

KESWICK THEOLOGY: A SURVEY AND ANALYSIS OF THE DOCTRINE OF SANCTIFICATION IN THE EARLY KESWICK MOVEMENT

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An Outline for the William R. Rice Lecture Series
at Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary

I. A HISTORICAL SURVEY OF THE EARLY KESWICK MOVEMENT

A. Forerunners

1. Wesleyan Perfectionism: Perfect Love Toward God and Man (Wesley, Fletcher, Clarke)
2. The Holiness Movement: Modified Wesleyan Perfectionism
 - a. Methodist Perfectionism: Emphasis on the Crisis of Christian Perfection (Phoebe Palmer, Camp Meetings)
 - b. Oberlin Perfectionism: The Perfection of a Human's Autonomous Free Will (Finney, Mahan)
 - c. The Higher Life Movement: Immediate Sanctification by Faith, Transdenominational (Boardman, R. P. & H. W. Smith)

B. Propagators

1. Eight Leaders of the Early Keswick Convention
 - a. Thomas Dundas Harford-Battersby (1823-83) and Robert Wilson (1824-1905): Keswick's Founders
 - b. James Elder Cumming (1830-1917): Keswick's Exemplar
 - c. Evan Henry Hopkins (1837-1918): Keswick's Formative Theologian
 - d. Hanmer William Webb-Peploe (1837-1923): Keswick's Orator
 - e. Handley Carr Glyn Moule (1841-1920): Keswick's Scholar
 - f. Frederick Brotherton Meyer (1847-1929): Keswick's International Ambassador
 - g. Charles Armstrong Fox (1836-1900): Keswick's Poet
2. Eight Other Prominent Propagators of Keswick Theology
 - a. Andrew Murray (1828-1917): Keswick's Foremost Devotional Author
 - b. James Hudson Taylor (1832-1905) and Amy Wilson Carmichael (1867-1951): Keswick's Foremost Missionaries
 - c. Frances Ridley Havergal (1836-1879): Keswick's Hymnist
 - d. Arthur Tappan Pierson (1837-1911): Keswick's American Ambassador
 - e. William Henry Griffith Thomas (1861-1924), Charles Gallaudet Trumbull (1872-1941) and Robert Crawford McQuilkin (1886-1952): Keswick's Leaders of the Victorious Life Movement

C. Successors

1. Albert Benjamin Simpson (1844–1919): Founder of the Christian and Missionary Alliance
2. Moody, Torrey, and Gray: Leaders of Moody Bible Institute
3. Pentecostalism: Product of Wesleyan Perfectionism, the Holiness Movement, the Early Keswick Movement, Simpson, Moody, and Torrey
4. Dallas Theological Seminary: Bastion of the Chaferian View of Sanctification (Scofield, Chafer, Walvoord, Ryrie)

II. A THEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF THE EARLY KESWICK MOVEMENT

A. Day 1. The Diagnosis: Sin

B. Day 2. The Cure: God's Provision for Victorious Christian Living

1. Fundamental Proposition: There Are Two Categories of Christians
2. Problem: Wrong Views on Sanctification Result in Defeat (Category 1)
3. Solution: Sanctification by Faith Results in Victory (Category 2)

C. Day 3. The Crisis for the Cure: Consecration

D. Day 4. The Prescription: Spirit-Filling

E. Day 5. The Mission: Powerful Christian Service

III. A THEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF KESWICK THEOLOGY

Four commendable characteristics:

1. affirms fundamental Protestant orthodoxy
2. exalts Christ and faith rather than self-dependence
3. warmly devotional
4. legacy of Christian service

A. Historical Theology

1. Critique 1. Age: New in Time—Relatively Recent
2. Critique 2. Pedigree: New in Kind—Offspring of Wesleyanism and the Holiness Movement

B. Systematic Theology

1. Critique 3. Fundamental Disjunction: Chronological Separation of Justification and Sanctification Resulting in Two Categories of Christians
 - a. All Christians Have Been and Are Being Sanctified (Romans 6)
 - b. All Christians Are Spiritual; None Are Permanently Carnal (1 Cor 2:6–3:4)
 - c. All Christians Are Spirit-Baptized at Regeneration (1 Cor 12:13)
 - (1) Subjects of Spirit-baptism

- (2) Timing of Spirit-baptism
 - (3) Results of Spirit-baptism
- d. All Christians Abide in Christ to Various Degrees (John 15:1–10; 1–2 John)
 - (1) Jesus’ metaphor for abiding (John 15:1–6)
 - (2) Jesus’ command to abide (John 15:4a)
 - (3) Jesus’ reasons for abiding (John 15:4–6)
 - (4) Jesus’ explanation of abiding (John 15:7–10)
 - (5) Μένω in 1 John
 - (6) Μένω in 2 John
- e. All Christians Are Spirit-Filled to Various Degrees (Eph 5:18)
 - (1) The meaning of πληροῦσθε (be filled)
 - (2) The meaning of ἐν πνεύματι (with/by the Spirit)
 - (3) The meaning of πληροῦσθε ἐν πνεύματι
 - (4) Results of Spirit-filling (Eph 5:19–21)
 - (5) The means of Spirit-filling (Col 3:16)
 - (6) The subjects of Spirit-filling—all believers
 - (7) Explanation of the nature of imperatives
- 2. Critique 4. A Form of Perfectionism: Shallow and Incomplete View of the Christian’s Relationship to Sin
 - a. Continuous Counteraction (Keswick) vs. Gradual Mortification (Reformed)
 - b. Old Man vs. New Man; Old Nature vs. New Nature
 - c. Two Major Problems with Keswick’s View of Sin in the Believer
 - (1) Keswick misunderstands the nature of the flesh.
 - (2) Keswick rejects gradual transformation by gradual mortification.
- 3. Critique 5. A Form of Quietism: Emphasis on Passivity, Not Activity
 - a. Sanctification involves a lifelong struggle.
 - b. Sanctification requires active effort.
- 4. Critique 6. A Form of Pelagianism: The Believer’s Free Will Autonomously Starts and Stops Sanctification
 - a. The believer’s will is not autonomously free.
 - b. Synergism: The believer works because God works.
- 5. Critique 7. Disproportionate Emphasis on Practical Holiness: Doctrine Minimized
- 6. Critique 8. Eisegesis: Aorist-Tense Fallacy and Allegorical Hermeneutics

C. Practical Theology

- 1. Critique 9. Nonlordship Salvation: Comforts Spurious “Christians” with False Assurance
- 2. Critique 10. Methodology: Superficial Formulas for Instantaneous Sanctification
- 3. Critique 11. A Form of Eudaemonism: Self-Centered Pursuit to Experience Happiness
- 4. Critique 12. Result: Dependency on Experiences at Special Holiness Meetings
- 5. Critique 13. Result for the “Haves”: Elitism—Pride and Divisiveness

6. Critique 14. Result for the “Have-Nots”: Disillusionment and Frustration
7. Critique 15. Result: Misinterpretation of Personal Experiences

IV. CONCLUSION

Keswick theology’s view of sanctification is theologically erroneous.

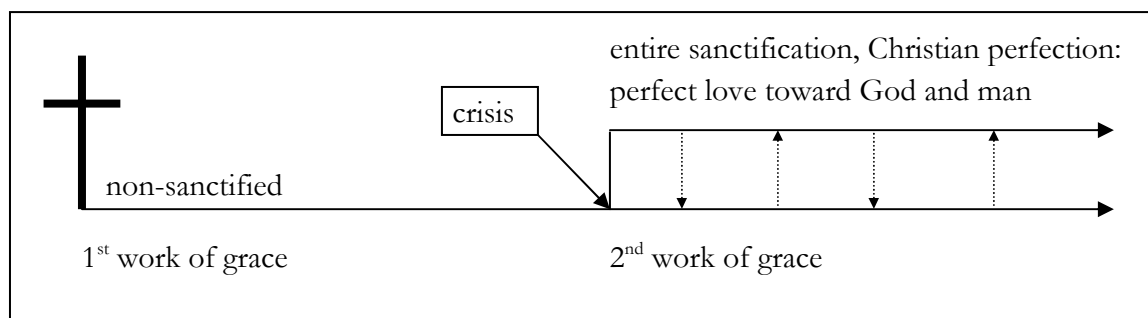
V. APPLICATION: FIVE LESSONS FROM THIS STUDY

1. Although some Christian leaders embraced errant views on sanctification, they were godly men and Christian examples.
2. Since Keswick theology is an errant view of sanctification, believers should avoid propagating it through books, articles, sermons, lectures, counseling, hymnody, and other means.
3. Believers should recognize the importance and practical value of the doctrine of sanctification.
4. Since it is unlikely that all living believers will agree on their view of sanctification, believers should promote unity on this issue as much as possible.
5. Since the doctrine of sanctification is so important and practical, believers should actively pursue maturing in their understanding and practice of it.

VI. APPENDIX: CHARTS OF FIVE VIEWS OF SANCTIFICATION

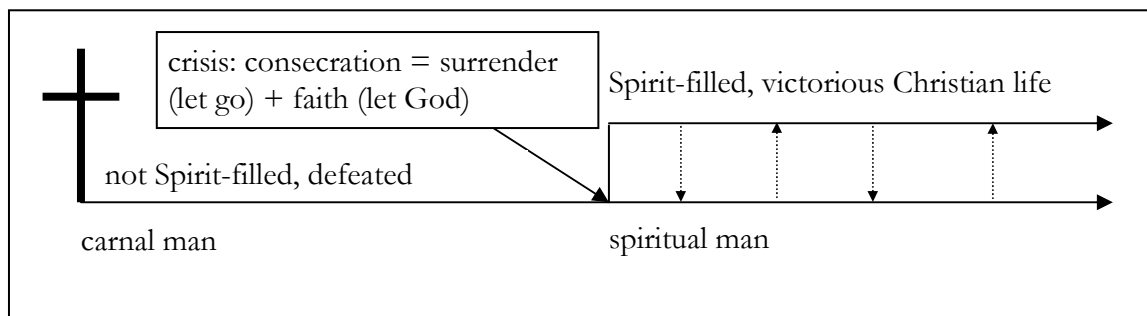
The following charts attempt to clarify five views of sanctification, at the risk of oversimplifying them.¹ The cross in each chart represents the point of a Christian’s regeneration and conversion. The dotted arrows in the first three charts depict that the resultant state from the crisis may be repeatedly lost and recovered.

A. The Wesleyan View of Sanctification

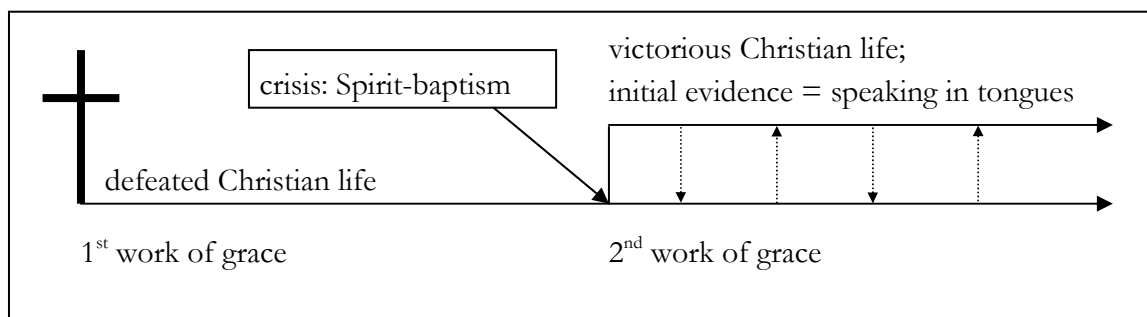


¹ Adapted from Charles C. Ryrie, *Balancing the Christian Life* (Chicago: Moody, 1969), pp. 183–84, 187; and H. Wayne House, *Charts of Christian Theology and Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), pp. 111–13.

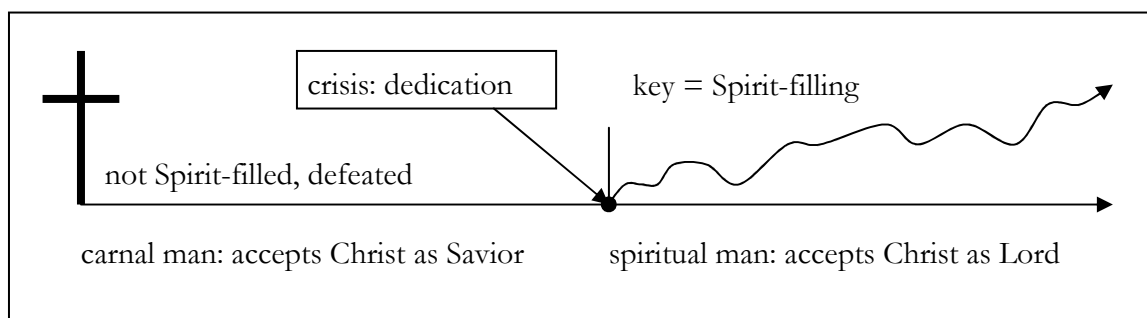
B. The Keswick View of Sanctification



C. The Pentecostal (Assemblies of God) View of Sanctification



D. The Chaferian View of Sanctification



E. The Reformed View of Sanctification

