

KESWICK

'HIGHER LIFE MOVEMENT', later a.k.a. 'VICTORIOUS LIFE'

THE KESWICK MOVEMENT (HIGHER LIFE) BACKGROUND / HISTORY

Originally the Higher Life movement was a movement devoted to Christian holiness in England. Its name comes from a book by William Boardman, entitled *The Higher Christian Life*, which was published in 1858. The movement is sometimes referred to as the Keswick movement, because it was promoted at conventions in Keswick, which continue to this day.

In its infancy, the main idea of the Higher Life movement was that the Christian should move on from his initial conversion experience to also experience a second work of God in his life. This work of God is called "entire sanctification," "being filled with the Holy Spirit," and various other terms. Higher Life teachers promoted the idea that Christians who had received this blessing from God could live a more holy, less sinful life on earth. The so-called Keswick approach seeks to provide a mediating and biblically balanced solution to the problem of subnormal Christian experience. The "official" teaching has been that every believer in this life is left with the natural proclivity to sin and will do so without the countervailing influence of the Holy Spirit.

The Higher Life movement was precipitated by the American Holiness movement, which had been gradually springing up, but made a definite appearance in the mid-1830s. It was at this time that Methodists in the northeastern United States and non-Methodists at Oberlin College in Ohio began to accept and promote the Wesleyan doctrine of Christian perfection or entire sanctification, though Charles Finney of Oberlin thought his doctrine was distinctly different from the Wesleyan one which Asa Mahan was more attracted to. The American holiness movement began to spread to England in the 1840s and 1850s. Methodist evangelist James Caughey, as well as Presbyterian Asa Mahan and Presbyterian-turned-Congregationalist Charles Finney began to teach the concept to churches in England and then in Ireland and Scotland.

Soon after these initial infusions of holiness ideas, Dr. Walter Palmer and his wife Phoebe Palmer of New York City went to England in the 1850s and 1860s to promote them. Oddly enough, they were banned from ministering in Wesleyan churches, even though they

were promoting Wesleyan doctrines and were themselves Methodist. During their time in England many people experienced initial conversion and many more who were already converted believed that they had received entire sanctification. Robert and Hannah Smith were among those who took the holiness message to England, and their ministries helped lay the foundation for the now-famous Keswick Convention.

In the 1870s William Boardman, author of *The Higher Christian Life* began his own evangelistic campaign in England, bringing with him Robert Pearsall Smith and his wife, Hannah Whitall Smith, to help spread the holiness message.

On May 1, 1873, Rev'd William Haslam introduced Robert Pearsall Smith to a small meeting of Anglican clergymen held at Curzon Chapel, Mayfair, London. Two men whose lives were revolutionized by what they heard were Evan Henry Hopkins and Edward William Moore.

Little by little, Methodist churches in the London area became open to the concept of Christian holiness, which was their rightful inheritance from their founder. Robert Pearsall Smith warned them that they would end up falling behind other churches who had embraced the movement, and they began to invite Higher Life teachers to explain the doctrine to them.

The first large-scale Higher Life meetings took place from July 17–23, 1874, at the Broadlands estate of Lord and Lady Mount Temple. The meetings were held primarily for Christian students at Cambridge University. At the end of these meetings, Sir Arthur Blackwood, Earl of Chichester and president of the Church Missionary Society, suggested that another series of meetings for the promotion of holiness be conducted at Oxford later that summer.

A convention for the promotion of holiness was held at Brighton from May 29-June 7, 1875. The prominent American evangelist Dwight L. Moody told his London audiences that the Brighton meeting was to be a very important one. About eight thousand people attended it. T. D. Harford-Battersby attended this convention and made arrangements to have one in his parish in Keswick. He was the recognized leader of this annual convention for several years until his death.

A gradual distinction developed between traditional Methodists and the newer Keswick speakers. **Keswick took on a more Calvinistic tone, as Keswick preachers took pains to distance themselves from the Wesleyan doctrine of eradication (the doctrine that**

original sin could be completely extinguished from the Christian soul prior to death). Keswick speakers began using the term "counteraction" to describe the Holy Spirit's effect on original sin, often comparing it to how air pressure counteracts gravity in lifting an airplane. *Modern Wesleyan-Arminian theologians regard the Keswick theology as something different from their own dogma of entire sanctification.*

Harford-Battersby organized and led the first Keswick Convention in 1875. Over four hundred people met under the banner of "All One in Christ Jesus." British speakers included Anglicans, such as the J. W. Webb-Peploe, Evan H. Hopkins, and Handley Moule, as well as Frederick Brotherton Meyer, a Baptist, and Robert Wilson, a Friend. An annual convention has met in Keswick ever since and has had worldwide influence on Christianity.

Columbia Bible College and Seminary (now Columbia International University) was founded by one of the early leaders of the American Keswick movement, Robert C. McQuilkin. His son, Robertson McQuilkin, contributed the Keswick chapter to the book "Five Views of Sanctification."

THE KESWICK CONVENTION

People like Evan Hopkins of England and Theodore Monod of France, together with Smith in America, formed the so-called Keswick movement. In addition, there was Andrew Murray, a Dutchman. The raising up of these brothers set the general scene for the recovery. However, their recoveries were not complete. There were still recoveries of other minor parts. For example, we have the recovery of the hymns by Frances Ridley Havergal, and some other contributions by other writers.

THE RECOVERY OF THE CRUCIFIXION OF THE OLD MAN

During the last century, God enlightened men concerning the matter of consecration and its importance through the brothers we have mentioned. However, their revelations were not deep enough. Consecration is not simply a kind of exchange, in which we offer to God all we have and all we are, and we take back from Him what He has and what He is. Darby told others that consecration is based on the casting off of the man of flesh and the removal of this man. The goal of the gospel is not only to forgive the sinner's sin, but to

crucify the sinner. The gospel saves not merely by forgiving the sinner and delivering him from perdition, but by crucifying the sinner with the Lord. In preaching the gospel, we have to be careful. If we are not careful, we will easily preach the wrong thing. The gospel removes not only the sin in the flesh, but the person of the flesh. What goes to the heavens is the new man, and not the fleshly man. All spiritual lessons, including obedience and our service to the Lord, must be practiced in accordance with this principle. Even lessons as spiritual as those taught by Madame Guyon must be pursued according to the principle mentioned here by Darby.

Romans 7 says that we are dead to the law. This is why we can be married to Christ. Not only are our sins dead, but we ourselves are dead. If we were not dead, it would be unlawful and adulterous for us to be joined to Christ. If we are dead, we would not be our own person any longer, because the cross has removed our own person. Today there is no longer any need for this person to ask for forgiveness. Only a living person needs forgiveness; a dead person does not need forgiveness. The one who was dead in sin is the crucified old man, and the cross has removed this old man already. This was what Darby preached.

THE RECOVERY OF THE TRUTH OF THE CROSS

After this, we have Mrs. Penn-Lewis, who was raised up to preach the truth concerning the cross. She preached about the cross dealing with the old man. Her understanding was more advanced. Notwithstanding, today our understanding of the subject is more clear than that of Mrs. Penn-Lewis.

THE RECOVERY OF THE TRUTH OF RESURRECTION

After Mrs. Penn-Lewis, we have Mr. T. Austin-Sparks, who saw resurrection. We have been talking about resurrection for years, but we do not know what resurrection really is. Mrs. Penn-Lewis wrote two books about resurrection, but they are not very clear about the subject either. It was not until Brother T. Austin-Sparks wrote about resurrection in 1926 and published what he wrote in the Overcomer magazine that the world knew for the first time what resurrection is. When Miss Barber and I read his writings, we began to pay attention to this matter. Many people talk about resurrection, but they have not

presented to others resurrection—the real thing itself. When Brother Sparks talked about resurrection, light came. He presented to others the very resurrection itself.

What is resurrection? It is life going into death and passing through death; in the process, what succumbs to death dies, and what cannot die comes out of death alive. This coming out of death is resurrection. Resurrection is anything that death cannot swallow up.

In 1925 T. Austin-Sparks paid a first visit to the United States as speaker at a Victorious Life Conference in Keswick Grove, New Jersey. He had begun to see, perhaps more clearly than many of his contemporaries, that the cross of Christ is central, not only to world history but also to human experience. To “lose his life” is the disciple’s safe but costly way of entry to a service that is marked by eternal gain, and the discovery of this fact explains and gives meaning to so much in life that the Christian otherwise finds difficult. One day in his study, while waiting on God for the needs of His flock, the truth that “it is no longer I, but Christ who lives in me” dawned freshly upon him with compelling power. Afterwards he often spoke of the “open heaven” beneath which, from that day on, he ministered.”

THE KESWICK SOLUTION – SANCTIFICATION BY FAITH

Aspects of Sanctification; positional, experiential, and ultimate

1. Positional Sanctification – the sanctification that was wrought on the cross of Calvary by Christ for every believer

1 Corinthians 1:30 WNT “But you--and it is all God's doing--are in Christ Jesus: He has become for us a wisdom which is from God, consisting of righteousness and sanctification and deliverance;”

2. Experiential Sanctification – the day by day transformation of the believer into the image of Christ which is progressive by nature.

Philippians 1:6 AMP “And I am convinced and sure of this very thing, that He Who began a good work in you will continue until the day of Jesus Christ [right up to the time of His return], developing [that good work] and perfecting and bringing it to full completion in you.”

Romans 8:28-29 NKJV “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. (29) For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.”

3. Ultimate Sanctification – the perfect sanctification that will be the portion of all believers in the life to come.

1 John 3:2 NKJV “Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”

Experiential Sanctification as a Process

1. Experiential Sanctification of the believer is a gradual process

- A. by the Holy Spirit into the likeness of Christ

- B. begins at regeneration but is different from regeneration

- C. 2 Corinthians 3:18 ESV “And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.”

2. Experiential Sanctification often is accelerated by a crisis of faith

- A. Often it is when one comes to a crossroads or crisis of faith that significant growth is accelerated.

- B. A greater degree of surrender is required often revealing to them the idol of their heart and forcing a decision between that idol and God.

- C. This is a time of revelation to the believer about the real object of their affections

- D. Exodus 20:3 NKJV "You shall have no other gods before Me.”

- E. Luke 14:26 NKJV "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.”

F. Luke 9:23-24 NKJV "Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. (24) For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it."

Sanctification is a gift

1. Same as positional salvation and was wrought by Christ on the cross for every believer.
2. We cannot obtain salvation by self-effort or works for but must receive it by faith, and sanctification being a part of salvation cannot be obtained by self - effort and must be a gift as well.

The Believer's Identification with Christ in His Death to Sin as the Grounds for His Sanctification

1. When Christ died on the cross we were identified with Him in that death to sin.

A. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 NKJV "For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; (15) and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again."

B. Galatians 2:20 NKJV "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

C. Colossians 3:2-3 NKJV "Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. (3) For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God."

2. By our union with Him in His death we were freed from the penalty of sin and also emancipated from the power of sin.

A. Romans 6:6-7 NKJV "knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. (7) For he who has died has been freed from sin."

B. The "old man" our corrupt sinful nature (the cause of our sinning) that we inherited from Adam was crucified with Christ

C. The “body of sin” (our human body that was the servant of sin) was done away with or rendered inoperative.

D. The result of these things means that we should no longer serve sin.

E. Romans 6:11-13 NKJV “Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (12) Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. (13) And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.”

3. The Rest of Faith and Conflict.

A. Not a rest from temptation and conflict but a rest in temptation much the same as Israel’s journey into the Promised Land.

B. Hebrews 4:1 NKJV “Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it.”

C. We must prepare for the conflict which is not between two natures but between the flesh and the Holy Spirit.

D. Galatians 5:16-18 NKJV “I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. (17) For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. (18) But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.”

E. He must clearly see the nature of the victory in that Christ vanquished all of his foes at Calvary.

F. He is identified with the Victor, therefore he is fighting from victory rather than for victory.

G. Finally he must put on the whole armor of God.

Finally, whatever your situation in life, no matter what you have done or how much you may be suffering, this Victorious Christian Life is yours to be had. You only need confess your sin and pray for God to become the Lord of your life, surrender it all to HIM, and you too can have the Holy Spirit sanctify you and begin your eternal life with the joy and peace you could have never imagined. Once this has begun, find other Christian Believers to have fellowship with, and read God’s Word as much as you can (the bible).