite beginning," repeats distinctive features of Wesleyan holiness theology.⁷ David Eby also classifies Boardman's message under Wesleyan holiness theology.⁸

Benjamin Warfield denies any connection between Boardman's message and the Reformed doctrine of sanctification. As a defender of Reformed orthodoxy, Warfield does not allow Boardman a place in the Reformed tradition either theologically or ecclesiastically. He places Boardman along a trajectory that originates in John Wesley, passes through the Oberlin Perfectionism of Finney and Mahan, and ultimately bears fruit in the Keswick Convention. Warfield maintains that the Keswick Convention advanced Boardman's thought, along with that of the Smiths. According to Warfield, Wesleyan holiness theology, Oberlin Perfection, the higher

⁶David D. Bundy, "Keswick and Evangelical Piety," in Modern Christian Revivals, ed. Edith L. Blumhofer and Randall H. Balmer (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1993), pp. 125, 127; and idem., Keswick: A Bibliographic Introduction to the Higher Christian Life Movements (Wilmore, KY: B. L. Fischer Library, Asbury Theological Seminary, 1975), pp. 36, 54, 57, 118-119, 126-127, 131.

⁷Gerald E. McGraw, "The Doctrine of Sanctification in the Published Writings of Albert Benjamin Simpson" (Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1986), pp. 159, 144-162.

⁸David L. Eby, "The Reformed Response to the Higher Life Movement" (Th.M. thesis, Westminster Theological Seminary, 1982), p. 4.

Christian life, and the message of the Keswick Convention belong to a perfectionist strain within Christianity that is both antinomian and quietistic.⁹

Boardman's doctrine of sanctification has also been compared to the message heard at the early Keswick Conventions. Samuel Stoesz believes that the Christocentric character of Boardman's thought reflects the early emphasis of the Keswick Convention. Richard Gilbertson claims Boardman revised Wesleyan holiness theology and Oberlin Perfection. The result was a message "congruent" with that of Handley C. G. Moule, a Bishop in the Church of England and a leading proponent of the message of the Keswick Convention.¹⁰

Theodor Jellinghaus, Paul Fleisch, and Charles Nienkirchen refrain from defining Boardman's place in the nineteenth-century holiness movement in terms of the current holiness theologies.¹¹ Fleisch believes that early on Boardman stood with

⁹Benjamin Warfield, Perfectionism, 2 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1931), 2:463-558, esp. 2:463, 465-466, 473, 475, 487-489, 513.

¹⁰Samuel J. Stoesz, "The Doctrine of Sanctification in the Early History of the C&MA," in The Birth of A Vision: Essays on the Ministry and Thought of Albert B. Simpson, with a Preface by Dennis Kinlaw, ed. David F. Hartzfeld and Charles Nienkirchen (Regina, SK: Canadian Theological Seminary, 1986), pp. 122-123, fn. 24; and H. C. G. Moule, Christ is Victor (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1896), p. 64, cited by Richard Gilbertson, The Baptism of the Holy Spirit: The Views of A. B. Simpson and his Contemporaries (Harrisburg, PA: Christian Publications, 1991), p. 180.

¹¹Theodore Jellinghaus, Das vollige gegenwärtige Heil durch Christum, Fünfe durchgesehene und vermehrte Anflage (Berlin: Thormann and Goetsch, 1903), pp. 723-730; Paul Fleisch, Zur Geschichte der Heiligungsbewegung: erstes Heft: Die Heiligungsbewegung von Wesley bis Boardman (Leipzig: H. G. Wallman, 1910), pp. 122-128; and *idem.*, Die moderne Gemeinschaftsbewegung in Deutschland. Erster Band. Der Geschichte der deutschen Gemeinschaftsbewegung bis zum Austreten des Zungenredens (1875-1907), Dritte Auflage (Leipzig: H. G. Wallmann, 1912), pp. 19-21, 29-31; and Charles W. Nienkirchen, A. B. Simpson and the Pentecostal Movement: A Study in Continuity, Crisis, and Change (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1992), pp. 7-8.

Mahan and Finney, but that Boardman's later understanding of sanctification set him apart from the proponents of Oberlin Perfection.¹² Jellinghaus thinks that Boardman, Finney, Mahan, and other non-Wesleyan proponents of practical holiness infused "new life" into the question of "deeper holiness." Jellinghaus also believes, however, that even though Boardman's message had much in common with Finney and Mahan's message, the evangelist's ideas differed from those of the Oberlin perfectionists. Jellinghaus considers Oberlin Perfection to be an essentially Wesleyan theory of sanctification. He describes Boardman's message as "the soundest, most scriptural, and most influential" of those put forth under the banner of holiness through faith. According to Jellinghaus, Boardman formulated an original message.¹³ Lastly, Nienkirchen describes Boardman as a "guiding force" in the "interdenominational, transcontinental, higher- and deeper-life movement."¹⁴

¹²Aber während er so völlig auf seiten der Oberliner steht, ver wirst er doch einige Züge ihrer Lehre. Fleisch, Heiligungsbewegung, p. 122. Also see Fleisch, Heiligungsbewegung, pp. 126-128

¹³"Ein neue Leben kam in dies Fragen nach tieferer Heiligung durch einige Männer ausserhalb der Methodistenkirche, nämlich durch die beiden Professoren an der Oberlin=Universität in Amerika, Charles G. Finney and Asa Mahan und den Professoren der Philosophie Upham, W. E. Boardman und andere ... Asa Mahan beschreibt es aus führlich, wie er, ohne von Wesley beeinflusst zu sien ... zu dieser Erfahrung und Erkenntnis gekommen sei. Seine Darstellungs=weise ist verschieden von John Wesley, aber in allen Hauptpunkten stimmt er mit Wesley überein und gebraucht auch mehrere der oben genannten starken Ausdrücke. Durch diese um 1841 von Mahan und dem gewaltigen Gottesmanne Finney ... ausgehende Bewegung kam dann auch in das Heiligungsstreben der amerikanischen Methodistenkirche ein neues Leben ... Der gefundete, schriftgemässte, vorsichtigste und einflussreichste Lehrer der Heiligung durch den Glauben wurde W. E. Boardman ... Er sowohl wie noch lebende Frau hatten die Heiligung in der weselyanischen Art als christliche Vollkommenheit und Ausrottung der Alten Natur nicht fassen können und hatten auch gesehen, dass durch Missverstand dieser Lehre Leute in offenbare Schwärmerei gekommen waren." Jellinghaus, Das vollige, gegenwärtige Heil, pp. 722-723.

¹⁴Nienkirchen, A. B. Simpson, p. 7.

The analysts generally agree that Boardman's work as an evangelist of the higher Christian life was directed to the non-Wesleyan churches. Blumhofer believes Boardman directed his efforts toward the Reformed churches. Dieter maintains that Boardman's The Higher Christian Life communicated the message of practical holiness to the non-Wesleyan churches unlike any other volume of the period. Bundy, Park, and Vinson Synan reach similar conclusions.¹⁵

The analysts disagree regarding Boardman's influence on the non-Methodist Keswick Convention. On the one hand, Donald Dayton, Jellinghaus, Synan, and Warfield maintain that Boardman's efforts gave rise to the Keswick Convention.¹⁶ On the other hand, Fleisch maintains that Boardman did not contribute to the rise of the Keswick Convention. He credits Thomas Harford-Battersby, whom he identifies as an adherent of "Smithism," with the founding of the Keswick Convention.¹⁷ Dieter reaches a similar conclusion.¹⁸

¹⁵Waldvogel, "'Overcoming Life'," pp. 78-79. Bundy, Keswick, p. 123, citing Mrs. W. E. [Mary M.] Boardman, Life and Labours of the Rev. W. E. Boardman, with a Preface by Mark G. Pearse (New York: D. Appleton, 1887), pp. 134-136. Also see Bundy, Keswick, 134-136; *idem.*, "Keswick and Evangelical Piety," p. 125. Dieter, Holiness Revival, pp. 156-180; Park, "Concepts of Holiness," p. 7; Timothy Smith, Revivalism and Social Reform, pp. 11, 21; *idem.*, Called unto Holiness: The Story of the Nazarenes: The Formative Years (Kansas City, MO: Nazarene Publishing House, 1962), pp. 21-22; and Vinson Synan, The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement in the United States (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1977), p. 30.

¹⁶Donald W. Dayton, The American Holiness Movement: A Bibliographic Introduction (Wilmore, KY: B. L. Fischer Library, Asbury Theological Seminary, 1971), pp. 20-23; and Synan, Holiness-Pentecostal Movement, p. 43.

¹⁷Auf den 28. Juli 1875 berief dan Canon Harford=Battersby, der in Oxford die Smithsche Lehre angenommen hatte, eine zehntägige Konferenz nach Keswick ... der eigentlich Smith präsidieren sollte. Fleisch, Gemeinschaftsbewegung, p. 29.

¹⁸Dieter, Holiness Revival, p. 186.

Dayton also does not believe Boardman contributed to the rise of the Keswick Convention. He acknowledges Boardman's participation in events that led up to the first Keswick Convention. Dayton, however, finds that Boardman's message differed from that heard at the Keswick Convention. According to Dayton, Boardman's ideas were consistent with Wesleyan holiness theology. The message heard at the early Keswick Conventions was Reformed, due to the emphasis put on gradual rather than instantaneous sanctification.¹⁹

Bundy and Blumhofer also recognize Boardman's contribution to the events leading up to the first Keswick Convention, but they, too, distinguish Boardman's doctrine of sanctification from that presented at the early Keswick Conventions. Bundy sets Boardman's contribution to the events preceding the first Keswick Convention in the context of the native British holiness movement that pre-dated Boardman's visit. The events that preceded the first Keswick Convention lie in this native British holiness movement. Like Dayton, Bundy believes that the Keswick Convention moved toward a Reformed doctrine of sanctification, and, consequently differed from Boardman's message.²⁰

Even though Blumhofer identifies Boardman as an adherent of a modified Reformed doctrine of sanctification, she distinguishes his doctrine of sanctification from the one taught at the early Keswick Conventions. Boardman developed his

¹⁹Dayton, American Holiness Movement, pp. 19-26.

²⁰Bundy, "Keswick and Evangelical Piety," p. 127; and *idem.*, Keswick, pp. 36, 43, 54, 57, 118-119, 126-127, 131. Regarding the British holiness movement that predated Boardman's arrival in Great Britain see David Bebbington, Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s (London: Unwin Hyman/Routledge, 1989; reprint ed., Grand Rapids, MI Baker, 1992), pp. 164-165.

understanding of sanctification within a Reformed theological context, but Wesleyan holiness theology heavily influenced his ideas. As the Keswick Convention developed a distinctively Reformed message, its adherents moved away from Boardman.²¹

The analysts also disagree regarding Boardman's influence on Simpson's doctrine of sanctification. Blumhofer, McGraw, and Park believe that Boardman contributed to Simpson's understanding of sanctification.²² In contrast, Nienkirchen recognizes similarities in the development and outcomes of Boardman's and Simpson's individual doctrines of sanctification, but hesitates to specify the extent of Boardman's influence on Simpson.²³

The Correction of the Mistaken Perceptions of the Evangelist's Place in the Nineteenth-Century Holiness Movement

The scholars who briefly comment on William Boardman's place in the nineteenth-century holiness movement introduce the evangelist and consider his contribution to developments within the movement. They correctly draw attention to Boardman, and recognize his contribution to the movement. The analysts,

²¹Waldvogel, "'Overcoming Life'," pp. 78, 121; and Blumhofer, Assemblies of God, 1:157-164. Regarding the differences and similarities between Wesleyan holiness theology and the Keswick Convention as understood by proponents of the older holiness theology see W. B. Godbey, Keswickism (Louisville, KY: Pentecostal Publishing House, n.d.), pp. 31-32, 52-53, 64-65; and H. A. Baldwin, Objections to Entire Sanctification Considered (Pittsburgh, PA: n.p., 1911), p. 11. Both Godbey and Baldwin draw a clear line of distinction between these two holiness theologies.

²²Blumhofer, Assemblies of God, 1:61-64; McGraw, "Doctrine of Sanctification," pp. 144-162; and Park, "Concepts of Holiness," p. 178.

²³Nienkirchen, A. B. Simpson, p. 8.

nevertheless, incorrectly define Boardman's place in the nineteenth-century holiness movement.

Theological labels are convenient instruments of identification. The nineteenth-century holiness movement abounded with them. Participants within the movement identified one another as Wesleyan, Oberlinian, Reformed, or Keswickian. Critics of the holiness theologies also used these labels. Despite their convenience, labels are not always accurate. The attempt to identify Boardman's message with one of the then current holiness theologies misrepresents his central idea, his own understanding of his message, and his objective.

In the first-edition of The Higher Christian Life (1858), Boardman analyzed Wesleyan holiness theology, Oberlin Perfection, and his own doctrine of sanctification. He concluded that the differences between these three holiness theologies pertained to terminology and experience. He considered the differences as differences of opinion. They were of no consequence, in his view.²⁴

According to the evangelist, the differences that distinguished the proponents of Wesleyan holiness theology, representatives of Oberlin Perfection, and himself were tempered by the common belief shared by all. They agreed that Jesus Christ is the source of sanctification, and that through faith in Jesus Christ, Christians obtain victory over the power of sin. Boardman maintained that this principle, sanctification by faith, was the essential matter.²⁵

Boardman did not consider the differences between his doctrine of

²⁴W. E. Boardman, The Higher Christian Life (Boston: Henry Hoyt and Chicago: William Tomlinson, 1858; reprint ed., New York: Garland, 1985), pp. 41-42, 55.

²⁵Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1858), pp. 41-42, 55.

sanctification and other nineteenth-century holiness theologies a barrier to cooperation. Even though he was not in full agreement with the other holiness theologies, their proponents shared with him the belief that faith in Jesus Christ is the means of sanctification. This shared belief provided the basis for cooperation with anyone interested in practical holiness. Boardman made a conscious effort not to alienate the representatives of other holiness theologies. Though critical of their theological choices, he did not condemn them or their message. Proponents of each doctrine affirmed the essential truth regarding the necessity of faith in Jesus Christ for sanctification, and that was sufficient.²⁶

Admittedly, in 1858 Boardman used a theological label to identify his doctrine of sanctification. He claimed to subscribe to a Lutheran doctrine of sanctification. The ambiguity of Boardman's definition of this so-called Lutheran doctrine of sanctification cancelled the significance of his claim.²⁷

The Lutheran doctrine of sanctification Boardman affirmed was not the one recorded in the sixteenth-century Lutheran confessions. Rather, Boardman derived what he called the Lutheran doctrine of sanctification from a unique reading of Martin Luther's religious experience as described by Jean D'Aubigne. Boardman admitted that Luther described this experience in terms contrary to those Boardman used to describe the higher Christian life. He also admitted that Luther did not understand this experience in a manner consistent with Boardman's understanding of full salvation. The inconsistency was of no consequence. Boardman believed that while

²⁶Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1858), pp. 41-42, 55, 58, 73.

²⁷Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1858), pp. 20-31, 57.

crawling up the steps in Rome, Luther placed his faith in Jesus Christ for full salvation. What Luther might have called it, or the way in which he understood it, was not an issue. Luther affirmed sanctification is obtained by faith in Jesus Christ in this experience.²⁸

When Boardman revised The Higher Christian Life in 1871, he no longer claimed to be a proponent of a particular holiness theology. He omitted his earlier analysis of the current holiness theologies. Though he still recalled the religious experience of Martin Luther in support of the higher Christian life, he no longer identified his message in any narrow sectarian terms.²⁹

The analysts correctly recognize that Boardman's message resonated with certain themes characteristic of then current holiness theologies, but they overlook the distinctive features of his message. At least as early as 1858, Boardman advanced a Christocentric doctrine of sanctification within the context of a firm commitment to the doctrine of the Trinity. All the nineteenth-century holiness theologies were Christocentric. They all taught that Jesus Christ is the sanctifier. Unlike Mahan, Palmer, the Smiths, Simpson, and Hopkins, however, Boardman carefully explained Jesus Christ's role in sanctification within the context of the Trinity. He did not advance an exclusively Christocentric doctrine of sanctification. Rather, Boardman promoted a Trinitarian holiness theology.

Boardman knew the Christocentricity of his message could be misunderstood. He, therefore, carefully explained that Jesus Christ does not undertake the

²⁸Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1858), pp. 20-31.

²⁹W. E. Boardman, The Higher Christian Life, rev. ed. (Boston: Henry Hoyt, 1871), pp. 21-36.

sanctification of Christians independent of the Father and the Holy Spirit. To the contrary, Jesus Christ works in cooperation with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Boardman explained that he did not compress the work of the Trinity into the person of Jesus Christ. The Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit work in concert to sanctify Christians.³⁰

By explaining the Christocentricity of his message in the context of the Trinity, Boardman agreed with orthodox Wesleyan holiness theology and the Reformed doctrine of sanctification. At the same time, he distinguished his views from those of Mahan, Palmer, the Smiths, Simpson, and Hopkins. All of these people affirmed the doctrine of the Trinity. They did not, however, explain their holiness theologies in the context of the Trinity.³¹

Boardman's emphasis on "second conversion" is similar to the second work of grace affirmed in Wesleyan holiness theology and Oberlin Perfection. This emphasis suggests that Boardman affirmed one or both of these holiness theologies. In the latter years of his career, however, Boardman no longer insisted that Christian experience must conform to this pattern. During this period of his ministry, he allowed the possibility that some converts might enter the higher Christian life at the moment of justification--a Reformed idea. The majority of Christians, however, would enter the higher Christian life after conversion. All would enter the higher Christian life prior

³⁰Boardman, The Higher Christian Life (1858), pp. 45, 47, 95, 99, 109-110, 214. Also see Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1871), pp. 62, 68-79, 87-94, 122, 214; idem., In the Power of the Spirit; or, Christian Experience in the Light of the Bible (Boston: Willard Tract Repository, 1875), pp. 1-7, 108, 113; and idem., He that Overcometh; or, A Conquering Gospel (Boston: Henry Hoyt, 1869), pp. 79, 94, 134.

³¹Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1858), pp. 47, 51, 57, 116, 117, 139; and idem., Power of the Spirit, pp. 15, 16, 17.

to death, even if immediately prior. This change in Boardman's thought coincided with a decreasing emphasis on the necessity of a distinct experience. A distinct experience became secondary to the essence of the experience: receiving Jesus Christ as full savior. Though Boardman still did not use traditional terminology, this shift in thinking demonstrated an openness to the Reformed doctrine of sanctification.³²

Further openness to the Reformed doctrine of sanctification is evident in Boardman's idea that in the higher Christian life, sin is purged through a process of indefinite length. According to Boardman, the Christian life consists of a series of successive steps, which are under God's control. Drawing an analogy between sanctification and the growth of plants, Boardman explained that even though plants grow gradually, their growth is periodically interrupted. At no point during the process is growth complete. The periodic interruptions merely mark stages of growth. The same is true of sanctification. Under no circumstances can Christians expect the completion of this process prior to death.³³

Despite the claims of some of the analysts, Boardman did not teach that Christians are entirely sanctified when they enter the higher Christian life. Boardman differed from Mahan and Palmer on this point. According to Boardman, entrance into the higher Christian life was a beginning. He called it a "new starting point" in which Christians reach a "new and higher level." Though Christians are not entirely

³²Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1858), pp. 194-195; *idem.*, Higher Christian Life (1871), pp. 225-238; *idem.*, He that Overcometh, pp. 75-76, 82; and W. E. Boardman, Gladness in Jesus, rev. ed. (Boston: Willard Tract Repository, 1875), pp. 21, 35.

³³Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1871), pp. 35-54, 167, 173, 175-177, 178-179, 180, 182, 184-185, 186-188, 192-200; *idem.*, Power of the Spirit, p. 64; and *idem.*, Higher Christian Life (1871), pp. 107, 184.

sanctified after entering the higher Christian life, the pace of their Christian maturity increases--an idea advanced by John Wesley.³⁴

Boardman's understanding of spiritual growth is reminiscent of Wesley's idea of sanctification as a process and a crisis. Boardman's understanding is also similar to Robert Smith's and Simpson's view of sanctification. Boardman's view of crisis and process, however, differs from nineteenth-century American interpretations of Wesley's doctrine of Christian Perfection. For Mahan and Palmer, the crisis experience resulted in instantaneous, entire sanctification, or, Christian Perfection. Boardman did not believe in instantaneous, entire sanctification. According to him, a second conversion did not produce holiness, but a greater awareness of personal sinfulness.³⁵

Boardman also thought that sanctification is the result of God's gracious activity, and is not the result of human effort. Christians enter the higher Christian life not by determination, not by effort, but by faith. For him, faith involved trust in Jesus Christ. Faith was a conscious reliance upon the person of Jesus Christ to empower the Christian to overcome temptation.³⁶

According to Boardman, faith is not possible apart from the sovereign operation of the Holy Spirit. He consequently rejected the idea of sanctification by a mere act of the will taught by Mahan and Palmer. He also rejected the idea suggested in the writings of Hannah Smith that faith entails passive dependence on Jesus Christ.

³⁴Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1858), pp. 59, 60.

³⁵Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1858), pp. 58-59, 64-73.

³⁶Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1858), p. 142; idem., He that Overcometh, pp. 102-109; and idem., Higher Christian Life (1871), pp. 87-94.

Boardman wrote: "... in point of fact, in every case, if the reader will examine, it will be seen that it is only the earnest and active Christian, the working, struggling one, who comes to Christ in his fullness." Despite his criticism of the idea of faith as cooperation, he endorsed an understanding of faith that made belief the result of cooperation between humans and God. The human role in faith, however, was not a mere act of the will. It was a response to the Holy Spirit. Apart from the work of the Holy Spirit in a person's life, faith was not possible.³⁷

Boardman's understanding of faith included the idea of rest. Faith is a surrender of the will to the authority of Jesus Christ. This rest is not passive reliance on Jesus Christ. Boardman did not embrace the Smiths' idea that sanctification was the result of God working on Christians. According to Boardman, a surrender to receive without a complementary commitment to serve is ineffective.³⁸

Boardman's approval of divine healing also distinguishes his view of sanctification from the other holiness theologies of the day. His endorsement of divine healing would appear unrelated to his place in the nineteenth-century holiness movement. Some within the holiness movement, at least within the non-Wesleyan holiness movement, thought that divine healing was an extension of the doctrine of sanctification. Boardman was a proponent of this idea during the last decade of his life.³⁹

³⁷Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1858), pp. 49-50, 142; idem., He that Overcometh, pp. 102-109; and idem., Higher Christian Life (1871), pp. 87-94.

³⁸Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1858), p. 142; idem., He that Overcometh, pp. 102-109; and idem., Higher Christian Life (1871), pp. 87-94.

³⁹See Raymond J. Cunningham, "From Holiness to Healing: The Faith Cure in America 1872-1892," Church History 43 (1974):499-513; and Donald Dayton, "The

Divine healing was not essential to Wesleyan holiness theology. The Methodist National Camp Meeting Association for the Promotion of Holiness, with which Boardman cooperated in the late 1860s and early 1870s, did not emphasize divine healing. Individuals within the organization, however, endorsed the idea. Similarly, the Keswick Convention did not formally endorse divine healing, though some individuals attending the annual meeting did affirm the concept. Simpson was a staunch proponent of divine healing. Healing services were common at Simpson's Gospel Tabernacle in New York City. Like Boardman, Simpson considered divine healing an extension of his doctrine of sanctification. In a report to the International Conference on Divine Healing and True Holiness (1875) held at Agricultural Hall in London, Simpson thanked Boardman and the Bethshan Healing Home for the influence they had on his founding of the Berachah Home in New York City (1880).⁴⁰

Ultimately, Boardman's message cannot be properly labeled Wesleyan, Oberlinian, Reformed, or Keswickian. By attaching labels to Boardman's ideas, Warfield, Timothy Smith, Blumhofer, Dayton, McGraw, Dieter, Gilbertson, Park, and Eby overlook the ambiguities in his message, ambiguities to which his critics repeatedly drew attention. Jellinghaus, Fleisch, and Nienkirchen define Boardman's place in the holiness movement without attaching specific labels to his message. Nienkirchen recognizes traces of the various holiness theologies in Boardman's

Rise of the Evangelical Healing Movement in Nineteenth Century America," *Pneuma* 4 (1982):1-18.

⁴⁰[Mrs. Michael Baxter], Record of the International Conference on Divine Healing and True Holiness Held at the Agricultural Hall, London, June 1 to 5, 1885 (London: J. Snow and Bethshan, [1885]), p. 161.

message. He claims that Boardman attempted to marry these differing themes.⁴¹

Nienkirchen is incorrect. Boardman makes no attempt to reconcile conflicting themes in his message. He allows these conflicting themes to stand in tension. Upon close scrutiny, Boardman's message can only be called a churchly doctrine of sanctification.

Neither are the analysts of Boardman's place in the nineteenth-century holiness movement correct in their determination that Boardman was an evangelist of practical holiness among the non-Methodist denominations. Mrs. Boardman reports that in 1870 Boardman received a definite divine call to evangelistic work among Christians. From this point on, Boardman devoted his efforts to the proclamation of Jesus Christ as full savior among those Christians who were not acquainted with this message.⁴²

Mrs. Boardman suggests that churches in the Reformed family were Boardman's target. Boardman did not, however, limit his audience to the Reformed churches. The Methodist churches were not universally fond of the doctrine of Christian Perfection. Nor were all Baptists supportive of the holiness message.⁴³ Boardman's audience consisted of all Christians who did not know Jesus Christ as full savior.

Blumhofer, Jellinghaus, Warfield, Synan, and Bundy believe Boardman contributed to the rise of the Keswick Convention. The evidence suggests Boardman contributed to the rise of the Keswick Convention only to the extent that his message helped to fuel British interest in a deeper Christian experience. He did not have a role

⁴¹Nienkirchen, A. B. Simpson, pp. 7-8.

⁴²Mrs. W. E. Boardman, Life and Labours of the Rev. W. E. Boardman, with a Preface by Mark G. Pearse (New York: D. Appleton, 1887), pp. 134-136.

⁴³See Alvah Hovey, The Doctrine of the Higher Christian Life Compared with the Teaching of the Holy Scriptures (Boston: Henry A. Young, 1876).

in organizing the events which preceded the first Keswick Convention, nor was he involved in planning the first meeting.

The historians of the Keswick Convention do not assign Boardman a leading role in the events preceding the Convention. By all accounts, Robert Smith was the driving force behind the London Breakfasts, and the Broadlands, Oxford, and Brighton Union Meetings (1873-1875). J. B. Figgis, who described these developments at the request of Hannah Smith, identifies Robert Smith as "the leader" of the Oxford and Brighton Union Meetings. When the organizing committee learned that Robert Smith would not be available for the first Keswick Convention, the committee contemplated cancelling the event. Boardman attended the London breakfast meetings and the Broadlands and Oxford Union Meetings. He spoke at the London Breakfast meetings and at least once at the Oxford Union Meeting. At all these events, Robert Smith dominated the scene, and impressed the audience. When the conferees gathered for the Brighton Union Meeting, Boardman was leaving for the United States. At the time, he planned to resume his ministry in his homeland. He was still in the United States when Thomas Harford-Battersby called to order the first Keswick Convention.⁴⁴

⁴⁴See Steven Barabas, So Great Salvation: The History and Message of the Keswick Convention (Westwood, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1952); Bebbington, Evangelicalism in Modern Britain, pp. 151-180; J. Elder Cummings, "The Founders and Some of the Leaders," in The Keswick Convention: Its Message, Its Method and Its Men, ed. Charles F. Harford (London: Marshall Brothers, 1907), pp. 49-64; J. B. Figgis, Keswick from Within (London: Marshall Brothers, n.d.; reprint ed., New York: Garland, 1985); *idem.*, "Some Characteristics of the Message," in The Keswick Convention: Its Message, Its Method and Its Men, ed. Charles F. Harford (London: Marshall Brothers, 1907), pp. 97-109; Evan Hopkins, "Preliminary Stages," in The Keswick Convention: Its Message, Its Method and its Men, ed. Charles F. Harford (London: Marshall Brothers, 1907), pp. 23-34; Memoir of T. D. Harford-Battersby Together with Some Account of the Keswick Convention, with a Preface by H.C. G.

Though Boardman regularly attended the Keswick Convention after his return to Great Britain in 1876, his message was not consistent with the message delivered from its platform. The message of the Keswick Convention differed from other nineteenth-century holiness theologies in its doctrine of "counteraction." Hopkins, for example, taught that the power of the flesh cannot be overcome by a simple act of the will. Christians need divine help to overcome the power of the flesh. The Holy Spirit provides the necessary assistance. The Holy Spirit, therefore, counteracts the power of the flesh.⁴⁵ Boardman agreed that the power of the flesh cannot be overcome by a mere act of the will. He also thought that divine help is necessary. For Boardman, however, the Holy Spirit does more than counteract the flesh: the Holy Spirit mortifies, or puts the old nature to death.⁴⁶

British evangelicals appreciated Boardman's role in the holiness movement in Great Britain, and in their personal religious experience.⁴⁷ The evidence, nevertheless, does not support the claim that Boardman contributed to the rise of the Keswick Convention.

The evidence does suggest Boardman had an influence on the development of

Moule (London: Seeley, 1890); Arthur T. Pierson, The Keswick Movement in Precept and Practice (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1903); J. C. Pollock, The Keswick Story: The Authorized History of the Keswick Convention (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1964); H. Webb-Peploe and E. W. Moore, "Early Keswick Conventions," in The Keswick Convention: Its Message, Its Method and Its Men, ed. Charles F. Harford (London: Marshall Brothers, 1907), pp. 35-47.

⁴⁵Evan H. Hopkins, The Law of Liberty in the Spiritual Life, with an Appreciation by Fred Mitchell (Philadelphia: The Sunday School Times, 1952), p. 113.

⁴⁶Boardman, Gladness in Jesus, pp. 64, 67, 70, 75, 77, 82-85, 71-73, 80.

⁴⁷"The Late Rev. W. E. Boardman," The Life of Faith, March 1, 1886, p. 56.

Simpson's doctrine of sanctification. Simpson testified to Boardman's influence on his religious experience. Given the support Simpson drew from his religious experience, Boardman can be said to have influenced Simpson's view of sanctification. Simpson did not, however, merely echo Boardman's higher Christian life. A significant difference of opinion distinguished their theologies of sanctification. Simpson insisted that entrance into practical sanctification occurred in a crisis experience subsequent to justification. Early in his career Boardman would have wholeheartedly agreed with Simpson. In the course of his theological development, however, Boardman came to allow the possibility that a person might experience sanctification without a crisis experience. In other words, he held out the possibility that Christians might enter the higher Christian life at the moment of justification. For Boardman, this disagreement was merely a difference in opinion. It did not prevent him from cooperating with Simpson.

The analysts incorrectly define Boardman's place in the nineteenth-century holiness movement because their reading of the primary sources is limited. This lack of attention to the larger portion of Boardman's writings is understandable due to the analysts interests in other topics. If Boardman's writings are not considered in their breadth, however, his place in the holiness movement will be misunderstood. The possibility of misunderstanding increases if attention to Boardman's writings is limited to his early works, particularly the first edition of The Higher Christian Life (1858). If readers are only concerned with Boardman's early works, they will not discern the ongoing development of his thought. Boardman's thinking changed over the years.⁴⁸

⁴⁸Boardman, Higher Christian Life (1871), p. 7.

Any analysis of his message based solely on the first edition of The Higher Christian Life is, therefore, provisional. Unfortunately, most analysts base their judgments of Boardman's message on the first edition of this work. Samuel Stoesz recognizes the "similarities and differences" between the first and second editions of The Higher Christian Life, though he does not specify them. Though Fleisch does not recognize similarities and differences between the first and second editions of The Higher Christian Life, he does recognize shifts in Boardman's message.⁴⁹

The Conclusion

William Boardman, a businessman living in Potosi, Wisconsin Territory, became a proponent of practical holiness in 1842, after a definite religious experience subsequent to his conversion.⁵⁰ Boardman's entrance into the holiness movement occurred under the influence of people who affirmed the message of practical holiness. His experience was influenced by a Methodist circuit rider, and the writings of Charles Finney, Asa Mahan, and James Brainerd Taylor. A friend and Mrs. Boardman, who previously had a similar experience, were also influential.

Boardman contributed to the holiness movement in the United States and Great Britain. Many Christians felt his influence through the books and articles he wrote on topics related to practical holiness, and through his conference work in the United States, Great Britain, and Sweden.

⁴⁹Stoesz, "Doctrine of Sanctification," pp. 122-123, fn. 24. "Aber während er so völlig auf seiten der Oberliner steht, verwirrt er doch einige Züge ihrer Lehre." Fliesch, Heiligungsbewegung, p. 122. Also see Fleisch, Heiligungsbewegung, pp. 126-128.

⁵⁰Mrs. Boardman, Life and Labours, p. 45.

Throughout a forty-four year career as an evangelist of the higher Christian life, Boardman interacted with leading proponents of the various nineteenth-century holiness theologies. He was acquainted with and cooperated with Asa Mahan, Phoebe Palmer, Robert and Hannah Smith, Evan Hopkins, and Albert Simpson. Boardman was an ordained Presbyterian minister, but he ignored denominational lines. He worked alongside Methodists, Baptists, Quakers, Anglicans, Lutherans, Independents, and members of churches belonging to the Reformed family.

Boardman was a churchman, and believed that the church was his mission field. He was equally passionate whether addressing Baptist, Anglican, Methodist or Reformed Christians. Similarly, Boardman's message was a churchly message. He drew upon the various holiness theologies current in the nineteenth century to formulate a doctrine of sanctification which held conflicting ideas in tension. He affirmed both the Wesleyan doctrine of instantaneous sanctification and the Reformed doctrine of gradual sanctification. He also allowed for the possibility that a Christian might enter what he called the higher Christian life at the moment of justification, or as a result of a crisis experience subsequent to justification.

Boardman's higher Christian life provided a middle ground on which the proponents of various holiness theologies could unite. Few joined Boardman on this middle ground. Unlike some of those with whom he worked, his efforts did not produce an independent organization, movement, or institution. Without a movement or school of thought descending from Boardman's name, the possibility of a legacy is slight. In contrast to Mahan, Palmer, Simpson, and Hopkins, Boardman's legacy is not found in any particular enduring movement, institution, or school of thought. Like these preachers of practical holiness, however, Boardman left a legacy of

individuals whose lives were changed through the higher Christian life.

Boardman's message helped people overcome the spiritual anxiety they felt as they contemplated their lives in light of God's will. Many Christians who heard Boardmans' message believed that they fell short of God's ideal. Despite their best efforts, they only experienced a slight improvement. Boardman's writings led them to Jesus Christ in whom they found victory and power for ministry.

APPENDIX

Propositions

Propositions Drawn from the Dissertation

- (1) William Boardman drew on various holiness theologies to formulate a Trinitarian doctrine of sanctification that held conflicting ideas in tension.
- (2) William Boardman revised his understanding of the higher Christian life without sacrificing his fundamental belief that through faith in Jesus Christ, Christians obtain victory over doubt, besetting sin, and ineffective ministry.
- (3) William Boardman's significance does not lie in the originality of his message, but in his attempt to create a middle-ground between conflicting holiness theologies.
- (4) William Boardman's influence on the nineteenth-century holiness movement was overshadowed by the more dynamic leaders of the non-Methodist holiness movement.
- (5) William Boardman is misrepresented in the secondary literature because scholars give limited attention to his writings.

Propositions Based on Course Work

- (1) The doctrine of sanctification is clearly stated in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Reformed confessions.
- (2) The democratic spirit encouraged Reformed Christians in America to question the validity of the orthodox doctrine of sanctification.
- (3) The nineteenth-century proponents of practical holiness made extensive use of typology in their interpretation of Scripture.
- (4) The Christus victor motif is a common theme within the nineteenth-century American holiness movement.

(5) The inability of scholars to acknowledge their bias is a barrier to a fair analysis of the data.

Propositions Drawn from Personal Interests

(1) The teaching of Paul in 1 Thessalonians 5:23 confirms the idea of gradual, or progressive sanctification.

(2) The preoccupation with Jesus Christ within the nineteenth-century American holiness movement influenced twentieth-century oneness theology.

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