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Ph.D. thesis, University of Durham, 2005

The Mystical Theology of Jessie Penn-Lewis (1861-1927)

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Many have said that completing a thesis is often lonely and joyless. I confess to an experience quite the opposite. The more I read the greater was my delight. Had it not been for Professor Ann Loades who prodded me to completion, I might still be reading and rewriting to this day. As one said of Penn-Lewis: "It is difficult to explain the influence of your teaching has on my mind, but somehow it is teaching that teaches, and I find that few do that now."¹

¹ Mary Gerrard, *Mrs. Jessie Penn-Lewis: A Memoir*. (London: The Overcomer Book Room, 1930), p. 197.

ABSTRACT

M. R. Haddad

The Mystical Theology of Jessie Penn-Lewis (1861-1927)

Ph.D. Thesis, University of Durham, 2005

This thesis examines the life and mystical theology of Jessie Penn-Lewis (1861-1927). While Penn-Lewis has been the subject of historical research, particularly by scholars of the evangelical movement of the late 19th century, yet her theology has not received adequate assessment from the academic community. Therefore, this thesis undertakes an analysis of the mystical theology of Jessie Penn-Lewis whereby I demonstrate that Penn-Lewis was part of the classical mystical tradition, over and against the Quietism operative within the Keswick Conventions of her day. Following a brief summary of her life, international ministry, and mystical writings, I show that Penn-Lewis's mystical path engaged suffering in the soul's ascent to union with the Divine and this separated her from the Quietists who insisted upon the one-act of passivity in reaching the highest mystical states. I trace the Quietism within the early Keswick Conventions to a mishandling of the Prayer of Simple Regard by Quietists such as Madame Guyon and Thomas Upham. Upham's reshaping of Guyon's Quietism was readily assimilated by leaders within the early Keswick Conventions, excluding Mrs. Jessie Penn-Lewis who could not tolerate the passivity and absorption of the will demanded by Quietism. Penn-Lewis's mystical theology, also called Cross Theology, was nurtured by the Romantic mood of the day, and was thus rooted in personal religious experiences, including the experience of suffering. In this way Cross Theology combines the apophatic tradition of Bonaventure with an experience of suffering, in the soul's ascent, such that Cross Theology opposes the shallow mysticism of Keswick's Quietists who rejected effort and suffering in the path toward the unitive state. Penn-Lewis's mysticism also advances an egalitarian theology that challenged leaders within the Keswick Movement to consider the social ramifications of women's union with Christ. According to Penn-Lewis, women

who are united with Christ bear the fruits and responsibilities of the highest mystical state, just as men. Cross Theology therefore had social consequences manifest in women's equal service beside men in Christian work. Penn-Lewis's mysticism was central to her ministry, her interpretation of scripture and her activism on behalf of women. Thus, Penn-Lewis was a Protestant mystic whose mysticism gave shape to an egalitarian agenda that challenged the gender bias of the Church at the turn of the century.

The Mystical Theology of Jessie Penn-Lewis (1861 - 1927)

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M.R. Haddad

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A near-exhaustive compilation of books, articles, journals, pamphlets, and leaflets edited or written by Jessie Penn-Lewis. The authors associated with the Keswick and affiliate conventions have also been included in this appendix.

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PREFACE

It is to me a source of consternation that the evaluation of Jessie Penn-Lewis has been limited to two biographies, *Mrs. Penn-Lewis: A Memoir*, by Mary N. Gerrard (1930), and *The Trials and Triumphs of Jessie Penn-Lewis*, by B. Pierce Jones (1997). Even more disturbing is that neither Gerrard nor Pierce Jones attempt an assessment of Penn-Lewis's theological work. While scholars have assessed the contributions of her many male colleagues,² Penn-Lewis's own theological accomplishments have been largely overlooked.

Perhaps the neglect of Penn-Lewis stems from what has commonly called the bias of history, i.e. that men, rather than women, are worthy of research. One may easily locate materials on revivalists such as Evan Roberts, F.B. Meyers, or Evan Hopkins, while Jessie Penn-Lewis's achievements were as influential and prolific as the men with whom she worked.

Troubled by the gender bias I observed within the Church, the theological contributions of women became a keen interest to me as a young woman. Each time I discovered a woman leader in Church history, or a book on feminist theology, I was greatly encouraged. You can imagine my delight when I discovered a dozen books by Jessie Penn-Lewis—a proponent of gender equality at the turn of the turn of the last century. I was furthered intrigued to learn that Penn-Lewis was not only at the fore of the Keswick revivals, but she was also ardently opposed to the gender bias that she believed had stymied the Church throughout history. Moreover, Penn-Lewis advanced a mystical

² The following is a cursory sample of published research on Penn-Lewis's male contemporaries: W.H. Aldis, & W. Smith, *The Message of Keswick and its Meaning*. (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott Ltd. 1957), S. Barabas, *So Great Salvation: The History and Message of the Keswick Convention*. (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1957), H. Boardman, *The "Higher Life" Doctrine of Sanctification Tried by the Word of God*. (Harrisonburg: Sprinkle Publications, 1996), J. Ford, *What the Holiness People Believe: A Mid-Century Review of Holiness Teaching*. (Cheshire: Emmanuel Bible College & Missions, 1954), W.Y. Fullerton, *F.B. Meyer: A Biography*. (Ontario, Canada: Ontario Christian Books, 1992), C. Harford, *The Keswick Convention: Its Message, Its Method and its Men*. (London: Marshall Brothers, 1907), B.P. Jones, *An Instrument of Revival: The Complete Life of Evan Roberts, 1878-1951*. (South Plainfield: Bridge Publisher, 1995), J.C. Pollock, *The Keswick Story*. (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1964), C. Price, & I. Randall, *Transforming Keswick: The Keswick Convention Past, Present & Future*. (Wannasboro: Operation Mobilization Publishing, 2000), W. B. Sloan, *These Sixty Years: The Story of the Keswick Convention*. (London: Pickering & Inglis, 1935), B.B. Warfield, *Perfectionism*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1958)

theology that had transformed her frail and diseased body, and emboldened her international ministry, and was the impetus to great spiritual effectiveness.

Equality, an ideal furthered by the Enlightenment, was advanced within the early Keswick Conventions where women as well as men were encouraged to enter the highest mystical states. Adapting the Prayer of Simple Regard from the Quietists, Keswick suggested that sanctification could be accomplished through a mystical experience, which offered immediate release from all human weakness and sin. This was particular good news for women, whose spiritual infirmity was indivisible from the failings of Eve.

Women's participation in revival work had been, until the advent of Mrs. Penn-Lewis, limited to women's ministry. It was Jessie Penn-Lewis who provided the leadership as well as the theological support that advanced equality for women within the Keswick Conventions and beyond. She argued that in union with Christ, all weakness is transformed into strength, and this was particularly good news for women whose spiritual inferiority had been assumed. As a movement within the spectrum of Romanticism,³ Keswick welcomed the contributions of mystics, and thus Penn-Lewis's mystical theology received a broad hearing within Keswick circles around the world.

Penn-Lewis's life and work also addressed a modern dilemma I have noticed in the United States. A growing number of North Americans have expressed an interest in Church revival and renewal. Admitting a sense of spiritual ineffectiveness, many Christians, lay and clergy alike, have organized themselves by denomination (e.g. Presbyterians for Renewal and the Vineyard Christian Fellowship), and across denominational lines, (e.g. The Concerts of Prayer) calling on the Holy Spirit to quicken personal and corporate ministry.

These groups pray for an out-pouring of the Holy Spirit with an unspoken proviso--that God should honor their gender bias. God may pour out the Holy Spirit, but for many it is men alone who may exhibit the Spirit's empowering. Those familiar with women's contribution throughout church history, particularly noted within the revival narrative, argue that history is replete with examples of Joel's prophecy fulfilled—"Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy." (Joel 2:28).

³ D. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain; A History from the 1730s to the 1980s*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 1989), p. 167 & ff.

Jessie Penn-Lewis, however, did notice that the pouring out of God's Spirit since Pentecost has engaged women's preaching and leadership. Commenting on texts such as Psalm 65:11-12 and Joel's prophecy, Penn-Lewis wrote:

The Spirit of God has never been poured forth in any company, in any part of the world, in any nation, without the Handmaidens prophesying, and this as the spontaneous and unvarying result of the Spirit of God moving upon women as well as men, as at Pentecost.⁴

Ultimately, Penn-Lewis's feminism was guided by her mystical theology, aptly called Cross Theology. According to Cross Theology, mystical death with Christ infused men and women alike with inordinate power. Drawing upon Scriptures such as Romans 6:6⁵ and Galatians 2: 19b,⁶ Penn-Lewis suggested that to die mystically with Christ initiated the unitive state, whereby souls are not only freed from sin, but are also endowed with power for extraordinary ministry. Cross Theology was therefore the portal to the victorious life in the Spirit, where unity among believers was fully realized, and the failings of Eve overcome.

Penn-Lewis therefore represents a furthering of the liberation of women in ministry, as seen in her international ministry; her writings; her leadership within the Keswick Conventions; her feminism; and her mystical theology. By documenting the theological contributions of Penn-Lewis, I hope to redress the bias of history, while offering a theological critique of the early Keswick movement, the mysticism of Jessie Penn-Lewis and her advancement of women's public ministry.

⁴ J. Penn-Lewis, *The Magna Charta of Woman*. (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany Fellowship, 1975), p. 100.

⁵ "We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin." Romans 6:6.

⁶ "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me." Galatians 2:19b.

Chapter One

Setting the Scene

“From the point of Eternity, in whose light they lived,
they attacked the sins of their generation.”⁷

I. Christian Mysticism: A Brief History

In order to introduce the mystical theology of a late 19th century Protestant, it seems crucial to provide a brief historical overview of Christian mysticism whereby to explore the contributions of Jessie Penn-Lewis’s mystical theology. In a further section, I will offer a further historical assessment of Christian mysticism, but for our current purposes, the brief history that follows will provide a response to the following questions: What is Christian mysticism and how has it developed? Has mysticism been distilled into stages? What have Christian mystics shared over the centuries, and how does Jessie Penn-Lewis’s life and work relate to the longstanding or classical, mystical tradition within the Church?

Greek culture and philosophy contributed significantly to the development of Christian mysticism. The term “mystical” was first used by the Greeks (*mystikos*), and referred to the secret or unspoken initiation rites of the “Hellenistic mystery cults.”⁸ Greeks such as Plato and Plotinus spoke of the soul’s purification through a moral and intellectual ascent.^{9 10} The Greek notion of *mystikos*, coupled with the Platonic and Neoplatonic idea of the soul’s ascent through purification gave shape to early Christian mysticism.

The Apostle Paul employed the noun *mysterion*, to connote the mystery of salvation,¹¹ which, for Paul, comes by way of divine revelation. Christ appeared to Paul on the road

⁷ E. Underhill, *Mysticism*. (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1961), p. 459.

⁸ J. Aumann, *Spiritual Theology*. (London: Sheed & Ward, 1980), p. 14. See also M. McIntosh, *Mystical Theology*. (Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Inc, 2000), p. 42.

⁹ A. Louth, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition from Plato to Denys*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), p. 6 & ff.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 42 & ff.

¹¹ Aumann, p. 14.

to Damascus and this “revelation was the foundation of his Christianity.”¹² Moreover, Paul’s frequent use of the phrase “in Christ” suggests not only his belief in a union with God, but that this union becomes personal through participating in the death and resurrection of Christ.¹³ The Christian mystery, therefore, has been viewed as God’s love enacted through Christ, revealed in the scriptures¹⁴ and aimed at joining “creation with God’s own existence.”¹⁵ Therefore, God’s love is not incomprehensible, as if “imprisoned in heavenly mystery.”¹⁶ Rather, the Christian mystery is God’s self-giving love which “races to rescue the lost sheep and hurries out to welcome and embrace the lost prodigal child.”¹⁷ At the heart of the Christian mystery is the drama of the Cross, rooted in “God’s decision not to be God apart from the lost creation.”¹⁸

How do we participate in or acquire personal knowledge of Christ? This was the focus of early Christian mysticism. Prior to the Middle Ages, the “mind was not primarily a self-referential ratiocination machine.”¹⁹ Knowing meant that the “‘the known’ has drawn me into an encounter with itself.”²⁰ “In this sense, all believers are mystics in that they are plunged into the mystery of Christ.”²¹ Mysticism thus acknowledged an element of passivity, as the Divine acts upon the soul. Mystics were therefore conscious that their experiences were not produced in and of themselves. “They did not cause the experience and cannot retain it for a second longer than is desired by the one who produces it.”²² For the Christian, encounters with the Divine were said to be the product of the Holy Spirit, to which human volition responds and cooperates.²³

¹² W. R. Inge, *Christian Mysticism*. (New York: Meridian Books, 1964), p. 60.

¹³ E. Underhill, *The Mystics of the Church*. (New York: Schocken Books, 1971), pp. 35-50.

¹⁴ L. Boyer, as quoted by McIntosh, p. 43.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ McIntosh, p. 70.

²⁰ Ibid., See also Louth, p. 73, 196. See also G. Jantzen, *Power, Gender and Christian Mysticism*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 33.

²¹ P. Sheldrake, *Spirituality and History*. (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1995), p. 46.

²² Aumann, p. 124.

²³ Ibid. The American historian and Puritan scholar, Richard Lovelace, assessed the difference between Catholic and Protestant views of union with God as part of sanctification. Within the Reformed tradition, sanctification occurs as the “believer’s union with Christ [is] applied sovereignly by the Holy Spirit” such that the believer learns to cooperate with the Spirit’s prompting. Therefore, “Union with Christ is not the end but the beginning of the Christian life.” See R. Lovelace, pp. 312, 302, “English Devotional

In response to God's initiative, the soul pursues holiness through the process of purification—resisting sin, and by participating in the sacraments,²⁴ as well as in the life of the Church. Union with God meant not only union with Christ, but also union with other believers.²⁵ Christian baptism was of course available to all, and in this sense Christian mysticism often had both a communal and egalitarian impulse.

While the formative period of mysticism considered the mystery of being a Christian, by the Middle Ages there was a concerted focus on the practical expression of the mystic's intimacy with God. Mystics like Francis and Clare of Assisi, Marguerite Porete of France, the Finnish Hadewijch and the German Mechthild renovated religious life through a dedication to a life of poverty, by caring for the poor, through writing in the vernacular, often without the support of the established Church.²⁶ During the late medieval period, mysticism also began to emphasize the Christian mystery in terms of private and personal experiences²⁷ such as visions, raptures, erotic language for God, noted particularly within the affective tradition characterized by Bernard of Clairvaux (1019-1153).²⁸ For Hildegard of Bingen, God's hidden mysteries were revealed through her God-inspired visions.

The focus on personal experience coincided not only with the advance of Scholasticism,²⁹ but also with the progressive exclusion of women from political and ecclesiastical power. Just as more women gained respect and authority as mystics, for union with God imparts spiritual authority,³⁰ the "contemplative life comes to be

Literature," L. Dupré L. & D. E. Saliers, *Christian Spirituality: Post-Reformation and Modern*. (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1989)

²⁴ U. King, *Christian Mystics: Their Lives and Legacies*. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998), p. 18 & ff. See also Louth, p. 168 & ff.

²⁵ Louth, pp. 199 & ff.

²⁶ Jantzen, p. 142 & ff.

²⁷ Defining mysticism in terms of a private experience was significantly advanced in the Modern Era according to Jantzen. See Jantzen, p. 305 & ff. Jantzen insists that the modern notion of mysticism, expounded by W. James in *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. (London: Longmans Green & Co., 1937), is based the work of Schleiermacher—who first characterized mysticism as "pre-rational immediate consciousness or feeling." See Jantzen, pp. 314, 318.

²⁸ According to Jantzen, Julian of Norwich also emphasized experience by recognizing the role of pleasure in knowing God, as well as the experience in receiving God's love for our intrinsic "beauty and worth." (Jantzen: 152) See also Jantzen, p. 147 & ff.

²⁹ McIntosh, p. 63.

³⁰ According to Jantzen, a "person who was acknowledged to have direct access to God would be in a position to challenge any form of authority, whether doctrinal or political, which she saw as incompatible with the divine will." See Jantzen, p.1.

regarded as primarily a private affair (best kept cloistered and away from the corporate life of the church.)”³¹ While women mystics resisted this tendency and still do, yet there was a concerted effort to render women’s spiritual authority “a private and ineffable psychological occurrence,”³² thus constraining their influence and authority.³³ Such suppression can be noted throughout history, and also in the life of Jessie Penn-Lewis—a matter to which we will return.

In the modern era, there has been great interest in identifying the psychological states or experiences of mystics,³⁴ over and against those who believe that these states or experiences are modern constructs that focus on private rather than social matters, and are outside of the concerns of the mystics themselves.³⁵ While we will resume this debate at a later point, it is our present concern to outline the salient characteristics of the mystical tradition of which, as I shall argue, Jessie Penn-Lewis was a part.

II. Stages of Mysticism

How does the mystical life progress? Are there stages within mysticism? According to historian Richard Lovelace, Christian mystics “share with Platonic (and, for that matter, Buddhist) mysticism a common structure: that of a threefold path to God, consisting of purification, contemplation, and final union.”³⁶ “The Christian mystic awakens to, is purified and illuminated by, and is eventually united with the God of love.”³⁷

³¹ McIntosh, pp. 63-64.

³² Ibid., p. 64.

³³ Jantzen, suggests that as mysticism came to embody different spiritual ideals, in each case, women were categorically excluded, rendering them powerless to effect significant social change or justice on their own behalf. See Jantzen, pp. xv, 80, 257 & ff, 262.

³⁴ James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. (London: Longmans Green & Co., 1937), and also Underhill, particularly in her works *The Mystic Way: A Psychological Study in Christian Origins*. (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1913) and Underhill, *Mysticism*.

³⁵ See O. C. Quick, “Mysticism: Its Meaning and Danger.” *The Journal of Theological Studies*. Vol XIV, October, 1912, 2-9, and Jantzen, pp. 3-8, 305 & ff.

³⁶ R. Lovelace, “English Devotional Literature,” L. Dupré L. & D. E. Saliers, *Christian Spirituality: Post-Reformation and Modern*. (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1989), p. 318. The three-fold mystical path was observed first in the Christian writings by Origen, and also emphasized by other early Christian writers such as Dionysius the Areopagite, see Louth, pp. 54-55. See also King, p. 19 & ff. See also Jantzen, p. 88 & ff.

³⁷ H. Egan, *Anthology of Christian Mysticism*. (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1991), p. xvi.

Purgation

The path towards union with God begins with purgation, or “purification of character and detachment from earthly interests,”³⁸ whereby the soul, by God’s grace, is purged or detached from falsehood, self-love³⁹ and other moral imperfections which create distance between God and the soul. Christian mystics turn to Christ as a model of the perfectly purified soul, for “Christ’s human nature was so utterly bereft of self, and apart from all creatures, as no man’s ever was, and was nothing but a ‘house and habitation of God.’”⁴⁰

Illumination

Through the process of purgation, the soul is led to that “peaceful certitude of God”⁴¹ in which “the mind is ravished into the abyss of divine Light.”⁴² Illumination is thus a state of visions, joy and ecstasies.⁴³ Ecstasy “comes from the Greek *ek-stasis*, which literally means ‘standing outside oneself,’”⁴⁴ often outside one’s intellect. In the state of illumination the soul is more God-centered than self-centered,⁴⁵ the reward of which is peace and joy.

Union

Union is a state in which the soul is lifted into the very being of God and becomes one with the Divine. The unitive state is considered spiritual marriage, in which the soul’s love for God finds consummation. It is a perfecting of selflessness whereby the soul is immersed in the life of God’s Spirit.⁴⁶

³⁸ Underhill, *The Mystics of the Church*, p. 26.

³⁹ Jantzen, p. 121.

⁴⁰ *Theologia Germanica*, (Chapter 15) http://www.ccel.org/t/theo_ger/theologia21.htm

⁴¹ Underhill, *The Mystics of the Church*, p. 27.

⁴² Richard of Saint – Victor, *The Four Grades of Violent Love*, <http://home.earthlink.net/~livingflame/Mysticism.html>

⁴³ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 241.

⁴⁴ Jantzen, p. 106. See also McIntosh, p. 140.

⁴⁵ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 234.

⁴⁶ Underhill, *The Mystics of the Church*, p. 27.

Union with Christ: A Social Dimension

From the beginning, Christian mysticism evinced an egalitarian impulse. That is to say that the notion of being “in Christ” also implied a participation in the body of Christ.⁴⁷

Mystical union was therefore more

a bond between Christ and the Church, and between man and man as members of Christ, than between Christ and individual souls. Our Lord’s prayer is ‘That they all may one, even as Thou, Father art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us.’⁴⁸

Thus, Christian mysticism is not a private, ineffable affair. Nor is mysticism self-directed. Rather, Christian mysticism is participation in the Christian mystery—in the power of the risen life of Christ.

What is paramount are the central doctrinal truths of Christianity: that there has been a true incarnation in the true humanity of the true God, and that the church can only live as the true body of this incarnate Word by living ever more truthfully into Christ’s dying and rising—thus to participate in that self-giving love which is truly the life of the triune God. ‘All the history of Christian dogma unfolds itself about this mystical centre.’⁴⁹

Paul said that though we are many, yet we form one body,⁵⁰ for “there is neither slave nor free, Greek nor Jew, male nor female, for we are all one in Christ Jesus.”⁵¹ Thus, mysticism “is not so much a unity of the individual soul with the heavenly Christ, as an

⁴⁷ Louth, p. 199 & ff.

⁴⁸ Inge, p. 51.

⁴⁹ McIntosh, p. 40.

⁵⁰ Romans 12:4-8. See also, Eph, 3:6, 4:16, 25, 1 Cor. 10:17, 12:12-13, 20, Col 3:15.

⁵¹ Gal 3:28

organic unity of [Christians].”⁵² Christian mystical theology is communal for the “relationship of the bride to the Bridegroom is both singular and corporate.”⁵³

The mystics therefore shared an organic unity, based not only upon their unity with Christ, but because of this they are also united to one another, a union rooted in faith and love. The corporate life of the Christian then becomes the social dimension of Christian mysticism, which, as Andrew Louth suggested, distinguished Christian from other forms of mysticism.⁵⁴

For Christians love is the love of Christ which unites us to him and through him to one another. And so Christian theology, and in particular Christian mystical theology, is ecclesial, it is the fruit of participation in the mystery of Christ, which is inseparable from the mystery of the Church.⁵⁵

Therefore, “faith goes so closely hand in hand with love that the mystics seldom try to separate them.”⁵⁶ Love and action are inseparable because Christian “moral virtues are the fruit of the Spirit, the evidences of the indwelling of Christ in the soul of the Christian.”⁵⁷ Quoting Gregory of Nyssa, Louth writes:

You are the master of your prayer if abundance does not come from another’s property, and is not the result of another’s tears; if no one is hungry or distressed because you are fully satisfied. For the bread of God is above all the fruit of justice, the ear of the corn of peace, and pure and without any admixture of the seed of tares.⁵⁸

⁵² Inge, p. 68.

⁵³ Louth, p. 200

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 199.

⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 199-200.

⁵⁶ Inge, p. 8.

⁵⁷ Louth, p. 198

⁵⁸ Gregory of Nyssa, as quoted by Louth, p. 199.

It may be in this regard, through the social dimension of Christian mysticism, that mystics stand on the shoulders of each other bringing reform⁵⁹ and renewal to each generation.⁶⁰ As Evelyn Underhill suggested, "From the point of Eternity, in whose light they lived, they attacked the sins of their generation."⁶¹

The social dimension within the mystical tradition is perhaps best characterized as reform in that the mystics were known to address the moral and social failings of their day. Perhaps for this reason mystics, particularly women mystics such as Margerite Porete, Hadewijch and Jeanne Guyon wrote in the vernacular, or popularized more scholarly treatises.⁶² Through these means they made their reformist ideas accessible to many, undercutting the long and censoring arm of ecclesiastical and political authorities.⁶³ For a life that aims at union with God is detached from earthly pleasures and accolades, and is therefore hard to control, as church officials discovered.

The social force of the Christian mystics has long been a matter of fascination. One need only recall the life of Francis of Assisi, whose devotion to Lady Poverty and whose desire to see the whole of the world through the "life of the Gospel of Jesus Christ"⁶⁴ incited first local, then international admiration and reform. Consider, also, the work of the Beguines, or Catherine of Siena, or Hildegard of Bingen, or Teresa of Avila. Women mystics such as these resisted and in some cases denounced church officials in their pursuit of love, faith, and social justice. They cared for the poor, and though women, they did not fail to raise both voice and pen in challenging authorities, as inspired by God to do so. The social force of mysticism, then, is the very real activity "which is called humility, service, love of our neighbour."⁶⁵

⁵⁹ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 414.

⁶⁰ Inge, p. 138.

⁶¹ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 459.

⁶² J. Penn-Lewis's popular rendering of Katherine Bushnell's scholarly book, *God's Word to Women*.

⁶³ Jantzen, p. 205 & ff.

⁶⁴ King, p. 74.

⁶⁵ McIntosh, p. 99. Contrary to McIntosh, G. Jantzen suggests that "there is little indication that mysticism and spirituality have anything to do with politics and social justice. Instead, they provide a private religious way of coping with life, whatever the external circumstances." (Jantzen: 20) Further, Jantzen insists that because the mystical tradition affirmed notions such as submission to God, love of God, trust in God (Jantzen: 20), such mandates only furthered the powerlessness of women mystics in effecting social change on their behalf. Though Jantzen also admits that female mystics like Hildegard believed that "true mystical knowledge cannot be separated from efforts of justice," (Jantzen: 171) she ultimately concludes that women mystics were powerless to challenge the patriarchy and social injustices of their day. Jantzen accuses modern scholars of neglecting the life and work of women mystics (Jantzen: 305 & ff) particularly

While male and female mystics arise from diverse cultures, the significance of their mysticism is often manifest in a spirit of reform—in addressing the social and theological failures of their day, and, in this way they were astonishingly similar.⁶⁶ Mystics are reformers and troubadours whose intimacy with the God imparts vitality, not only to their own life, but also to those whom their life touches.⁶⁷ Though joy, patience and energy characterized their lives, yet these attributes were never self-directed. Rather, the fruits of mysticism has social consequences; it serves a higher purpose.

III. Jessie Penn-Lewis: An Introduction

The mystical path, though briefly outlined, can now be related to our subject, Jessie Penn-Lewis (1861-1927). (The reader may find the Time-Line of Appendix A helpful at this point.) While her life had simple beginnings, yet she grew to become the most esteemed female preacher associated with the worldwide Keswick revivals. As a young woman, she developed a hunger for holiness, which led her steadily through a series of spiritual stages along the mystical path, culminating in the unitive state. Her mysticism was part of the classical Christian tradition embracing purgation, illumination and finally union.⁶⁸

Penn-Lewis's spiritual journey, as well as her life work suggests that she was part of the tradition of Christian mystics whose intimacy with God was manifest in a vibrancy of faith and social reform. Though her mystical life is carefully documented throughout her diary and personal letters, some of which are compiled and published, yet her mysticism

as such scholarship relates to social justice enacted on their behalf. It would seem that Jantzen has ignored the ways in which mystics such as Hildegard, Catherine of Siena, Teresa of Avila and others offered resistance and reform to the political and ecclesiastical structures, albeit within a patriarchal structure. There was no other to be had. Yet, resist they did, as Jantzen herself admits, at least in the case of Hildegard.

⁶⁶ King captured the salient characteristic of Christian mysticism this way: "What is very striking in most of the mystics through the ages is their immersion in the world of their time. Most Christian mystics were not examples of self-absorption and union with God to the exclusion of everything else, but their special strength consists in the integration of contemplation and action. What wonderful examples we have of the practical involvement of different men and women mystics with the problems of their communities and time. (King: 246).

⁶⁷ Underhill, *The Mystics of the Church*, p. 37. See also Underhill *Mysticism*, p. 362.

⁶⁸ Louth, p. 54.

was largely unrecognized not only by her biographers, but by Keswick scholars as well.⁶⁹ However, her writing pulsates with a vibrant intimacy with God, readily identifiable in her books, diary and letters. Penn-Lewis's spiritual intimacy with God not only invigorated her own ministry, but that of others as well. Her life work exhibits that endless energy, indomitable courage and social reform so characteristic of many within the mystical tradition.

Penn-Lewis viewed herself as a prophet of the Cross, advancing a participation with Christ on Calvary whereby the soul undergoes first death and then resurrection—an experience with which she was intimately acquainted. Penn-Lewis believed that sharing Christ's experiences on Calvary transformed her diseased body and frail psyche whereby she became a courageous leader who traveled the world imparting spiritual vitality to others. By advancing intimacy with the Cross, Penn-Lewis found herself at odds with the leaders of Keswick, some of whom resented her leadership as a woman almost as much as they distrusted the mortifications intrinsic to her Cross Theology. Keswick's mystical theology preferred the 'shorter path' of the Quietists, which opposed effort and volition in the path to the highest mystical state—union with God. Having parted company with Keswick in later years, Penn-Lewis was to devote much of her life to opposing the spiritism and shallow mysticism of the early 20th century, whilst also confronting the gender bias within the Keswick Convention and affiliate Conventions in which she served. In contrast to the intellectualism of 19th century Church, Penn-Lewis's Cross Theology advanced personal experiences of faith. Unlike those in Keswick who defined faith as an experience of rest, Cross Theology was a return to the classical, mystical tradition in which souls participate in the process of purification in the path to holiness or sanctification. In the end, Penn-Lewis's Cross Theology resembled those mystics whose energies addressed the sins of their generation, and she was thus a loving spirit that "sets another spirit on fire."⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Neither Mary Gerrard nor Brynmoor Pierce Jones identifies the classical mysticism operative in the life or literature of Jessie Penn-Lewis. See Gerrard, *Mrs. Penn-Lewis: A Memoir*. (Leicester, UK: Alfred Tracey Ltd., 1947) and B. P. Jones, *The Trials and Triumphs of Mrs. Jessie Penn-Lewis*. (North Brunswick: Bridge-Logos Publisher, 1997) D. Bebbington, perhaps the most noted Keswick scholar, likewise does not identify Penn-Lewis's mysticism as part of the classical tradition.

⁷⁰ St. Augustine, as quoted by Underhill, *The Mystics of the Church*, p. 37.

Our exploration of Jessie Penn-Lewis's mysticism will begin with an overview of the religious climate of the late 19th century, placing the theology of the Keswick Conventions within a historical context. Next, we shall note the sexism and Quietism or shallow mysticism intrinsic to the Keswick Conventions, compared to the egalitarian impulse and the classical mysticism of Penn-Lewis's Cross Theology. Cross Theology therefore offered a corrective not only to the sexism and Quietism of Keswick, but also to the disdain for the doctrine of the Atonement noted among the more high-minded Church leaders of her day. Finally, we will observe how Penn-Lewis's mysticism guided her own pursuit of social reform embodied in an egalitarian interpretation of Paul's teaching on women, resulting in the publication of her *Magna Charta of Woman*—a biblical defense of women's leadership. Penn-Lewis's mystical theology suggested that the failings of Eve have been overcome in union with Christ.

The Climate of the Times

Any analysis of Jessie Penn-Lewis must include the historical and cultural context of the late 19th century in which she lived. Women seeking a place of equality within the Church were beneficiaries of both Enlightenment ideals and also the Romantic tenor of the late 19th century. While enlightenment ideals stressed the individual rights of both women and men, the Romantic Movement valued experience and feelings, and thus the contributions of mystics, even women such as Jeanne Guyon, were readily embraced.

In contrasting the Enlightenment with the Romantic Movement, we wish to understand the impact Romanticism had on the founders of the Keswick Convention, particularly with respect to their view of sanctification. Ultimately, we seek to address the following question: With the rise of Jessie Penn-Lewis within the Keswick Convention, how did she distinguish herself as a theologian and an emancipator of women?

The spiritual tenor of the late 19th century has been called Romantic. A reliance on feelings and experience overcame the call of logic and reason. A longing for the "the picturesque,"⁷¹ with Coleridge, Wordsworth, Lord Byron, Carlyle, Emerson,

⁷¹ Sydney Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1972), p. 585.

Schleiermacher, and Rousseau, characterized the Romantic mood, with its “great alternations of mind and feelings which have convulsed Christendom.”⁷² In reaction to Enlightenment empiricism, rationalism and the slow grinding processes of reason, the Romantic mood celebrated “Pascal’s dictum that the heart has its reasons which the mind can never know” which became a slogan.⁷³ Similarly, Schleiermacher claimed that “it is not knowing Doctrines ... It is feelings. It is an intuition of the Infinite”⁷⁴ that characterizes faith.

Romanticism in England meant the “whole poetic movement of the time, with Wordsworth and Coleridge as well as Schiller and Goethe, as the hierophants of the new mysteries.”⁷⁵ Of course the Romantic Movement produced its extremes. For example, “individuality was often driven to whim and self-pleasing, and the sacred rights of the feeling were too often conferred upon the shallow claims of sentimentality.”⁷⁶ Appealing to artistic intuition, the great task of faith “was to expound ... the Universe, with its boundless variety in closest unity of design.”⁷⁷ The Romantic mood readily engaged art and the emotions as a means of understanding and expressing spiritual truth.

It is perhaps no accident that the Holiness Conventions converged at Keswick, in the Lake District--one of the most romantic and picturesque locations in all of England. “The setting was essential to the experience,”⁷⁸ argued David Bebbington. Romantic impulses collided with an emphasis on experience, and this was the soil that nurtured Holiness theology. Denouncing the products of the Enlightenment in favor of feelings and experience, the Reverend Figgis made the following observations after attending a Holiness revival: “The old way used to be too much of an effort--a way of self-control. The (new way) is a way of faith.”⁷⁹ Miller, a Holiness enthusiast, suggests that the new

⁷² Ibid., p. 584.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 588. See also Alister McGrath, *The Making of Modern German Christology, 1750-1990*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1994), pp. 38-40.

⁷⁴ N. Flew, *The Idea of Perfection in Christian Theology; An Historical Study of the Christian Ideal for the Present life*. (New York: Humanities Press, 1968), p. 349.

⁷⁵ Flew, p. 347.

⁷⁶ J. Oman, *The Problem of Faith and Freedom in the Last Two Centuries*. (1906), p. 204. As quoted by Flew, pp. 347-348.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Bebbington, p. 168.

⁷⁹ Figgis as quoted by M. E. Dieter, *The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century*. (Metuchen, New Jersey: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1980), p. 183. See also p. 54.

piety concerned heart not head, and those inspired by Holiness found the teaching a welcome comfort in the uncertainty, doubt, and mind-bending pace of modern life.⁸⁰

Religious experiences were framed in eclectic terms, as the apostles of Holiness viewed doctrine and dogma with disdain. Robert Pearsall Smith (1827-98), an eminent Holiness preacher said to a group gathered at Oxford: “We did not come to Oxford to set each other right or to discuss doctrines.”⁸¹ The shift was from the dogmatic and doctrinal methods of the Enlightenment of the previous century, to a new and experiential mood.

The late 19th century easily assimilated Quaker spirituality, with its emphasis on spiritual experiences and “full surrender” which, according to the early Quakers, meant living in full submission to the Holy Spirit.⁸² Holiness circles extended the concept of “full surrender” to connote a second experience or baptism of the Spirit in which one is freed from the power of sin.

The Romantic mood fueled a delight in spiritual experiences and poised the Holiness thinkers to reject Enlightenment ideals of progress, struggle and effort. The most significant theological example of this is perhaps noted in Holiness’ reshaping of the doctrine of sanctification. Methodism grew in Enlightenment soil and therefore viewed sanctification as a lengthy battle with sin accomplished, if at all, only after a life-long struggle. By contrast, the Holiness Movement believed that sanctification could be achieved through an experience of rest and abandonment. One conquers sin without a struggle, by abandoning oneself to a spiritual experience. Holiness divines employed phrases such as “resting in faith,” “trusting God” and “reckon” to describe the Quietist’s abandonment of effort in the path of sanctification. The new way of holiness or sanctification, promoted by Holiness teaching, was to cease from one’s struggle with sin. Keswick embraced the shorter path of the Quietists in attaining holiness, and this was viewed as a refreshing and powerful alternative to the Enlightenment emphasis on effort and process. Everyone felt a need for an experience of rest.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 183.

⁸¹ Bebbington, p. 171.

⁸² *Undaunted Zeal: The Letters of Margaret Fell*. Edited and Introduced by Elsa F. Glines. (Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 2003), pp. 91, 95, 237 & ff.

The Holiness Movement: A Desire for Power

Pentecostal scholar Donald Dayton suggests that there was a growing sense of disempowerment during the late 19th century. Life was overwhelming and human effort seemed insufficient to manage the pressures and complexities of modern life. Power was the remedy for those who felt helpless in a modern world.⁸³ Power became, therefore, a central theme of the Holiness Movement. By offering power, the Holiness divines promised “a means of coping”⁸⁴ with modern life. The National Camp Meetings Association for the Promotion of Holiness had five years running the *Days of Power in the Forest Temple*.⁸⁵ Power and victory were catch phrases of the Higher Life Movements.⁸⁶ Pre-millennialists, who anticipated Christ’s imminent return, welcomed the Holiness teaching of power over sin as they prepared for Christ’s second return.⁸⁷

The understanding of the Holy Spirit as a source of power over sin was perhaps an idea grafted into the Holiness Movement first by Phoebe Palmer. Palmer was to assert that “holiness is power.”⁸⁸ She turned to the teachings of William Law⁸⁹ for her notion of baptism in the Spirit--a second blessing, as an infusion of power for sanctification.⁹⁰ In Palmer’s view, sanctification is attained just as salvation was, through a crisis and by a decision. Likewise, sanctification within the Holiness Movement was accomplished by an instantaneous act of power, which overshadowed the Enlightenment view of a gradual and arduous path towards perfection.⁹¹

Towards the end of the 19th century, even the Reformed branch of the revival camp began to speak of ministry in terms of power.⁹² However, the Reformed branch of the

⁸³ D. Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*. (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishing, 1994), pp. 77-78.

⁸⁴ Bebbington, p. 152.

⁸⁵ Dayton, p. 90.

⁸⁶ Bebbington, pp. 170-174. See also Dayton, p. 105.

⁸⁷ Bebbington, p. 152. See also Dayton, pp. 143-167.

⁸⁸ Palmer, as quoted by Dayton, p. 94.

⁸⁹ Norman W. Taggart, *William Arthur, First Among Methodists*. (Westminster, London: Epworth Press, 1993), p. 152. See also Dayton, pp. 87-88.

⁹⁰ Dayton, pp. 87-88. See also Bebbington, pp. 164-165.

⁹¹ It was William Law who suggested that “virtues do not require length of time and variety of method for their attainment, but ‘a turning of the mind’ to Christ, whereby any one may have all the benefit of those virtues, as publicans and sinners by their turning to Christ, could be helped and saved by Him.” See Flew, p. 310.

⁹² Dayton, pp. 99-103.

Holiness Movement sought power primarily for the purposes of Christian service, since they were eager to avoid accusations of antinomianism which were hurled at the Holiness movement because of their claim to instantaneous sanctification.⁹³ Moreover, a distinction was made between the Keswick or British branch of the Holiness Movement and the American Holiness Movement. While Keswick taught that sin was not eradicated but suppressed, moment by moment, in the power of the Holy Spirit, the American Holiness Movement insisted that sin was eradicated, in a single act of faith, through the agency of the Holy Spirit.⁹⁴ Both sought power to overcome sin, to enhance ministry, and to find ways of coping with the rapid pace of the modern world.

The Holiness Movement of the 19th century was also called the Higher Christian Life (or Higher Life), entire sanctification, consecration, the Keswick Movement, the second baptism and perfectionism⁹⁵—each phrase implied the same ideal—an experience of power over sin. Thus in the broadest sense the Holiness Movement concerned the doctrine of sanctification.

The process of sanctification came under debate in the 19th century.⁹⁶ The Reformed camp claimed that while sanctification begins at conversion, Reformed theologians also insisted that perfection is never completed in this life. Other groups such as the Wesleyans and Methodists argued that sinlessness in this life is possible, after a life-long struggle.⁹⁷ The American Holiness Movement insisted that a second work of grace, following conversion, ushered in a state of sinlessness.⁹⁸ While Wesley's notion of perfection entailed a process of "going on with God in obedient worship and service fueled by love,"⁹⁹ members of the American Holiness Movement suggested that an act of faith inaugurated a state of perfection.¹⁰⁰ The Higher Life teaching of the American

⁹³ Ibid., pp. 103-104.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 105.

⁹⁵ A. T. Pierson, *Forward Movements of the Last Half Century*. (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Co., 1900), p. 1.

⁹⁶ B.B. Warfield, *Perfectionism*, p. 216 & ff., Dayton, p. 104 & ff., and J.I. Packer, *Keep in Step With the Spirit*. (Grand Rapids: Revell, 1999), p. 145 & ff.

⁹⁷ See John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*. (London: The Epworth Press, 1952), Stanley Gundry, editor, *Five Views of Sanctification*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1987), pp. 9-47, J.I. Packer, p. 132 & ff, and Warfield, p. 216 & ff.

⁹⁸ Dayton, p. 104 & ff., Packer, p. 145 & ff.

⁹⁹ Packer, p.135.

¹⁰⁰ Warfield, p. 216 & ff., Dayton, p. 104 & ff., and Packer, p. 145 & ff.

Holiness Movement and the Keswick Higher Life teaching therefore differed in significant ways. While the Americans favored complete eradication of sin, the British Holiness Movement suggested that sin is suspended, moment by moment, through a continuous act of faith.¹⁰¹

Higher Life teaching was perhaps first introduced in England by the American couple Hannah Whitall Smith (1832-1911) and Robert Pearsall Smith who lectured widely throughout England, beginning first in 1872. The notion that sin could be suspended became the platform of the Keswick Conventions, an annual Convention held in the Lake District of England beginning in 1875. Throughout these yearly Conventions, Christians, pastors, missionaries and students from around the world were introduced to Higher Life teachings.

The Holiness or Higher Life Conventions grew rapidly in England, both in numbers and influence. While the first Higher Life Convention was held in London in 1873, by 1907 attendance had grown to over 5,000.¹⁰² What was it about the Higher Life movement that attracted so many? Keswick itself was aware of its magnetic spirit. A.T. Pierson (1837-1911), author of *The Keswick Movement: In Precept and Practice*, wrote:

One may read the whole series of addresses, [at Keswick] as reproduced verbatim in the *Life of Faith*, and yet miss the most conspicuous charm of these assemblies—the very aroma of the flower. Those who have little knowledge of the matter often dismiss this teaching as a mere ‘school’ of religious opinion akin to one of many modern types of doctrine, the tendencies of thought which differentiate one theological school from another. This is a great mistake. Keswick stands for a great deal more than the truth, orally proclaimed from its platform.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Dayton, p. 105.

¹⁰² Bebbington, p. 179.

¹⁰³ A. T. Pierson, *Forward Movements of the Last Half Century*. pp., 40-41.

What was the spirit, vitality or essence of The Holiness Movement that enraptured and energized so many? The hymns of Charles Wesley are said to embody the “aroma” eluded to by A.T. Pierson.

[Wesley’s] homiletic prose and ecstatic hymns respectively, gave the Wesleyan version of the Christian life a quality of ardor, exuberance, and joy—joy of knowing God’s love, pursuing his grace, and resigning oneself into his hands—that went beyond anything we find in Calvin, the Puritans, and the early Pietists.¹⁰⁴

It is not coincidental that Keswick produced prolific hymn writers. They too expressed the spiritual vitality of Keswick music and prose, creating a milieu that characterized the religious experiences at the early Keswick Conventions.

A “motivating spirit of love to God and man; without [which] all religion is hollow and empty,”¹⁰⁵ propelled Keswick goers into ministry of extraordinary proportions. They set others on fire, “as one loving spirit sets another spirit on fire”¹⁰⁶ In this sense, Keswick resembled renewal groups throughout the history of the Church, whose motivating spirit energized its members to accomplish great feats for love of God and humankind.¹⁰⁷ The milieu of Keswick therefore led to worldwide Christian service that was unusually fervent, productive and had far-reaching influence, particularly on the mission field. Among Keswick luminaries were women like Jessie Penn-Lewis, whose involvement with the Higher Life Movement took her to foreign countries, placed her in leadership positions, and ultimately led her to challenge women’s inequality within Christian ministry.

IV. Building Momentum

Throughout the 19th century, spiritual renewal was stirring in many branches of the Church. Whether it was from a High Church background, Brethren, Nonconformists, or

¹⁰⁴ J.I. Packer, p. 134.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Underhill. *The Mystics of the Church*, p. 37.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 27 & ff.

from within the evangelical camp, there “was a felt lack of, and a great hungering for, a personal righteousness, which should really meet their too often starving spiritual natures.”¹⁰⁸ In response, the Oxford Movement fed the spiritual cravings within the High Church Camp, whereas the Low Church party, under the influence of Methodism, quenched spiritual longing through spiritual experiences and by instilling the importance of scripture and the sermon “in the religious service.”¹⁰⁹ The Nonconformists, the Plymouth Brethren, like the Low Church Party, responded by advancing “diligent Bible study and a return to the simplicities of the faith.”¹¹⁰ Through these means spiritual vitality was quickened throughout Great Britain .

In America, D.L. Moody, Whitefield, Finney, Mahan, Boardman and Robert Pearsall Smith established a system of camp meetings that offered spiritual experiences that satisfied the stated hunger for a deeper spiritual life. Modeled on the American camp meetings, the British Holiness Movement reached its zenith through a series of Conventions, orchestrated first in London in 1873, and later in Oxford, Brighton, the Broadlands, and finally in the Lake District in 1875. By 1875 the cumulative attendance at these Higher Life Conventions attracted nearly 10,000 people.

The Oxford Movement, 1833

Keswick’s Higher Life roots can also be traced to the Oxford Movement through the person of Thomas Dundas Harford-Battersby. Harford-Battersby came under the influence of John Henry Newman and the Tractarians while a student at Oxford. Having trained at Oxford while Newman was “at his zenith,”¹¹¹ he later became vicar in Keswick, during the first Conventions. Harford-Battersby embraced a passion for holiness while at Oxford, and he was thus a natural link to the Keswick’s Conventions that later ensued. Harford-Battersby was a founding member of the Keswick Convention and served as the Convention’s first chairman.

¹⁰⁸ A. T. Pierson, *Forward Movements of the Last Half Century*, p. 15.

¹⁰⁹ Barabas, p. 15.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Price & Randall, p. 20.

The Oxford Movement as well as the Keswick Convention sought to revive a radical commitment to personal holiness. Both were distrustful of higher criticism, both were influenced by the Romanticism of the 19th century ¹¹² with its deep religious sentiments, and both inspired broad support to their ideals. Interestingly, both groups produced a number of hymns that the Church continues to enjoy. ¹¹³ Finally, both groups turned their sights outward. While Keswick worked tirelessly on the foreign mission field, the Oxford Movement focused its energies on the poor and the victims of industrial England. The Keswick Conventions as well as the Oxford Movement had a social focus.

They also had their dissimilarities. While the Oxford Movement was promulgated by intellectuals who cherished theological scholarship, Keswick shrank from theological discourse or, as they would say, from “handling the promises of God as abstractions.”¹¹⁴ From the standpoint of Keswick, authentic spirituality did not demand theological study. Rather, in Keswick’s view, the spiritual life was based on action, on decision and personal experience. Another contrast between the two Movements came in the form of denominational inclusivity. While the Higher Life Movement took pride in their denominational diversity, the Oxford Movement worked primarily within the Church of England. The two groups also differed on their inclusion of women. Unlike the Oxford Movement, women held positions of prominence within the American and Keswick Higher Life Movements.

London YMCA, 1873

The Higher Life message reached a larger audience when in 1873 *The Christian*, a London weekly paper, claimed that the Church had neglected a central biblical teaching “that Christ came to save His people from their sins; and not from the consequences only.”¹¹⁵ This story caught the interest of many Christians so that within the year a Convention for the promotion of scriptural holiness was held in London, at the YMCA.

¹¹² K. S. Latourette, *A History of Christianity*. (New York: Harper & Row: 1975), p. 1168.

¹¹³ Ibid., See also Packer p. 134, and C. Harford, editor, *The Keswick Convention: Its Message, Its Method, and Its Men*. (London: Marshall Brothers, 1907), p. 210 & ff.

¹¹⁴ R. P. Smith, *Holiness Through Faith*. (New York: Anson D.F. Randolph & Co., 1870), p. 32.

¹¹⁵ A. T. Pierson, *Forward Movements of the Last Half Century*, p. 16.

At the London YMCA Convention it was suggested that the normal Christian life could be one of “victory over sin and sustained communion with God.”¹¹⁶ Holiness or sanctification, it was said, was the result of the “consecration of will and a completed trust in the Word of Christ.”¹¹⁷

One year later a series of meetings for “self-dedication” to holiness were held in Dublin, Manchester, Nottingham and Leicester.¹¹⁸ These Conventions produced a sense of renewal where lay and clergy alike discovered that after years of feeling powerlessness over sin, they suddenly encountered a “marvelous uplift of soul, a supernatural courage and confidence in meeting the adversary,”¹¹⁹ with a peace that surpassed understanding. The Higher Life message brought power to those who were limping along spiritually, or who felt defeated in their moral and spiritual lives. Hundreds who had attended these Conventions said they had experienced “triumph over sin, purity of heart, peace with God ... and power in service, quite unknown before.”¹²⁰

Broadlands Convention: 17-24 July, 1874

Within one year of the London Convention, the distinguished Lord Mount Temple, William Cowper-Temple, sponsored a similar convention for the promotion of holiness at Broadlands. For an entire week Hannah Whitall Smith and her husband Pearsall Smith promoted Higher Life teaching to an audience of one hundred. Other speakers included Canon Harford-Battersby, Canon Wilberforce, George MacDonald, Amanda Smith and Madame Antoinette Stirling.¹²¹ The intent was to spend a week in prayer, meditation and Bible readings, exploring the biblical offer of “victory over all known sin.”^{122 123} Gatherings of Christians were convened alongside a river, and groups of Christians were

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 17.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ A.T. Pierson, *The Keswick Movement in Precept and Practice*. (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1903), p. 19.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p. 20.

¹²⁰ Ibid., p. 23.

¹²¹ Walter B. Sloan, *These Sixty Years: The Story of the Keswick Convention*. (London: Pickering & Inglis, 1935), pp. 11-12.

¹²² Harford, p. 26.

¹²³ *Account of the Union Meeting for the Promotion of Scriptural Holiness*, held in Oxford, August 29 to September 7, 1874 (Chicago, Illinois: F.H. Revell, 1875), pp. 19-22, as quoted by Barabas, pp. 19-20.

seen around the grounds with Bibles open or heads bowed. Long prayer silences were thought to facilitate spiritual renewal.

One pastor from France, Theodore Monod, found the experience of the Broadlands Convention a “soul-satisfying and God-glorifying faith ... the sunshine of Jesus’ smile in your heart.”¹²⁴ Throughout the week, groups assembled outdoors along the river, throughout the woods, praying on their knees, singing and sharing personal experiences of victory over sin. The Broadlands Convention foreshadowed the milieu of what was to become the Keswick Convention, two years hence.

One Convention goer recalled the Higher Life message of the Broadlands Convention in these words:

We sought to have that which was true in God as to our judicial standing in a risen Christ, also true in personal appropriation and experience. Many secret sins, many a scarcely recognized reserve as to entire self renunciation, were brought up into the consciousness and put away in the presence of the Lord.¹²⁵

Under the spell of Hannah Whitall Smith, Pearsall Smith and other Higher Life visionaries, the longing for spiritual power deepened,¹²⁶ perhaps in part because the Higher Life meetings began by propounding the problem of besetting sins,¹²⁷ a practice Keswick would also adopt. Before the close of the Broadlands Convention, a similar conference was scheduled for Oxford, in three weeks hence.

The Oxford Convention: August 29- September 7, 1874

Notices were circulated throughout Britain, Europe and United States announcing the Oxford Convention for the “Promotion of Scriptural Holiness.” The summons read:

¹²⁴ Harford, p. 28.

¹²⁵ Harford, p. 27.

¹²⁶ Pollock, *The Keswick Story*. (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1964), p. 24.

¹²⁷ *Account of the Union Meeting for the Promotion of Scriptural Holiness*, held in Oxford, August 29 to September 7, 1874 (Chicago, Illinois: F.H. Revell, 1875), pp. 21-24, as quoted by Barabas, p. 20.

In every part of Christendom the God of all grace has given to many of His children a feeling of deep dissatisfaction with their present spiritual state, and a strong conviction that the truths they believe might and should exercise a power over their hearts and lives, altogether beyond anything they have as yet experienced. They have been brought to see that personal holiness is God's purpose for them as well as His command ... They see with deep distress the grievous gap there is between what they know of Scriptural truth, and how they live. This is not a reaching out towards new forms of doctrine or of ecclesiastical system, but the felt need of more vitality in what has been already accepted.¹²⁸

The announcement drew an audience of one thousand to the week long Oxford Convention where once again Pearsall Smith served as Chairman. Hannah Whitall Smith delivered daily Bible readings alongside speakers such as Harford-Battersby and Evan Hopkins, the Americans Asa Mahan and W.E. Boardman, the Reformed pastor from France, Theodore Monod, and the Swiss pastor Otto Stockmayer. The success of the Oxford Convention evidenced the growing influence of Higher Life teaching.

Harford-Battersby, vicar of St. John's in Keswick, said that the Oxford Convention was ten days of being "taken out of themselves ... led step by step, after deep and close searchings of heart... to God."¹²⁹ Stories of defeated Christian lives were compared to testimonies of the "satisfaction and peace enjoyed by those who have attained"¹³⁰ consecration. The choice was obvious. Hundreds, from many branches of the Church, were said to have entered into "consecration," a state of power over sin. These individuals were given many opportunities to "confess what the Lord had done for them, and bear witness to the results of it in their own experience."¹³¹

¹²⁸ Barabas, p. 21.

¹²⁹ *Account of the Union Meeting for the Promotion of Scriptural Holiness*, held in Oxford, August 29 to September 7, 1874 (Chicago, Illinois: F.H. Revell, 1875), preface pp. i-ii. as quoted by Barabas, p. 22.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ Barabas, p. 23.

Consecration was said to be accompanied by physical changes, most commonly, a glowing face. Recalling the face of Moses after encountering God, Holiness Divines suggested that a changed appearance was the outer expression of an inner experience. The evidence of consecration was reflected “on the very countenances of their more favoured brethren.”¹³² Thus the skeptical onlooker might notice the glowing faces of those who enjoyed a Higher Life.

Higher Life Conventions were said to impart the choice of consecration through an “ordered scheme of teaching.”¹³³ By beginning the Convention with a clear statement of the problem—sin and defeat—attendees were asked to take inventory of their lives. This was followed by a “renunciation of all idols of the flesh and spirit,”¹³⁴ whereby the soul surrenders to and trusts Christ, “for the bestowal of the blessing asked.”¹³⁵ Careful to avoid “fleshly excitement in the meetings,”¹³⁶ Harford-Battersby reported that the Convention offered a spirituality that was “a still, calm, sober; though deeply earnest spirit,”¹³⁷ which seemed to “animate both speakers and hearers.”¹³⁸

Robert Pearsall Smith, chairman of the conference, opened one meeting with a proclamation: “It is to bring you to a crisis of faith that they had come together—to a point at which you will say, ‘By God’s grace I will believe God’s promises.’”¹³⁹ Pearsall Smith said he did not come to Oxford to debate theology, or to “set each other right or to discuss doctrines,”¹⁴⁰ as perhaps the Oxford Movement had in years past. Rather, his visit to Oxford was to plead for action and a decision.

Evan Hopkins (1837 - 1918), vicar of Holy Trinity, Richmond, also addressed the audiences at Oxford Convention. Hopkins, a successful Bible expositor, had a steady and logical manner and was able to articulate Higher Life teaching with the highest clarity. His topic at Oxford centered on God’s promise to provide holiness.

¹³² Ibid., p. 22.

¹³³ Ibid., p. 23.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid., p. 22.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Sloan, p. 16.

¹⁴⁰ Bebbington, p. 171.

To those gathered at Oxford, Hopkins explained that “resting faith” was the “complete trust and dependence on God for everything he has promised ... as something received.”¹⁴¹ According to Hopkins, the “rest of faith,” was like the rich man who appealed to Jesus for his son’s healing, to whom Jesus said; “Go thy way; thy son liveth.”¹⁴² Christ’s promise was the only assurance the rich man needed. The man chose to believe Christ and went home to find it so. It was not Christ’s word but the man’s “resting faith” that released Christ’ power. Go, said Hopkins, and choose likewise. Could holiness be reached by a decision, through act of faith? Few seemed to question the simplicity of this proposition.

Harford-Battersby was so impressed by Hopkins that he left the Oxford Convention determined to live a holy life by a “deliberate act of full surrender and enter a ‘rest of faith.’”¹⁴³ Because of Hopkins’ teaching, Harford-Battersby said he found a new power through the Holy Spirit, “the means of effective, powerful and holy living and service.”¹⁴⁴

The Brighton Convention: May 29 - June 7, 1875

Nine months later, eight thousand attended the Brighton Convention, to hear holiness luminaries such Hannah Whitall, Pearsall Smith, Evan Hopkins, Theodore Monod, and H.W. Webb-Peploe.¹⁴⁵ Hannah Whitall Smith offered Bible Readings to both women and men. Her theme centered on the “power of Christ to save, keep and unite.”¹⁴⁶ The large crowd, from twenty-three countries, shared communion together and national and denominational boundaries were obscured. The chairman pronounced: “The Brighton Convention has now ended, and the blessings from the Convention have begun.”¹⁴⁷ The crowd was larger than any Church. The promise of power over sin was unlike any message they had heard from the pulpit before. Everything seemed new.

¹⁴¹ Price & Randall, p. 25.

¹⁴² Pollock, p. 26.

¹⁴³ Ibid., p. 26.

¹⁴⁴ Price & Randall, p. 27.

¹⁴⁵ Dayton, p. 104.

¹⁴⁶ Pollock, p. 32.

¹⁴⁷ Barabas, p. 24.

One woman said the Brighton Convention transformed her understanding of God. She wrote:

I never believed in any Saviour but a Saviour from sin; I never dreamed of any salvation, but a salvation from sin. Yet now, everything, every word of the Bible, every relation of human life, everything in nature—old familiar hymns, the Creeds, the services of the Church, the Holy Communion—glow, become translucent, with a new glory and significance.¹⁴⁸

The message of consecration—the suspension of every known sin—did not go unopposed. “Evangelical Leaders of that day felt it their duty to oppose what they believed to be a false doctrine of ‘Perfection.’”¹⁴⁹ Higher Life luminaries denied that they were teaching a form of perfection. They insisted that sin continued in the life of the believer, though its manifestations were suspended by the power of the Holy Spirit, on a moment to moment basis.

Critics could not dissuade Higher Life leaders, whose mission it seemed to rouse the Church to effectual holiness. Holiness, or the Higher Life was not only freedom from “fret, and fear, and folly, but from all known and actual sins.”¹⁵⁰ To be unencumbered by sin was the power of Pentecost, available to all Christians,¹⁵¹ the Apostles of Holiness insisted.

The Brighton Convention was therefore seen as a new Pentecost, a season of spiritual awakening. If the Convention created a longing for holiness, God would surely gratify that desire. “He who wakens holy desires also satisfies the longing He creates.”¹⁵²

Harford-Battersby, along with a prominent businessman, convened another Holiness Convention in the Lake District, a mere three weeks later. They entitled the Convention, the “Union Meetings for the Promotion of Practical Holiness.”¹⁵³ Once again, notices

¹⁴⁸ Harford, pp. 32-33.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 38.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 39.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., p. 40.

¹⁵² A.T. Pierson, *The Keswick Movement in Precept and Practice*. p. 39.

¹⁵³ Price & Randall, p. 29.

were sent around the globe, inviting Christians to participate in the “Union Meetings for the Promotion of Practical Holiness.” The first Keswick Convention was aimed at those “conscious of the low state of vital religion in the Churches, [who] are hungering and thirsting after a fuller and richer life in the Spirit.”¹⁵⁴ The meeting was like those before it, international and nonsectarian. All “Christians of every section of the Church of God”¹⁵⁵ were encouraged to attend.

The First Keswick Convention: June 1875

Pearsall Smith, the featured speaker, cancelled at the last minute. Rumors circulated that Smith had been involved in a scandal, but the real facts concerning his sudden withdrawal were not known for some time. The promoters of practical holiness were eager to maintain credibility. Harford-Battersby replaced Pearsall Smith, whose plenary sessions centered on Christ’s sufficiency to cleanse from all sin.¹⁵⁶ Other speakers included the Rev. H.W. Webb-Peploe, the Revs. George R. Thornton and T. Phillips, Mr. H.F. Bowker, Mr. T. M. Croome, and Mr. Murray Shipley.

Despite the absence of Pearsall Smith, the first Keswick Convention was considered a success. Keswick goers claimed to experience both personal and corporate renewal. They left the conference with a keen awareness that their experience might bring greater unity between Christians of differing denominations. Unity among Christians was based on the notion that the Higher Life experience was a modern Pentecost, uniting “Parthians, Medes and Elamites,” who together declared the wonders of God. (Acts 2:9) Therefore, a banner with the words “One in Christ Jesus” hung over the Keswick platform, where it remains to this day.

The decision was made to hold a second Keswick Convention the following year, and every subsequent year. Thus, the Lake District became known as the center of spiritual renewal and the focal point of Higher Life teaching.¹⁵⁷ Within two years of its inception,

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 31.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 32.

the Keswick Conventions attracted nearly 1,000 people annually and Convention goers overran the town of the Lake district each summer.¹⁵⁸

V. Higher Life Luminaries

The influence, which the Higher Life Movement enjoyed was, attributed to the American couple, Hannah Whitall Smith and Robert Pearsall Smith. Their charismatic personalities gave the Keswick Higher Life Movement exceptional momentum. Following their return to America, the Higher Life platforms were filled by British luminaries who proved as articulate, enthusiastic and influential as their American counterparts.

Robert Pearsall Smith

While 19th century evangelicals in England were confronted by the intellectualism of “highbrows” from the Oxford Movement, as well as by “higher critics,” who challenged the authority and reliability of scripture, the Higher Life message of the Pearsall - Smiths injected fresh religious sentiment without the burden of intellectualism.¹⁵⁹ It also promised power over sin, through rest rather than by effort. The message must have seemed a welcome relief to life in a rapidly changing world.

Pearsall Smith had established himself as a man “full of fun and spirits but wonderfully interesting and edifying spiritually.”¹⁶⁰ At the 1874 Broadlands Convention, he addressed his audiences with a familiar demeanor, always emphasizing the centrality of spiritual experience, just as the American Camp system had “aimed at direct experience with God.”¹⁶¹ It was in part due to the influence of Pearsall Smith that the British Higher Life message focused on the spiritual experience of holiness by faith. “Rest;” “reckon;” “consider it complete;” or “the rest of faith” (the title of Pearsall

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., pp. 41-42.

¹⁵⁹ M. Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994), p. 124.

¹⁶⁰ Pollock, p. 12.

¹⁶¹ Price & Randall, p. 33.

Smith's book ¹⁶²) were phrases or slogans used by Keswick Conventions to connote an experience of consecration or holiness.

Pearsall Smith described his own consecration in terms of a sensible infusion of power, followed by a new-found capacity over sin. By praying with ten others, Pearsall Smith said he felt the earth shake around them as each person was filled with the Holy Spirit. Afterwards they were conscious of a transaction with God that left them not only redeemed, but also fully sanctified. Pearsall Smith wrote:

I entered into a complete soul-rest in Christ, a rest, through the cleansing blood, which my soul has never lost for one hour ... Since then I have received answers to my prayers for holiness as never before ... consciousness of the actual, in-wrought reality of the expression, 'I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet, not I, but Christ liveth in me.' Instead of pining for rest, I am continually praising God for realized rest, the deep, inward Sabbath-keeping of my blood-cleansed soul. I can now see no limit to the possibilities of the life of Christ in my soul, since I have accepted the atonement in its full purposes, both pardon and holiness.¹⁶³

Holiness divines like Pearsall Smith criticized the Church for appealing to Calvary solely for the purposes of justification, while failing to acknowledge that the Cross was also a place of sanctification. Through a second spiritual experience, Pearsall Smith suggested that souls receive power over sin.¹⁶⁴ Entire sanctification, like salvation, is acquired through a choice, rather than through a moral struggle. The shift was from effort to rest, from reason to trust. A life of righteousness is also accomplished the very moment one trusts Christ for holiness.¹⁶⁵ ¹⁶⁶ Pearsall Smith wrote:

¹⁶² R. P. Smith, *Holiness Through Faith: Light on the Way of Holiness*.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 83-84.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

The scriptures are radiant with promises of present sanctification--a redemption from all iniquity--studied a thousand times, but never understood [until] now. Prayers for holiness are now answered, and a holy joy, a divine peace, a rest in God, and the witnessing of the Holy Spirit to the work of Christ, for the soul, ensue. ¹⁶⁷

Pearsall Smith claimed the experience of entire sanctification was not unique. He and his wife were careful to provide personal accounts of many converts and skeptics alike. One Presbyterian minister, who rejected the notion of entire sanctification envied the "resurrection power in which some around him" ¹⁶⁸ had experienced. These stories were compelling for Church leaders who longed for more effective ministry.

It was Pearsall Smith who influenced the young Anglican vicar, Evan Hopkins. Hopkins later became the most articulate expositor and leader associated with the early Keswick Conventions. ¹⁶⁹

Hannah Whitall Smith

Born and raised a Quaker, Hannah left the fellowship of Friends and joined the Presbyterian Church, shortly after marrying her husband, Robert Pearsall Smith. Though Hannah underwent a conversion experience, she and her husband remained dissatisfied with their spiritual lives. Despite an intentional period of repentance and resolve, they found themselves powerless over besetting sin.

Hannah began to see that the apostle Paul was also unable to overcome the power of sin. It was not until Paul learned to die with Christ, that he acquired real moral victory and spiritual power. Hannah convinced her husband that Romans 6:6 was the key to a happy or victorious Christian life. The sixth chapter of Romans, the sixth verse became

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 90.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., pp. 150-151.

¹⁶⁹ Pollock, p. 14.

her “victory” passage and the secret to her happy Christian life.¹⁷⁰ Upon this blessed discovery Hannah wrote:

We had simply discovered the ‘secret of victory,’ and knew that we were no longer the ‘slaves of sin’ and therefore forced to yield to its mastery, but that we might, if we would, be made more than conquerors through our Lord Jesus Christ. But this did not mean that temptations ceased to come; and when we neglected to avail ourselves of the ‘secret’ we had discovered, and instead of handling the battle over to the Lord, took it into our own hands as of old, failure inevitably followed.¹⁷¹

Hannah compiled her discovery of the Higher Life in a book entitled, *The Christian’s Secret of a Happy Life*. The success of her book launched the couple as Higher Life advocates in many countries, particularly England.

Traveling throughout England in 1872, Hannah and her husband convinced both clergy and laypersons that they too could become “overcomers.” Receiving “the blessing,” “the consecration” or “rest” as it was called, meant victory over life’s trials and personal failings.

The couple returned to the United States under a cloud of shame when it was learned that Pearsall Smith had an inappropriate encounter with a young woman in his hotel room. Yet, their Higher Life ideals were catalysts to the Higher Life Movement that drove the Keswick Conventions for years following their return to America.

Early Keswick Leaders

A broad spectrum of talented leaders quickly assembled to fill the void left by Robert Pearsall Smith and his wife. Men such as Webb-Peploe, Bowker, Evan Hopkins and Harford-Battersby were not only capable leaders, but each also possessed unique, salient

¹⁷⁰ See H. W. Smith’s *The Christian’s Secret of a Happy Life*. (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: J.B. Lippencott & Co., 1873)

¹⁷¹ H. W. Smith, p. 37, as quoted by Barabas, p. 18.

talents. Harford-Batterby was a “shy, cultured ex-Tractarian, Bowker [a] learned schoolmaster, Webb-Peploe the athlete squire, and Hopkins the scientist.”¹⁷²

South American by birth, Evan Hopkins trained as a civil engineer at London’s School of Mines. By 1865 Hopkins took holy orders, and in 1871 he became rector of Holy Trinity Church in Richmond, Surrey. Impressed by Robert Pearsall Smith, Hopkins embraced the Higher Life message, which, he claimed, imparted “a new ebullience, assurance, unflagging zest, and above all contagious joy.”¹⁷³ Perhaps most importantly, Hopkins believed that the Higher Life message explained his own spiritual experiences. Once he had encountered entire consecration, the “secret of blessings in what was called ‘resting faith,’”¹⁷⁴ he sought to make this experience the standard for others. Respected throughout Keswick for his unassuming demeanor and affable nature, Hopkins was to become a guiding presence in the Keswick Conventions and Anglicanism. His influence should not to be underestimated.

Hopkins, Webb-Peploe and Bowker were different with respect to temperament and talent, yet together they represented both the Anglican and Nonconformist Church. Therefore Keswick boasted of unity among diverse believers, noted particularly in their leadership, which they believed represented a modern Pentecost—the new millennium. Though Keswick rarely boasted of their intellectual achievements, the early leaders were noted scholars. H.C.G. Moule for example, held a doctorate in divinity, served as Principal of Cambridge’s Ridley Hall, and later became Bishop of Durham.

VI. The Keswick Milieu

The Mood

The Keswick Conventions had a conspicuous charm, an aroma all their own.¹⁷⁵ One newcomer to Keswick believed that the atmosphere was atypical of Christian Conventions. While theological discourse was absent, nonetheless this observer claimed

¹⁷² Pollock, p. 56.

¹⁷³ Ibid., p. 15.

¹⁷⁴ Price & Randall, p. 39.

¹⁷⁵ A. T. Pierson, *Forward Movements of the Last Half Century*. pp. 40-41.

he had never received greater clarity on the scriptures, particularly as they related to faith as the means to Christian living. Nor had he attended a meeting with such newness of spirit. Some reported feeling dazed by the “glory that had burst upon”¹⁷⁶ them. Held in the Lake District of England, one of the most picturesque locations on earth, the scenery added to the milieu. The “love, joy, peace, meekness, gentleness”¹⁷⁷ and beauty of Keswick was inescapable.

The Keswick experience was above all else an experience of faith and rest. Therefore, strenuous intellectual or emotional activity was avoided. Striving of any form was considered a disruption to the rest and peace intrinsic to authentic encounters with God. It is no surprise that Keswick leaders were fond of citing the medieval mystics, and particularly the Quietists who suggested the highest forms of intimacy with God are attained through rest. The works of Madame Guyon, Fénelon, Thomas à Kempis, Faber and Brother Lawrence were frequently on the lips of Keswick luminaries, and prominently displayed in their personal libraries.¹⁷⁸ Mystics such as Jacob Boehme, St. Theresa, Catherine of Siena, and William Law¹⁷⁹ and others held a significant place in Keswick’s spirituality, and through Keswick their ideas were introduced to evangelical circles.

Despite the emphasis on rest, Keswick luminaries were quite industrious. Keswick’s spiritual milieu gave rise to an abundance of hymns, poetry, and spiritual literature by both women and men. Authors like Hannah Whitall Smith, Andrew Murray, Evan Hopkins, Bishop Moule, F.B. Meyer and Jessie Penn-Lewis were especially prolific. Their articles, journals and books underwent multiple reprinting, and in some cases were translated into over one hundred dialects and languages. The message of holiness through faith was infused into many denominations around the world through Keswick’s industry of hymns, books, pamphlets, journals, and articles. Much of their work remains in print today.

¹⁷⁶ Harford, p. 125.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 223.

¹⁷⁹ Pierson, *Forward Movements of the Last Half Century*. pp. 11-12.

The Method

Holiness through faith was propounded through a carefully structured week of sermons, lectures, hymns and testimonies. Higher Life teaching was imposed on conference goers at every turn. Even the hymns argued for rest and repose. In addition to writing their own hymns, Keswick reworked the lyrics of common hymns infusing them with the Higher Life message. These were incorporated into *The Keswick Hymn-Book*, which proved an effective and portable means of delivering their message to audiences around the world.

The Keswick week consisted of five days of carefully structured lessons. Each day of the week had a specific theme, and every hymn, each sermon or Bible reading, and each testimony added to the day's theme. Each day built upon the previous one towards one end—to create a longing for victory over sin.

The Keswick week began by exalting the holiness of God. Monday offered a comparison of God's perfection with human sin. Keswick was fond of propounding the exceeding sinfulness of sin. Tuesday rehearsed God's provision for sin. Wednesday was the climax as Convention goers were invited to enter rest. Thursday's teaching centered on the Spirit-filled life. Christian service was the topic of Friday's lectures and Bible Readings. An example of a week's sermons include the following:

Sunday: The High and Lofty One whose name is holy and the glorious inheritance of the children of God.

Monday: Sin in the life of the believer and its disastrous consequences.

Tuesday: The perfect cleansing available in the precious blood of Christ, and the rest of faith that results.

Wednesday: The whole-hearted surrender of the cleansed life to God, pointing to a God-controlled life of victory.

Thursday: The fullness of the Holy Spirit and the indwelling and abiding presence of Christ in the heart of the believer.

Friday: The life of disciplined and sacrificial service that must ensue, and the means of grace to make possible a holy walk in all circumstances. (An emphasis brought out in the great Missionary Meeting on Friday morning, the special teaching meeting in the afternoon, and the administration of the Lord's Supper at night.)¹⁸⁰

The Music

The message of Keswick reached worldwide audiences in part through the vibrant hymns they wrote. The most famous hymnist associated with Keswick was Frances R. Havergal (1836-1879). An Anglican, Havergal wrote over fifty hymns including, "I am trusting thee, Lord Jesus," "Who is on the Lord's side," and "Take my life and let it be." Her hymn, "Like a River Glorious" secured a place in nearly every denominational hymnal, and remains in most Protestant hymnals to this day.

Frances Havergal wrote the lyrics to twenty-one hymns in the 1936 *The Keswick Hymn-Book*.¹⁸¹ She devoted six hymns for "consecration;" one for "Faith;" one for "Fulness of the Spirit;" two for "the Overcoming Life;" six for "Union;" one for "Conflict;" one for "Growth in Grace;" one for "Service;" one for the "Second Advent;" and one general hymn.

Havergal's lyrics are sympathetic to Keswick's call to rest. Her popular hymn "Like a River Glorious," suggests that to remain in God, is to have perfect peace and rest. But perhaps more than this, Havergal's hymn expresses a longing for God to provide a place to hide, perhaps from sin where "no foe can follow, no traitor stand, no surge of worry," "not even a shade of care" can touch one's spirit there. She then connects a longing for rest with God's promise of peace and rest.

¹⁸⁰ Price & Randall, pp. 195-196.

¹⁸¹ *The Keswick Hymn-Book*. Compiled by the Trustees of the Keswick Convention. (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, Ltd., 1936)

Like a River Glorious

Is God's perfect peace,
 Over all victorious
 In its bright increase;
 Perfect, yet it floweth
 Fuller every day—
 Perfect, yet it groweth
 Deeper all the way.

Chorus—Stayed upon Jehovah,
 Hearts are fully blest;
 Finding, as He promised,
 Perfect peace and rest.

Hidden in the hollow
 Of his blessed hand,
 Never foe can follow,
 Never traitor stand;
 Not a surge of worry,
 Not a shade of care,
 Not a blast of hurry,
 Touch the spirit there.

Every joy or trial
 Falleth from above,
 Traced upon our dial
 By the Sun of Love.
 We may trust Him fully
 All for us to do;
 They who trust Him wholly

Find Him wholly true.¹⁸²

The Keswick Hymn-Book was organized thematically. Unlike many evangelical hymnals however, *The Keswick Hymn-Book* included themes such as mystical union; the overcoming life; longings for holiness; fullness of the spirit; and consecration. While Keswick hymns were frequently sung to familiar church tunes, the lyrics were often new. The rephrasing of popular hymns popularized the Higher Life message to Christian audiences in many countries.

Just as Keswick began the week by emphasizing the problem of sin, likewise the Keswick hymnal provided forty-one hymns on “Longings for Holiness.” Every aspect of the Keswick Convention, including its hymns, created a longing for holiness and rest, and also encouraged a decision of faith.

A hunger for holiness and a longing to enter “rest” in made clear in the following hymn by A. W. Martson, entitled “Longing for Holiness.” Here we note that while the soul is ransomed or redeemed, it lacks the power to please God. The soul has yet to become fully sanctified. The ransomed soul acknowledges its “lack of strength” which has left God’s “will undone.” Powerless, the soul “cannot stand at all” and can only fall into “Thine everlasting arms.” The element of passivity whereby the soul completes God’s will in attaining holiness is noted.

Longing for Holiness

O Lord, I come to Thee
 Thou knowest all my state;
 My heart is longing so for rest,
 No longer can I wait.

Thou knowest all my sin;
 How I, Thy ransomed one,
 Have gone the way my heart desired,

¹⁸² F. Havergal. Hymn 213. *Ibid.*, p. 191.

And left Thy will undone

 Lord, Thou canst work in me
 The will to do Thy will;
 And Thou canst work in me to work,
 Thy pleasure to fulfil

 In utter lack of strength
 Into Thine arms I fall;
 For if Thou dost not hold me up,
 I cannot stand at all

 Thine everlasting arms
 Will never let me go;
 The arms of Him who fainteth not
 Can never weary grow.

 Lord, Thou wilt take me now;
 I trust myself to Thee,
 That as Thy will is done in heaven
 It may be done in me.¹⁸³

After acknowledging one's sins and one's hunger for peace and holiness, Keswick offered God's promise of rest. Correspondingly, the second category of *The Keswick Hymn-Book* devoted thirty-nine hymns to "consecration." In the following hymn, Moule, Bishop of Durham, contrasted slavery to self with consecration or union to Christ. As the soul surrenders to God it is united to God's will, just as a slave is united to a benevolent Master. The pierced-ear of the slave is willingly bonded or united to God, where the vassal-soul enjoys a vastness, a joy and a freedom from serving the cruel master—self. The following hymn was based upon the music of R.W. Dixon.

¹⁸³ A.W. Marston. Hymn 5. Ibid., p. 4.

Untitled

My glorious Victor, Prince Divine,
 Clasp these surrendered hands in Thine
 At length my will is all thine own,
 Glad vassal of a Saviour's throne.

My Master, lead me to Thy door;
 Pierce this now willing ear once more:
 Thy bonds are freedom; let me stay;
 With Thee, to toil, endure, obey.

Yes, ear and hand, and thought and will,
 Use all in Thy dear slav'ry still!
 Self's weary liberties I cast;
 Beneath Thy feet; there keep them fast.

Tread them still down; and then I know,
 These hands shall with Thy gifts o'er flow;
 And pierced ears shall hear the tone
 Which tells me Thou and I are one.¹⁸⁴

Faith, for Keswick, opened the door to fruits of the spiritual life. Faith was not only the portal to forgiveness, but faith was also the means to power over sin. Frances Havergal wrote the following hymn as a tribute to the fruits of faith. Her hymn, "I Am Trusting," suggests that souls trust God for cleansing and holiness, as well as for power. Havergal wrote the following lyrics, though E.W. Bullinger composed the music. The hymn appears in the Keswick Hymn-Book without a title.

I AM trusting thee, Lord Jesus,
 Trusting only Thee;

¹⁸⁴ Bishop H.C.G. Moule. Hymn 47. *Ibid.*, p. 42.

Trusting Thee for full salvation,
Great and free.

I am trusting Thee for pardon,
At Thy feet I bow;
For Thy grace and tender mercy,
Trusting now.

I am trusting Thee for cleansing,
In the crimson flood;
Trusting Thee to make me holy,
By Thy blood.

I am trusting Thee to guide me,
Thou alone shalt lead,
Ev'ry day and hour supplying
All my need.

I am trusting Thee for power,
Thine can never fail;
Words which Thou Thyself shalt give me,
Must prevail.

I am trusting Thee, Lord Jesus;
Never let me fall:
I am trusting Thee, Lord Jesus;
Never let me fall;
I am trusting Thee for ever
And for all. ¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁵ F. Havergal. Hymn 101, *Ibid.*, p. 91.

The Keswick Hymn-Book included thirty-four hymns on the “Fulness of the Spirit,” the focus of Keswick’s mid-week lectures. The following hymn was sung to the music of M. J. Hammond. The lyrics, by B.P. Head, illustrate the function of the Holy Spirit to first cleanse from sin, and second to renew or restore “thought, will and heart.”

O Breath of Life, come sweeping through us,
Revive Thy Church with life and power;
O Breath of Life, come, cleanse, renew us
And fit Thy Church to meet this hour.

O Wind of God, come bend us, break us,
Till humbly we confess our need;
Then in Thy tenderness remake us,
Revive, restore, for this we plead.

O Breath of Love, come breathe within us,
Renewing thought and will and heart;
Come, Love of Christ, afresh to win us,
Revive Thy Church in ev’ry part.

O Heart of Christ, once broken for us,
‘Tis there we find our strength and rest;
Our broken contrite hearts now solace,
And let Thy waiting Church be blest.

Revive us, Lord! Is zeal abating
While harvest fields are vast and white?
Revive us, Lord, the world is waiting,
Equip Thy Church to spread the light.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁶ B. P. Head. Hymn 149, *Ibid.*, p.130.

Twenty-six hymns extol the victorious life.¹⁸⁷ Havergal's hymn below, sung to a tune by W.S. Bambridge, rehearsed the Keswick theme, that sanctification is initiated by faith, not by human effort. Faith initiates union so that God's own beauty is "on our brow" and "God's own holiness" is ours as well.

Church of God, beloved and chosen,
Church of Christ for whom He died,
Claim thy gifts and praise the Giver,

Ye are washed and sanctified.
Sanctified by God the Father,
And by Jesus Christ His Son,
And by God the Holy Spirit,
Holy, Holy, Three in One.

Holiness by faith in Jesus,
Not by effort of thine own,
Sin's dominion crushed and broken
By the power of grace alone,
God's own holiness within thee,
His own beauty on thy brow;
This shall be thy pilgrim brightness,
This thy blessed portion now.¹⁸⁸

The 1936 *Keswick Hymn-Book* included fifty-eight hymns on mystical union, indicating the importance this theme held for Keswick. In the following hymn, "Abiding in Him," that mystical union is celebrated as "rest in the Crucified." Moreover, through mystical union, the soul is "dead" to itself but "alive to Him." As the soul remains "dead," divine power replaces human effort, so that it is not "I but Christ in me," through which "mighty

¹⁸⁷ *The Keswick Hymn-Book*. Compiled by the Trustees of the Keswick Convention. (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, Ltd., 1936)

¹⁸⁸ Havergal. Hymn 163, *Ibid.*, p. 143.

work is done.” One clearly notes the elements of Quietism in the following hymn, sung to music of D.C. Wright, entitled: “Abiding in Him.”

Abiding in Him

Abiding, oh, so wondrous sweet,
I'm resting at the Saviour's feet,
I trust in Him, I'm satisfied
I'm resting in the Crucified.

Abiding, abiding,
Oh! So wondrous sweet;
I'm resting, resting
At the Saviour's feet.

He speaks, and by His word is giv'n
His peace, a rich foretaste of heav'n;
Not as the world He peace doth give,
'Tis thro' this hope my soul shall live.

I live; not I; 'tis He alone
By Whom the mighty work is done,
Dead to myself, alive to Him,
I count all loss His rest to gain.

Now rest, my heart, the work is done,
I'm sav'd thro' the Eternal Son:
Let all my pow'rs my soul employ,
To tell the world my peace and joy¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁹ C. B. J. Root. Hymn 203, *The Keswick Hymn-Book*. Compiled by the Trustees of the Keswick Convention. (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, Ltd., 1936), p. 182.

Keswick's hymns popularized their theological priorities. Because the hymns of Charles Wesley celebrated spiritual vibrancy, they were included among Keswick's hymns. Similarly, since the hymns of Bernard of Clairvaux and F.W. Faber's extolled union with Christ, they too found a home in the *Keswick Hymn-Book*. Keswick hymns created a longing for rest, and through their simple prose and vivid images, their message was accessible to many people, regardless of their educational background or denominational affiliation. Thus, at the close of each convention, the Keswick Convention celebrated communion en masse. Thus, Keswick's *Hymn-Book* offered eleven hymns used during the Lord's Supper. Keswick's milieu easily incorporated the arts, and they were prolific writers not only of music and hymns, but of literature as well.

The Keswick Convention never established a creed or doctrinal statement. It preferred practical spiritual experiences to theological dogma. Though theological and biblical treatises were never developed, yet Keswick leaders produced quantities of practical and devotional literature.¹⁹⁰ The most prolific authors included the British Hopkins, Bishop Moule, F. B. Meyer, the South African Andrew Murray, the Welsh Jessie Penn-Lewis, and the Americans W.E. Boardman, A.J. Gordon, A.T. Pierson, and Robert Pearsall and Hannah Whitall Smith.

The early Keswick literature was deeply influenced by the Romantic Movement, with its affinity for depicting spiritual ideals through pastoral images. Nature was the perfect metaphor for God, with its intoxicating beauty and its call to repose. Perhaps this explains why Higher Life Conventions convened in settings such as Keswick, Chamonix, and the countryside throughout North America. Some feared, however, that the frequency with which Keswick imaged God through nature revealed a pantheistic undercurrent in Keswick teaching.^{191 192}

¹⁹⁰ D. Dayton, Editor. *The Higher Christian Life. Sources for the Study of the Holiness, Pentecostal, and Keswick Movement*. Volumes 1- 48. This is a Facsimile Series of extremely rare documents for the study of 19th century religious and social history, the role of feminism, and the history of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements. A Garland Series (1985) Garland Publishing Inc., NY/London. (Fuller Seminary, Pasadena, California.), pp. 16-20.

¹⁹¹ Price & Randall, p. 65.

¹⁹² Bebbington, p. 167 & ff.

The Keswick Convention that produced theological poets such as the Rev. Charles A. Fox also served as the curate to William Pennefather. Fox's influential works such as: *Ankle Deep* and *The River of Pentecostal Power* and *The Spiritual Grasp of the Epistles*, combined the message of Keswick with the poetry of the Lake District. By expressing encounters with God through "the poetry of the spiritual,"¹⁹³ Fox won the title of the poet of the Keswick Conventions. Fox, F.B. Meyer, and others captured the spirituality of Keswick in prose, and Keswick honored their works with a place in the *Keswick Hymn-Book*. Through the literature of Keswick, the Higher Life message was diffused to a world already well influenced by the Romantic mood.

In order to give account of their spiritual victories, Keswick leaders created a number of journals or magazines. As early 1874, Robert Pearsall Smith and Hannah Whitall Smith began *The Christian Pathway of Power*. Edited by Pearsall Smith, *The Christian's Pathway of Power* was conceived with one purpose in mind: to promote "personal consecration and Power for Service."¹⁹⁴ The stated mission of Pearsall Smith's journal read:

We believe the Word of God teaches that the *normal* Christian life is one of sustained victory over known sin ... the Cross of Christ which has effectually separated us from the penalty or consequence of our sins is also the means by which we become separated from their power; and that the only true way of overcoming the evil within us is by recognizing our position as those that have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts; that the reckoning of ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin is the great duty of faith, and the secret of life of abiding communion with God.¹⁹⁵

By reporting on the events at the Oxford and Brighton Conventions, Evan Hopkins began writing for the *Christian's Pathway of Power* in 1874. After the return of Pearsall Smith to America in 1875, Hopkins became editor. In 1879, *The Christian's Pathway of Power*

¹⁹³ Price & Randall, p. 45.

¹⁹⁴ Harford, p. 224.

¹⁹⁵ The editor of *The Christian's Pathway of Power*, as quoted by Harford, p. 224.

was renamed *The Life of Faith*, and became the main publication of the Keswick Convention. *The Life of Faith* remained in print for over one century. In order to include a full account of Keswick lectures and meetings, in 1882 the Keswick Conventions developed a second journal entitled *The Keswick Convention*. *The Keswick Convention Week* was eventually shortened to *The Keswick Week*.

As Higher Life teaching came under criticism, often from members of the Reformed camp, Keswick divines responded by publishing a twelve-pamphlet series defending their spiritual foundations. H.F. Bowker, chairman of the Keswick Convention, contributed a pamphlet entitled: "Sanctification: A Statement and a Defense." Harford-Battersby authored a pamphlet called, "Bondage or Liberty." Yet, it was Evan Hopkins work, *The Law of Liberty in the Spiritual Life*, which proved the most lucid articulation of Keswick's Higher Life message.

Eager to defend sanctification by faith, the leaders of Keswick engaged in a prolific writing campaign. Perhaps the most scholarly proponent was Bishop Handley Moule. His most noted treatises included, *Thoughts on Christian Sanctity; Veni Creator; The Epistle to the Romans*; and *Thoughts on Union with Christ*. Moule's affiliation with the Keswick Conventions lent credence to a movement under attack by the Church of England and Nonconformists alike.

Two other prolific writers associated with Keswick were Andrew Murray and Jessie Penn-Lewis. Murray's *Abide in Christ*, became perhaps the most popular book in Keswick circles, while Jessie Penn-Lewis's books, booklets and articles were in demand by international readers. Other popular Keswick authors included; E.E. Cummings, author of *Through the Eternal Spirit*, and *After the Spirit*; Hubert Brook, author of *Candlestick and The Temple of His Body*; G.H.C. Macgregor, author of *A Holy Life*; and F.B. Meyer author of *From Calvary to Pentecost*, *Elijah*, *Abraham*, and *Jacob*. These books were considered Higher Life classics as they ably communicated sanctification by faith.¹⁹⁶

The literature of Keswick became an industry in itself. Marshall Brothers, (later known as Marshall & Scott) published Keswick authors, and sold these books at yearly conventions. Profits from the sale of books were returned to the Convention.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., pp. 232-237.

VII. Keswick Markets the Message

The Keswick Conventions were opportunities to experience masterful communication and skillful marketing techniques. In contrast to the flamboyant American camp meetings, Keswick preachers preferred personal testimony, simple music, with sermons that everyone could understand. Thus, the Higher Life message was advanced without intellectual superiority or excessive emotion, as proponents of the Higher Life claimed that sanctification through faith improved life. By communicating ideas simply, the Higher Life message was made accessible to all walks of life. They packaged their message consistently, communicating a single truth with elegant simplicity—that victory over sin comes not by might or power, (emotionally or intellectually), but by faith, through resting in God’s Spirit. Daily Convention events were designed to create first a longing for rest, and second a decision of faith.

Keswick Conventions offered multiple venues to those whose lives were transformed from weakness to power, from addiction to freedom, and from fretfulness and ill-temper to peace and repose. D.L. Moody, for example, was said to have possessed an irritable and disagreeable temperament. After attending Keswick he claimed his life was altered and so full of Christ’s love that friends commented on the change. “He has been to Keswick,”¹⁹⁷ was the explanation.

Entrance to the Keswick platform was therefore tightly controlled. Prominence on the Keswick platform was rarely gained through academic qualifications alone. Ambition “and brilliant rhetorical efforts would not find a congenial atmosphere or a sympathetic hearing.”¹⁹⁸ Only those who shared the convictions of Keswick and “by experiment have tested them, are asked to take part, and no others.”¹⁹⁹

According to Keswick divines, figures from the Bible were said to have undergone a second experience, where they too found the power to overcome besetting sins and moral frailty. Keswick was fond of exploring what seemed like biblical evidence that Moses,

¹⁹⁷ Harford, p. 82.

¹⁹⁸ Barabas, p. 34.

¹⁹⁹ A.T. Pierson, as quoted by Barabas, p. 33.

Peter and Paul had had a “second experience” with God. Paul, for example was a proud and ill-tempered Pharisee. He was bitter and ferocious, and threatened the slaughter of “the followers of the Meek and Lowly One.”²⁰⁰ Yet after Paul encountered Christ on the Road to Damascus, he too became humble and gentle, because, as he said, “The life I now live I live by the faith in the Son of God. I live, nevertheless, not I, but Christ liveth in me.”²⁰¹

Similarly, Peter underwent a second experience, according to W.E. Boardman. Following his transformational “experience,” Peter was changed from one who denied Christ, to one who proclaimed the Messiah with boldness. From the moment of Peter’s second experience he was a new man, as W.E. Boardman wrote:

[Peter] was the first to rise up before the Jerusalem populace who had put Christ to death, and ... tell them boldly that they had killed the Prince of Life. The fearless one also [stood] before the grand court of his nation, and when charged not to speak or to teach in the name of Jesus, and threatened with death if he should, he could answer their threatenings, by saying, Whether it be right to hearken unto you, more than unto God, judge ye; for we cannot but speak the things we do know, and testify the things we have seen.²⁰²

Like Paul, Moses was a man enslaved by rage, egotism and cowardice. By “the fire of his own tempter,”²⁰³ he killed a man. He was angered “because his own people did not accept him at once as their deliverer.”²⁰⁴ Yet, after Moses encountered God in the burning bush, he was remade. “Nothing daunted, yet nothing offended him.”²⁰⁵ Though his own people rebelled, Moses, now transformed, remained courageous. “Oh how like that One did Moses become through the indwelling of that One in him!”²⁰⁶

²⁰⁰ W.E. Boardman, *In The Power of the Spirit: Or, Christian Experience in the Light of the Bible*. (London: Bemrose & Sons, 1887), p. 38.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, pp. 38-39.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

Following the model of Paul, Moses and Peter, women believed that their lives were also transformed and empowered by the Higher Life message. Women claimed they found strength at every “point where we are weakest, by nature or habit.”²⁰⁷ One woman described her enslavement to anger and harsh-language. She felt hopeless and powerless until she attended a Keswick Convention. There she met Jesus, who was quicker than her temper. She said:

The grand truth was only to give herself up ... and this she could do and did do with delight. So given up, and so trusting in Jesus, she found herself perpetually and entirely in the Lord, and proved by happy and continual experience His keeping power. He was always quicker than the temper and the tempter.²⁰⁸

Burdened with domestic demands and many other pressures, women longed for Keswick’s “rest” as much as did their male counter parts. One woman, after listening to a houseguest describe her experience of “rest” wasted no time. She immediately embraced the “consecrated life” and afterwards insisted that all “her work and all her cares had been wonderfully sweetened, and thus wonderfully lightened and brightened.”²⁰⁹ Even her husband noticed the change and he too became a Keswick convert.

Like Pentecost, Keswick imparted spiritual power to both women and men. As one pastor explained that the baptism of the Spirit was not limited “to apostolic times,”²¹⁰ his incredulous wife was won over by his message and began to pray the Lord’s prayer. By the time she reached the end she realized that:

The kingship of Christ was a present spiritual inner one, and the power by which He sets up His kingdom is that of the Spirit given unto us to dwell in us and work in us to will and to do the will of God. When she came to the amen ... Wonderful was her deliverance ... When next she went into

²⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 39.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., pp. 40-41.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 55.

²¹⁰ Ibid., p. 62.

the meeting ... she was able herself to give in a testimony as unequivocal and as ringing of her husband's.²¹¹

Unsurprisingly, Keswick became a place of healing for those enslaved by various addictions. Freedom from tobacco, alcohol, gambling and the racetrack was said to be the result of a Keswick experience.²¹² When an addict is healed, and a "violent temper is made meek ... it brings a ceaseless revenue of glory to God which all the equable tempers in the world could not do."²¹³ One consecrated soul marked his release from drink and smoke in this way:

When I go to market now, the Lord He goes with me all the way, and I don't want to stop at them drinkin' places on the road, as I used to. I don't have to stop to light my pipe, either, for I give it up at once when the Lord must have a clean temple to dwell in, and not one all filthy with the filthy weed. And I ain't never had one bit o' desire to touch either rum or tobacco from then till now."²¹⁴

Each summer both men and women showcased their deliverance from "besetting sins of tongue and temper, habits of wrong-doing."²¹⁵ Infirmities once regarded as burdens to "be borne with and struggled against until death gives relief and release"²¹⁶ were said to vanish through the experience of rest.

As the Keswick Conventions ushered souls into an experience of consecration, the result was not only release from physical and psychological additions. As noted earlier, consecration was also said to initiate physical renewal, noted particularly in one's facial appearance. Just as Moses' face glowed after encountering God, so too the faces of those who entered "rest." For example, after hearing Canon Harford-Battersby preach at Keswick, one listener described his face as that of an angel's. "It showed at once that

²¹¹ Ibid., p. 64.

²¹² Harford, p. 94.

²¹³ W.E. Boardman, *In The Power of the Spirit: Or, Christian Experience in the Light of the Bible*, p. 37.

²¹⁴ Ibid., p. 27.

²¹⁵ A.T. Pierson, *The Keswick Movement in Precept and Practice*, p. 116.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

there was something there, which told its own tale.”²¹⁷ Following the consecration of Keswick’s chairman Bowker, one woman compared his new facial expression to that of an earlier painting saying she “had never seen a more remarkable change.”²¹⁸

The Failure of the Church

Is the average Christian characterized by victorious power and supernatural “joy in the midst of unhappy circumstances?”²¹⁹ Does the world rather view many Christians as weak and unable to master sin and self-interest? Why are not most Christians composed, patient and loving when faced with “ingratitude and indifference, even hostility?”²²⁰ These were the questions that the Keswick Conventions asked.

In Keswick’s view, most Christians are not only a disappointment to themselves but their moral failings also dissuade others from pursuing a life of faith. The absence of “real spiritual power”²²¹ is worsened by the fact that many Christians are focused on material rather than spiritual pursuits. Crippled by sin, complacent Christians are of no real service to others, Keswick argued. How could they “lead others into a new life of purity, peace, and power”²²² which they have not found themselves?

Who was to blame for the scarcity of power in the average Christian life? Churches and pastors, insisted Keswick leaders. The source of spiritual impotence rests in the fact that the Church acknowledges only a portion of the gospel message--pardon to the sinners. All too often preachers omit the Higher Life message, that “continuous victory over temptation [is] equally provided in the Gospel.”²²³ Such oversight has led to a spiritual feebleness as well as ineffective Christian service. The Keswick Convention therefore began a rigorous campaign to educate pastors on the Higher Life message. Ministers, after all, are those most in need of the spiritual power. They face constant pressure from “higher critics” that attack the faith and the authority of the scripture.

²¹⁷ Harford, p. 55.

²¹⁸ Ibid., p. 56.

²¹⁹ Dieter, Hoekēma, Horton, McQuilkin, and Walvoord, *Five Views on Sanctification*. (Grand Rapids: Academie Books, 1987), p. 151

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ A. T. Pierson, *The Keswick Movement in Precept and Practice*, p. 68.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Ibid., p. 16.

Pastors also come under attack from the devil. They are targets, said Keswick, of “the deadliest temptations in the arsenal of Satan.”²²⁴

What better place to revive and empower beleaguered pastors than in the Lake District? At Keswick, “Bible ideals begin to appear as divine possibilities—Alps to be attempted, not stars to be admired.”²²⁵ The “very atmosphere helped.”²²⁶ Keswick promised victory to Christian leaders who faced the modern world and higher criticism with shrinking defeat. “No one can visit Keswick without feeling its power—no one can leave Keswick and not carry away some of the joy.”²²⁷ What vicar could resist the promise of power? After attending Keswick, even the “dullest of preachers”²²⁸ were said to have “resistless power in the pulpit.”²²⁹ Keswick offered power to the weary and defeated so that they might substitute “the old ‘I cannot,’ [with] the triumphant ‘I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me.’”²³⁰ Even competent people derived new strength from a Keswick experience, it was claimed.²³¹

Of course, not everyone enjoyed the company of Keswick goers. Affiliation with Keswick was said to produce Christians who were divisive and self-righteous. Claiming to possess power over sin, these individuals seemed to view themselves with a sense of superiority.²³² Because Keswick called their Higher Life converts to infuse their “new life into dead and formal service,”²³³ their local parishes often resented the inference. In defense, Keswick devotees claimed that their holiness was rooted in authentic humility, an admission of personal inadequacy, and an utter dependence on the Holy Spirit.²³⁴ A truly consecrated Christian, they argued, is the “last to assert their own sanctity, and would be shocked, should others ascribe to them holiness or perfection.”²³⁵ Despite such disclaimers, many viewed Keswick’s enthusiasm as insincere.

²²⁴ Harford, p. 177.

²²⁵ Ibid., p. 179.

²²⁶ Ibid., p. 179.

²²⁷ Sloan, p. 106.

²²⁸ A.T. Pierson, *The Keswick Movement in Precept and Practice*, pp. 117-118.

²²⁹ Ibid., p. 117.

²³⁰ Harford, p. 182.

²³¹ Ibid., p. 181.

²³² A. T. Pierson, *Forward Movements of the Last Half Century*, p. 41.

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ Ibid., p. 42.

²³⁵ Ibid.

Every aspect of the Keswick Convention had one purpose—to lead each soul to a decision of faith. Every hymn, each testimony and sermon, even the scenery, poetry and literature made a case, built momentum, and aimed towards one goal—consecration. Will you choose holiness? Will you enter rest? Who could resist? As Pearsall Smith said in 1875, he did not come to Oxford to bend minds around theology, but to beg for a decision. Thus, every evening, following the general session, while music was playing gently in the background, an invitation was made. Delegates were asked to “rise in their places as token that they desire to consecrate themselves wholly unto God.”²³⁶ Keswick avoided the pitfalls and delays of over intellectualization. They offered a simple call and fully expected a positive response.

Faith Overshadows Effort

Because Keswick leaders claimed that holiness was attained through passivity, emotional or intellectual effort was copiously avoided. The consecrated Christian shunned strain of any sort, for spiritual union was initiated by faith, through a resting in Christ alone. Thus, Keswick speakers were earnest, without exhibiting intellectual rigor or sensational emotion. Similarly, Keswick sermons were void of brilliant rhetoric, oratory or anything that might appear intellectually superior. Rather, sermons were “simple expositions of the Word of God, that impress the hearer as quite devoid of attempts at mere literary effect.”²³⁷ To participate in a Higher Life experience did not require a brilliant mind or an education. A childlike faith was the only prerequisite. This of course made the Higher Life experience accessible to almost everyone. Yet, while Keswick avoided theological discourse, the intellectual capacity of Keswick speakers was deemed to be high. One observer noted that:

[The] intellectual level of the addresses has been astonishingly high—I have never seen it equalled, and yet I have never detected one word that was self-conscious or egotistical, or that savoured of intellectual display.

²³⁶ Harford, p. 11.

²³⁷ A.T. Pierson, *The Keswick Movement in Precept and Practice*, p. 58.

There has been no clever talking about holy things, but a lowly, self-forgetting, showing forth of the things themselves.²³⁸

Bible readings and lectures at Keswick were intelligible and personal; they were also void of theological abstractions. This was particularly true when it concerned the Cross. To intellectualize rather than to experience Calvary was, for Keswick, to circumvent the Higher Life experience. Penn-Lewis for example had no desire to “dogmatise or systematise”²³⁹ her understanding of Calvary. Rather, she preferred to pursue “the experimental pathway” to God through Calvary.²⁴⁰ Keswick’s insistence upon a personal encounter with the Cross stood in contrast to the modern repugnance for doctrine of the atonement common in the 19th century church.²⁴¹ Against this Keswick sought to restore the centrality of the doctrine of the atonement by promoting personal experience with the Cross. Robert Pearsall Smith, for example, argued that the doctrine of the atonement had for him “too much of a theological doctrine, rather than the glorious effective reality which I now find it to be, meeting fully every present need of my soul.”²⁴² P.T. Forsyth (1848-1921) along with Jessie Penn-Lewis railed against an intellectual rather than an experiential grasp of Calvary, and thus a personal and vibrant Crucicentrism became a pressing concern not only within Keswick circles, but also within the broader evangelical Movement in the 19th century.²⁴³

Keswick not only avoided an intellectual expression of faith, it also resisted emotional sensationalism. Any rigor, be it intellectual or emotional was viewed as draining and wearisome. It also suggested human rather than Divine control.²⁴⁴ Keswick was about rest. Excessive fervor, like that encountered during the Welsh revival of 1904-1905, was believed to oppose God’s presence and peace. Therefore, unrestrained emotions were seen as a deterrent to faith. Faith, rather than effort, ushered in the Pentecost experience,

²³⁸ Sloan, p. 55.

²³⁹ Gerrard, p. 56.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ Bebbington, p. 156.

²⁴² R. P. Smith, *Holiness Through Faith: Light on the Way of Holiness*, p. 38.

²⁴³ The Stephen Barabas Collection, part of the Wheaton College Archives, offers many examples of the American crucicentrist who were active within the early Keswick and Holiness movement. The most prominent included Charles G. Trumbull, from Yale University, and Gordon Watt, of Massachusetts. See also Bebbington, pp. 14-15.

²⁴⁴ Price & Randall, p. 177.

insisted Keswick. “True Faith has the authority of a fiat, as Christ has taught us.”²⁴⁵ Faith boldly claims what is the rightful possession of every follower of Christ—holiness.²⁴⁶

Therefore, Keswick Conventions sought simplicity in all things. In particular, they avoided the fanfare and marketeering noted among American revivalists. According to Keswick, the Americans placed too much emphasis on big name “evangelists and great choirs with far-famed Gospel singers,”²⁴⁷ without which they anticipate “no divine outpourings.”²⁴⁸ The sensationalism of the American revivals seemed to minimize the simple and ordinary means of God working through ordinary Christians, through faith and rest. In contrast to American revivalists, Keswick avoided extremes that pointed to human power, over and against the power of God. Keswick insisted upon simplicity and modesty, therefore Keswick’s speakers, music, and literature resisted sensationalism of any kind.

Though the Keswick Conventions avoided American marketeering techniques, yet their movement influenced Christian communities around the world. Within a few years Christians from around the globe began attending Keswick Conventions, and many of these began writing, speaking and developing affiliate conventions in their own countries.²⁴⁹ Moreover, Keswick leaders were often invited to address audiences around the world, and their literature was translated in many languages. Women like Jessie Penn-Lewis, addressed audiences in Denmark, Sweden, Russia, India and America. Moreover, Penn-Lewis’s writings were translated into more than 100 languages and dialects. Likewise, men like Macgregor addressed audiences in Canada, while F.B. Meyer led a Convention in Germany. Theodore Jellinghaus and Otto Stockmayer, after attending Keswick Conventions in England, preached the Higher Life message throughout Germany. Andrew Murray, a prolific writer, led Keswick affiliate Conventions in South Africa. By 1907, attendance at the Keswick Convention grew to six thousand and as a result many smaller offshoot Conventions sprung up around the world.

²⁴⁵ A.T. Pierson, *The Keswick Movement in Precept and Practice*, pp. 84-85.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 36-37.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁹ Keswick developed a focus on missions early on. They expressed their dedication to missionary endeavor through the funds they raised to send Keswick-missionaries overseas.

One way Keswick gained influence around the world was through its outreach to Christian pastors. Keswick viewed itself as a “hospital” to weak and ineffective Christians, particularly those in Christian leadership. In 1903 the Keswick Convention established an informal “Ministers Meeting” for pastors interested in practical holiness. According to Dr. Elder Cummings, these meetings were opportunities for self-disclosure and propagation of Higher Life teaching. Ministers were said to:

[B]are their own personal history in order to help their brethren; and many must have gone back to their spheres of ministry, with a new vision of what was possible for them as the servants of Christ.²⁵⁰

Building a nexus of professional clergy was a successful method of creating a global, Higher Life Community. As faith was affirmed and sins confessed, pastors entered “mystical union between Christ and the believing soul.”²⁵¹ Keswick reported “hundreds of ministerial lives have been transformed in influence and power through the reception of the message.”²⁵²

The denominational diversity among the Ministers’ Meetings was viewed as a monument to the power of Keswick’s message. Nothing but the power of Christ could unite leaders of Churches who differed on so many issues. Clergy from High and Low Church traditions along with leaders within the Nonconformists Churches all admitted their failings and also agreed that “the things on which they differ are as nothing compared to the living Unity in Christ.”²⁵³ Pastors affiliated with Keswick began to redefine the Church as a group of Christians who admit their need of power. As in the time of Pentecost, so now, let believers identify not along denominational lines, but according to their experiences in Christ. “Spiritual affinities are felt to be stronger than denominational divergences.”²⁵⁴

²⁵⁰ Sloan, p. 56.

²⁵¹ Harford, pp. 190-191.

²⁵² Ibid., p. 191.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

Just as Keswick sought to influence pastors, it made similar inroads to college students. Outreach to college students began in 1893 with two graduates, Donald Fraser from Scotland, and Robert Wilder from the United States. Together they established the Keswick Student Movement and held meetings for students at yearly Keswick Conventions. This fledgling group became the precursor of the worldwide Evangelical Unions “which attracted students in universities who would forge strong Keswick links.”²⁵⁵

Meetings for students were held each year at the Keswick Convention, where students and young people were said to have embraced

[the] spiritual realities and enduements to which the Convention witnesses, and many of them received a fulness of blessing which has powerfully influenced the whole Student Christian organization to this day.²⁵⁶

Fraser and Wilder’s efforts to draw students into a personal Christian faith eventually led to the development of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship—an international mission organization which continues to this day.

Keswick’s missionary impulse was felt early on, though with some reluctance. While Keswick leaders were initially reticent to incorporate international missions within the scope of the Convention, they began funding missionaries who were already on the field. Over time however, Keswick hosted its own missionaries, provided they agreed with Keswick’s Higher Life teaching.

Similarly, the Keswick’s Ladies’ Meetings allowed for missionary activity almost immediately, though Chairman Bowker initially opposed a separate track for missions, as part of the Keswick Convention. It was the solicitor Reginald Radcliffe, who convinced Bowker of the “paramount claims of the non-Christian world.”²⁵⁷ Bowker agreed to hold a tent meeting for missions and over thirty individuals expressed an interest in missionary service. These events convinced Bowker that missions and consecration “ought to go

²⁵⁵ Price & Randall, p. 118.

²⁵⁶ Harford, p. 208.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 134-135.

together,”²⁵⁸ and thus began the Keswick missionary meetings. By 1887 Hudson Taylor, founder of China Inland Mission, was a featured speaker at Keswick Conventions. His dynamic presence and his passion for missions inspired others to dedicate their lives to foreign missions. By 1888, Keswick hosted its first session focused on missions, and the sum of £860 was raised for foreign work. Within one year, Keswick established a fund to bring missionaries to the Keswick Conventions, but a policy was adopted to support only those missionaries who embraced the “‘Keswick message’ in its fulness.”²⁵⁹

The first missionary to receive Keswick funding was Amy Carmichael, perhaps the best-known missionary of her era. Her successful work in South India was a powerful example of women’s service in foreign lands. Keswick also supported missionaries in countries such as China, Japan, Africa, Canada, Australia, South America, Germany, Sweden, Egypt, New Zealand and Palestine.

As funds for missionary effort increased, Keswick began to pay the expenses of missionaries on furlough, bringing them to Keswick Conventions for rest and renewal. Imparting Keswick’s message of power to exhausted and discouraged missionaries was viewed as integral to the Higher Life cause. Thus, Keswick “proved such a means of blessing”²⁶⁰ in the lives of beleaguered missionaries.

The Missions Meeting was said to be “the best and brightest of all the week,”²⁶¹ in no small part because of the unity evidenced amid the ethnic and denominational diversity of Keswick delegates. For example, there were more than twenty different missionary societies with seventy nationalities represented at the 1909 Missions Meeting.²⁶²

Though Keswick missionaries were some of the brightest anywhere, sheer intelligence was believed practically useless to the Higher Life cause. What was needed, insisted missionaries like Paget Wilkes, were missionaries with power. Referring to the perceived spiritual needs of Japan, Wilkes said that we have “enough intellect among ourselves, but we do need men and women filled with the Holy Ghost.”²⁶³

²⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 136.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 138.

²⁶⁰ Sloan, p. 34.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Ibid., pp. 65-66.

²⁶³ Ibid., p. 66.

The message of Keswick was said to empower the work of missionaries like Miss Stevenson, a member of the Church of Scotland. Stevenson had received a second blessing at the Bridge of Allan Convention, a Keswick affiliate meeting in Scotland. There she encountered not only a call to missions, but also power for service. In documenting her life years later she said:

I believe that neither my health nor my courage would stand the strain of the life I have lived out here were it not for the enabling and keeping power of the Holy Spirit. ²⁶⁴

Testimonies from missionaries like Stevenson underscored the importance of consecration to empower Christian service. It is no wonder that Keswick saw the significance of its message for missionary activity. ²⁶⁵

VIII. The Women of Keswick

Because women's Higher Life experience was initially limited to the home, women's worldwide ministry (in missions, evangelism, in the development of spiritual literature and music, etc.) did not have "the universal and recognized position" ²⁶⁶ it would eventually enjoy. The Ladies' Meetings were considered an ancillary or "after-meeting," where application of Keswick's Higher Life message was made to women's roles within home. Like all events at Keswick, the Ladies' Meetings provided additional opportunities to seek victory over sin. During these meetings, women were compelled to relinquish their willfulness to Christ. One woman was said to have abandoned her "high intellect" for the sake of Christ. ²⁶⁷

Eventually, however, the women of Keswick used the Higher Life teaching to challenge sexist presuppositions. If the victorious life was followed consistently, then women might finally gain victory over Eve's sin, which had hitherto limited their

²⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 75.

²⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 34.

²⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 195.

²⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 197.

influence within the Church. Moreover, young, single women longed for a greater scope for service. Perhaps because of this, women were among the first to serve as Keswick-sponsored missionaries overseas.²⁶⁸ Indeed, it was initially the women of the Keswick Conventions who supported missionary work in prayer, through their finances, and ultimately by giving their lives on the mission field. It was often through women missionaries that individuals around the world embraced the Higher Life teachings of Keswick.

As more and more women embraced the Higher Life message, they gained greater scope of service, as well as established a worldwide reputation as missionaries, authors, hymn writers and speakers. Women such as Jessie Penn-Lewis and Sophia Nugent quickly became renowned for their preaching abilities both within and outside Keswick circles.²⁶⁹ Even so, they were rarely invited to preach on the main Keswick platform. Annoyed by such inconsistency, both Nugent and Penn-Lewis challenged the gender bias of Keswick. It was Penn-Lewis who devoted much of her life to aligning the message of Keswick with the empowerment of women.²⁷⁰

The Holiness revival half a decade earlier extended leadership to women such as Phoebe Palmer. Palmer's visible authority was a model and impetus to the leadership of women like Catherine Booth, co-founder of the Salvation Army. The Salvation Army in turn gave women positions of equality in areas such as evangelism. Recalling the service of Phoebe Palmer, Sophia Nugent challenged the male-dominated leadership of Keswick. Why, she asked, are so few women within Keswick receiving "the commission given by Christ to Mary to pass on his message openly?"²⁷¹ Nugent recalled the fact that women's ministry had been a vital part of the heritage of the Holiness Movement, a tradition Keswick seemed unwilling to adopt.

Women like Phoebe Palmer, Catherine Booth and Hannah Whitall Smith set a precedent for leadership among Holiness women. Keswick could not therefore, deny that the claim of women's service to both men and women was part of the Holiness

²⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 198 & ff.

²⁶⁹ Sloan, p. 71.

²⁷⁰ Penn-Lewis wrote a short, but powerful book in support of women's public ministry. See Penn-Lewis, *The Magna Charta of Woman*. (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany Fellowship, 1975)

²⁷¹ Nugent, as quoted by Price & Randall, p. 149.

experience. After addressing a crowd of six thousand, at the 1875 Brighton Convention, Whitall Smith claimed that her “congregation” was larger than that of Charles Spurgeon.²⁷² However, Keswick leadership was reluctant to expand the sphere of women’s service beyond the home and family.

Yet, women’s attendance at Keswick continued to grow. In fact, the “Ladies’ Meetings” were so well attended, particularly when Penn-Lewis spoke, they required a larger meeting hall in order to accommodate the growing interest. As her influence grew, Penn-Lewis eventually expressed an unwillingness to be confined to the Ladies’ Meetings. In doing so, she challenged “the male hegemony of the Convention platforms.”²⁷³

Jessie Penn-Lewis had distinguished herself as a speaker during the Welsh revival of 1904-5, where the ministry of women was more prominent. Perhaps because of this the trustees of Keswick invited Penn-Lewis to address the weekday Bible Readings, and this meant preaching to men and women. Her influence was becoming hard to ignore.

Penn-Lewis’s popularity at Keswick led to speaking engagements around the world, and throughout Britain including Keswick affiliate Conferences such as the Bridge of Allan Convention, in Scotland. Her favorite topic was always victory through the Cross of Calvary, which elicited both “commitment to the transformed life,”²⁷⁴ as well as criticism for what some thought an obsession with the Cross. The American revivalist, A.T. Pierson, recoiled at what he perceived Penn-Lewis’s theory of self-mortification.²⁷⁵ Yet, the demand for Penn-Lewis was undeniable. Her skills as a preacher led to speaking engagements in places such as India, Russia, Scandinavia and America. Yet, despite her international reputation, Keswick continued to restrict the teaching of women, even women like Penn-Lewis.

In 1908 Penn-Lewis wrote openly to Evan Hopkins.²⁷⁶ She reminded him that her ministry to both men and women went unchallenged for many years. She also informed

²⁷² Price & Randall, p. 149.

²⁷³ Ibid., p. 155.

²⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 156.

²⁷⁵ Ibid. See also Sloan, p. 60 & ff.

²⁷⁶ See Appendix C.

him that “God had set his seal of blessing on her messages.”²⁷⁷ Penn-Lewis also told Hopkins that her teachings on the Cross had influenced and empowered Keswick men and women. Penn-Lewis warned Hopkins that restricting the influence of women would have dire consequences for the Church as well as the Higher Life Movement. If Keswick continued to shut out the ministry of women to “mixed” groups, Penn-Lewis threatened to take her ministry elsewhere.

The leadership of Keswick, however, remained recalcitrant and Penn-Lewis was no longer welcome to address the main platform or mixed gatherings at Keswick Conventions. By 1910, she retreated from Keswick altogether and turned her attention to audiences outside the Keswick Convention. At the same time she began to write books and articles, and she also launched a journal entitled *The Overcomer*. The readership of *The Overcomer* grew to 10,000.

Confronting the issue of women’s service in the Church, Penn-Lewis published a popular defense of women’s equality, entitled *The Magna Charta of Woman*. Published in 1919, *The Magna Charta of Woman* not only offered a biblical and historical basis for women’s leadership, but also attributed the suppression of women to the work of Satan—the ultimate perpetrator of women’s subordination. Penn-Lewis insisted that limiting the equality of women in the Church not only undermines the work of the Cross, it also impedes the fruit of Calvary—unity among believers. *The Magna Charta of Woman* warned against viewing women through Eve’s sin, rather than in women’s victory over sin, through union with Christ. Consecrated women should be included as equal partners with men so that they might infuse ministry with the power of the Cross.²⁷⁸ All around the world, Penn-Lewis concluded, women are gaining equal access to service in the public domain. If the Church continues to prohibit women’s equal service, Penn-Lewis predicts that women will reject a Church that disenfranchises them.

While women were rarely invited to preach from the Keswick platform, they were allowed to speak of their experience of rest and consecration. Keswick’s pedagogy often took the form of personal experience; the distinction between men preaching and women speaking from their experiences may have appeared minimal.

²⁷⁷ Price & Randall, p. 157.

²⁷⁸ Bushnell, as quoted by Penn-Lewis, *The Magna Charta of Woman*, p. 72.

Whether preaching or speaking from personal experience, the message of Keswick centered in overcoming weakness, and this offered new opportunities for women such as Jessie Penn-Lewis, Sophia Nugent—an affiliate with Eaton Chapel in London, and the missionary Lilius Trotter. Both Nugent and Trotter spoke of yielding to God such that the “‘weakest places’ in a woman’s life became strong.”²⁷⁹ Keswick’s message of transformation “generated female confidence.”²⁸⁰

Amanda Smith, a freed slave from America, took the Keswick platform in 1915 by an invitation from the Rev. Hubert Brook. Brook reminded his audience that in 1882, Smith stood on the Keswick platform where she said: “You may not know it, but I am a princess in disguise. I am a child of the King.”²⁸¹ Smith realized that “if she was a child, she was an heir of God!”²⁸² An heir, regardless of gender or race, is entitled to all the privileges of the children of God, including the privilege of engaging their God-given gifts. Smith was also a recognized missionary, and her self-confidence was infectious.

Responding to the call of consecration, Keswick women like Amanda Smith began to exhibit a growing sense of assurance that they too might contribute to Christian service alongside men. One woman admitted that though she longed to yield herself fully to Christ, she resisted self-abandonment for fear that God might “require me to plead his cause before mixed assemblies of men and women: that I can never do.”²⁸³ Perhaps God would ask her to speak to the “intelligent and refined.”²⁸⁴ She finally surrendered to Christ and afterwards she claimed that Christ filled her life “with His own sovereign presence, and enthroned Himself in her heart of hearts.”²⁸⁵ Through Christ she found the confidence to speak to the refined, to the educated, and to men. Her intimacy with Christ gave her the confidence to do what Keswick had discouraged, to speak to men. However, she believed she also received the Baptism of the Holy Ghost through which God gratified the cravings of her soul. She said:

²⁷⁹ Price & Randall, p. 151.

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ Sloan, p. 91.

²⁸² Ibid.

²⁸³ W.E. Boardman, *In The Power of the Spirit: Or, Christian Experience in the Light of the Bible*, p. 111.

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

Every good thing her soul craved ... He unfolded to her as assured in Him, in His boundless wisdom, power, and love ... she found herself rejoicing in the good, acceptable and perfect will of God, and joying in the God of her salvation with unalloyed satisfaction and ineffable delight ... she was called to speak to mixed assemblies of the refined and intelligent, and did it with great delight.²⁸⁶

The experience of consecration was an impetus to the emancipation of women, though Keswick was slow to grasp this. Ultimately, Keswick women were not content with inner experiences alone, as Pierce and Randall point out. They longed for an avenue, an opportunity to use the spiritual power gained from a second experience. Unlike the Keswick Conventions, the mission field offered wider ministry possibilities for women. Thus women were among the first to respond to the call from the mission field. Amy Carmichael was the first missionary funded by Keswick, but others soon followed. Notable women missionaries funded by the Keswick included Pandita Ramabai, who worked primarily in India, and Evangeline and Francesca French who served in China. In 1930, Keswick missionaries Miss Nettleton and Miss Harris²⁸⁷ were martyred in China.

Perhaps the most eminent missionary affiliated with Keswick was Amy Carmichael. Born in Northern Ireland, Carmichael authored 35 books and was one of the best known missionaries of the modern era. Carmichael lived and worked more than fifty years in the land of India. She devoted her life in service to the children of Donavur, rescuing young women and girls from a life of temple prostitution. It is said that Carmichael saved over two thousand children from prostitution, a practice the Indian government tried to keep secret. Carmichael established a home and school for these children who might otherwise have been lived a life of sexual slavery.²⁸⁸

Another revered female missionary was Pandita Ramabai, also one of the most highly esteemed women in India during her era. She had distinguished herself by translating the

²⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 112.

²⁸⁷ Sloan, p. 99.

²⁸⁸ Ruth Tucker and Walter Liefeld, *Daughters of the Church: Women and Ministry from New Testament Times to Present*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Academie Books, 1897), pp. 305-306.

Bible from Greek and Hebrew into Marathi.²⁸⁹ Pandita established the Home of Mercy, which offered aide to the many destitute individuals. In 1898, Ramabai addressed audiences at Keswick on the plight of Hindu women. She spoke of her vision to see 140 million women filled with the Holy Spirit. Ramabai began by saying that she had come “to speak for the 140,000,000 of Hindu women in India.”²⁹⁰ She said:

It was through a missionary from Keswick she had learned, three years ago, how to receive the Holy Spirit, and she knew that apart from that she could never have been of any use. She wanted 1000 Spirit-filled missionaries for India’s women, and she asked for prayer that 100,000 Christian women might be raised up in India to carry the Gospel to their needy sisters. When a request was made that those in the meeting, who were prepared to offer themselves for Missionary Service, should stand, about 200 rose, and the Rev. W.E. Burroughs led in prayer commending them to the Lord, and asking His guidance for them.²⁹¹

Keswick women frequently responded to the call of missionary work, and their achievements were reported each year from the main-platform. News from Carmichael was always well received, even though it often came through a letter. Reading one such letter, Mrs. Streeter said:

Donavur is very closely allied to ‘Keswick,’ not only because two of its missionaries are there, but because Donavur is working out what ‘Keswick’ stands for—practical holiness.²⁹²

Keswick women had distinguished themselves as missionaries in places such as China, India, Africa, Palestine and Persia.²⁹³ ²⁹⁴ Florence Young, for example, worked with the

²⁸⁹ Ibid., pp. 258-268.

²⁹⁰ Sloan, p. 49.

²⁹¹ Ibid., pp. 49-50.

²⁹² Ibid., p. 80.

²⁹³ Ibid., p. 51.

²⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 53.

“South Sea Islanders, at work in the sugar plantations in Queensland”²⁹⁵ and those she won to Christ donated “50 pounds per annum towards the support of missionaries in China.”²⁹⁶ Because of her notable work in Algiers, Lillas Trotter addressed Keswick’s missionary meeting. Her work was said to be one of “faith and prayer, the full results of which are still to be made manifest.”²⁹⁷ Women missionaries preached to mixed crowds overseas, yet the same activity was restricted in Great Britain. Some noted the inconsistency and grew resentful.

The women’s meetings developed their own spirituality, which at times included forms of self-mortification. Living simply, avoiding materialism and “listening to God in times of silence”²⁹⁸ was introduced to the Ladies’ Meetings by Sister Eva, a leader of an order of women within the Lutheran Church in Germany. Many women gave up their precious jewels to fund missionary work, as woman after “woman, young and old, brought up jewelry and placed it on the Bible.”²⁹⁹ Walter Sloan recalled the sacrificial giving of the Ladies’ Meeting in the following way:

Mrs. Penn-Lewis had spoken on the Tuesday about bringing of gifts to the altar, and the need of a cleansing of our inner relationships with one another; on the next day Miss Nugent said a few words as to everything being set right in outward things, expenditure, dress, house-keeping, and so on, when a lady from Germany rose and said that during the previous day’s meetings she had seen a new vision of the heathen world in its darkness, calling for the sending of the Light, she told of how she had already disposed of all her possessions for the Lord’s work; but she had two things left, precious to her because of their associations, then she presented a ring and a clasp. The hand of God was upon the meeting, and one after another went up to the front and laid jewelry, watches, or coins on the table, and this continued until the meeting closed. Sister Eva of

²⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 54.

²⁹⁶ Ibid.

²⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 24.

²⁹⁸ Price & Randall, p. 158.

²⁹⁹ Pollock, p. 125.

Friedenshort, for it was she, went home to prove in a new way the power of God in her own work, which had already been much blessed in Germany. It began to spread out into other lands, and now Sisters from Friedenshort are at work in China, at Dohnavur, in Syria, Central Africa, and Guatemala.³⁰⁰

Sister Eva along with Jessie Penn-Lewis fostered the “depths of spiritual experience at the women’s gatherings at Keswick,”³⁰¹ not simply through a proclamation of holiness by faith, but with good actions of sacrifice on behalf of others.

Summary Remarks

Here we have shown that the Holiness Movement was nourished by the Romantic mood of the day in which crisis overcame process, where mood and milieu overwhelmed debate and dialectic. As a branch from the Higher Life tree, the Keswick Conventions did not concern theology or doctrine. Rather, The Keswick Conventions nurtured a mood, a spirit, a form of spiritual energy that was often articulated through music, poetry, image and metaphor, rather than by theological discourse.³⁰² The Keswick experience was undeniable. Their prolific production of hymns and devotional literature brought renewal and a longing for holiness to Christians around the world. Their inflamed spirits set others on fire.³⁰³ Keswick’s mystical articulation of faith was marketing widely, and as a result the Convention grew in number and influence.

Keswick’s Higher Life message centered on power, accessed through faith. By way of surrender and faith, Keswick promised instantaneous power of the highest mystical state—union with Christ. “I live, yet not I but God in me,”³⁰⁴ was a watch-phrase of the Keswick Convention. Every element of the Keswick experience, the music, the literature,

³⁰⁰ Sloan, p. 60.

³⁰¹ Price & Randall, *Transforming Keswick: The Keswick Convention Past, Present and Future*. (Carlisle, Georgia: OM Publishing, 2000), p. 159.

³⁰² Underhill, *The Essentials of Mysticism and Other Essays*. (J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1920), p. 47.

³⁰³ St. Augustine, as quoted by Underhill, *The Mystics of the Church*, p. 37.

³⁰⁴ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 417.

the personal testimonies, the setting, the absence of erudition and emotional fervor was geared towards one goal, a decision of “rest” through faith. By denying human effort in favor of faith, Keswick suggested that union with Christ could be obtained through a decision, through a crisis. In union with Christ, the soul acquired the fruits of union—power over sin and extraordinary ability for Christian service. In essence, Keswick promoted a mystical Quietism that suggested that through faith and passivity the soul reached the highest mystical state—union. Union, via rest and without purgation, was the shorter path of Keswick’s Quietism. Classical mysticism however, does not omit purgation in the path to union, a discussion we shall pursue in detail further on.

Because Keswick promised union with God, release from sin, and extraordinary power for Christian ministry, the Higher Life message appealed to many moderns, particularly women. Women, in union with God, were finally freed from the stigma of Eve’s sin whereby they also accessed the fruits of union—power for extraordinary service, particularly on the mission field where many women found greater opportunity for service. Ultimately, Higher Life teaching fueled the emancipation of women, though Keswick resisted this.

While scholars admit that Keswick’s path to holiness was one of crisis rather than process—through a decision of faith, they overlook the ways in which Keswick’s shorter path engaged the Quietist’s prayer of simple regard, over and against the arduous path of “classical mysticism.” Historians suggest that Keswick was fueled by the Romantic mood, with its dreamy and inarticulate expression of faith,³⁰⁵ such that Keswick devotees articulate holiness or sanctification not as an arduous process but as a “living union with the living Saviour.”³⁰⁶ Many admit that Keswick used mystical language to describe union and holiness, yet a theological distinction has not been made between Keswick’s Quietism³⁰⁷ to that of the “classical mysticism” of Jessie Penn-Lewis. Therefore, this thesis will now compare the shorter path to holiness promoted by Keswick to the classical mysticism of Jessie Penn-Lewis which engaged the process of purgation.

³⁰⁵ Bebbington, p. 167 & ff, see also Latourette, p. 1168.

³⁰⁶ Bebbington, p. 172. See also page 174 in which Bebbington interprets Keswick’s favored image of “the branch abiding in the vine of Christ,” as organic and Romantic. Yet, this is often an image used of the unitive state, the final stage of classical mysticism.

³⁰⁷ Bebbington, p. 172.

Chapter Two

The Call of Holiness: An Introduction to Jessie Penn-Lewis

We must turn to the finished work of our Redeemer
and thankfully recognize our place with Him upon His cross.³⁰⁸

I. Introduction

The early experiences of Jessie Jones can be characterized as two-edged. On the one hand she was surrounded by vibrant religious and social activities. Raised in a Calvinistic, Methodist family, her grandfather was a minister and her mother was an ardent Temperance worker. She recalled how her home was the great rendezvous point for leaders and ministers as “they passed hither and thither on their Master’s business.”³⁰⁹ Unlike her siblings however, Jessie was never given full physical rein. She was often constrained indoors, or by the seashore because she suffered from tuberculosis.³¹⁰ Her early years offered opportunity to fight illness and fatigue, and perhaps through this Penn-Lewis developed an inner resolve that would serve her in years to come.

Her early years were also opportunities to sample the equality of women. Educated by the Quakers as a child, and empowered by the Holiness Movement as a young woman, Penn-Lewis observed equality for women within the spiritual realm.

Gender equality, an ideal furthered by the Enlightenment,³¹¹ was advanced by the early Keswick Conventions through a spirituality that promised the highest mystical states to anyone, without regard to race, class or gender. Keswick suggested that holiness or sanctification comes through a mystical experience that overcomes human weakness

³⁰⁸ J. Penn-Lewis, *Life out of Death*. (Fort Washington, Pennsylvania: Christian Literature Crusade, 1991), p. 9.

³⁰⁹ Gerrard, p. 1.

³¹⁰ Jones, *The Trials and Triumphs of Mrs. Jessie Penn-Lewis*, p. 5.

³¹¹ Olive Banks, *Becoming a Feminist: The Social Origins of 'First Wave' Feminism*. (Brighton, Wheatsheaf, 1986)

and sin. This was good news for women whose spiritual infirmity was indivisibly linked to the failings of Eve. The writings of female and male mystics were welcomed at Keswick, and women such as Madame Guyon served as model to Keswick women like Jessie Penn-Lewis, before either she or the movement fully understood its possible implications. Eventually, Keswick's version of sanctification was to be seen as defective by Penn-Lewis's standards, as her mystical theology engaged effort and suffering in attaining holiness, whereas Keswick advocated rest through faith as the path to union with Christ.

Women's leadership in the Keswick Conventions had, until the advent of Mrs. Penn-Lewis, been limited to ministry among women alone. After her experience with the transforming power of union with Christ, Penn-Lewis rose to positions of leadership within the early Keswick Conventions. Her leadership gave advanced egalitarian ministry within Keswick through her biblical teachings, her service on platforms around the world, and ultimately through a mystical theology that she claimed transformed her life from frailty to power. She thus emerged as the key advocate and example of the equality of women first within the Keswick Convention, but also within Christian circles around the world.

Penn-Lewis's mystical theology promoted a mystical "death" with Christ whereby men and women alike were united to a Divine source of inordinate power. Drawing upon Scriptures such as Romans 6:6³¹² and Galatians 2: 19b,³¹³ Penn-Lewis suggested that to die with Christ initiated the highest mystical state—union with God.³¹⁴ In union with God souls are freed from sin and endowed with extraordinary power, and they were thus equipped for extraordinary ministry. Union with Christ was therefore the portal to the victorious life in the Spirit, where unity among believers was realized, and the failings of Eve overcome. Thus her vision for an organic unity with Christ made her a crucicentrist of the highest order, a role she shared with P.T. Forsyth whose work she cited.

³¹² "We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin." Romans 6:6.

³¹³ "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me." Galatians 2:19 b.

³¹⁴ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 413 & ff.

Penn-Lewis's egalitarian theology, perhaps forged by her mystical experiences, gave rise to a biblical defense for the equality of women in her *Magna Charta of Woman*. Summarizing the extensive scholarship of the physician-missionary Katharine Bushnell, the *Magna Charta of Woman* also included Penn-Lewis's interpretation of the demonic forces that oppress women, particularly during revival movements. Penn-Lewis believed that the Holy Spirit empowered both women and men throughout history, and such activity is always in harmony with Scripture. Acknowledging the power of Christ to abolish the "old Adam" and the hierarchy of men over women, Penn-Lewis's *The Magna Charta of Woman* sought to harmonize the leadership of Christian women throughout history with Paul's teaching on women.

Penn-Lewis therefore represents a furthering of the liberation of women in ministry, as seen in her international ministry, her writings, her leadership within the Keswick Conventions, and her mystical theology. This chapter will therefore offer an introduction to Jessie Penn-Lewis through a review of her life: her marriage, conversion, ministry, and her struggle to serve as a coworker alongside men in the gospel.

Childhood

Jessie Jones was born in Neath, South Wales in 1861. She was the daughter of an engineer, and the granddaughter of a Calvinist Methodist minister.³¹⁵ Her earliest memories were of great Church meetings and the "constant coming and going of ministers."³¹⁶

At ten years of age Jessie began to recognize the "limitations of her body."^{317 318} Lacking the stamina and physical capacity of other children, she was placed under the careful watch of the school proprietress. The diagnosis was tuberculosis.

She joined a Quaker school at twelve and during the same year her mother inducted her into the Temperance Movement. It was within the context of the Temperance Movement that Jessie began to demonstrate leadership ability. She was made "Chief

³¹⁵ Jones, p. 3.

³¹⁶ Gerrard, p. 1.

³¹⁷ Ibid., p. 4.

³¹⁸ Jones, p. 5

Presiding Officer of the juveniles,”³¹⁹ and at fourteen she was promoted to Honorary Secretary to the Adult Temperance Lodge, a post she held until the age of sixteen.

Marriage

At the age of nineteen Jessie married a member of the Church of England, an English accountant by the name of William Penn-Lewis.³²⁰ Prior to their marriage, Jessie’s uncle warned her fiancé that he was “practically taking an invalid for life!”^{321 322} Undeterred, the couple married and two years later they relocated to Richmond, Surrey—where William was appointed the Borough Accountant.

Shortly after their relocation to Surrey, the young couple joined Holy Trinity Church, where the Rev. Evan H. Hopkins served. Hopkins was known as “the chief mentor”³²³ and “theologian of the early Keswick Conventions.”³²⁴ It was Hopkins who first introduced Jessie Penn-Lewis to the notion of “victory over the bondage of besetting sins.”³²⁵ Because of his influence, Jessie became acquainted with the spiritual and theological foundations of the early Keswick Conventions, with their emphasis on the “Spirit-filled life.”³²⁶ Penn-Lewis was not only attracted to the idea of holiness through spiritual power, she was also impressed by the powerful preaching of Evan Hopkins. When Hopkins preached, she said it was like the “opening of the heaven.”³²⁷

The call to holiness, in preparation for Christ’s imminent return, was part of the premillennialism of the 19th century. The Keswick Conventions therefore “had a ready affinity for premillennialism,”³²⁸ and embraced Adventist teaching at their first Convention. It was under the preaching of Hopkins that Jessie became uncomfortable with the thought of Christ’s return.³²⁹ Eager to know that she was a child of God, Mrs.

³¹⁹ Gerrard, p. 4.

³²⁰ Jones, p. 11.

³²¹ Gerrard, p. 6.

³²² Jones, p. 7.

³²³ Bebbington, p. 168.

³²⁴ J.C. Metcalfe, *In the Mould of the Cross*. (Dorset, England: Overcomer Publications 1947), p. 16.

³²⁵ Jones, p. 33.

³²⁶ Gerrard, p. 8.

³²⁷ Ibid.

³²⁸ Bebbington, p. 152.

³²⁹ Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, pp. 143-167. See also Bebbington, p. 152.

Penn-Lewis began to read the Bible voraciously. She readily acknowledged both her sinfulness and Christ's atonement. Making a rapid assessment of whether she believed her sins were forgiven, she cried, "Lord, I do believe, and ... the Spirit of God instantly bore witness with my spirit that I was a child of God, and deep peace filled my soul."³³⁰

Mr. Penn-Lewis joined his wife's interest in Christian activity, and together they opened their home to the work of Holy Trinity Church. In this new environment, Jessie became assiduous in Christian ministry. She led Bible classes, served as librarian at a Rescue Mission, and she also worked in various capacities within the YWCA Institute in Richmond.³³¹

Despite a prolific ministry in Richmond, Mrs. Penn-Lewis remained dissatisfied with her Christian service. Specifically, it was her apprehension of public speaking that paralyzed Jessie and stalled her development as a leader and speaker. According to her biographer, despite hours of preparation, the idea of speaking to a handful, even in her own home, produced great pangs of fear. Her diary reads:

Those who knew this servant of God in later years were often amazed to hear her speak of the agony of fear with which she used to go forth to speak, even at the smallest meeting, and the hours of hard and painful preparation which preceded such a service.³³²

Penn-Lewis struggled to overcome not only emotional frailty, but her physical weakness as well. Her lung disease always threatened to narrow the scope of her activities. The promise of power, offered by Holiness teaching, must have captured her attention. Eager to study Keswick's promise more thoroughly, Mrs. Penn-Lewis read Madame Guyon's, *Spiritual Torrents*,³³³ which circulated widely within Keswick circles. Through Guyon, Penn-Lewis learned more about the promise of spiritual union, with its subsequent power,

³³⁰ Gerrard, p. 7.

³³¹ Ibid., p. 11.

³³² Ibid., pp. 15–19.

³³³ Jones, p. 16.

joy, and fruitfulness.³³⁴ Penn-Lewis was tired of failure and defeat. She was eager to exchange her restricted life for that which was limitless.³³⁵

II. Called to be Crucified: A Mystical Path

According to Higher Life teaching, the power to become holy in preparation for Christ's imminent return was initiated by a second blessing--a baptism in the Spirit. It was through Hopkins that Mrs. Penn-Lewis first learned of the power available through a second blessing.³³⁶ Hopkins called Christians to seek a second blessing beyond conversion, after which they "no longer would feel themselves ensnared by wrongdoing, for they would have victory over sin."³³⁷

Prompted by the Higher Life imperative to encounter Christ experientially, Penn-Lewis acknowledged her own spiritual ineffectiveness and prayed for a second experience, a baptism in the Holy Spirit. Eager to possess greater effectiveness and composure in Christian service, it occurred to Penn-Lewis that her longing for a second blessing might actually be a desire for self-aggrandizement. Her conscience was sensitive to selfish motives. She asked herself:

Would I be willing to have no great experience, but agree to live and walk entirely by faith on the Word of God? This, too, was a new aspect, but I quickly answered 'Yes.'³³⁸

Penn-Lewis was conscious that her self-orientation not only limited her confidence and her sphere of spiritual service, but more importantly it seemed "truly a horror"³³⁹ to God. The keen awareness of her selfishness led Penn-Lewis through a "deep abasement to the

³³⁴ Ibid., p. 16.

³³⁵ J. Penn-Lewis, *The Leading of the Lord: A Spiritual Autobiography*. (Devon, UK: Gospel Press, 1903), p. 5.

³³⁶ Ibid.

³³⁷ Bebbington, p. 151.

³³⁸ Penn-Lewis, *The Leading of the Lord: A Spiritual Autobiography*, pp. 7-8. See also Gerrard, pp. 24-25.

³³⁹ Gerrard, p. 25.

Blood of Christ for cleansing.”³⁴⁰ Her final abasement or purgation came through a mystical encounter with the Cross, as she later came to realize. Her diary notes:

Then came the still, small voice once more, and this time it was the one little word--- ‘Crucified’. ‘Crucified!’ What did it mean? I had not asked to be crucified, but to be filled.³⁴¹

The call to be purged of self through a mystical crucifixion with Christ provided Penn-Lewis with a personal understanding of Paul’s words in Romans 6: 6-11.³⁴² Classical mysticism suggested that union with God can come only after an awareness, abhorrence, and final shedding of one’s self-orientation,³⁴³ through a “baptism into the death of Christ (Rom. vi. 3).”³⁴⁴ This was the path to abundant life where “the human spirit [is] set free”³⁴⁵ from sin and “the domination of the flesh.”³⁴⁶ To experience mystical union required purification, according to the classical tradition.³⁴⁷ For Penn-Lewis, “Calvary must always precede Pentecost.”³⁴⁸ Her words are not a mere recounting of Christ’s death and resurrection. Rather, they suggest her awareness that a self-orientation impedes union with Christ and must therefore be eliminated in order for her soul to enter the unitive state.³⁴⁹

She thus discovered that while she asked for a second blessing in the Spirit, anticipating a life of power afterwards, she was called instead to a mystical encounter

³⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 25.

³⁴¹ Penn-Lewis, *The Leading of the Lord: A Spiritual Autobiography*, p. 7. See also Gerrard, p. 25.

³⁴² Romans 6:6-11: “We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For whoever has died is freed from sin. But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; Death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.” These verses are central to Penn-Lewis’s Cross Theology.

³⁴³ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 199 & ff.

³⁴⁴ Gerrard, p. 26.

³⁴⁵ Ibid.

³⁴⁶ Ibid.

³⁴⁷ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 198 & ff. See also see Louth, pp. 54-55, King, p. 19 & ff, Jantzen, p. 88 & ff, 121, Egan, *Anthology of Christian Mysticism*. p. xvi, and *Theologia Germanica*, (Chapter 15)

http://www.ccel.org/t/theo_ger/theologia21.htm

³⁴⁸ Gerrard, p. 26

³⁴⁹ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 417.

with the Cross. "The Cross leads to the Spirit, and the Spirit leads back to the Cross,"³⁵⁰ she claimed. God, according to Penn-Lewis, never gives power to "the old creation, nor the uncrucified soul... Satan will give power to the 'old Adam,' but God will not."³⁵¹ Penn-Lewis seemed to both understand and accept the call to purification through a mystical death with Christ. She wrote the following description of her Baptism in the Spirit, her mystical awakening:

Traveling alone in a railway carriage ... it seemed as if suddenly my spirit broke through into the spiritual world and I was caught up into the bosom of the Father. For days afterwards I felt that I was as a babe lying in the Father's bosom with all the world below lying in darkness whilst I was in Light, clear as crystal and so pure... the Lord stood by me and I clasped his very feet ... the room seemed filled with glory, and from this time there broke out upon the 'work' a very river of life from God, which ever since has been flowing on the ends of the earth. It was my Baptism with the Holy Ghost.³⁵²

Like Paul on the road to Damascus, Penn-Lewis believed she was thrust into the invisible, spiritual world, an experience that was difficult to describe. "I have had to weep for joy today, and at His feet no words came, only 'Master'!"³⁵³ For Penn-Lewis, these experiences were "the first drops of the showers which were to become a very river of 'waters to swim in.'"³⁵⁴ Her diary states that her entrance into the spiritual realm was unexpected:

Suddenly and unexpectedly, not in an hour of 'waiting' upon God, nor in a meeting with others seeking the same blessing—but, at the breakfast table in her own home one morning in March, the glory of the Lord was

³⁵⁰ Gerrard, p. 26.

³⁵¹ Ibid., pp. 26-27.

³⁵² Ibid., pp. 27-28.

³⁵³ Ibid., p. 29.

³⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 25.

revealed in her spirit as to Paul on his way to Damascus, with such blinding power that she fled to her own room to fall upon her knees in worship and speechless adoration.³⁵⁵

Months after her mystical awakening, Penn-Lewis experienced a continual “breaking through into the supernatural world,”³⁵⁶ which like St. Francis, left Penn-Lewis weeping uncontrollably at the mention of Christ. Penn-Lewis said:

I lived in a very heaven of joy and light and gladness, and the very Name of Jesus was so sweet that the sound of it caused me to melt into tears, and to be filled with exquisite joy.³⁵⁷

Like many mystics, Penn-Lewis was to experience the classical stages of mysticism: Awakening, Purgation, Illumination, the Dark Night and finally Union with God.³⁵⁸ Each stage along the mystical path drew her further from the visible or sensible world, leading her soul into union with God. At a later point, we will explore the fullest expression of each stage, both in her personal life as well as in her writings. Our purpose here is to become acquainted with Penn-Lewis’s mystical path, as it began during the early years, while she and her husband attended Holy Trinity Church, in Richmond, Surrey.

Her mystical awakening had an immediate impact on her physical health, according to her biographers. Quite abruptly, Jessie was “released from the worst symptoms of her lung disease and people marveled at the power of her voice.”³⁵⁹ As her physical stamina improved, she was able “to labor for the kingdom in ways beyond all expectations.”³⁶⁰ Her mystical encounter translated into an empowered Christian service, “a flood-tide of blessing to others.”³⁶¹ Whether it was through private discussion or formal lectures,

³⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 25-26.

³⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 28.

³⁵⁷ Ibid.

³⁵⁸ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 167.

³⁵⁹ Jones, p. 29.

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

³⁶¹ Gerrard, p. 29.

the presence and power of God were such that scarcely any soul went away untouched by Him. Many passed from death unto life, some being convicted of sin without even being spoken to, and numbers of God's own children were led to fuller surrender of heart and life, and realised 'the exceeding greatness of His power' to save to the uttermost. To come over the threshold of the Institute was to come into the felt presence of God, and thus many stepped down into the river of blessing quite apart from any human instrument. The prayer meetings, always the pulse of any work, were now times of great liberty and rejoicing in free access to the Throne of Grace, though in the past they had often been so lacking in liberty.³⁶²

A continual invasion of "the supernatural world"³⁶³ enabled Penn-Lewis to enjoy both physical health as well as a new-found "liberty and power of utterance ... blessed freedom of power with others never known before."³⁶⁴ In the past she devoted hours to prepare a short speech, only to be gripped by stage fright. Following these extraordinary spiritual encounters however, Penn-Lewis gave extemporaneous speeches "without a tremor of the self-conscious misery of the past."³⁶⁵ Her self-orientation had been subdued following her mystical encounters with Christ.

These early mystical awakenings, therefore, mark a new beginning, a transformation observed not only in her improved health, but also in her ability to speak and engage audiences. One biographer suggests that her "once-dead prayer meetings"³⁶⁶ were now thronged. First through the YWCA Institute, but later around the world, Penn-Lewis attracted crowds in the thousands. The scope of her ministry eventually developed a world-focus and thus Penn-Lewis received invitations to address audiences throughout Scandinavia (1896, 1898), India (1903), Russia (1897, 1898), the U.S. (1900), Canada (1900) and Egypt (1904).

³⁶² Ibid., pp. 29-30.

³⁶³ Ibid., p. 28.

³⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 32.

³⁶⁵ Ibid. See also Jones, p. 29.

³⁶⁶ Jones, p. 25.

Jessie Penn-Lewis's early life was marked by both activism and a lively spiritual life, initially within the context of her Christian family; her Quaker education; and her involvement with the Temperance Movement. As a young married woman Penn-Lewis's spiritual life was shaped by her affiliation with Evan Hopkins, her work at the YWCA and the Rescue Mission. All along, we observe a leader emerging, though not without difficulty. She had very real limitations both physically and perhaps psychologically. Despite her talent as a leader and her openness to spiritual experiences, her effectiveness was stunted not only by tuberculosis, but also by a paralyzing self-consciousness.

While eager for the spiritual power promised by Holiness teaching, Penn-Lewis recognized the need of purification, perhaps an early indication of her vocation as a mystic. Her desire to be holy was followed by a call to the Cross—to purgation. On the Cross, Penn-Lewis found release not only from her paralyzing self-consciousness, but she also received strength to manage her physical weaknesses. Her mystical life enabled her to overcome not only frailty and fear, but also it gave her the means to battle the gender bias she experienced as a successful female leader.

As Penn-Lewis's international ministry grew, she proved not only a success as a speaker and leader, but she also possessed, despite her tuberculosis, an astonishing physical capacity to manage a demanding schedule. In the end, she becomes a spokesperson for power accessed through mystical encounters with the Cross. Her spiritual leadership was a model of women's power. Her mystical theology also redressed the shallow mysticism of the Keswick Convention, as I plan to demonstrate.

III. Domestic and Foreign Evangelism

Throughout her international ministry, Penn-Lewis claimed that her spiritual power emanated from a mystical experience with Christ's death and resurrection. Holiness Divines insisted that a second spiritual experience or baptism in the Holy Spirit was initiated by faith and resulted in an unleashing of power.³⁶⁷ Penn-Lewis, however, was unwilling to separate a baptism in the Spirit from sharing in Christ's passion, a passion that most certainly embraced purgation. Calvary always proceeds Pentecost for Penn-

³⁶⁷ Bebbington, pp. 162-162.

Lewis, and she frequently insisted that the Spirit always leads to the Cross.³⁶⁸ She therefore evoked a fully-bodied mysticism that embraced the path of purgation as well as illumination, both of which she had experienced personally so that “it might be said of her, as Paul said of himself, ‘in me first, for a pattern.’”³⁶⁹

As a prophet of the Cross, she maintained that all spiritual truth, every biblical theme, all that is just, holy and true radiated from the Cross.³⁷⁰ Within Keswick and affiliate Conventions, in her writings, in her correspondence and personal interactions, Penn-Lewis took every opportunity to extol a personal encounter with the Cross as integral to the mystical path.

Here we will highlight Penn-Lewis’s message and the people who received it, noting the receptivity of her audiences, as well as the challenges she posed. Compelling souls to experience the Cross mystically or personally, Penn-Lewis attracted men, women, rich and poor, from many nations. The ultimate outcome of a mystical experience with Calvary was for Penn-Lewis an organic unity within the body of Christ. Therefore, Penn-Lewis’s furthered an egalitarian momentum among her followers and acquaintances, which her letters and diary demonstrate.

Russia and Scandinavia

In 1896 Mrs. Penn-Lewis traveled to Sweden to address delegates from “Norway, Sweden, Finland and Denmark,”³⁷¹ at the first YWCA Scandinavian Conference. At the time of this journey, Penn-Lewis had begun to interpret passages such as Romans 6:6 – 10 through her own spiritual experiences. Hence, in discussion with a British couple, Penn-Lewis suggested that Paul, in Romans 6, promoted a mystical death to self as a prelude to union with Christ.^{372 373} The following day the woman confessed that her life had been too self-focused, and, after giving Penn-Lewis’s mystical interpretation of

³⁶⁸ Gerrard, p. 26.

³⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 147.

³⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 169.

³⁷¹ Ibid., p. 68.

³⁷² Ibid., p. 69.

³⁷³ Underhill, *The Mystics of the Church*, p. 41.

Romans consideration, the woman acknowledged a desire for self-abandonment that Christ might “[work] through her.”³⁷⁴

It is interesting to note that Penn-Lewis’s first trip to Scandinavia combined two themes that remain coupled throughout the remainder of her life—union with Christ and the equality of women. Penn-Lewis’s egalitarian focus emerged during this 1896 Scandinavian YWCA Conference. After delivering her message; “God’s Army of Women Who Publish the Tidings,”³⁷⁵ the delegates confessed that Scripture had been used to exclude them from preaching and teaching activities. Penn-Lewis’s diary reads:

I did not know then that our sisters were yet in the battle of strong prejudice against the handmaidens’ prophesying. Strong prejudice based upon a misunderstanding of Paul’s word of rebuke to the chatterers of his day, the women who would persist in taking questions at the wrong time and in the wrong place; while the same letter he gives instructions to the women who did prophesy and preach, how they should dress when so engaged.³⁷⁶

Penn-Lewis further reasoned that Peter, in Acts 2:17, extended biblical authority to women’s public ministry by associating the events of Pentecost with the fulfillment of Joel’s prophesy.^{377 378} Therefore, Pentecost represented a mystical experience in which Christians, especially women, exchanged their finitude for God’s infinite power. She writes:

In what a matter-of-fact way it is recorded that Philip had four daughters who ‘prophesied’ (Acts xxi.9). How delightful it is to read 1 Cor. 1.27, 28, 29,³⁷⁹ as the list of the ranks of God’s army of women. Yes, thank God,

³⁷⁴ Jones, p. 47.

³⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 50. See also Gerrard, p. 73.

³⁷⁶ Gerrard, p. 73.

³⁷⁷ Acts 2:17b: “I will pour out my Spirit and your sons and daughters shall prophesy.”

³⁷⁸ Gerrard, p. 74.

³⁷⁹ I Corinthians 1: 27-29 “But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him.”

'foolish' enough to depend upon God for their wisdom; 'weak' enough for the endynamiting with God's strength; 'base' enough to have no 'honour' but God's honour'; 'despised' enough to be kept in the dust at His feet, and better than all, 'Not' – 'nothing' enough for God to be everything!³⁸⁰

Once more we observe Penn-Lewis's understanding that self-abnegation is a prerequisite to Divine union. Souls that participate in the self-naughting of Calvary, also receive "God's... everything." As self is held "as dust at His feet" the result is an "endynamiting" of power. While suggesting that the Bible supports women's public ministry, Penn-Lewis also argued that authentic spiritual authority results from an utter dependence, a mystical death to self, through which God's power is accessed.

If self is made as dust, and the soul receives Christ's life in return, then all who are so united to Christ possess an intrinsic equality. Hence the mystical life not only initiates parity between women and men, but it also creates an organic unity among humans.³⁸¹ Viewing Pentecost as the model for harmonious union of Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, Penn-Lewis also noted that the delegates of the first YWCA Scandinavian Convention were "Swedes, Norwegians, Finns, Russians, and English."³⁸² "How like Pentecost,"³⁸³ she observed. The harmony of diverse Christians was thought the outcome of a powerful experience with the Holy Spirit. Keswick Divines took pride in the blurring of denominational and cultural boundaries,³⁸⁴ which lent credibility to their spiritual experiences.

The following year, Penn-Lewis was invited to Russia where she spoke to gatherings of young people, German workers and Russian nobility. Interestingly, her audiences were once again diverse ethnically and economically. In Russia she remained true to her calling as a prophet of the Cross, for she again advanced the experiences of mystical death as a prelude to union.³⁸⁵ Union with Christ will also facilitate unity among believers.

³⁸⁰ Gerrard, p. 74.

³⁸¹ Inge, p. 68.

³⁸² Gerrard, p. 72.

³⁸³ Ibid.

³⁸⁴ Harford, p. 191.

³⁸⁵ Gerrard, p. 109.

Once again, her diary suggested that her message won the praises of her audience. As her listeners showered Penn-Lewis with thanks, she was quick to remind them she had no part “in it at all.”³⁸⁶ Their praise for her service she said, “passed over me to Him, for ‘I am not.’”³⁸⁷ Penn-Lewis mystical theology was unmistakably coupled with expressions of self-abnegation.

Penn-Lewis returned to Russia in 1898. This time secrecy was required as “fines, confiscations, imprisonments, exile, were remorselessly imposed”³⁸⁸ upon any whose religious expression differed from that of the Czars. Penn-Lewis recalled the breakdown of class among her audience. The consequence of a Pentecost experience, when viewed as mystical union, is the unmistakable unity among believers regardless of class, race or gender. She wrote:

The princess and her Christian coachman might be seen kneeling together with others to partake of the Lord’s Supper, the company dispersing afterwards in twos and threes through different exits that it might not be known that there had been a meeting.³⁸⁹

Unity among believers was viewed as a manifestation of mystical union, a union that was often unrecognized by spiritual and political leaders.

Penn-Lewis told a group in Russia that she had been sent to deliver the message of “the revelation of the Risen Christ within the heart.”³⁹⁰ She said, “‘if Christ for you’ has meant such deep work in the Russian Christians, what will ‘Christ in you’ mean?”³⁹¹ The phrase “Christ in you” was undoubtedly intended to imply mystical union.

As Penn-Lewis promoted personal encounters with the Cross, she also suggested that the fullest experience of Calvary is available to all people, regardless of age, acumen or education. In 1898 she urged an audience in Sweden to:

³⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 111.

³⁸⁷ Ibid.

³⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 132.

³⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 133.

³⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 110.

³⁹¹ Ibid.

Learn that there is a need in hearts that only the Cross will meet, and that the Holy Spirit can make *simple* the deepest mystery of the Cross to the youngest believer! Let us not withhold God's secret of the Cross.³⁹²

In the mood of her day, feeling and experience overshadow logic and reason. Even so, here we observe Penn-Lewis engage an earlier understanding of mysticism, also seen in Paul. "For St. Paul it is clear that the most complete form of knowledge would not finally be our own act at all, but an event in which I yield myself to God."³⁹³ Anyone, of any age, is able to surrender to an encounter with the Cross, Penn-Lewis reasoned.

North America and India

In 1900 Penn-Lewis journeyed to North America, where she lectured to a variety of audiences, beginning with a conference for Christian Workers held at Moody Bible Institute. Lecturing to workers, students and faculty at Moody, her theme centered on the negation of self. Penn-Lewis called her audience to disown themselves and to take up their Cross so that they might become like wheat, "sacrificing its life for fruitfulness."³⁹⁴ She drew such a large crowd that "people stood in the doorways, and along the passages"³⁹⁵ to hear her preach. She ended her tour of the United States by speaking to workers in Harlem, and to groups in New York and Philadelphia. Penn-Lewis's North American tour evidenced a consistent theme: Death to a self as the pathway to an abundant life in Christ.

Despite a chronic illness, the stress of international travel, a heavy lecture schedule coupled with her innate fear of public speaking, Penn-Lewis ventured to India in 1903. In India, she offered "instruction and reproof"³⁹⁶ to those who exalted in spiritual experiences to the exclusion of encountering the Cross. Therefore, Penn-Lewis called her audiences to resist spiritual experiences that are based on "the power of the flesh and the

³⁹² Ibid., pp. 159-160.

³⁹³ McIntosh, p. 69. Thomas Aquinas said: "Divine things are not named by our intellect as they really are in themselves, for in that way it knows them not." T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Pars I, Q. 13. I

³⁹⁴ Gerrard, p. 185.

³⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 186.

³⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 205.

‘wisdom of man.’”³⁹⁷ True spirituality, according to Penn-Lewis, is to know the Cross with its self-emptying. Spiritual experiences, in and of themselves are powerless to displace “the old life of nature and continually ‘making to die’ its inclinations and habits (Rom. viii.13; Col. ii. 20-23; iii. 1-4.)”³⁹⁸ While the Holiness Movement at the turn of the century stressed the centrality of spiritual experiences, many in Keswick were shaped by the experiences of mystics and quietists, as this was part of the growing Romantic mood.³⁹⁹ Yet, Penn-Lewis expressed concern for the priority given spiritual experiences to the exclusion of an experience with the Cross. Writing from India Penn-Lewis said:

All error is ‘truth pressed to extreme’ ... I feel most deeply that the ‘experimental’ side has hidden the power of the Divine side ... I have seen the disastrous confusion and despair produced by preaching an experience instead of the work of Christ.⁴⁰⁰

One of her achievements while in India was to complete a small booklet entitled, *The Word of the Cross*. *The Word of the Cross* won such enormous popularity that the Foreign and British Bible Society requested 100,000 copies for distribution.⁴⁰¹ *The Word of the Cross* was reportedly the first gospel booklet to reach Tibet. Oswald Chambers wrote to Penn-Lewis in 1903, saying “Your Cross of Calvary is pre-eminently of God ... Your book teaches clearly and grandly what the Spirit witnesses to in the Bible and in our hearts.”⁴⁰²

Keswick and Llandrindod Wells Conventions

In addition to her international lectures, Mrs. Penn-Lewis was active in the Keswick Conventions of 1899, 1901, 1903, and offshoot Keswick Conventions such as the Bridge of Allan in Scotland (1901), and the Llandrindod Wells Conventions in Wales (1902,

³⁹⁷ Ibid.

³⁹⁸ Ibid.

³⁹⁹ Bebbington, p. 171.

⁴⁰⁰ Gerrard, pp. 205-206.

⁴⁰¹ J.C. Metcalfe, *In the Mould of the Cross*. p. 65.

⁴⁰² Gerrard, p. 220.

1904, 1927). Some argue that Penn-Lewis was perhaps the most gifted female speaker involved with the Keswick and affiliated Conventions.⁴⁰³

In 1896, the Rev. J. P. Davis, D. Wynne Evans and thirteen other Church leaders determined that God was leading them to hold Convention in Wales “for the deepening of spiritual life.”⁴⁰⁴ Before proceeding, they decided to “go and see Mrs. Penn-Lewis and confer with her.”⁴⁰⁵ She agreed to assist, and in 1903 J. S. Holden, Charles Inwood, F.B. Meyers, and Jessie Penn-Lewis led the first Llandrindod Wells Convention. Penn-Lewis addressed audiences again at Llandrindod Wells in 1906. Her last public appearance was at the 1927 Llandrindod Wells Convention. The Rev J. R. Morgan described Penn-Lewis’s final lecture in these words:

When Mrs. Penn-Lewis arrived at Llandrindod, we saw how weak and frail she was ... to take her little delicate hand into yours, and feel ... deep sympathy and real fear that one so frail would undertake any duty at all. However, her ministry at Llandrindod was really marvelous ... She spoke on schism in the Body of Christ, and her words were one great intense appeal for sympathy between the members of the body of Christ one for another... unable to walk ... we were amazed to hear how her voice filled the tent so that some twelve hundred people heard her distinctly ... Mrs. Penn-Lewis came to speak at our little church on the Sunday following the convention. I was distressed to see her looking more like an invalid than one come to undertake a service... but when I led the congregation in the chorus, ‘There is power in the Blood of the Lamb’ I saw her stirring! She pulled herself together, and in her characteristic way threw off her cloak and walked up to the platform. ‘We are made nigh by the Blood, we have access to God by the Blood, we are redeemed by that precious Blood, we enter into the Holiest by the Blood... The Blood cleanses from sin, the Cross delivers from the power of sin ... The Cross of Christ is the

⁴⁰³ Bebbington, p. 175.

⁴⁰⁴ Gerrard, p. 221.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid.

instrument God uses to deal with the Flesh, the old nature, the Adam life. God does not cleanse the flesh, He condemns it to death.'.. She spoke with wonderful power, holding the whole congregation in intense interest ... She pleaded ... for over an hour, but for the last quarter of an hour her voice was growing weaker, and weaker, until it became almost inaudible ... She closed her address in prayer ... her spirit seemed to rise, and she appeared as strong as ever. We shall never forget that visit.⁴⁰⁶

After her lecture, Penn-Lewis nearly collapsed and her biographer said that she gave "the last drops of the sacrifice"⁴⁰⁷ to the Christians of Wales. One observer noted that God had answered her own prayer: "So then death worketh in us but life in you. (2 Cor iv.12)." ⁴⁰⁸ In her last sermon, Penn-Lewis implored her audience to grasp that the power of the Cross not only justifies, but it also eliminates sin in order that unity among believers might become a living reality. Again, we note the egalitarian and corporate impulse of her mysticism; Union to Christ imparts organic union among believers.

For over forty years Jessie Penn-Lewis exalted a mystical death with Christ as the portal to spiritual power. Therefore, Penn-Lewis's audiences included "factory girls, Conference delegates, Military men, fashionable ladies, Christian workers of all kinds."⁴⁰⁹ Her ultimate mission was to articulate a theology that not only offered liberation from weakness, sin and oppression, but also united souls to Christ as well as to each other. Therefore, Penn-Lewis's notion of mystical union was organic in so far as it was a "unity of the individual soul with the heavenly Christ"⁴¹⁰ as well as a unity among all people. "We being many, are one body in Christ, and severally members of one another."⁴¹¹ During her last sermon, preached on the brink of death, Penn-Lewis's mystical theology pleaded for spiritual equality not only of class, but of gender as well. Perhaps for this reason, Keswick "was seen as a landmark in the emancipation of women,

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid., pp. 300-303.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 304.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 75.

⁴¹⁰ Inge, p. 68.

⁴¹¹ Romans 12:5 as cited by Inge, p. 68.

at least in religious spheres.”⁴¹² Prior to Keswick, few women delivered the gospel message in mixed meetings. Penn-Lewis, deemed “the most accomplished lady speaker associated with Keswick,”⁴¹³ provided a biblical basis for the public ministry of women that was rooted in a mystical theology. Her mystical theology also provided her with unusual strength that astonished many.

IV. Publications

In addition to her busy speaking schedule, Penn-Lewis authored over thirty books and countless booklets, articles and tracts.⁴¹⁴ Her literature was published in many languages and dialects, and several have undergone seven or more editions. In 1909, Penn-Lewis established *The Overcomer*, a publication that focused on revival work, though it eventually narrowed its focus to the demonic forces that opposed revival. *The Overcomer* remains in print today.⁴¹⁵ According to her biographer, approximately 45,000 excerpts of *The Overcomer* circulated among Christian workers and missionaries world-wide. Writing from Persia, one missionary wrote the following in appreciation of Penn-Lewis’s journal:

I can testify that I count my great spiritual victories over spiritual hosts of wickedness ... from the day when I learnt ... to deny ‘ground’ ... to the devil and his agents; to re-assert my freedom from the power of sin ... and to reaffirm my trust and confidence in the law of the Spirit of life in Christ ... And--I am not the only one who has profited by the Message of the ‘Overcomer’ in Persia.⁴¹⁶

⁴¹² Bebbington, p. 175.

⁴¹³ Ibid.

⁴¹⁴ Penn-Lewis was fond of revising her earlier works under new titles. I have attempted to collect as many of these as possible. For a complete list of her works refer to Appendix C.

⁴¹⁵ Michael Metcalfe, son of J.C. Metcalfe with whom Penn-Lewis worked, now oversees the publication of *The Overcomer* through The Overcome Literature Trust, Ltd., located at 10 Bydemill Gardens, Highworth, Wiltshire, SN6 7BS, England. See also <http://www.freedomsing.com/overcomer/>.

⁴¹⁶ Gerrard, p. 265.

The Overcomer journal was published quarterly, and maintained a worldwide readership.⁴¹⁷ Serving as editor, Penn-Lewis published her journal during the years of 1909-1914 and 1920-1927. While publication of *The Overcomer* was halted at the time of World War One, Penn-Lewis sent subscribers "Occasional Papers," which explored the modern disdain for the doctrine of the atonement.⁴¹⁸ Penn-Lewis resumed publication of *The Overcomer* in 1920, with a shift in focus. Apostasy, demonic activity, and contempt for the Cross became the primary concerns of the *Overcomer* in the post-war years.⁴¹⁹ In addition to her own publications, Penn-Lewis also contributed to other Christian journals including the *Christian Press*, *Our Onward Way*, and *The Christian*.⁴²⁰

Upon the request of her audiences, Penn-Lewis began publishing her lectures.⁴²¹ Her mystical theology was a common theme throughout her books and booklets. In the preface to an early publication, *The Pathway to Life*, Penn-Lewis states:

The booklet has been written to interpret in some degree the death with Christ on the subjective side of the Holy Spirit's dealings with the soul. There is no desire to dogmatize or systematize but only to show the main experimental pathway.⁴²²

Brynmor Pierce Jones, a scholar of the Welsh revival and author of *The Trials and Triumphs of Mrs. Jessie Penn-Lewis*, astutely suggests that Penn-Lewis's literature was not "intended for the ordinary believer."⁴²³ According to Pierce Jones, her work "was designed to meet the needs of dedicated disciples and witnesses."⁴²⁴ While Pierce Jones provides a stellar summary of her work, and while he readily acknowledges the mystical

⁴¹⁷ Ibid., p. 262.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid., p. 271 & ff.

The most extensive collection of Penn-Lewis publications is the National Library of Wales. Other locations which offer a substantial number of Penn-Lewis's work include: The Donald Gee Centre for Pentecostal and Charismatic Research, Mattersey Hall, an Assemblies of God college in Doncaster, England; The Wheaton College Archives, the Stephen Barabas Collection; the British Christian Literature Crusade, in Alresford, Hants, England; The *Overcomer* Literature Trust, Wiltshire, England, and Biola University Library, La Mirada, California.

⁴²¹ Jones, p. 60.

⁴²² Penn-Lewis, *The Pathway to God*, as quoted by Jones, p. 61.

⁴²³ Jones, p. 219.

⁴²⁴ Ibid.



quality operative in Penn-Lewis's *Song of Solomon*, *Thy Hidden Ones*, and *The Story of Job*,⁴²⁵ he does not explore either the anatomy of her mysticism, or the way in which her mystical theology shaped not only her feminism, but also her understanding of spiritual warfare and revival work.

Similarly, David Bebbington, a noted historian, exhibits the same oversight. Bebbington provides helpful insights into the background of the 19th century in which Keswick developed, and he notes that as an "early twentieth-century holiness advocate"⁴²⁶ Penn-Lewis taught "that there must be a decisive experience for the believer of crucifixion of the self."⁴²⁷ Yet, he fails to see that the crucifixion of self is rooted in the classical mystical tradition. Penn-Lewis's biographers (Gerrard and Pierce Jones) as well as a key biographers of the early Keswick Conventions (Bebbington), all fail to note the centrality of her mysticism which directed her life and literature. When scholars do acknowledge her mystical impulse, they neglect to provide a comparative or theological study of her mystical theology.

Pierce Jones, perhaps the most thorough Penn-Lewis biographer, suggested that her work, *The Song of Solomon* was a

God-inspired answer to our confusions and disobediences and to our longings to enter that Garden and to seek intimacy with that beautiful Bridegroom standing there. Any failure to find the Great Lover signified a loss or lack of that enriching experience.⁴²⁸

Such a description of Penn-Lewis's mystical literature fails to identify her works as part of the classical mystical tradition. Nor does it provide insights into Penn-Lewis's specific contributions to mysticism. Pierce Jones does not appear to observe that union with God was the final climax and the just reward of an arduous mystical path, which takes the soul through a crucifying, transmutation of self—a journey Penn-Lewis herself experienced.

⁴²⁵ Ibid., p. 220.

⁴²⁶ Bebbington, p. 16.

⁴²⁷ Ibid.

⁴²⁸ Jones, p. 220.

Pierce Jones offers greater insights in his summary of Penn-Lewis's *The Story of Job*, which he says is a description of the path to intimacy with God through suffering. *The Story of Job*, Pierce Jones tells us, clearly reflects "her own experiences"⁴²⁹ of suffering. Both statements are not only true of mysticism as a whole and of Penn-Lewis's personal path of purgation, but also clearly reflect the core purposes of the mystical path—the transmutation of self in preparation for union with God.

Though Pierce Jones and Gerrard indicate the influence mystics such as Guyon and Fénelon had on Penn-Lewis,⁴³⁰ they left the mysticism central to Penn-Lewis generally unexplored. There seems to be inadequate scholarship on Penn-Lewis's mysticism by both Keswick and Penn-Lewis biographers. Moreover, no one has explored in detail, Keswick's path to holiness as a deviation of classical mysticism, a deviation that the mystical theology of Jessie Penn-Lewis appears to redress.

V. Gender Prejudice

Penn-Lewis's egalitarian concerns are informed, it seems, by her mystical theology. As souls enter mystical union with Christ they are joined organically to one body, with one head—Christ. Therefore, the members of Christ's body, whether Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female, transcend hierarchies associated with "self," as "self" dies with Christ on the Cross. In union with Christ, the soul, now freed by the limitations of self accesses endless power, and indeed gains new perspectives on spiritual matters. Life in the spiritual realm is uninhibited by the limitations of "self," and the soul receives an enlightened understanding of the Scriptures, and fresh insights into issues such as the subordination of women. Empowered by mystical union with Christ, Penn-Lewis offered a biblical defense for her egalitarian theology, in concert with Katharine Bushnell. Both women suggest that the Bible has been misinterpreted by generations of expositors and translators. Just as the Church has overlooked the fullest message of the Cross, so too the Church has missed God's real message concerning the equality of women in Christian work, an equality accomplished by Christ's completed work on Calvary.

⁴²⁹ Ibid., p. 221.

⁴³⁰ Ibid., p. 61. See also Gerrard, p. 34.

Penn-Lewis's egalitarian consciousness was not only steeled by the gender prejudice she had encountered, but also by the suppression of Christian women she met throughout her life. During Penn-Lewis's first international tour to Sweden, she witnessed the devastation of gifted women whose ministries were diminished by a sexist reading of the Scriptures. Penn-Lewis opposed gender bias through her books and lectures, and in her confrontation with the leaders of Keswick.

For example, in 1901 overt prejudice prevailed against Mrs. Penn-Lewis during the Scottish Keswick, at the Bridge of Allan. While many expected Penn-Lewis to address mixed meetings as was her custom in many countries, in Scotland she was invited to speak only to the Ladies' Meetings. However, the man scheduled to address the general meeting "failed to appear,"⁴³¹ and Penn-Lewis was asked to preach in his place. As she ascended the platform, Penn-Lewis was conscious of her calling as "a crucified messenger of the crucified Lord."⁴³² She decided to preach to the ministers and "white haired Divines"⁴³³ on the need for a "deep circumcision of the heart."⁴³⁴ Perhaps her intention was to provide these leaders with a pride-mortifying encounter with the Cross that they might forever abandon gender prejudice and receive women as equal members of Christ's body. So powerful was her sermon that the man who had convened the Scottish Conventions wrote in appreciation to Penn-Lewis saying:

I am your son in this service. You have seen what I did not see, and believed for what I did not think to be possible, and have cheered and helped me when all was dark and blank ... It was like the 'mighty ordination of the pierced hands.' Please take me still as one of your burdens to the Master's feet... It is difficult to explain the influence of your teaching on my mind, but somehow it is teaching that teaches, and I find that few do that now.⁴³⁵

⁴³¹ Gerrard, p. 194.

⁴³² Ibid., p. 195.

⁴³³ Ibid.

⁴³⁴ Ibid.

⁴³⁵ Ibid., pp. 196-197.

Another leader with a self-professed prejudice against women's preaching admitted to her afterwards that he did not believe it was possible for God to use women as God had used her. In response, Penn-Lewis reminded him that "God never does use a woman like that, or a man either! God only uses the new creation."⁴³⁶ Her implication was obvious. Gender is irrelevant when souls are united to Christ. The failings once associated with women are overcome as women are mystically united to their Divine Lord.

During the 1902 Bridge of Allan Convention, Mrs. Penn-Lewis was again asked to speak to the Ladies' Meetings. Once more, her lectures were so evidently filled with "the Presence and Power of God that ... numbers of the Ministers came into the 'Ladies' Meetings' to share in the blessing."⁴³⁷ Following her lecture, Penn-Lewis was asked to explain "the deep things of God"⁴³⁸ to the educated divines in attendance. Those who sought to limit Penn-Lewis's lectures to the Ladies' Meetings were the first to solicit her understanding of the Cross, once they heard her preach.

Some accused the Keswick Conventions of doctrinal errors and excessive emotion because they permitted women such as Penn-Lewis to teach at mixed audiences at Keswick and affiliate events such as the Welsh Convention. Welsh revival scholar Eifion Evans suggested that the Scriptures forbade the public ministry of women, and thus the failure to enforce such prohibitions led not only to a weak doctrinal foundation, but also to the excessive emotions noted in the Welsh revival of 1904. Evans argued that the teaching of Scripture

clearly defined limits to the public ministry of women in the life of the church ... At the time of the (Welsh) revival this Scriptural norm (the prohibition of the public ministry of women) was not always observed. Its omission left the movement open to emotional excesses and to a related failure in providing adequate doctrinal foundations.⁴³⁹

⁴³⁶ Ibid., pp. 266-267.

⁴³⁷ Ibid., p. 196.

⁴³⁸ Ibid.

⁴³⁹ Eifion Evans, *The Welsh Revival of 1904*. (London: Evangelical Press, 1969), pp. 175-176.

In contrast to Evans, J. C. Pollock maintained that it was men rather than women who displayed an excessive emotional element. Critiquing the Welsh revival, Pollock stated that during

the young Men's Meeting ... someone 'began to cry out' in such paroxysm of agony that no man, except 2 or 3 of that great number, dare lift his face from his hands to see who this sufferer was.⁴⁴⁰

Pollock contrasted the emotional display among the men to the Ladies' Meeting under the leadership of Jessie Penn-Lewis. Her sessions were reportedly less fervid, less melodramatic and more balanced.⁴⁴¹

According to Piece Jones, it was Penn-Lewis's powerful sermons and passion for the Cross that led to the criticism by "conservative gentlemen who queried whether there should be any room for a woman's ministry, except in the ladies' meetings."⁴⁴² As a result of these criticisms, in 1909 the Trustees of Keswick began to limit the scope of Penn-Lewis's public ministry. In defense of her of freedom to serve alongside men, Penn-Lewis wrote the following letter, and shortly thereafter withdrew entirely from the Keswick Conventions.⁴⁴³ She wrote:

It will be a very grave importance to the whole Church of Christ if Keswick officially sets its face against women speaking to mixed audiences when, at this time, God is using women in a very marked way. The whole current of life moving through the spiritual Church is towards clear and open ground for women in the work of God. I have been invited to take a service in one of the chapels and I have no alternative but to accept. I cannot stay in line without a sacrifice of principle and disobedience to God. The Lord has set the seal of Blessing on my

⁴⁴⁰ Pollock, p. 124.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid., p. 125.

⁴⁴² Jones, p. 196.

⁴⁴³ See Appendix C.

messages at Keswick, where many have come up to receive the message not the messenger. Out of loyalty I must state the people's wishes.⁴⁴⁴

She also warned the leaders of Keswick that gender bias, such as she had experienced from the leaders of Keswick, would ultimately quench God's renewing of the Church. Believing that opposition to women's public ministry was a result of demonic activity and shallow exegesis, she promoted her Cross Theology as an antidote.⁴⁴⁵ Penn-Lewis believed that Satan and the forces of evil are unable to harm those in union with Christ.

While Penn-Lewis's Cross Theology received a warm welcome from many quarters, she had her critics as well. Her views of sanctification engendered fierce opposition and many resented the prominence she gained as a woman. When doors closed either because of her gender or her message, Penn-Lewis was not rebuffed. She found other venues for her message. Perhaps her courage was rooted in her belief that in the revivals of the late 19th century, as with the early Church, the Spirit of God is no respecter of persons.

VI. Introduction to Cross Theology

The victorious life, for Penn-Lewis, was acquired through an experience of death, a mystical mortification with Christ on the Cross. Through this process the soul is released from enslavement to self and is freed to enjoy union and the fruits of union—power over sin. The Church throughout history has failed to apprehend the fullest meaning of the Cross, Penn-Lewis lamented. While some turn to the Cross solely for salvation, Penn-Lewis believed it was her mission to unveil the power of the Cross to unite souls mystically to Christ's death and resurrection, the only path to a victorious life.

Penn-Lewis's Cross Theology eventually came into conflict with those in Keswick who asserted the shorter path of the Quietist, as means to sanctification. Whereas the Holiness Movement believed that faith and rest initiated union with God, Penn-Lewis insisted that union is the fruit or consequence of a soul that has undergone a mystical death and a purgation and transmutation of self. To be united with Christ is also to share

⁴⁴⁴ Jones, p. 197.

⁴⁴⁵ Gerrard, p. 267.

in Christ's passion. Therefore, Cross Theology embraced the path of purgation as an unavoidable process in the path towards union. Purgation is necessary because without the stripping and negation of "self-life," or "Adam life," union with God is impossible. Moreover, to seek spiritual or Pentecostal experiences without including the Cross was spiritual folly, and led to a rise in demonic activity, Penn-Lewis argued.

Power Through Death

Penn-Lewis, in sympathy with Keswick divines, agreed that too many Christians have failed to experience the fullest victory of Calvary. Where she went beyond them was in denying that faith and passivity mediate the highest mystical states, for she drew on the resources of the classical mystical tradition by suggesting that the purgative path is required in order for the soul to enter the unitive state.

Despite these differences, both Keswick and Penn-Lewis agreed that the power of Calvary extended beyond justification. Both believed that souls are identified with Christ as our substitute, whereby sins are forgiven. Keswick and Penn-Lewis therefore sought power over sin. However, for Penn-Lewis, solidarity with Christ's death was the means whereby souls are separated from the power of sin. Beyond that, in mystical union with Christ we follow Christ who was the first of many to overcome sin. Therefore, an experience of the Cross imparted not only solidarity with Christ's righteousness, but also solidarity to Christ's holiness—his power over sin.⁴⁴⁶ She wrote:

The Cross and the Fall exactly and perfectly correspond- the one as the remedy for the other. First, by the death of the Saviour on the Cross ... sin had to be put away, and the way made possible for the Holy God to pardon the sinner, and (2) then the sinner must be given a way of escape from the bondage.⁴⁴⁷

⁴⁴⁶ Penn-Lewis, *All Things New*. (Fort Washington, Pennsylvania: Christian Literature Crusade, 1970), p. 44.

⁴⁴⁷ Penn-Lewis, *Soul and Spirit*. (Leicester, England: The Overcomer Book Room, 1913), p. 10.

Too often the Church has failed to understand that organic union with Christ also unites the soul to Christ's power over sin. Cross Theology, in its fullness, was the call to follow the mystical path through purgation and into the unitive state whereby deliverance from the power of cancelled sin is realized.⁴⁴⁸ Penn-Lewis wrote:

It is one thing to have your sins blotted out, it is another thing to be delivered from their power so that you are not under their mastery. You may get rid of the guilt of sin, the burden of sin, without understanding how to get the victory over the power of sin... So also the way of victory over and freedom from sin is not only to believe that the Lord Jesus Christ bore our sins on the Cross, and that God will, on that account, forgive them ... you must also understand that you yourself died with Jesus Christ on the Cross... It is just as if you yourself were on Calvary's Cross, looking at your old life with a gulf of death between you and it.⁴⁴⁹

The deeper meaning of the Cross was a message Penn-Lewis believed the apostle Paul had received through special revelation,⁴⁵⁰ a message that God had also revealed to her. In her view, Paul's notion of the Cross was like her own, a call to the mystical path, a journey that included the "crucifixion of our 'old man' with Christ."⁴⁵¹ To die mystically with Christ is to embrace the "two-fold message of the Cross,"⁴⁵² that of sanctification as well as justification. Again, drawing on Paul, she wrote:

This is why the Apostle so remarkably interchanges in Romans 6 the Magna Charta of the Church of Christ- the words 'HIS DEATH' and 'WE DIED', as if it meant one and the same thing, which spiritually it does in

⁴⁴⁸ Penn-Lewis, *The Centrality of the Cross*. (Fort Washington, Pennsylvania: Christian Literature Crusade, 1950), pp. 14-15, see also p. 9. See also Dayton, pp. 87-108.

⁴⁴⁹ Penn-Lewis, *The Work of the Holy Spirit*. (Fort Washington, Pennsylvania: Christian Literature Crusade, 1992), pp. 28-29.

⁴⁵⁰ Penn-Lewis, *The Cross of Calvary and its Message*. (Dorset, England: The Overcomer Literature Trust, 1909), pp. 82-83.

⁴⁵¹ Penn-Lewis, *How Deep Shall the Cross Go?* (Bournemouth, England: Overcomer Book Room, 1923), p. 2.

⁴⁵² *Ibid.*, See also Penn-Lewis, *The Centrality of the Cross*. p. 83. See also Underhill, *The Mystics of the Church*, p. 41.

God's marvelous plan of redemption ... Christ's death- 'His death'- set up in the central depths of the inner man as a barrier, like the whirling sword at the gate of Eden, between you and the tyrant 'Sin'. You have 'died to sin,' and by the powerful application of the Holy Spirit in response to your faith in the working of God (Col. ii.12), you are set free to 'live unto God.'⁴⁵³

Romans 6: 5-6⁴⁵⁴ functioned as the mystical Magna Charta⁴⁵⁵ of Cross Theology because it described a death and resurrection experience that Penn-Lewis had herself undergone. She made it her life mission to beckon souls to die with Christ, so that they might reap the benefits of union with the Lord who conquers all.⁴⁵⁶ By dying with Christ, sinners enter union and fully "break with sin,"⁴⁵⁷ and embrace "freedom from the results of the Fall through the recognition of the old creation crucified with Christ."⁴⁵⁸

Through purification with Christ on the Cross, souls are separated from their carnal life. As the soul identifies with Christ's death on the Cross,⁴⁵⁹ Christ terminates the old order- a fleshly order, and initiates life in the spirit.⁴⁶⁰ In the writings of Paul we observe that

there is a union with Christ's death which admits us into a new sphere of life, whence we look back upon the Cross as a gulf fixed between us and the past.⁴⁶¹

⁴⁵³ Penn-Lewis, *How Deep Shall the Cross Go?* pp. 3-4.

⁴⁵⁴ Romans 6:5-6: "For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin."

⁴⁵⁵ Penn-Lewis, *Soul and Spirit*, p. 10.

⁴⁵⁶ Penn-Lewis, *More Than Conquerors*. (Copy provided by the B.L. Fisher Library, Asbury Theological Seminary, Asbury, Kentucky), pp. 5-6. See also Bebbington's survey of the different ways Romans 7 was interpreted by Calvinists, Methodists, and Holiness divines, p. 172.

⁴⁵⁷ Penn-Lewis, *More Than Conquerors*, p. 5.

⁴⁵⁸ Penn-Lewis, *All Things New*, p. 51.

⁴⁵⁹ Penn-Lewis, *The Climax of the Risen Life*. (Bournemouth, England: The Overcomer Room, Publication date is uncertain, though 1909 is approximated), p. 23. See also pp. 14-15.

⁴⁶⁰ Penn-Lewis, *Much Fruit*. (Fort Washington, Pennsylvania: Christian Literature Crusade, 1903), p. 31. See also Penn-Lewis, *The Cross of Calvary and its Message*, pp. 82-83. See also Penn-Lewis, *The Centrality of the Cross*, p. 7.

⁴⁶¹ Penn-Lewis, *The Cross of Calvary and its Message*, p. 96.

Penn-Lewis's Cross Theology concerned power, to be sure,⁴⁶² and many within Keswick eagerly sought power through spiritual experiences, which in Penn-Lewis's opinion was an erroneous pursuit. Just as the Church overlooked the fullest message of the Cross, at the same time the Church had overlooked the purpose of spiritual experience, she argued. While many Christians longed for spiritual encounters similar to those of Pentecost, Penn-Lewis insisted that the purgative path of the Cross must precede a mystical resurrection or an outpouring of Pentecostal power. The highest mystical states are dependent upon purification or mortification. Yet, in their hunger for spiritual power, some have circumvented the need for "a deep work of the Spirit, in the old Adam life being nailed to the Cross, and rendered inoperative."⁴⁶³ According to Penn-Lewis, spiritual power is not only unavailable to those seeking solely after power through spiritual experiences, power is likewise inaccessible to those who know only forgiveness of sins through the Cross.⁴⁶⁴ Christians need to recognize the personal element of the Atonement-- that they died with Christ. To encounter transcendent power in union with Christ, is to first die with Christ.⁴⁶⁵ She wrote:

This is the position and privilege which the Cross is purposed to bring us into. Not only identification with Christ in His death, as a judicial fact, but a practical life where the 'I' is kept 'in the place of death', so that there results such a union with the Risen Lord... As Christ becomes our centre, and the 'I' is yielded to the Cross, the whole life is brought into light to be placed under His control.⁴⁶⁶

Penn-Lewis recognized the human longing for the transcendent, as well as the desire to overcome human failing and weakness. As prophet of the Cross, she insisted that all transcendent encounters are located in an encounter with that Cross. Penn-Lewis

⁴⁶² Penn-Lewis, *More Than Conquerors*, pp. 13-14.

⁴⁶³ Penn-Lewis, *The Centrality of the Cross*, p. 62.

⁴⁶⁴ Barabas, p. 83. See also E. Hopkins, *Practical Holiness*. (Fort Washington, Pennsylvania: Christian Literature Crusade, 1991), pp. 18-31.

⁴⁶⁵ Penn-Lewis, *How Deep Shall the Cross Go?* p. 28.

⁴⁶⁶ Penn-Lewis, *The Centrality of the Cross*, pp. 18-19.

therefore integrated all spiritual experiences, justification and sanctification in union with Christ at Calvary.

According to Penn-Lewis it is only as self dies that God can become the center of existence. The primitive or sinful self cannot attain the highest mystical states because the natural self is never God-oriented. We cannot tame, ignore or conquer our sinful nature, claimed Penn-Lewis.⁴⁶⁷ Human failings, as well as human strength have a proclivity towards a self-orientation that cannot be overcome except in a purgative death, a transmutation of self. Death, therefore, re-orientes the soul's spiritual allegiance. Death was also the source of authentic spiritual productivity, whereby Pentecost power is unleashed.^{468 469} What happens as self dies with Christ? "Life springs up spontaneously,"⁴⁷⁰ explained Penn-Lewis.

We struggle to conquer our sins and deliver ourselves ... and yet victory appears more and more hopeless ... At this point of bitter despair and darkness the Spirit of God shows us that deliverance must come from another source, and that self cannot conquer self or sin... The Spirit of God then leads us again to Calvary... and we agree to live the crucified life, 'Always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake that the life also for Jesus may be manifested.'⁴⁷¹

Central to Cross Theology was the transmutation or death of self whereby God, rather than self, becomes the center of existence and the source of fecundity. Therefore, all of the failings as well as strengths of self were subjected to the purgative path, where the soul agrees "to live the crucified life."⁴⁷² One must die to a bad temper, to a bad attitude, or for that matter to one's strengths. All "creaturely activity" that is self-oriented, that

⁴⁶⁷ Penn-Lewis, *The Climax of the Risen Life*, pp. 14-15.

⁴⁶⁸ Penn-Lewis, *Power for Service*. (Bristol, England: Overcomer Publications, 1927), pp. 25-26.

⁴⁶⁹ Penn-Lewis, *The Centrality of the Cross*. p. 32.

⁴⁷⁰ Penn-Lewis, *The Climax of the Risen Life*. pp. 14-15.

⁴⁷¹ Penn-Lewis, *Dying to Live*. (Fort Washington, Pennsylvania: Christian Literature Crusade, 1963), pp. 6, 30-31. See also Penn-Lewis, *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, pp. 28-29. See also Penn-Lewis, *Fruitful Living*. (Fort Washington, Pennsylvania: Christian Literature Crusade, 1992), p. 49.

⁴⁷² Penn-Lewis, *Dying to Live*, p. 6.

arises from the “old Adam life” must cease, and from its dying a God-centered soul is born. She writes:

[God] has brought to naught the ‘creaturely activity’, that the energy of God may come into you in resurrection power of abundant life ... God wants you to see yourself ‘cut off’ with Christ’s death, ‘cut off’ from the old strength and power. (Ezekiel 37:11) Has He brought you to see the deep mystery of the Cross, that you have died in Him? ‘Cut off’ in Christ’s death, ‘cut off’ with Christ from your friends, from your old work, ‘cut off’ from that blessed experience even of the ‘Garden of Eden’; all the fruitfulness apparently gone, the beauty, and the power. He is leading you on to know the Lord.⁴⁷³

Ceasing from “creaturely activity” through a purgative death included the loss of consolation which brings “the believer to an end of all resources in himself, and makes a way for the life of God.”⁴⁷⁴ According to Penn-Lewis, besetting sins cannot be resisted though they can be overcome through a death.⁴⁷⁵ As the self dies it becomes conscious of “a new force taking possession of it- a silent power taking control and pervading its whole being.”⁴⁷⁶ The soul has entered a life that springs from death. “It possesses no longer; it is possessed. God being the principle of life cannot want for anything. The soul has lost the created for the Creator; nothingness for all things (Colossians 2:9-10)”⁴⁷⁷

Quietism and Cross Theology

Union with the Divine was a notion widely promoted by the Mystics and Quietists alike. For both the Quietist and the Mystic, human activity was wholly identified with God’s

⁴⁷³ Penn-Lewis, *Fruitful Living*, pp. 34-35.

⁴⁷⁴ Penn-Lewis, *All Things New*, p. 9.

⁴⁷⁵ Penn-Lewis, *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, pp. 32-33. See also pp. 35-56.

⁴⁷⁶ Penn-Lewis, *Life Out of Death*, pp. 41-42.

⁴⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

actions in the unitive state. "I am no longer alive, it is Christ that lives in me."⁴⁷⁸ The Quietists however had an emphasis quite different from that of the Mystics. As a deviation or "perversion of a great mystical truth,"⁴⁷⁹ the Quietists suggested that through utter passivity the highest mystical states were attained, whereby the soul is absorbed by and fully identified with the Divine. Quietism was therefore the "doctrine of the one act; passivity,"⁴⁸⁰ after which the soul needs only to rest "in the Divine Life, be its unresisting instrument."⁴⁸¹ The ideals of Quietism were therefore indifference and passivity. Quietism forbade the purgative path as well as all effort, and from passivity and indifference "the Quietists strove in vain to identify with that state of Pure Love which 'seeketh not its own.'"⁴⁸² A complete identification with God, through passivity, led not only to a "holy indifference" but also to a complete "stultification of the mental and moral life."⁴⁸³ In a state of utter passivity, the Quietists insisted that the soul is absorbed by "the divine life and therefore exempt from the usual duties and limitations of human existence."⁴⁸⁴ This, many believed, led to a doctrine of irresponsibility. As a deviation from classical mysticism, the Quietism within the Higher Life Movement was based upon the passivity of "rest" as the impetus to union.

Nurtured in the Keswick milieu, Penn-Lewis's Cross Theology often engages the language of Keswick's Quietism, yet without embracing the conclusions of the Quietist, that passivity of soul is the portal to union or complete identification with the Divine. For example, Penn-Lewis asked: "Have you ever been to the foot of Calvary and seen hanging on that cross not only the Lord Jesus Christ but yourself? Yourself in Him."⁴⁸⁵ Her emphasis, however, differed from the Quietist's insistence that the Divine absorbs the soul in the unitive state. Penn-Lewis viewed the soul *with* Christ, rather than *as* Christ on the Cross, whereas the Quietist demanded full identification such that "the good man,' ... 'is the only begotten Son of God.'"⁴⁸⁶ The soul sees not only Christ on the

⁴⁷⁸ R. Knox, *Enthusiasm: A Chapter in the History of Religion*. (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994 edition), p. 351.

⁴⁷⁹ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 325.

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁸¹ Ibid.

⁴⁸² Ibid.

⁴⁸³ Ibid., p. 323.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁵ Penn-Lewis, *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, pp. 30-31.

⁴⁸⁶ Knox, p. 351.

Cross, but itself in Christ. Cross Theology thus overcomes the complete identification through participation, cooperation of the human with the Divine such that the soul finds itself “in Him.”⁴⁸⁷

In what ways then does Penn-Lewis’s “dying” differ from Keswick’s “rest” as the one-act eliciting union?⁴⁸⁸ At times the “rest” of Keswick certainly resembles Penn-Lewis’s “dying.” Yet, a review of Penn-Lewis’s mystical literature makes it clear that the soul must progress through a process of purification that leads to union, and therefore the highest mystical state is not elicited by the one act of dying.⁴⁸⁹ For dying, unlike rest, requires a painful transmutation whereby “self” is purified within the soul. The power of self cannot be overcome through passivity or rest, but must be overcome through an active and organic union with Christ’s death. For the “Cross and the Fall exactly and perfectly correspond.”⁴⁹⁰ In this sense death is both more radical and also more active than “rest” in uniting the soul to Christ. Thus, the death of Cross Theology engages not the Quietist’s one-act of rest, but the purification and mortification of classical mysticism where, like Job, the soul loses all things and is

‘Cut off’ in Christ’s death, ‘cut off’ with Christ from your friends, from your old work, ‘cut off’ from that blessed experience even of the ‘Garden of Eden’; all the fruitfulness apparently gone the beauty, and the power. He is leading you on to know the Lord.⁴⁹¹

As we have just shown, Cross Theology differs from Quietism by first resisting complete identification with the Divine. Second, as we have suggested, Penn-Lewis’s Cross Theology embraces the purgative path intrinsic to the classical tradition of mysticism. Both Keswick and Cross Theology offered victory over sin, but Keswick was a call to resist effort, whereas Cross Theology was a call to undergo a mortification more typical of the classical mystical tradition.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁹ For a full exploration of the purgative path of Cross Theology chapter six as it explores Penn-Lewis’s mystical literature.

⁴⁹⁰ Penn-Lewis, *Soul and Spirit*. p. 10.

⁴⁹¹ Penn-Lewis, *Fruitful Living*, pp. 34-35.

While Cross Theology at times harnessed the language of Quietism, and while admitting that her earliest mentor was Madame Guyon, in 1903 Penn-Lewis expressed a concern for the priority given to passivity and the abandonment of volition within subjective spiritual experiences.⁴⁹² This she believed led to spiritual folly and demonic torment. Therefore, Penn-Lewis's Cross Theology included the state of purgation as an unavoidable path towards union. We will explore the similarities and differences between Quietism and Cross Theology more thoroughly at a later point.

Within the revival camp, there were those whose spiritual experiences, second blessings and baptisms in the Holy Spirit Penn-Lewis believed were demonic in root, and this must have been a bitter pill to swallow.⁴⁹³ For Penn-Lewis, Keswick's emphasis on passivity was based on a misunderstanding of what "dying rather than doing" entailed. For Penn-Lewis dying resisted passivity by engaging volition. However, as Keswick insisted upon passivity and the abandonment of volition and Penn-Lewis feared that such a stance would leave souls vulnerable to the demonic world.

Penn-Lewis suggested that to experiment blindly with spiritual experiences, without encountering the purification of self on the Cross, was to lose one's stability and spiritual moorings. This for Penn-Lewis accounted for the emotionalism, glossolalia and spiritism that divided and disrupted the Revival Movement.⁴⁹⁴ Cross Theology therefore, encouraged not only the purgative path, but also active human volition as a corrective to the hysteria and spiritism that trailed the Keswick Revivals.⁴⁹⁵ In heedless pursuit of spiritual encounters, based on a "wrong interpretation of a real truth,"⁴⁹⁶ souls were left vulnerable to counterfeit spirits. She wrote:

Devoted believers have permitted evil spirits to enter and manipulate their bodies, so that with delight they relate any experience which shows they

⁴⁹² Gerrard, p. 205 & ff.

⁴⁹³ Bebbington, p. 170. See also Dayton, p. 105, and Barabas, p. 94.

⁴⁹⁴ Penn-Lewis considered extensively the demonic activity, which she believed, worked to thwart revival work. Later in life Penn-Lewis wrote, *Warfare on the Saints*, and *The Spiritual Warfare*. Both explore demonic opposition to Christian ministry. Penn-Lewis's book, *Warfare on the Saints*, remains in print today.

⁴⁹⁵ E. Evans, *The Welsh Revival of 1904*, pp. 175-176. See also J. Penn-Lewis & E. Roberts, *War on the Saints*. (Kent, England: Diasozo Trust, 1987).

⁴⁹⁶ Penn-Lewis, *How God Energizes the Human Will*. (Copied with permission of the Stephen Barabas Collection, Wheaton College Archives, Wheaton, IL), p. 7.

were made to act without their power to control! ... 'I was thrown down by the power;' and such like statements, showing that the will was dethroned for the time being by the satanic deceiver who obtained their surrender of will by feigning to be God.⁴⁹⁷

By calling attention to the dangers of passivity and a blind experimentation with spiritual experiences, Penn-Lewis hoped to protect the Church from encounters with the demonic. Penn-Lewis's extensive treatment of evil and spiritual conflict led her to conclude that a passive will was the portal to demonic activity.⁴⁹⁸

By pointing to a middle way—of human co-operation with God, Penn-Lewis affirmed classical mysticism that struck a balance between God's initiative and human volition.⁴⁹⁹ Cross Theology, therefore, stressed the importance of human agency and free choice. According to Penn-Lewis, God's initiative never overwhelms human choice.⁵⁰⁰ Penn-Lewis wrote:

God will not change even the tone of your voice for you, as if you were a machine. He will put His laws into your mind and write them on your heart, but you are the person to act upon them ... It is for you to choose the way you will speak, think, and act, and as you choose, the Holy Spirit will enable you to carry out God's laws.⁵⁰¹

As we exert our wills, as we choose to resist or die to sin, God's Spirit empowers our choice and secures our victory.⁵⁰² Cross Theology called for moral action, for moral choice, for resisting evil. For example, when Christ called the disciple to walk on the water, the disciple found he could do so by obedience and by faith. Our will must be as active as our faith.⁵⁰³ Most importantly, we must purposefully resist sin. Only in so far as

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁸ Penn-Lewis, *Power for Service*, pp. 44-45.

⁴⁹⁹ Aumann, p. 124.

⁵⁰⁰ Penn-Lewis, *How God Energizes the Human Will*, p. 6.

⁵⁰¹ Penn-Lewis, *Face to Face, Glimpses into the Inner Life of Moses*. (Dorset, England: Overcomer Publication, 1940), p. 21.

⁵⁰² Penn-Lewis, *Fruitful Living*, p. 46.

⁵⁰³ Penn-Lewis, *The Cross of Calvary and its Message*, p. 40.

we actively oppose sin will “the Holy Ghost seals our faith with real deliverance.”⁵⁰⁴

Penn-Lewis’s plea to resist sin stood in clear opposition to the passivity promoted by the Quietists.

Moreover, Penn-Lewis suggested that God’s action is dependent upon human choice. She wrote:

The manifestation of Divine power depending upon our human co-operation has ever been strange to finite creatures. It lies mainly in the freedom of will that belongs to us. God cannot deliver us from bondage unless we desire Him to; therefore He must permit pressure to come upon us in the one way or another, so as to bring us to the point of asking Him to do what He has been ready and able to do all the time.⁵⁰⁵

Penn-Lewis, with her emphasis on a co-operation of human volition and the Divine, was therefore uneasily poised between Quietists and Calvinists. Her theology was fundamentally Arminian.

It comes as no surprise that the Calvinist, B. B. Warfield, was a strident critic of Holiness Theology. Warfield opposed the notion that God was in any way bound by human action. For Warfield, the Divine is never obligated by the demands of creatures. The supernatural cannot be dependent on the natural.⁵⁰⁶ For Warfield, God’s grace always and everywhere takes the initiative. God is never dependent on human activity, Warfield insisted.⁵⁰⁷

The Role of the Holy Spirit

What role did the Holy Spirit play in the life of a Christian according to Higher Life teaching? This question was often the subject of debate. Some claimed that a second act of grace or a second experience with the Holy Spirit followed conversion, and was thus a

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁵ Penn-Lewis, *Face to Face, Glimpses into the Inner Life of Moses*, p. 21.

⁵⁰⁶ Warfield, pp. 286-311.

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid., pp. 397-398.

prerequisite to entire sanctification.⁵⁰⁸ Yet, there were those in Keswick who viewed the primary work of the Holy Spirit as that of “empowering for ministry,” and this view was more closely linked with the Reformed camp, over and against the Methodist notion of entire sanctification.⁵⁰⁹

The Holy Spirit assumed two interrelated roles within Cross Theology. First, it was the Holy Spirit that transformed the soul in the purgative process. Second, the Holy Spirit quickened and empowered souls for ministry or service.⁵¹⁰ For Penn-Lewis, the “Cross leads to the Spirit, and Spirit back again to the Cross.”⁵¹¹ It is through the Spirit that souls are released from the power of sin through the Cross.

According to Penn-Lewis, the Holy Spirit purges the soul of the old life, or carnal life thereby giving rise to the unitive or victorious life.⁵¹² Entrance into the unitive state is an organic participation in the Cross implemented by the Holy Spirit.⁵¹³ As the Holy Spirit leads both “sin and the sinner to the Cross,”⁵¹⁴ to “subjectively apply the power of that death to the sinner himself,”⁵¹⁵ a partnership between the Holy Spirit and the soul is forged so that the soul has access to Divine power. In her own life, Penn-Lewis believed that the Holy Spirit drew her to the Cross where she exchanged her weakness for Christ’s strength; she overcame her timidity and frailty and became a woman whose ministry was filled with boldness, and with “with liberty of utterance.”⁵¹⁶ She claimed that the Holy Spirit so empowered her own ministry that “souls were convicted of sin the instant they entered the room, without one word being spoken to them.”⁵¹⁷ The Holy Spirit therefore lifted her life to “a different plane, as if it were raised by the incoming of some tidal wave.”⁵¹⁸ Thus, Penn-Lewis exhorted her audiences to cooperate with the Holy Spirit not

⁵⁰⁸ Dayton, p. 100, Warfield, p. 121, Bebbington, pp. 162-168.

⁵⁰⁹ Dayton, p. 100.

⁵¹⁰ Penn-Lewis, *Power for Service*, pp. 5-6.

⁵¹¹ Penn-Lewis, *The Cross of Calvary and its Message*, p. 52.

⁵¹² Penn-Lewis, *Thy Hidden Ones: Union with Christ as Traced in the Song of Songs*, p. 129.

⁵¹³ Penn-Lewis, *Dying to Live*, p. 31.

⁵¹⁴ Penn-Lewis, *All Things New*, p. 44.

⁵¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

⁵¹⁶ Penn-Lewis, *Power for Service*, p. 56.

⁵¹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵¹⁸ *Ibid.*

only to attain spiritual power in serving, but beyond that also for “aggressive warfare against Satan.” ⁵¹⁹

Finally, as free moral agents, each soul must prepare for union with God by purification. By removing all known sin and pursuing “what you know to be right, up to your light,” ⁵²⁰ the soul acts in co-operation with God’s Spirit. Souls that cooperate with the Holy Spirit exert effort in the path to holiness, whereas the Quietists promoted passivity as the portal to union. For Penn-Lewis, as the soul enters the unitive state they embrace extraordinary spiritual power for service without signs, wonders or glossolalia. Penn-Lewis never associated the baptism of the Holy Spirit with spiritual experiences such as speaking in tongues. ⁵²¹

Overcoming Satan

Cross Theology, as it drew souls into the unitive state, offered not only release from the flesh, from human weakness and sin, it also provided protection from the spiritual forces of evil. Sin, self and the devil were thus overcome at Calvary, insisted Penn-Lewis. Because Satan was defeated at Calvary, agents of evil endeavor to conceal the power of the Cross from the Church. “The Cross is the one place where [Satan] is powerless,” ⁵²² and it is for this reason that the devil endeavors to omit “the message of the Cross, in all religions.” ^{523 524} Penn-Lewis wrote:

The mind blinded by Satan is made to reject the Cross; revolt against the Cross; tone down the meaning of the Cross; shrink from the language of the Cross; all because the Deceiver of men knows that the ‘word of the

⁵¹⁹ Ibid., p. 35.

⁵²⁰ Ibid., p. 50.

⁵²¹ Penn-Lewis disdained the hysteria and glossolalia that often accompanied revival meetings. These, she believed, were the result of demonic activity. Demons, she argued, gain entrance to souls who passively pursue spiritual experiences, abandoning their wills in spiritual activity. Thus, Penn-Lewis favored “power” motifs that called spiritual seekers to engage their wills, thus resisting blind acceptance of spiritual experiences. See Penn-Lewis’s *Warfare on the Saints* and *The Spiritual Warfare*.

⁵²² Penn-Lewis, *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, p. 35.

⁵²³ Penn-Lewis, *All Things New*, p. 32.

⁵²⁴ Penn-Lewis, *The Cross of Calvary and its Message*, p. 73.

Cross' as the 'power of God' will destroy by the working of the Spirit of God, his veil.⁵²⁵

Therefore, any aspect of life which has not endured the mortifications of the Cross, Satan may exercise influence over. Satan may tempt the old creation—our Adam-life, or any aspect of life that remains “uncrucified.”⁵²⁶ She wrote:

If the old life is not kept in the position of death every moment, it is the material Satan puts his 'fiery darts' in. Satan has full rights over all the old creation. He knows that part of the old life in you which is not 'crucified,' and he directs his fiery darts to that spot.⁵²⁷

Souls are therefore vulnerable to Satan only if the “the knife of the Cross”⁵²⁸ has not been applied. For if “there is any self indulgence or anything doubtful in your life,”⁵²⁹ the evil one will attack you or “fastening on that uncrucified ‘ground’ in you will press against you with appalling power.”⁵³⁰ Victory is found only as the Cross is “steadily, persistently, and unbrokenly applied.”⁵³¹ As the mystical path of the Cross is pursued, the failings of the spiritual and physical realm are conquered and overcome. This was the promise of Cross Theology.

The Crucicentrism of Penn-Lewis

As we have seen, Cross Theology countered what Penn-Lewis believed to be an inadequate form of spirituality, a shallow mysticism that rendered souls vulnerable to sin and Satan. Penn-Lewis's mystical theology had yet another important focus. Along with

⁵²⁵ Penn-Lewis, *All Things New*, p. 33.

⁵²⁶ Penn-Lewis, *The Clinic Hour*. (Bournemouth, England: The Overcomer Book Room, actual date of publication is uncertain, though 1903 is approximated.), p. 4.

⁵²⁷ Penn-Lewis, *More than Conquerors*. (Copy provided by the B.L. Fisher Library, Asbury Theological Seminary, Date of publication is uncertain.), p. 7.

⁵²⁸ Penn-Lewis, *The Conquest of Canaan*. (Fort Washington, Pennsylvania: The Christian Literature Crusade, 1992), p. 22.

⁵²⁹ Ibid.

⁵³⁰ Ibid.

⁵³¹ Ibid.

her contemporary P.T. Forsyth, she rallied against the modern disdain for the Cross through a tenacious crucicentrism. Crucicentrism was seen as a hallmark of the evangelical Movement in the late 19th century,⁵³² and it vigorously opposed individuals like Bernard Shaw who held the doctrine of the Atonement with contempt. Shaw wrote:

I detest the doctrine of the Atonement ... ladies and men cannot as such possibly allow anyone else to expiate their sins by suffering a cruel death.⁵³³

An Anglican priest declared, “in a sermon in 1921 that God’s anger was not appeased by the offering of his son. The idea was revolting.”⁵³⁴ Similarly, Leslie Weatherhead, a young Methodist, denied the traditional axiom that Christ’s death was the means of “‘forgiveness of sins.’ ‘In our modern view,’ he boldly asserted, ‘this is simply not true.’”⁵³⁵

Evangelicals like Forsyth and Penn-Lewis sought to bring “back, and by an aggressive movement, the Cross, and all that the Cross essentially implies.”⁵³⁶ Recalling the words of John Wesley, “nothing in the Christian system is of greater consequence than the doctrine of Atonement.”⁵³⁷ Thus the call went out to glory in nothing so much as the Cross. At the Annual Address of the Methodist Society in London, in 1892, the plea to realize a personal experience of the Cross was clear:

We must be careful lest the Cross passes into the background, from which it is the glory of our fathers to have drawn it. Give to the death of Christ its true place in your own experience, and in your Christian work- as a witness to the real and profound evil of sin, as an overwhelming

⁵³² The Stephen Barabas Collection, within the Wheaton College Archives, offers examples of crucicentrist preaching within the early Keswick movement in the U.S., the most prominent was Charles G. Trumbull, from Yale University, and Gordon Watt, MA.

⁵³³ Bernard Shaw, as quoted by Bebbington, p. 16.

⁵³⁴ Bebbington, p. 201.

⁵³⁵ Weatherhead, as quoted by Bebbington, p. 201.

⁵³⁶ William Gladstone, as quoted by Bebbington, p. 14.

⁵³⁷ John Wesley to Mary Bishop, 7 February 1778, *The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley*, A.M., ed. J. Telford, Vol. 6 (London, 1931), p. 297 ff.

manifestation of Divine love, as the ground of acceptance with God, as a pattern of sacrifice to disturb us when life is too easy, to inspire and console us when life is hard, and as the only effectual appeal to the general heart of men, and above all, as the Atonement for our sins.⁵³⁸

P. T. Forsyth insisted that the doctrine of the Atonement is “not a piece of mediaeval dogma.”⁵³⁹ On the contrary, Forsyth suggested that the Cross lies at the center of the gospel. While many of his contemporaries abhorred the Cross, Forsyth claimed that the Cross is the “centre of gravity”⁵⁴⁰ within the gospels. He said:

I met a poor and mischievous pulpit influence, and he said, ‘It is time we got rid of hearing so much about the Cross of Christ; there should be preached to the world a humanitarian Christ, the kind of Christ that occupies the Gospels.’ There was nothing for it but to tell that man he was the victim of smatterers, and that he must go back to his Gospels and read and study for a year or two. It is the flimsiest religiosity, and the most superficial reading of the Gospel, that could talk like that. What does it mean that an enormous proportion of the Gospel story is occupied with the passion of Christ? The centre of gravity, even in the Gospels, falls upon the Cross of Christ and what was done there, and not simply upon a humanitarian Christ.⁵⁴¹

Both conservatives and liberals argued over the meaning of the Cross. While liberals dismissed the centrality of Calvary, conservatives championed the Cross. Among twentieth century Crucicentrists, P.T. Forsyth was perhaps the most powerful, writing “a series of vibrant treatises”⁵⁴² on the doctrine of the Atonement. Forsyth battled the “new

⁵³⁸ ‘Annual address to the Methodist Societies,’ *Minutes of Several Conversations ... of the People called Methodists* (London, 1892), p. 374 f. As quoted by Bebbington, p. 15.

⁵³⁹ P.T. Forsyth, *The Work of Christ*. (Australia: New Creation Publication, Inc., 1994), p. 51.

⁵⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 51-52.

⁵⁴² Bebbington, p. 14.

theology”⁵⁴³ of 1907-1910, an idealistic philosophy that embraced forms of pantheism. Singled out by arch proponents of this “new theology,” Forsyth found himself defending the Cross as central to Christianity. For the Cross, he posited, “is either the life of our religion, or it is the death of our religion.”⁵⁴⁴

Like Forsyth, Penn-Lewis challenged those who neglected Christ’s achievement on Calvary. Penn-Lewis complained that “higher critics” portrayed Christ as a moral leader while revival enthusiasts pursued spiritual experiences. Both overlooked a personal encounter with the Cross. We are told by some “to look to the Lord Jesus Christ as a ‘hero’ and Example, with no preaching of his Atoning Death.”⁵⁴⁵ Others tell us that the spiritual world is accessed solely through personal experiences, again omitting the Cross. These preachers, argued Penn-Lewis:

Are unaware that they preach of their ‘experience’... forgetting that others need the message that ‘Christ died,’ he now proclaims to them the ‘Risen Christ’ waiting to receive and save, with the message of the Cross left out.⁵⁴⁶

Modern preachers too often ‘theologize’ the doctrine of the Atonement; they treat Calvary as a mere abstraction. Such impersonal renderings of the Cross circumvent the power of the gospel, Penn-Lewis complained. In response to the popular dismissal of the Atonement, Penn-Lewis shored up her call to Calvary by quoting Forsyth. According to Penn-Lewis the vital message of the Cross is:

...rarely heard even in evangelical pulpits, and then only but a reference, or few words, as if it were only a ‘doctrine,’ ‘God help us,’ said Dr. Forsyth at Queen’s Hall, ‘if when we come to think of the Cross of Christ, as His redemptive atonement, we only theologise them.’⁵⁴⁷

⁵⁴³ Ibid., p. 199.

⁵⁴⁴ Forsyth, *The Cruciality of the Cross*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1909), pp. 36-37.

⁵⁴⁵ Penn-Lewis, *The Cross as the Touchstone of Faith*. (Bournemouth, England: The Overcomer Bookroom, no date), p. 22.

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 23.

The Higher Life camp however, was consumed by the pursuit of power and spiritual experiences, and they too overlooked the transforming power of Calvary. Quoting Forsyth, Penn-Lewis asked whether Calvary was

‘The one final treatment of sin’ (Dr. Forsyth), so that for ever afterwards all men are to be invited to come to Him as the *Risen Saviour*; or, is it absolutely necessary that the atoning death of Christ ... should be proclaimed and revealed to every man personally, by the Holy Spirit, ere he can be saved by the life of the Risen Lord; or, in other words, is the gospel proclamation, ‘Come to the Risen Christ as Saviour,’ or ‘Christ DIED for you?’ We are ‘reconciled to God through the death of His son,’ and ‘saved in His life.’⁵⁴⁸

Revivalists promoted power in spiritual experiences; power in Pentecost; and power through a Baptism in the Spirit. Yet, any pursuit of power that does not elicit death to self, through a sharing in Calvary’s dark night, is incomplete at best, and inauthentic and counterfeit at worst, insisted Penn-Lewis. Authentic spiritual power, she argued, emanates from death to self on the Cross, and will therefore engage purgation in the path to holiness. “The Cross leads to the Spirit, and the Spirit leads back to the Cross.”⁵⁴⁹

Like Penn-Lewis, P.T. Forsyth was a prophet of the Cross and he too challenged rationalists as well as revival enthusiasts, both of whom omitted the centrality of the Cross. To the mystics and the “many rationalist mystics today, who think we have outgrown historic Christianity,”⁵⁵⁰ Forsyth reminded them that “the real source of the Spirit is the Cross.”⁵⁵¹

Because Forsyth viewed Christ as the federal head of a new race, the Atonement was not solely substitutionary in nature. The Cross also created solidarity between the soul

⁵⁴⁸ Forsyth, as quoted by Penn-Lewis, *Ibid.*, pp. 21-22. See also *The Cross The Basis of Christian Unity*. (Bournemouth, England: The Overcomer Bookroom), p. 1.

⁵⁴⁹ Gerrard, p. 26.

⁵⁵⁰ Forsyth, *The Work of Christ*, p. 218.

⁵⁵¹ *Ibid.*

and Christ. Through union with Christ, souls are made not only righteous⁵⁵² they are also “integrated into a New Goodness.”⁵⁵³ The “Son of God was not an individual merely; He was the representative of the whole race.”⁵⁵⁴ The Cross was not only personal, but also collective.⁵⁵⁵ In so far as one dies with Christ, one also rises as a member of a new race.⁵⁵⁶ Through solidarity with Christ on the Cross souls are joined to Christ in “an organic spiritual unity- one will in two parties or persons.”⁵⁵⁷

Through union with Christ each Christian becomes a holy member of a new race, for the Cross is “but the under and seamy side of that solidarity whose upper side is the beauty of our corporate holiness in Him.”⁵⁵⁸ Therefore the Cross which laid “sin on Him lays His holiness on us, and absorbs us into His satisfaction to God.”⁵⁵⁹ The same “act that redeems us produces holiness, and presents us in this holiness to God and His communion.”⁵⁶⁰ The “same act of Christ which delivered from the guilt of sin delivered also from its power.”⁵⁶¹

While the Holiness Movement tended to bifurcate justification and sanctification into separate experiences, yet Forsyth argued that the Cross accomplished both forgiveness as well as sanctification, as sinners are mystically united to Christ’s death. Apart from the Cross, there is no higher spiritual experience. Yet throughout Church history the message of Calvary has not been fully apprehended, complained Forsyth. Over the centuries a misguided Church has attempted to acquire, through impotent means, what the Cross alone provides.⁵⁶²

For example, the Higher Life camp advanced a “baptism in the Spirit” as a second act of grace. Can a second act of grace impart holiness apart from the Cross? This was the challenge Forsyth posited. It is erroneous to claim, said Forsyth

⁵⁵² Ibid., p. 84.

⁵⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 116.

⁵⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 119.

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid., pp. 225-226.

⁵⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 226.

⁵⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 227.

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 208.

⁵⁶¹ Ibid., p. 221.

⁵⁶² Ibid., p. 218.

...a subsequent action of the spirit over and above faith- almost as if the Spirit and His sanctification were a second revelation, a new dispensation.⁵⁶³

While an overemphasis on religious experiences was a reaction to the errors of rationalism, yet to overstate the need for spiritual encounters led to an overly subjective faith, with its weak moral note. Forsyth writes:

We have yet another extreme ... We have moved the accent from the objective to the subjective work of Christ; and we fall victims more and more to a weak religious subjectivism ... so that people say, 'I will believe whatever I feel ... My soul will eat what I enjoy, and drink what makes me happy.' They are their own test of truth, and 'their own Holy Ghost.' ... to think together the various aspects of the Cross, and make them enrich and not exclude one another ... The secret, therefore is not change of accent but balance of aspects ... To think together the various aspects of the Cross.⁵⁶⁴

Perhaps because Jessie Penn-Lewis was not theologically trained, by citing Forsyth she lent legitimacy to her own position that Calvary united souls to Christ in "an organic spiritual unity- one will in two parties or persons."⁵⁶⁵ As ambassadors of the Cross, Forsyth and Penn-Lewis locate human solidarity with Christ on Calvary, and together they beckoned to a modern world to embrace power of the Cross, which they insisted was the sole reality of faith and the only means of holiness.⁵⁶⁶

⁵⁶³ Forsyth, *The Work of Christ*, p. 218.

⁵⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 220-221.

⁵⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 226.

⁵⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 228-29.

Summary Remarks

The Crucicentrists of the late 19th century opposed a rationalistic expression of faith as noted within the liberal branch of the Church. They also rejected a religious subjectivism that had penetrated the revivalist camp. Whereas some within the Church portrayed Christ only as a moral leader, revival enthusiasts pursued spiritual experiences. The former overlooked a personal need for the Cross and the latter pursued spiritual encounters independent of the Cross. Both allowed the centrality of the Cross to drop into the background of Christian experience, complained Forsyth and Penn-Lewis. Crucicentrists like Forsyth and Penn-Lewis sought to return the Cross to a central place within Christian experience.

Penn-Lewis's Cross Theology expressed a crucicentrism in which she opposed first the rationalists, who omitted a personal encounter with the Cross. To the subjectivists, she likewise insisted that all spiritual experiences be rooted in the ultimate source of Divine power—Calvary. For “all error is truth pressed to an extreme,”⁵⁶⁷ claimed Penn-Lewis.

It is unclear whether Penn-Lewis had any direct communication with P.T. Forsyth, even while she was known to cite his work. Her affinity for Forsyth seems to rest in their shared belief that the Cross alone imparts authentic holiness and spiritual power. While holiness, through union with Christ, was for Penn-Lewis attained through the process of dying to self, as outlined by classical mysticism, for Forsyth, holiness was located in union or solidarity with Christ—the federal head of a new, holy race. To die with Christ is to rise a member of a new race, an experience that unites rather than bifurcates justification and sanctification.⁵⁶⁸ Regardless of the process, be it one experience or many, both Forsyth and Penn-Lewis insist that the Cross mediates holiness because it establishes solidarity with Christ's will.

We have shown that the purpose of Cross Theology concerned the acquisition of power attained through mystical death with Christ. Union with Christ, initiated by the

⁵⁶⁷ Gerrard, p. 205.

⁵⁶⁸ Forsyth, *The Work of Christ*, p. 217 & ff.

Holy Spirit, drew the soul through the purgative path in which the soul overcomes the power of sin and the devil. The internal dynamics of Cross Theology included an affirmation of free will as a means of avoiding demonic possession. Moreover, because Cross Theology asserted the primacy of volition as well as the purgative path, Penn-Lewis avoided the passivity and full identification with the Divine, noted among the Quietists. Unlike the Quietists who shunned purgation and mortification in preference to the one-step of "rest" toward union or holiness, Penn-Lewis taught that mystical union with Christ involved mortification. Her insistence on purgation in the path to union aligned Cross Theology with the classical mystics.

Before examining the dynamics of Cross Theology in detail, we will turn our attention to the theological convictions of Keswick. We will also explore those who served as theological antecedents to the early Keswick Convention. Our intention is to provide an understanding of the Quietism intrinsic to Keswick to which Cross Theology was an alternative.

Chapter Three

Faith Imparts Holiness: Keswick's Shorter Path

Take my hands and let them move at the impulse of thy love...
 Take my intellect, and use every power as thou shalt choose...
 Take my will, and make it thine; it shall be no longer mine...⁵⁶⁹

I. Introduction

Holiness or sanctification, according to Keswick, was attained through a second act of grace, following conversion. Many within Keswick suggested that union with God—the highest mystical state—was mediated not by effort, but through “rest” or faith. For Keswick, therefore, justification and sanctification were both elicited by faith, and each occurred as a separate event or crisis. Because Keswick advanced an experience of sanctification following justification, they received steep opposition from outspoken critics, particularly from the Reformed branch of the Church.⁵⁷⁰

Holiness or sanctification based upon faith was roundly promoted throughout the Conventions, through their literature, hymns, sermons, and through personal testimony. Keswick's Holiness theology was rooted in a one-act of faith and this was promoted over and against effort in the path to perfection. For Keswick, “rest” or faith, rather than effort, was the only path to perfection and union with the Divine. To circumvent effort in attaining sanctification separated Keswick not only from the Reformed tradition, but also from the classical mystical tradition, for both Reformed Christians as well as classical mystics embraced effort in the path to holiness.

⁵⁶⁹ Excerpts from “Take my Life and Let it be,” a hymn by Frances Ridley Havergal. Hymn 57, *The Keswick Hymn-Book*. Compiled by the Trustees of the Keswick Convention. (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, Ltd., 1936), p. 53.

⁵⁷⁰ Warfield, pp. 579-584, as quoted by Barabas, p. 72.

It is the purpose of this section to explore Keswick's view of sanctification as an act of faith rather than effort, and as an experience subsequent to and separate from justification, which the soul received upon conversion. Here, I will introduce the similarities between Keswick's "rest of faith" and the Quietists' Prayer of Simplicity, both of which offered a shorter path, void of effort, to attaining the unitive state. It is also the purpose of this chapter to note the ways in which Higher Life teachers adopted Quietism, and how this differed from the classical mystical tradition fundamental to the Penn-Lewis's Cross Theology. Because Cross Theology embraced purgation, she offered an alternative to what she saw as the deficient teachings of Keswick,⁵⁷¹ a matter that led some within Keswick to criticize Penn-Lewis and her views of the Cross.⁵⁷² Penn-Lewis's differences with Keswick on this and other matters ultimately led to her withdrawal from the Keswick Conventions.

II. In Christ Twice

As discussed earlier, the Keswick Conventions created a sense of dissatisfaction with the ordinary Christian life. Most Christians had not, in Keswick's perspective, attained the victory over sin that the Scriptures promised. Keswick's Higher Life message was directed at those who felt beleaguered by besetting sin and the failures of their Christian service. In particular, Keswick solicited Christian ministers who above all others should evidence spiritual efficacy. To lay and clergy alike, the Keswick experience promised a more effective and holy Christian life. Through a second experience of grace, Keswick offered an infusion of power that enabled the soul to overcome failure and sin. The power to surmount sin and failure was mediated by the "rest of faith," Keswick suggested.

Keswick therefore advanced a notion of total depravity, exploring in depth the desperate condition of human sinfulness. Every thought, motive and deed was at enmity with God, Keswick insisted. For this reason, Romans chapters four through seven were

⁵⁷¹ Price & Randall, p. 156.

⁵⁷² A.T. Pierson (1837-1911), the American Holiness leader complained that Penn-Lewis's view of the Cross engaged mortification. See Price & Randall, p. 156.

well known to Keswick delegates. Held hostage to sin, Paul said that he was not the master of his own actions. "For I do not what I want to do."⁵⁷³

According to Keswick, only a force of equal or greater strength can subdue the tyrant sin. That force was Pentecost, Keswick claimed. Sin is conquered, they reasoned, by a "Pentecostal experience," following conversion. While conversion provides release from the guilt of sin, sanctification offers power over sin. Justification, through faith, freed sinners from the condemnation of sin. Sanctification through faith was, according to Keswick, a second act of grace whereby the soul attained holiness or power over sin. At the center of the Pauline epistles are two "in Christ" experiences.⁵⁷⁴ The first was justification in Christ, and the second was union with Christ.⁵⁷⁵

A fully sanctified Christian enjoyed "salvation from sinful attitudes and actions,"⁵⁷⁶ such that the Christian was transformed into "the likeness of Jesus."⁵⁷⁷ Through a second act of grace, souls attained "complete and permanent sanctification,"⁵⁷⁸ argued Keswick. One can achieve justification by overcoming "sin as a fault,"⁵⁷⁹ while remaining enslaved to the power of sin as an "inwrought tendency of the will."⁵⁸⁰ To live a pardoned but powerless life was to live a carnal Christian life, "a life of condemnation in the daily experience."⁵⁸¹ Evan Hopkins writes:

Sin thus robs us of the power by which alone we are able to perform the functions that belong to our renewed being. And it not only undermines our strength, it hinders our growth.⁵⁸²

⁵⁷³ Romans 7:15: "For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate ... Wretched man that I am. Who will rescue me?"

⁵⁷⁴ Dieter, Hoekema, Horton, McQuilkin, and Walvoord, p. 154.

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 159.

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 160.

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁹ E. Hopkins, *The Law of Liberty in the Spiritual Life*. (Fort Washington, Pennsylvania: Christian Literature Crusade, 1991), p. 46.

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁸¹ Ibid., p. 47.

⁵⁸² Ibid., p. 28.

Everyone begins as a carnal Christian, but some remain carnal or powerless for many years. Carnal Christians succumb to what Keswick calls the “self-life.” While they understand their judicial standing before God, they are unaware of the “in-Christ of sanctification.”⁵⁸³ To those who know only justification, Paul said: “I could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ (1 Corinthians 3:1).”⁵⁸⁴ The Keswick Conventions offered a higher life. Through an experience of Pentecost, souls were freed from the “self-life” and attained a new “personal Center [Christ], about which all else is to revolve.”⁵⁸⁵ The “idol-room often proves afterward the Throne-room.”⁵⁸⁶

According to Keswick, the prominence of carnal Christians was the result of two factors, ignorance and a lack of faith. Through ignorance, the Church has failed to perceive the “possibility and necessity of living triumphantly.”⁵⁸⁷ As a result the Church, as “an aggregate of individual impotent members,”⁵⁸⁸ limped along only now and again successful in its commission. The “normal experience of every Christian should be one of victory rather than defeat.”⁵⁸⁹ Thus, it became Keswick’s mission to educate Christians to the vast riches available through a Pentecost experience.

Apart from ignorance, Evan Hopkins suggested that holiness is hindered by an absence of faith and a reliance upon effort.⁵⁹⁰ If Christians trusted only God to make them holy, they would not attempt to overcome sin through their own efforts. Self-reliance, according to Keswick, was the path of spiritual impotence. Therefore, Keswick encouraged Christians to abandon moral effort in the path to holiness.⁵⁹¹ It was faith, rather than effort, that offered power over sin.⁵⁹²

⁵⁸³ Ibid., p. 45.

⁵⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 47.

⁵⁸⁵ A.T. Pierson, *The Keswick Movement in Precept and Practice*. (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1903), p. 70.

⁵⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 78.

⁵⁸⁷ Dieter, Hoekema, Horton, McQuilkin, and Walvoord, p. 163.

⁵⁸⁸ Barabas, p. 58.

⁵⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 99.

⁵⁹⁰ Hopkins, *Practical Holiness*, p. 12.

⁵⁹¹ Dieter, Hoekema, Horton, McQuilkin, and Walvoord, p. 164.

⁵⁹² Ibid., p. 165.

Turning to the experience of the disciples, Keswick reasoned that the events of Pentecost were “both subsequent and different from conversion.”⁵⁹³ Since the disciples received the Holy Spirit after conversion, and this led to effective ministry, Keswick insisted that all Christians should experience a Pentecost, that they too might receive “an exhaustless reservoir”⁵⁹⁴ of power.

A second experience following conversion was noted not only in the lives of Christians at Pentecost, but can also be traced in the life of the Apostle Paul. Paul spoke of his struggles to overcome sin (in Romans 7:14-15), and he described his emancipation from sin in Romans 6:1-14. In both instances, Paul was “in Christ,” argued Keswick. According to Hopkins, Paul, though redeemed, was yet a carnal Christian, even though he was “enveloped in Christ the Righteous One, who has met all the claims of the righteous law.”⁵⁹⁵ As Paul was sanctified through a second experience, he was capable of abiding “in Christ the Holy One, who has satisfied all the desires of a Father’s heart.”⁵⁹⁶ Paul’s first experience related to justification or redemption, and his second experience was sanctification.

In Keswick’s view therefore, the soul is freed from the power of sin through two, separate encounters with grace. Both encounters with grace are mediated through faith. Faith was the means to justification. Faith was also the means to sanctification, because faith releases the Holy Spirit to exercise a counteracting force whereby “we are freed from the dominion of sin.”⁵⁹⁷ Through faith, the Christian is “brought positionally into such a relationship to sin that he is beyond the reach of sin’s dominion and lordship.”⁵⁹⁸ Therefore, faith rather than effort, was the portal to the highest mystical states where the soul receives extraordinary power over sin. The absence of effort in the path to holiness was a notion Keswick derived from the Quietist’s adaptation of the Prayer of Simple Regard, a matter we will explore further on.⁵⁹⁹ The Quietists suggested that inactivity or

⁵⁹³ A. T. Pierson, *The Keswick Movement in Precept and Practice*. p. 82.

⁵⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

⁵⁹⁵ Hopkins, *The Law of Liberty in the Spiritual Life*, p. 50.

⁵⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹⁷ Barabas, p. 97.

⁵⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

⁵⁹⁹ Underhill, p. 208. See also P. Pourrat, *Christian Spirituality, Volume 4*. (Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1953), p. 125 & ff.

a simple gazing at God mediates a state of union. We will explore this notion more thoroughly in another section.

W.E. Boardman (1810-1886),⁶⁰⁰ a noted American Holiness teacher, compared the experience of justification to that of sanctification and concluded that both are founded on faith. He suggested that “the first experience [conversion], and the second [Baptism in the Holy Spirit] were received immediately when there was willingness and faith for its acceptance.”⁶⁰¹

How permanent is the state of holiness attained by faith? The tendency to sin is ever present. The downward pull of sin continually “fixes our thoughts on ourselves.”⁶⁰² Because sin poses a constant threat, even those who have enjoyed a second experience must remain in a state of rest or faith in order to sustain union with Christ. Thus, while the American Holiness Movement suggested that sin was eradicated by a second experience of faith, Keswick favored a moment-by-moment suppression of sin.

To explain how sanctification is sustained moment-by-moment, Evan Hopkins employed the following analogy. Carnal Christians are like iron, they are cold, black, hard and stiff. But place the Christian or iron in the furnace of the Holy Spirit:

What a change takes place! It has not ceased to be iron; but the blackness and the coldness and the hardness are gone! It has not lost its nature ... as long as it remains in the fire it is red and hot and malleable, and the fire and iron are still distinct, and yet how complete is the union—they are one ... So it is with the believer ... as long as he abides in Christ.⁶⁰³

The higher Christian life was a matter of being not doing.⁶⁰⁴ We become holy, or Christ-like, not by imitation but through faith, asserted Hopkins.⁶⁰⁵ Moral bricks assembled by

⁶⁰⁰ W.E. Boardman wrote *The Higher Christian Life*, first published in 1858, (Boston: Henry Hoyt). He is also the author of *In the Power of the Spirit, or Christian Experience in the Light of the Bible*. (London: Daldy, Isbister, & Co. 1879)

⁶⁰¹ W.E. Boardman, *In The Power of the Spirit: Or, Christian Experience in the Light of the Bible*, p. 24.

⁶⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 173.

⁶⁰³ Hopkins, *The Keswick Week*, 1906. p. 180, as quoted by Barabas, p. 80.

⁶⁰⁴ Hopkins, *The Law of Liberty in the Spiritual Life*. p. 109.

⁶⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 108.

human effort cannot build the house of practical holiness,⁶⁰⁶ suggested Hopkins. Until we come to an end of our own abilities, we cannot experience “the beginning of God.”⁶⁰⁷ Too often, complained Keswick, we “make more of our cooperation than of God’s operation.”⁶⁰⁸

Hopkins considered how our efforts might in any way overcome sin. He wrote:

Shall we try to help Christ to live in us? Shall we try to make Christ more living? Shall we help Him to put forth His own power in us? Shall we try, in other words, to grow—to produce fruit? Surely not. And yet is not this the grand mistake multitudes are making?⁶⁰⁹

Holiness, according to Hopkins, cannot be the product of human effort. It is by faith and not effort that the carnal life is raised “to another platform,”⁶¹⁰ to the state of union. Faith was for Hopkins an absence of effort, and was thus a state of passivity. This represents a profound difference from Penn-Lewis’s Cross Theology that denounced passivity as the portal to holiness.⁶¹¹

Like Hopkins, Hannah Whitall Smith also rejected human effort in acquiring holiness. She wrote:

You need make no efforts to grow. But let your efforts instead be all concentrated on this, that you abide in the Vine ... Give up all your efforts after growing, and simply let yourself grow. Leave it all to the Husbandman whose care it is, and who alone is able to manage it ... Abide in the Vine. Let the life from Him flow through all your spiritual veins. Interpose no barrier to His mighty life-giving power, working in you all the good pleasure of His will. He is not asking thee in thy poor weakness, to do it thyself: he only asks thee to yield thyself to Him that He

⁶⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 109.

⁶⁰⁷ A.T. Pierson, *The Keswick Movement in Precept and Practice*. p. 97.

⁶⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁹ Hopkins, *Practical Holiness*. p. 11.

⁶¹⁰ Hopkins, *The Law of Liberty in the Spiritual Life*. p. 112.

⁶¹¹ Penn-Lewis, *The Conquest of Canaan*, p. 87.

may work in thee to will and to do of His good pleasure. Thy part is to yield thyself: His part is to work: and never, never will He give thee any command, which is not accompanied by ample power to obey it.⁶¹²

Humans cannot obtain justification through striving, nor can the soul conquer sin by effort, claimed Keswick. Our exertion and “resolutions will utterly fail in effecting it, and leave us in despair.”⁶¹³ To struggle against sin is like a drowning person who struggles against the water. Hopkins suggests that there is a force—a buoyancy in the water that permits the body to float. That force is faith.

According to Keswick, Christians who strive to please God advance pride and self-reliance.⁶¹⁴ “They made a start ‘in the Spirit,’ as Paul says, but now are foolishly attempting to live the Christian life in their own strength.”⁶¹⁵ A truly spiritual life, a life pleasing to God is a life rooted in faith and rest, claimed Keswick. “Faith throws the switch, releasing the current of divine power.”⁶¹⁶ Faith opens the soul to the power of the Holy Spirit and appropriates “God’s provision for successful Christian living.”⁶¹⁷ Consider the following analogy. The Holy Spirit is God’s gift and “faith is the Christian’s hand which takes the gift from God.”⁶¹⁸

The Higher Life teachers therefore viewed their movement as a second Reformation. Whereas the first Reformation was “the development of justification by faith, so is this to be by the unfolding of sanctification by faith.”⁶¹⁹ All spiritual power is accessed through a covenant of faith, for both the “unredeemed sinner and for the redeemed sinner.”⁶²⁰ Victory over “sin’s dominion is a blessing we may claim by faith, just as we accepted pardon.”⁶²¹

⁶¹² Hannah Whitall Smith, *The Christian’s Secret*, as quoted by H. Boardman, *The “Higher Life” Doctrine of Sanctification, Tried by the Word of God*, p. 140.

⁶¹³ Hopkins, *Practical Holiness*, p. 30.

⁶¹⁴ Dieter, Hoekema, Horton, McQuilkin, and Walvoord, p. 164.

⁶¹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 167.

⁶¹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶¹⁸ W.E. Boardman, *In The Power of the Spirit: Or. Christian Experience in the Light of the Bible*, pp. 4-5.

⁶¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁶²⁰ Dieter, Hoekema, Horton, McQuilkin, and Walvoord, p. 166.

⁶²¹ Evan Hopkins, *The Law of Liberty in the Spiritual Life*, p. 21.

Mastery over sin is dependent upon a “relationship of faith,”⁶²² rather than some “complex doctrinal system or upon achievement.”⁶²³ Simple faith and a trusting relationship with Christ were attainable by anyone, regardless of age or education. The Keswick Conventions were therefore designed to lead to a decision of faith, which for Keswick was the only source of spiritual vitality.

Therefore, all events at Keswick were intended to lead to a “crisis” or a profound dissatisfaction with one’s weakness and failings. The music and scenery, the extraordinary stories of powerful Christian service created a longing and built towards a decision. Will you enter rest and receive holiness? How faith mediated sanctification was less important than the fact that it does, if one so chooses. Lengthy theological discourse was avoided. Keswick Conventions concerned “decisions not discussions,”⁶²⁴ and few seemed interested in theology. Even Keswick’s most distinguished theologian, Bishop Moule, suggested that holiness did not “not depend on wearisome struggle,”⁶²⁵ but that the “inmost secret of deliverance and purification, behind all ‘means’, is faith.”⁶²⁶

The emphasis was on simple faith as the means to union, where the soul and the Divine are indistinguishable. For example, according to Keswick leaders such as W.E. Boardman, faith initiates such identification with God that God can “speak by us as He spake by holy men of old. He can write by us, print by us, preach by us, teach by us, give to us, do anything and everything by us.”⁶²⁷

Or again, Hubert Brooke, an early Keswick Convention leader, suggested that it is not only an abandonment of effort, but also through a state of passivity that the Christian enters the unitive state, receives power over sin, and is identified with the Divine.⁶²⁸ To enter holiness, or consecration, Brooke said, one must abandon the “powers of the body, the affections of the heart, and the possessions of the offerer.”⁶²⁹ In doing so, the soul undergoes a “tremendous upheaval... [a] transference of rule, choice, decision and

⁶²² Dieter, Hoekema, Horton, McQuilkin, and Walvoord, p. 166.

⁶²³ Ibid.

⁶²⁴ Ibid.

⁶²⁵ Moule as quoted by Pollock, p. 74.

⁶²⁶ Moule as quoted by Pollock, p. 77.

⁶²⁷ W.E. Boardman, *In The Power of the Spirit: Or, Christian Experience in the Light of the Bible*, pp. 33-34.

⁶²⁸ Barabas, pp. 112-113.

⁶²⁹ Ibid.

selection in life from self to God.”⁶³⁰ The unitive state, initiated by an abandonment of effort and a state of passivity, is likened to soldiers who “obey only one voice; the engagement of the servant to recognize only the master’s will.”⁶³¹

Though the modern Church had failed to lead souls to holiness “of heart and conduct,”⁶³² Keswick recalled a time in history when Christians had enjoyed the fruits of union with Christ. Exalting in the lives of superlative saints from the past, Keswick remembered how these souls were “grounded in love, and filled with the fulness of God.”⁶³³ Saints such as Madame Guyon, Tauler, Zinzendorf, Tersteegen, Fénelon and John and Charles Wesley,⁶³⁴ at a certain moment had been “lifted up into Christ and filled with the Spirit in an experience which stood at the beginning of a higher plane of Christian life and power.”⁶³⁵

Keswick viewed itself as part of a great tradition, a tradition extolled by the Apostle Paul in the sixth chapter of Romans, experienced by the Church on the day of Pentecost, and by mystics ever since. Like Paul and the mystics after him, Keswick believed all Christians can, through faith, experience the “self-abandoned energy and freedom, which ... [makes] every real Christian a ‘new creature,’ and constitutes the essential character of Christian mysticism.”⁶³⁶ To recover the Church’s true source of power was to reclaim spiritual union with Christ, Keswick insisted.

However, unlike the classical mystical tradition that favored effort over passivity and purgation over rest, the highest mystical states were, for Keswick, the product of faith alone. And, this separated Keswick from many classical mystics, a fact of which they seemed unaware.

⁶³⁰ Ibid., p. 113.

⁶³¹ Ibid.

⁶³² Sloan, p. 9.

⁶³³ Ibid.

⁶³⁴ Ibid.

⁶³⁵ W.E. Boardman, *In The Power of the Spirit: Or, Christian Experience in the Light of the Bible*, p. 3.

⁶³⁶ Underhill, *The Mystics of the Church*, p. 46.

III. Opposition to the Higher Life Message

Keswick Charged with Perfectionism

Eminent Keswick leaders such as Scroggie eventually rescinded his support for sanctification through “rest of faith”⁶³⁷ alone. By 1950, Scroggie indicated that a life of faith “was achieved by effort.”⁶³⁸ Spiritual progress must involve work, he now insisted.⁶³⁹ We cannot “rely on God to do what we can do ourselves,”⁶⁴⁰ Scroggie argued.

Like Scroggie, the reformed theologian B.B. Warfield was critical of the Higher Life’s system of sanctification. In particular, Warfield railed against a method of sanctification that separated justification from sanctification. Warfield insisted that conversion alone freed us from the principle of sin. To suggest that the power of sin was suspended by means of a subsequent act of grace called into question the first act of grace, and was itself an “inadequate conception of salvation.”⁶⁴¹ According to Warfield, Higher Life teaching was simply another version of perfectionism. Any notion of sinless perfection in this life is theologically misguided, charged Warfield.⁶⁴²

In defense of Higher Life teaching, Moule rejected the charge of perfectionism by insisting that the tendency to sin will always be a part of our earthly pilgrimage. We are sinners, argued Moule, and we are therefore always ready to exert our tyranny against God, neighbor and self.⁶⁴³ For Moule, therefore, the soul has “abundant work to do, in watching and prayer, in self-examination and confession of sin, in diligent study of the divine Word.”⁶⁴⁴ Such holy activity is pursued with the purpose of “maintaining and

⁶³⁷ Scroggie, as quoted by Price & Randall, p. 75.

⁶³⁸ Ibid.

⁶³⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁴¹ Warfield, as quoted Barabas, p. 72.

⁶⁴² Warfield, p. 240 & ff.

⁶⁴³ Moule, as quoted by Pollock, p. 76.

⁶⁴⁴ Moule, *Outlines of Christian Doctrines*, p. 193-194, as quoted by Barabas, pp. 97-98.

deepening that sacred practical contact with Christ by faith, the one ultimate secret of spiritual success,"⁶⁴⁵ which is a continual process never fully accomplished in this life.

While many Christians, pastors and missionaries around the world welcomed the message of Keswick, yet the Higher Life teaching of Keswick also received fierce and articulate opposition. Particularly within the Reformed branch of the Church, the Higher Life teaching of Keswick was denounced as perfectionism, and as Quietism. Against these critics Keswick divines rigorously defended both their message and their experience.

J.C. Ryle (1816 - 1900)

Made Bishop of Liverpool in 1880, J.C. Ryle was an outspoken proponent of Reformed theology as well as an ardent opponent of the Higher Life Movement. Ryle published a blistering assessment of Pearsall Smith's 1875 Brighton Convention lectures in *The Record*, an Anglican publication. Ryle suggested Pearsall Smith was a dangerous American import whose teaching trades "emotional sentimentalism and visionary mysticism for solid piety and Scriptural experimentalism founded on the Word of God."⁶⁴⁶ Comparing the teaching of D.L. Moody to that of Pearsall Smith, was, according to *The Record*, the difference between "sunshine and fog."⁶⁴⁷

In 1877, Ryle offered a critique of Keswick's view of sanctification in his book *Holiness*. Fundamentally, Ryle rejected a version of sanctification acquired without a struggle, as an act of faith distinct from conversion. Sanctification, according to Ryle, can not be separated from conversion. Representing the Reformed position, Ryle insisted that one receives conversion and sanctification simultaneously. At the moment of conversion, one acquires new life in Christ wherein begins the work of the Holy Spirit to make the soul holy. Ryle also asserted that sanctification is a process that is never completed in this

⁶⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 98.

⁶⁴⁶ Price & Randall, p. 211.

⁶⁴⁷ J.C. Ryle, to the editor, R, 28 May 1875. A letter regarding Mr. Pearsall Smith's contributions to the Brighton Convention, by the Rev. J. C. Ryle (Stradbroke, Suffolk, 1875) as quoted by David Bebbington, p. 171.

life. Moreover, Ryle objected to Keswick's lack of theological precision, and the vague and devotional prose used to forward their views of holiness through faith alone.

Ryle observes that the Higher Life teaching of Keswick did in fact differ from the Reformed view of sanctification. For Reformed thinkers like Ryle, sanctification and justification are simultaneous events in which the Holy Spirit separates the sinner from a "natural love of sin and the world, puts a new principle in his heart and makes him practically godly in life."⁶⁴⁸ For Keswick however, sanctification was a transforming event, initiated by faith, where the "old sinful nature is not changed or improved but replaced..."⁶⁴⁹ The sinful life is supplanted by the life of Jesus, and the Christian is transplanted or fused into Christ by the Holy Spirit. The old is replaced by the new, such that the soul is fully identified with Christ. "Yield," "be crucified," "rest," "reckon," were terms used by Keswick to suggest that by faith, the Christian is fully sanctified because the self-life has been absorbed by the Divine life. For this reason Keswick viewed effort as futile in reforming the sinful nature. What is needed, from Keswick's view, was a new life—not more energy from the old, self-life.

What is noteworthy for our purposes is that Ryle did not appear to notice that Keswick's view of sanctification is simply borrowed from the Quietists, and is itself an aberration of classical mysticism. Again, the reformed critics of Keswick fail to observe the theological or historical alterations of classical mysticism operative within Keswick's view of sanctification.

B. B. Warfield (1851 – 1921) & Dwight Moody (1837 – 1899)

As mentioned, the American Calvinist, B.B. Warfield, was an articulate opponent of Keswick's Higher Life teaching. In his extensive work *Perfectionism*, Warfield suggests that salvation is inseparable from sanctification. According to Warfield, throughout the life of a Christian, sin is gradually eliminated, a process that begins at conversion. That any group would separate "deliverance from the penalty of sin and from continued acts of sin, as to permit to fall out of sight deliverance from sin itself—that corruption of heart

⁶⁴⁸ Price & Randall, p. 213.

⁶⁴⁹ Ibid.

which makes us sinners,”⁶⁵⁰ was for Warfield “a fatally inadequate conception of salvation.”⁶⁵¹ Contrary to Keswick’s notion that sin is arrested through a second act of grace following conversion, Warfield posited that sin diminishes only as God’s grace works daily in the life of a converted soul. For Warfield, sanctification can never be separated from justification. The Bible, he argued, not “merely in Rom. viii.30, but everywhere—very explicitly in vi.—join justification and sanctification indissolubly.”⁶⁵²

While Warfield rightly identified the Higher Life teaching as “quietistic mysticism,”⁶⁵³ he failed to articulate the ways in which the Higher Life message deviated from classical mysticism. For example, Warfield did not appear to observe that the Higher Life’s “rest of faith” resembled the Quietist’s Prayer of Simple Regard, a matter we will explore, in greater detail, in the next section. Both served as the portal to union, via passivity. Despite Warfield’s lengthy treatise on the perfectionism of Higher Life teaching, he does not note how the American Holiness leader—Thomas Upham—adapted and reshaped Guyon’s Quietism, a matter to which we will give greater attention.

Like Warfield and Ryle, D. L. Moody was also critical of Keswick’s Higher Life teaching. He too rejected a theology of sanctification that did not engage in “a life of moral struggle.”⁶⁵⁴ Advising new Christians that their fallen natures would be with them all through life, Moody denied the teaching of complete victory over sin. While he spoke from Keswick platforms during his life, and though he shared Keswick’s summons to holiness and its emphasis on missions and evangelism, Moody did not support the Keswick view of sanctification.⁶⁵⁵

Henry A. Boardman (1808 – 1880)

Pastor of the Tenth Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia, H.A. Boardman, like other Reformed leaders of his day found Keswick’s view of sanctification out of “harmony

⁶⁵⁰ Warfield, as quoted by Barabas, p. 71.

⁶⁵¹ Ibid.

⁶⁵² Warfield, p. 234.

⁶⁵³ Ibid., p. 250.

⁶⁵⁴ Bebbington, p. 163.

⁶⁵⁵ Ibid.

with the current traditions of the Historic Church.”⁶⁵⁶ According to Boardman, Higher Life teaching ignored “the rich stores of Christian Biography, from Chrysostom and Augustine to Martyn, Brainerd and Payson.”⁶⁵⁷ However, Evan Hopkins and other Keswick leaders did in fact derive their views of sanctification from Fénelon, Guyon, and others that were very much a part of the historic Church, a fact Boardman failed to observe.

As a Reformed theologian, Boardman’s fundamental complaint with Higher Life teaching concerned the role of free will or human initiative. Faith, for Boardman, is a gift of God rather than the product of human free will. Similarly, just as faith was God-given, intimacy between the soul and Christ is accomplished at Christ’s initiative, at conversion. It is God’s work not ours. “Christ entereth first into the soul, to join himself to it by giving it the spirit of faith.”⁶⁵⁸ Boardman thus rejected Keswick’s notion that God cannot act in the absence of faith. God is never dependent upon human initiative. Rather, faith is dependent upon God’s initiative, he insisted.⁶⁵⁹

Boardman’s complaint, echoed by B.B. Warfield, centered on the Calvinist presupposition that human actions can never direct the actions of God. God is the preeminent initiator for the Calvinist. To say we will love, or believe something by willing it was absurd to a Reformed thinker such as Boardman. You cannot “will” sin inoperative. This is the work of God alone. To suggest that sin can be suspended or eradicated through faith, by believing one has died to sin, is to believe oneself regenerate while sin is ever active. Moreover, to suggest that holiness be initiated through an act of faith is moral blindness, and hence Keswick was accused of antinomianism—a neglect of the moral law.

According to Boardman, throughout the New Testament Paul called believers to fight the good fight, to run the race, to press towards the mark. Reciting passages such as Philippians 3:12-14: “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect,”⁶⁶⁰ Boardman pressed his point. Sinlessness is unattainable in this life, he

⁶⁵⁶ H. Boardman, *The “Higher Life” Doctrine of Sanctification, Tried by the Word of God*, p. 26.

⁶⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 49.

⁶⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 56.

⁶⁶⁰ Philippians 3:12-14, as quoted by H. Boardman, *In The Power of the Spirit: Or, Christian Experience in the Light of the Bible*, p. 169.

insisted. The Christian life is one of pressing onward, straining with effort to make Christ ours. To fail to resist and fight sin is to run the risk of sloth, pride and moral neglect, he warned.

In retort, Keswick claimed that it is Christ's work within the soul that alone must fight the "good fight of faith; and let Him lay hold of eternal life. This one thing I do: I 'let' the indwelling Christ press toward the mark."⁶⁶¹ Boardman, however, insisted that life is fraught with difficulty and conflict. Paul in Romans 6 described his own life of struggle, his failures and successes, which we should not, suggested Boardman, view as a summons to sinlessness. Romans teaches that though sin was conquered on the Cross, and though the Christian is regenerate and freed from condemnation, sin torments those it "cannot destroy. Sin had received a death wound; but it has vitality enough to struggle on—the old man against the new—as long as life lasts."⁶⁶²

To imagine one sinless in this life is to underestimate the grip of sin. A perfect person would be the "last to know it."⁶⁶³ It is only the pious, claimed Boardman, that understand in detail their imperfections. Boardman recounts saints such as Charles Simeon, William Wilberforce, Adelaide Newton, John Newton, all of whom were self-reproaching, yet certain that God will fully redeem their failings on that last day. Charles Simeon wrote:

I have desired, and do desire daily, that God would put (so to speak) a telescope to my eye, and enable me to see, not a thousand only, but millions of my sins, which are more numerous than all the stars which God himself beholds, and more than the sands upon the seashore. There are but two objects that I have ever desired for these forty years to behold; the one is, my own vileness; and the other is, the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; and I have always thought that they should be viewed together.⁶⁶⁴

⁶⁶¹ Ibid., p. 151.

⁶⁶² Ibid., p. 111.

⁶⁶³ Ibid., p. 256.

⁶⁶⁴ Charles Simeon as quoted by H. Boardman, *The "Higher Life" Doctrine of Sanctification, Tried by the Word of God*, p. 276.

Trials will ever be with us as they were with the children of God throughout history. In this life the redeemed will always suffer, as the Canaanites did, with “thorns in our eyes and scourges in our sides, to sweeten the place of our future rest.” ⁶⁶⁵

The Pentecostal Complaint

Because Pentecost was upheld as the ideal, with an emphasis on spiritual experiences, miraculous healings, speaking in tongues, and other manifestations of the Spirit, Keswick’s spirituality attracted many Pentecostals. While Keswick admitted that the disciples spoke in tongues during Pentecost, this, they argued, was not the only sign of Spirit baptism. Prophesying was also a manifestation of the Spirit at Pentecost. The main point of Pentecost, argued Keswick, was that the gift of the Holy Spirit was imparted to each and every Christian, though the manifestation of gifts differed from Christian to Christian. W.E. Boardman wrote:

[The] Holy Ghost was in them, and that by Him they did so speak of the wonderful works of God, that a whole city was awakened in a few hours, and three thousand converted in a day. That they could heal in the name of Jesus ... was indeed a blessed thing for the healed ones, and a real attestation of the power of God with them; but that they all could, by the Holy Ghost dwelling in them and working mightily with them, become glad and glorious witnesses for Jesus and witnesses for Jesus and win such multitudes to acknowledge Him as the Son of God in a single generation, and heal myriads of souls, was immeasurably more blessed. The logic of all this leads to the inevitable conclusion that the baptism of the Spirit is not a gift of miraculous power conferred upon a few, but the gift of the Holy Ghost Himself to us, to dwell in us, provided for every child of God who will receive Him. ⁶⁶⁶

⁶⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 117.

⁶⁶⁶ W.E. Boardman, *In The Power of the Spirit: Or, Christian Experience in the Light of the Bible*, p. 67.

Keswick's view of sanctification therefore permitted glossolalia as one of many outward expressions of an inward experience. However, the inward experience for Keswick was union with Christ. Pentecostal power, initiated through the Holy Spirit, was aimed at supplanting the self-life, and this for Keswick was the primary point of Pentecost. Glossolalia was a secondary manifestation and thus Keswick leaders could not accommodate the Pentecostal claim that glossolalia was the only sign of Holy Spirit baptism. While Pentecostals readily accepted Keswick's claim that the Holy Spirit was received by faith, that glossolalia was merely a corollary dismayed Pentecostals such as Alexander Boddy and Donald Gee.⁶⁶⁷ Both Gee and Boddy eventually parted company with Keswick because of this.

While Pentecostals viewed glossolalia as the singular manifestation of spiritual power, they therefore failed to observe that Keswick's Higher Life teaching was fundamentally an experience with God, initiated by faith, imparting power over sin and thus part of a long-standing tradition of Quietism.

Summary Remarks

Keswick concerned spiritual experiences rather than intellectual treatises, and this proved dissatisfying to many theologians, particularly within the Reformed camp. Aware of the limitations of reason, Keswick leveled a counter-attack claiming that often those who were theologically trained were also spiritually ineffective. Keswick therefore called the Church to experience power through faith rather than through effort, which they insisted initiated union with God. Keswick's Higher Life teaching impelled believers to enter transformation through the "rest of faith," that was inaugurated by faith, an experience available to anyone, just as in the day of Pentecost.

As we have noted earlier, historians have suggested that Keswick's rest of faith was part of the Romantic mood of the late 19th century⁶⁶⁸ and this reflected a shift from "the

⁶⁶⁷ Ian Randall, *Holiness and Pentecostal Spirituality in Inter-War England*. A paper presented at the 25th Meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies and The European Pentecostal and Charismatic Research Association, July 1995, pp. 3, 5 & ff.

⁶⁶⁸ Bebbington, p. 167 & ff, see also K. S. Latourette, p. 1168.

mechanical to the organic,”⁶⁶⁹ from the “classical to the Romantic.”⁶⁷⁰ While historians like Bebbington admit that Keswick likened sanctification to a “living union with the living Saviour,”⁶⁷¹ he failed to identify the prominence of Quietism, as it operated in Keswick leaders of Evan Hopkins. Moreover, Bebbington also failed to observe the difference between Hopkins’ view of sanctification compared to that of Penn-Lewis who favored a more classical mystical tradition, though both were part of Keswick and both advanced union with God through different means. Thus, it was not the Romantic mood alone that gave rise to Keswick’s system of sanctification. What seems more likely is that Keswick’s Quietism was a derivation from the classical mystical tradition, the recovery of which was made possible by the Romantic mood of the 19th century. Thus, it was the classical mystical tradition that gave foundation to Keswick’s versions of holiness.

Keswick’s theology of sanctification was based on the notion that through passive faith, rather than effort, one enters the highest mystical states—union with God. Moreover, union with God—the highest mystical state—is also a “condition of continual deliverance from the self-life,”⁶⁷² such that the power of Christ’s life is manifest.⁶⁷³ To suggest that faith rather than effort initiates and sustains the fruits of union—Christ’s “glorious emancipation from sin’s power,”⁶⁷⁴ is not Romanticism alone. Rather, such a notion is dependent upon the tradition of the Quietists who asserted that passivity and a continuous act of naked faith elicited the highest mystical states.⁶⁷⁵

Keswick therefore offered a shorter path to the unitive state, which was dependent not upon effort,⁶⁷⁶ but upon faith. Moreover, for the Quietists such as those within Keswick, a continual act of faith not only circumvented purgation and effort, but also initiated states of being in which God “puts forth His own power and manifests His own life”⁶⁷⁷ where

⁶⁶⁹ Bebbington, p. 172.

⁶⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁷¹ Ibid. See also Bebbington, p. 174 where Bebbington suggests that Keswick’s frequent use of “the branch abiding in the vine of Christ,” reflects a poetic and romantic notion of faith, rather than an image of the unitive state, the final stage of classical mysticism.

⁶⁷² Hopkins, *The Law of Liberty in the Spiritual Life*, p. 118.

⁶⁷³ Ibid., p. 118 & ff.

⁶⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 119.

⁶⁷⁵ Pourrat, p. 186 & ff.

⁶⁷⁶ Hopkins, *The Law of Liberty in the Spiritual Life*, p. 119.

⁶⁷⁷ Ibid.

there is “no lack of vitality.”⁶⁷⁸ As we shall see, this is an adaptation to the Prayer of Simple Regard in which a simple gazing at Christ was said to initiate the fruit of union. Keswick’s view of sanctification, therefore, was inevitably challenged by Reformed theologians,⁶⁷⁹ while being inadequate from the perspective of Pentecostalism because Keswick did not insist upon glossolalia as a sign of the Holy Spirit’s power.

In the next section we will examine the similarities between Keswick’s path to holiness and that of the Quietists. Observing the transmission of Quietism from Guyon through Upham, and from Upham to the Holiness Movement, we shall identify the theological alterations along the way. From this perspective, we are then in a position to assess Cross Theology, which offered an alternative to Quietism by including purgation in the path to union, thus providing the Holiness Movement with a version of classical mysticism, from which many in Keswick had selected only some elements.

⁶⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁹ Warfield, p. 397.

Chapter Four

Theological Antecedents to Keswick:

Phoebe Palmer, Madame Guyon and Thomas Upham

The true mystic never tries deliberately to enter the orison of quiet:
 he regards it as a supernatural gift beyond their control,
 though fed by his will and love.⁶⁸⁰

I. Introduction

The Quietism advanced by Keswick has historical antecedents reaching as far back as Madame Guyon. It is our purpose here, to evaluate the components of Quietism as it was imparted to Keswick through a historical continuum.

The notion that passivity mediated the highest mystical states was advanced by Quietists such as François Fénelon (1651 - 1715), Brother Lawrence (1611 - 1691), Madame Guyon (1648 - 1717),⁶⁸¹ as well as Thomas Upham (1799 - 1872), all of whom were widely read within the early Keswick Conventions.⁶⁸² While Keswick was fond of Guyon, a Quietist from France,⁶⁸³ she was introduced to Keswick circles primarily through the American, Thomas C. Upham.⁶⁸⁴ A professor of religion, Upham published a number of popular books on Madame Guyon.⁶⁸⁵ Upham was drawn to Guyon because he found in her an advocate for his view of holiness, that "rest" or passivity played an

⁶⁸⁰ Ruysbroeck, as quoted by Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 323.

⁶⁸¹ Knox, p. 232 & ff. See also Pourrat, Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11.

⁶⁸² Harford, p. 223. See also Penn-Lewis *Out of Death: A Brief Summary of Madame Guyon's Spiritual Torrents, and Other Papers on the Spiritual Life*. (London: Overcomer Book Room, 1900).

⁶⁸³ Gerrard, p. 34.

⁶⁸⁴ Dieter, *The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century*, p. 53.

⁶⁸⁵ T. Upham, *Inward Divine Guidance; Life of Faith*. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1848); *The Life and Religious Opinions and Experiences of Madame de la Mothe Guyon: Together with Some Account of the Personal History and Religious Opinions of Fénelon, Archbishop of Cambray*, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1857); *Principles of the Interior or Hidden Life: Designed Particularly for the Consideration of those Who are Seeking Assurance of Faith and Perfect Love*. (Boston: Waite, Pierce and Company, 1854)

efficacious role in mediating sanctification. Thomas Upham and Madame Guyon thus functioned as theological antecedents to the Higher Life understanding that passivity is the portal to sanctification.

Whether Upham identified Guyon as a Quietist is unclear. It is also uncertain whether Upham understood the Quietists' innovations to classical mysticism in which passivity becomes the main obligation of the soul. For Quietists, all effort is shunned in the path to holiness, while the will is subdued in higher mystical states. Classical mysticism, however, engaged both effort and human volition in the path to union.⁶⁸⁶ Church officials denounced the Quietists' reshaping of classical mysticism and this ultimately led to the imprisonment of Guyon because she insisted that the soul is absorbed by grace and thus remains passive.

One century after Guyon, Thomas Upham promoted her notions of Quietism within the Higher Life camp by suggesting, during meetings of the American Holiness Movement, that passivity mediated holiness. Because of this, Upham and Phoebe Palmer parted company over the role of the will in the path of sanctification.⁶⁸⁷ Phoebe Palmer (1807 - 1874), an ardent Methodist and Arminian, insisted that the will is always active and at no time is it absorbed in either salvation and sanctification. For Palmer, volition is never subdued by grace.

Phoebe Palmer, a leader in the American Holiness Movement, developed her own shorter route to holiness, known as her Altar Theology. Altar Theology suggested that sanctification is acquired in the same way salvation is—through a crisis experience, and by decision of faith.

In 1839, Dr. and Mrs. Palmer hosted the original meetings of the Tuesday Meetings for the Promotion of Holiness in their drawing room in New York. Christians from all denominations were invited to experience sanctification through a "single act of consecration and faith."⁶⁸⁸ These early Holiness gatherings engaged both lay and clergy and their "common experience of holiness united Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, Episcopalians, Quakers, United Brethren in Christ, Jews and proselytes."⁶⁸⁹ The

⁶⁸⁶ Pourrat, p. 149.

⁶⁸⁷ Barbara A. Howie, West Virginia University, <http://are.as.wvu.edu/phebe.htm>.

⁶⁸⁸ Dieter, *The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century*, p. 34.

⁶⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

experience of sanctification was viewed as a modern Pentecost and served to unite Christians from widely different backgrounds, and this became part of the ethos of later Holiness and Revival meetings. For Palmer, her Tuesday Meetings for the promotion of Holiness represented Pentecost and therefore overcame divisions among Christians and “sectarian evils so strongly lamented by so many.”⁶⁹⁰ As the holiness meetings grew in influence, and spread across the Atlantic, Palmer suggested that the unity achieved among differing Christians served as a model of heaven, for every soul gathered was

cemented in love ... The room seemed filled with the Holy Spirit. It was a truly Pentecostal season ... Are not these meetings for holiness ... the germs, the dawnings of millennial glory? Are they not strikingly imitative of Pentecost?⁶⁹¹

Little did she realize that her New York home meetings would become a “major impetus in setting off a world-wide movement.”⁶⁹² Thus, Palmer is thought to have had a pre-eminent influence on 19th century Holiness theology, not only in terms of its message, but also with respect to its milieu and method.

Phoebe Palmer’s experience of sanctification, or second blessing, stressed the importance of human decision. God is willing to give; are we willing to receive sanctification? Like Charles Finney (1792 - 1875), the American revivalist who gave human volition preeminence in receiving salvation, Palmer likewise claimed that souls receive sanctification in a similar way, through a crisis, a choice, and as an experience. Any delay in receiving sanctification is not because God is unwilling to impart holiness. Rather, it is because we are unwilling to receive or chose holiness. Palmer believed, therefore, that human beings might choose to respond to God, over against the Calvinist notion of divine predestination. The late American revivalist and Higher Life leader, Asa

⁶⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁹¹ P. Palmer, *The Beauty of Holiness*, as quoted by Dieter, *The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century*, p. 39.

⁶⁹² Dieter, *The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century*, p. 34.

Mahan (1799 - 1889) believed that Palmer's work, *The Way of Holiness*, was the most significant book next to the Bible.⁶⁹³

II. Palmer's Altar Theology

Palmer not only stressed the role of choice or volition in attaining holiness, but also emphasized the function of faith. For Palmer, faith played a pre-eminent role in attaining perfection. Palmer's popular tract, *The Way of Holiness*, recounted her discovery of a shorter route to sanctification mediated by faith whereby the Holy Spirit led her "into a solemn, most sacred, and inviolable compact... I was to be united in eternal oneness with the Lord my Redeemer."⁶⁹⁴ Since faith always engages the will, Palmer argued that as we place ourselves on the "altar," God readily responds to our decision of faith by making us holy. Everything placed on the altar becomes holy because the altar is Christ, and the altar sanctifies the gift. As we put ourselves without reserve on the altar, God who is faithful, acts through our faith.⁶⁹⁵

The belief that the altar sanctifies the gift is perhaps first observed in the work of Hester Ann Rogers (1756 - 1791), whose works Palmer read as a child.⁶⁹⁶ Rogers, a close associate of John Wesley, suggested that despite her unworthiness, by "offering up myself and my services on that altar which sanctifieth the gift"⁶⁹⁷ the soul is made perfect. The notion that an act of faith is the portal to holiness was developed more completely in Palmer's Altar Theology.

Palmer's view that sanctification ensues through a decision of faith was a theme shared by Thomas Upham, with one significant difference. Upham was a Quietist and for him, the human will is subdued by grace in sanctification. However, with Palmer and later with Penn-Lewis, the path toward holiness engaged volition. Inevitably Upham and Palmer crossed swords over the role of the will in attaining holiness.⁶⁹⁸ Upham claimed

⁶⁹³ Harold E. Raser, "Phoebe Palmer: Her Life and Thought." *Studies in Women and Religion*. 22 (1947), p. 177.

⁶⁹⁴ Thomas Oden, *Phoebe Palmer: Selected Writings*. (New York: Paulist Press, 1988), p. 118.

⁶⁹⁵ Raser, p. 160.

⁶⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 247.

⁶⁹⁷ Hester Ann Rogers, *An Account of the Experience of Hester Ann Rogers*, p. 188.

⁶⁹⁸ Charles Edward White, "What the Holy Spirit Can and Cannot Do: The Ambiguities of Phoebe Palmer's Theology of Experience." *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, 20 (1985), p. 111 & ff.

that “the heart is free from all personal desires and passions”⁶⁹⁹ when united with Christ. For Upham, union with God required an abandonment of volition,⁷⁰⁰ whereas Palmer consistently opposed any notion that the will should be annihilated in union with God,⁷⁰¹ as Penn-Lewis did years later.⁷⁰²

Half a century after Palmer, Penn-Lewis articulated her own understanding of holiness, not on the altar as seen by Palmer, but on the Cross, though both Palmer and Penn-Lewis assert the primacy of human volition in responding to God’s grace. While Penn-Lewis did not refer to the work of Phoebe Palmer, she insisted that the path to holiness engaged purgation, and hence she selected the Cross as a metaphor for holiness.

Despite their differences, however, Upham suggested that Palmer’s notion of entire consecration was not a new teaching but was part of a tradition belonging not only to Wesley and the German Pietists, but to Catholics mystics before them, particularly Madame Guyon and Fénelon. Compelled to publish his discoveries, Upham wrote a book on Madame Guyon,⁷⁰³ a book that garnered enormous approval from Holiness circles.⁷⁰⁴ In addition to his book on Guyon, Upham completed another popular work, *Life of Faith*, and both books advance a Quietism that the Keswick Conventions readily embraced.

Let us now explore the fundamental elements of Quietism.

III. Quietism

Quietists asserted that through passivity and a “self-annihilation and a consequent absorption of the soul into the Divine Essence,”⁷⁰⁵ the highest mystical states are attained. Through a state of complete passivity and annihilation, God therefore becomes wholly active in the soul.⁷⁰⁶ Because Quietism circumvents human effort and therefore

⁶⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 111.

⁷⁰⁰ Ibid., pp. 111-113.

⁷⁰¹ Ibid.

⁷⁰² Penn-Lewis, *How God Energizes the Human Will*, p. 8.

⁷⁰³ Thomas C. Upham, *The Life and Religious Opinions and Experiences of Madame de la Mothe Guyon: Together with Some Accounts of the Personal History and Religious Opinions of Fénelon, Archbishop of Cambray, Two Volumes*. (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1853)

⁷⁰⁴ Bebbington, p. 157. See also Dieter, *The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century*, p. 55.

⁷⁰⁵ The Catholic Encyclopedia, by E. A. PACE, Transcribed by Paul T. Crowley, New Advent Web Site <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12608c.htm>.

⁷⁰⁶ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 320 & ff.

human responsibility, it was viewed as a shallow, or false mysticism which, if followed “consistently, would prove fatal to morality.”⁷⁰⁷ Quietists were known to say that, “one moment’s contemplation is worth a thousand years’ good works.”⁷⁰⁸ Considered a perversion of the mystical tradition, Quietists claimed that the “half-hypnotic state of passivity”⁷⁰⁹ placed them in “touch with the divine life, and they were therefore exempt from the usual duties and limitations of human existence.”⁷¹⁰ Ruysbroeck (1293–1381), a Flemish mystic, was openly opposed to Quietism. He suggested that the passivity or the quiet of the false mystic was “nought else but idleness,”⁷¹¹ and wholly “contrary to the supernatural repose one possesses in God.”⁷¹² The repose and therefore idleness of the false mystics or Quietists was, for Ruysbroeck, an error that led to spiritual degeneration and a “holy indifference” which “ends in the complete stultification of the mental and moral life.”⁷¹³ Authentic mystics, according to Ruysbroeck, never attempt to enter a state of passivity. Rather, they regard such a state as a “supernatural gift, beyond [their] control.”⁷¹⁴ An authentic state of mystical repose was in reality a “rest most busy,”⁷¹⁵ in which the personality is not absorbed but surrendered and therefore renewed.

Four conditions or states characterize Quietism, and we will examine each one in detail in order to trace these characteristics within the Quietism of the Keswick Conventions.

The first condition of Quietism was a belief that holiness or perfection could be acquired in this life by a “shorter path,” through a “continual act of contemplation.”⁷¹⁶ The more one entered a state of repose with Christ, the more one might “continually abide with Him, without repeatedly straying and having to return.”⁷¹⁷ What was once a

⁷⁰⁷ The Catholic Online Encyclopedia, by E. A. PACE, Transcribed by Paul T. Crowley, New Advent Web Site <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12608c.htm>.

⁷⁰⁸ The 1911online Encyclopedia <http://91.1911encyclopedia.org/Q/QU/QUIETISM.htm>.

⁷⁰⁹ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 322.

⁷¹⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹¹ Ruysbroeck, “De Oranatu Spiritalium Nuptiarum,” l. ii caps. lxvi. (condensed), as quoted by Underhill in *Mysticism*, p. 322.

⁷¹² Ibid.

⁷¹³ Ruysbroeck, as quoted by Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 323.

⁷¹⁴ Ibid.

⁷¹⁵ Ibid.

⁷¹⁶ Ibid., p. 148.

⁷¹⁷ J. Guyon, *Experiencing the Depths of Jesus Christ*. Formerly entitled: *A Short and Very Easy Method of Prayer*, (Goleta: Christian Books, 1975), p. 109.

conscious and sporadic attempt to become holy now becomes “continuous, without interruption. A continuous inner act of abiding begins to take place within you.”⁷¹⁸

Falconi, writing in 1657, described this first condition of Quietism as follows:

I should like ... all your days, months, years, your whole life, to be passed in a continual act of contemplation with the simplest faith and purest love possible ... in such a disposition it is not always necessary when you pray to give yourself to God anew, because you have already done so. If you give a jewel to a friend and hand it over to her, there is no need to repeat every day afterwards that it is hers ... you simply leave it where it is, in her possession.⁷¹⁹

Secondly, a continuous state of contemplation was also a state of mental, emotional, and volitional passivity, which Quietists believed satisfied or included “all other acts of religion and of Christian virtue in an eminent degree.”⁷²⁰ Once engaged in a state of passivity and repose, acts of charity, mortification, verbal prayers, or other forms of spiritual discipline were considered unnecessary or even contrary to the Quietist’s call to complete passivity. To assume that a passive and continuous state of contemplation could satisfy all religious duty advanced slothfulness, or worse, a doctrine of irresponsibility.

Thirdly, the Quietists also forwarded a “holy indifference and complete abandonment to God,”⁷²¹ whereby God, they insisted, absorbed human personality, ability, desire and, most dangerously the human will. Without the full engagement of human volition, some feared the Quietists had developed a spirituality that not only ran contrary to the mystical tradition, but also beckoned spiritual and moral irresponsibility. “The true mystics have always taught that the will, with the help of grace, must fight strenuously against temptation, however strong it may be.”⁷²²

⁷¹⁸ Ibid., p. 110.

⁷¹⁹ J. Guyon, “Lettre du serviteur de Dieu, le R. P. Jean Falconi, de l’ordre de N.D. de la Merci, à une de ses filles spirituelles,” at the end of Mme. Guyon’s “Moyen Court” in *the Recueil de divers traités sur le Quietisme* (Colone, 1699), pp. 103-104, as quoted by Pourrat, p. 148.

⁷²⁰ Pourrat, p. 148.

⁷²¹ Ibid., p. 149.

⁷²² Ibid.

Lastly, as the Quietists demanded complete passivity of human emotion, intellect as well as human volition, these innovations were said to induce the highest mystical states for any soul, regardless of calling or spiritual maturity. Because the Quietists imposed their “shorter path” to perfection on any and all Christians without discrimination, they practically “involved them in the mystical way and passive prayer, for which they were neither ready nor called.”⁷²³ As the “weak and strong, the mediocre and the good, the most unmortified and ignorant as well as the most understanding”⁷²⁴ followed the Quietist’s “shorter path,” the result was “not prayer but reverie,”⁷²⁵ complained Pourrat. “False mysticism was the inevitable consequence.”⁷²⁶

The “shorter path” of the Quietist, which promised the highest mystical state to all people, was made possible by a mishandling of the Prayer of Simple Regard. The Prayer of Simple Regard, was a form of acquired contemplation which, coupled with ordinary grace, enabled the soul to transcend “discursive prayer”⁷²⁷ because the energies of the soul and mind were stilled. The more arduous mystical path of illumination, purgation and union were thus circumvented by a “simple act of faith in God’s presence.”⁷²⁸ Thus the innovation to classical mysticism were the result of imposing the Prayer of Simple Regard on all people as a “shorter path” to perfection, a matter I will now explore in greater detail.

IV. The Prayer of Simple Regard

The Prayer of Simple Regard, also called the Prayer of Simplicity, was commonly “practiced almost everywhere in France about 1670.”⁷²⁹ A form of spiritual discipline or acquired contemplation, the Prayer of Simple Regard advanced a spiritual state in which the mind and all human activity are stilled. Through ordinary grace and “a simple act of faith in God’s presence,”⁷³⁰ the soul “is content with a ‘loving looking at God and at

⁷²³ Ibid., p. 126.

⁷²⁴ Guilloiré, as quoted by Pourrat, p. 131.

⁷²⁵ Ibid.

⁷²⁶ Ibid., p. 126.

⁷²⁷ Ibid., p. 124.

⁷²⁸ Ibid.

⁷²⁹ Ibid., p. 123.

⁷³⁰ Ibid., p. 124.

Jesus Christ.”⁷³¹ As long as the mind is active, the soul cannot enter the highest mystical states. Guyon wrote:

Those who turn toward God merely by their intelligence may enjoy some spiritual contemplation but they will never enter into an intimate union ... He who knows God primarily by the light of his intellect never enters those imperceptible passes of the spirit which are reserved for the abandoned soul alone.⁷³²

By “putting aside feeling and thought”⁷³³ the Prayer of Simple Regard “consists in going down into the deeps of the spirit,”^{734 735} there to rest in God’s presence. Guyon wrote:

Now, when the soul, by its efforts to abandon outward objects, and gather itself inwards, is brought into the influence of this central tendency, without any other exertion, it falls gradually by the weight of Divine Love into its proper centre; and the more passive and tranquil it remains, and the freer from self-motion and self-exertion, the more rapidly it advances, because the energy of the central attractive virtue is unobstructed and has full liberty for action.⁷³⁶

It has been suggested that Quietists like Guyon mishandled the Prayer of Simple Regard in two fundamental ways. First, they confused simplicity, which the Prayer of Simple Regard advanced, with passivity. “It was not inactivity, but simplification that characterized the prayer of simple regard.”⁷³⁷ However the Quietists did not perceive this nuance. They entered God’s presence believing that all activities “should come to a stop

⁷³¹ Ibid.

⁷³² Guyon, *Union with God*. (Beaumont, Texas: The SeedSowers, 1981). p. 21.

⁷³³ Ibid., p. 125.

⁷³⁴ Ibid.

⁷³⁵ Guyon, *Experiencing the Depths of Jesus Christ*. Formerly entitled: *A Short and Very Easy Method of Prayer*, pp. 22-23.

⁷³⁶ Guyon, *A Short and Easy Method of Prayer*. (London: H.R. Allenson, Ltd., no date), p. 28.

⁷³⁷ Pourrat, p. 125.

and that their faculties should be as it were dead, in order that they may receive but not do anything.”⁷³⁸

Second, through confusing simplicity for passivity, the Quietists advanced their “doctrine of the One Act”⁷³⁹ of passivity, via the Prayer of Simple Regard, on all people, suggesting that everyone might enjoy the highest level of contemplation or union with God,⁷⁴⁰ through passivity. Quietism was, therefore, the “doctrine of the one act; passivity,”⁷⁴¹ after which the soul needs only to rest “in the Divine Life, be its unresisting instrument.”⁷⁴² The Quietists “pressed the Prayer of Simple Regard on all the faithful without distinction,”⁷⁴³ whether they had a mystical call or not. “False mysticism was the inevitable consequence.”⁷⁴⁴ Because of the popularity and accessibility of the Prayer of Simple Regard, “short and easy methods were provided which allowed (they said) of high contemplation being reached quickly and surely.”⁷⁴⁵

In so far as the Quietists viewed the Prayer of Simple Regard as accessible to every Christian, regardless of their maturity or calling, the “popularizing” of the mystical path led, some thought, to a false mystical experience, and placed many on the “brink of falsehood.”⁷⁴⁶ Thus the error of the Quietist rested in making “what is special to high mystical states into a general rule for contemplation.”⁷⁴⁷

Because the Quietists offered their shorter path to all people, a cult of passivity was said to have resulted by the masses that practiced the Prayer of Simple Regard. As those with and without a mystical vocation elevated the Prayer of Simplicity to embody and circumvent “the whole substance of the mystical life,”⁷⁴⁸ the result was a “self-abandonment, so excessive that it was inevitably condemned by all religious teachers”⁷⁴⁹ familiar with the classical mystical path. Moreover, because the Prayer of Simplicity did

⁷³⁸ Guillore as quoted by Pourrat, p. 125.

⁷³⁹ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 325.

⁷⁴⁰ Pourrat, pp. 124, 126 & ff.

⁷⁴¹ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 325.

⁷⁴² Ibid.

⁷⁴³ Pourrat, p. 126.

⁷⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 131.

⁷⁴⁶ Father Surin, as quoted by Pourrat, p. 132.

⁷⁴⁷ Pourrat, p. 139.

⁷⁴⁸ Underhill, *The Mystics of the Church*, p. 208.

⁷⁴⁹ Ibid.

not require piety, intelligence, education, or effort, Quietism had an egalitarian impulse that attracted the masses, as well as the suspicion of Church officials.

V. Quietism and Madame Guyon (1648 - 1717)

The works of Madame Guyon were widely promoted by Keswick luminaries, including the prominent Keswick spokesperson, Evan Hopkins. It was Mrs. Evan Hopkins who first gave Jessie Penn-Lewis a copy of Guyon's *Autobiography*.⁷⁵⁰ Because of Guyon's influence on the early Keswick Conventions, any theological analysis of the Keswick Convention would also require an assessment of Jeanne Guyon's theological perspectives.

Jeanne Bouvier De La Motte was born in 1648, into a wealthy French family. After twelve years of marriage, Jeanne was widowed at the age of twenty-eight. Now a woman of wealth and mother of three, Jeanne was determined to pursue a religious life. Noted for her prolific energy, and an ability to discuss "religion in an engaging way also fueled her innate charm and spiritual enthusiasm."⁷⁵¹ Guyon's qualities enabled her to become influential, attracting and persuading "many people of distinction, churchmen, religious, legal luminaries."⁷⁵²

Guyon believed that God had called her to the mystical life by revealing to her that she would become the mother of many spiritual children.⁷⁵³ To produce spiritual progeny was considered a distinguishing mark of a "true 'mystic marriage,'"⁷⁵⁴ as mystics were often "founders of spiritual families."⁷⁵⁵ Souls united to God are believed to be spiritually fertile, and all great mystics were said to "give birth," to spiritual offspring. Guyon's spiritual followers were rallied as evidence of her vocation as a mystic. In a letter to her spiritual director, Guyon wrote: "God wants to give me spiritual progeny, plenty of children of grace, that He will make me fruitful in Himself."⁷⁵⁶ Father La

⁷⁵⁰ Gerrard, p. 34.

⁷⁵¹ La C amus, as quoted by Pourrat, p. 185.

⁷⁵² Ibid.

⁷⁵³ Guyon, *Madame Guyon, an Autobiography*. (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1987), p. 315.

⁷⁵⁴ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 432.

⁷⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 431.

⁷⁵⁶ Pourrat, p. 188.

Combe and Abbé Fénelon were two spiritual children of Madame Guyon, so she insisted, and all three (Guyon, La Combe and Fénelon) were charged with being Quietists.⁷⁵⁷

In her culture, mystics were “widely read and admired,”⁷⁵⁸ and yet there were also inferior versions of mysticism circulating. Many followed the “fatal inclination to copy the contemplative life in cheaper materials”⁷⁵⁹ which eventually appeared. In a similar fashion, Guyon claimed to have discovered the “prayer of interior silence,”⁷⁶⁰ so popular in her day, which “she promptly elevated ... into the whole substance of the mystical life.”⁷⁶¹ Guyon’s “shorter path,” she believed, embodied the entire mystical path, and was the means to union with God whereby God substituted the Divine will for the human will. By promoting such a doctrine, Guyon established herself as a Quietist for she advanced passivity coupled with the annihilation of the human will, believing that human effort worked to limit and impede God’s action within the soul. She said: “I was seeking to get through effort what could be had only by giving up all effort.”⁷⁶² Guyon advanced her Quietism by writing works such as *Spiritual Torrents; A Short Method to Prayer; Autobiography; The Song of the Bride; Experiencing the Depths of Jesus; Union With God; and Final Steps in Christian Maturity*.

Bossuet (1627 - 1704), a theologian associated with the Sorbonne, examined Guyon and scrutinized her writings. He found Guyon guilty of promoting theological error in the form of Quietism, for which she was imprisoned for more than four years. In particular, Bossuet could not tolerate Guyon’s “shorter path” to holiness, in which she insisted that the soul is overwhelmed or absorbed by the Divine, a notion Bossuet believed minimized moral responsibility and led to a doctrine of irresponsibility, or antinomianism.⁷⁶³ Thus Bossuet attempted to persuade Guyon that:

⁷⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 186 & ff.

⁷⁵⁸ Underhill, *The Mystics of the Church*, p. 208.

⁷⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁶¹ Ibid.

⁷⁶² Guyon, as quoted by Pourrat, p. 186.

⁷⁶³ Pourrat, pp. 146, 181.

True mystics have never insisted [upon] a destruction of the soul, for they are most careful to avoid any expression that might suggest that human personality disappears in supernatural states.⁷⁶⁴

Quietists insisted that God absorbs the human will and thus becomes the principal source of all human activity. If it is "God's working in life and the life of the soul and, however real and true, it is not seen as the action of the creature,"⁷⁶⁵ the deed cannot therefore be judged as "good or bad."⁷⁶⁶ This was the ultimate challenge posed by the Quietists. The true mystical tradition has "always taught that the will, with the help of grace, must fight strenuously against temptation, however strong it may be."⁷⁶⁷

We will now assess the four characteristics of Quietism within Guyon's shorter path, which Thomas Upham later adapts and imparts to the Holiness Movement of the late 19th century.

The Quietists assert, first, that uninterrupted contemplation is the portal to holiness.⁷⁶⁸ According to Guyon, the "more you progress in Christ, the more you will continually abide with Him, without repeatedly straying and having to return."⁷⁶⁹ "In this state of continually being turned to God, you are abiding in the love of God, and the man who abides in love abides in God."⁷⁷⁰ What was once a conscious and sporadic attempt to become holy, now becomes "continuous, without interruption. A continuous inner act of abiding begins to take place within you."⁷⁷¹ Abiding in God is likened to "a sweet sinking into Deity,"⁷⁷² or like a ship as it catches the wind. So too our souls. At first we are "bound by sin and by self."⁷⁷³ Then the soul learns to abide in God continually, and just as a boat in favorable winds, "the pilot rests from his work ... Oh, what progress they

⁷⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 196.

⁷⁶⁵ Bertot, as quoted by Pourrat, p. 146.

⁷⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 149.

⁷⁶⁸ Pourrat, p. 148.

⁷⁶⁹ Madame Guyon, *Experiencing the Depths of Jesus Christ*. Formerly entitled: *Short and Very Easy Method of Prayer*, p. 109.

⁷⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 111.

⁷⁷¹ Ibid., p. 110.

⁷⁷² Ibid., p. 111.

⁷⁷³ Ibid., p. 113.

make without becoming the least bit tired.”⁷⁷⁴ Similarly, the soul who has continually abandoned itself to God achieves spiritual heights without effort.

Second, Quietists suggest that in an absence of effort, by way of passivity, the soul fulfils all religious obligations and attains perfection. In a state of passivity, the soul undergoes a complete loss of all human attributes, including “virtue as virtue.”⁷⁷⁵ To “place the whole of religion in an unconditioned self-yielding to God,”⁷⁷⁶ was a second characteristic of Quietism, which many believed “easily glides into the cult of passivity.”⁷⁷⁷ While some believe this mistake was a noble one, since it grew out of an exaggeration of the “turning of the religious consciousness toward pure adoration and away from mere self-consideration,”⁷⁷⁸ and though characteristic of the great French mystics,⁷⁷⁹ it was ultimately condemned by the Church. Quietists like Guyon were thus accused of false mysticism because their shorter way was void of the arduous path of purification and mortification so carefully documented in the lives of those mystics whose experiences were considered authentic.⁷⁸⁰ The passivity of the Quietist implied not only a disregard for spiritual disciplines such as confession, discursive prayer, mortification and good work, but also these endeavors were viewed as unnecessary to the Quietist’s “shorter path.” Guyon said those who have died mystically have “no further need of mortification.”⁷⁸¹ A passive soul has abandoned all human

gifts, graces, favors, the desire for service, the capacity to do good, to fast, to help his neighbor. He has lost everything except that which is divine ... What am I saying? The Christian loses virtue as virtue. He will find it again as it is Jesus Christ. It seems the soul has now lost everything—that is, everything but the Lord’s beauty.⁷⁸²

⁷⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 114.

⁷⁷⁵ Guyon, *Spiritual Torrents*. (Sargent, Georgia: The SeedSowers Christian Books Publishing House, 1990), p. 52.

⁷⁷⁶ Underhill, *The Mystics of the Church*, p. 188.

⁷⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁸⁰ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 198 & ff. See also Pourrat, p. 149.

⁷⁸¹ Guyon, *Madame Guyon, an Autobiography*. p. 85.

⁷⁸² Guyon, *Spiritual Torrents*, p. 52.

The passivity of the Quietist therefore included a “holy indifference,”⁷⁸³ that left no room for volition and had no need of contrition, and “did not even prefer heaven rather than hell.”⁷⁸⁴ Critics of Quietism questioned the moral moorings a religious system based on passivity and a denuded will; that is, can the soul be responsible for immorality when stripped of virtue? If a soul, in a state of passivity, is equally content to receive from the “hand of God either good or evil,”⁷⁸⁵ is the Quietist also indifferent to good and evil?

This leads to the third characteristic of Quietists who, by insisting upon the destruction or absorption of all human activity, advanced a doctrine of “holy indifference.” As the human will is absorbed by “the will of God,”⁷⁸⁶ the soul desires and accomplishes only that which God wills. Such self-abandonment, the Quietist argued, enabled the soul to refuse temptations as well as “every personal desire ... just as soon as it arises.”^{787 788} Those who have been absorbed by the Divine are utterly indifferent to any impulse or desire beyond “complete abandonment to God’s good pleasure.”⁷⁸⁹ They are equally willing “to be damned as to be saved.”⁷⁹⁰

As human volition is annihilated in a mystical death, the soul remains indifferent to all physical amenities such as food, clothing and shelter, as well as inward comforts such as God’s sensible consolations during periods of distress.⁷⁹¹ Souls so detached from sensible or physical comfort yet remain at peace, despite periods of prolonged deprivation. According to Guyon, the soul absorbed by God is like a child and has “no other will in itself.”⁷⁹² Such a death marks the end to the individual’s “desire, inclination and choices.”⁷⁹³ Guyon wrote:

⁷⁸³ Underhill, *The Mystics of the Church*, p. 208.

⁷⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁸⁵ Guyon, *Madame Guyon, an Autobiography*, p. 240. See also Guyon, *Spiritual Torrents*, p. 52.

⁷⁸⁶ Guyon, *Experiencing the Depths of Jesus Christ*. Formerly entitled: *A Short and Very Easy Method of Prayer*, p. 35.

⁷⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸⁸ Guyon, *A Short and Easy Method of Prayer*, p. 21.

⁷⁸⁹ Pourrat, p. 149.

⁷⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁹¹ Guyon, *Experiencing the Depths of Jesus Christ*. Formerly entitled: *A Short and Very Easy Method of Prayer*, p. 34 & ff.

⁷⁹² Guyon, *Madame Guyon, an Autobiography*, p. 186.

⁷⁹³ Guyon, *Spiritual Torrents*, p. 64.

Death is recognized by that which is absent; inability to feel pain or to have any care or any thought of self. Death is recognized by a permanent indifference ... Death is an insensitive state, insensitive to everything that concerns itself. Let God reduce that soul to any extremity; the soul knows no distaste.⁷⁹⁴

Why must the soul undergo annihilation or absorption into the Divine? In Guyon's view, the absence of self brings purity to the soul. "In fact, the soul's purity is increased in exact proportion to the loss of self!"⁷⁹⁵ Guyon's shorter way therefore called for a mystical death of "everything born of the will of flesh."⁷⁹⁶ A soul completely possessed by God is in a state of pure love, so that the soul may claim, as did the Apostle Paul; "'It is no more that I live, but Jesus Christ that liveth in me.' 'It is He in whom I live, move, and have my being.'"⁷⁹⁷

Moreover, a spiritual marriage or union between the soul and the Divine is possible only as the human nature becomes divine. "Self is the source of defilement, and it prevents any alliance with Purity."⁷⁹⁸ Guyon wrote:

For two things to become one, the two must have similar natures. For instance, the impurity of dirt cannot be united with the purity of gold. Fire has to be introduced to destroy the dross and leave the gold pure.⁷⁹⁹

The Lord therefore "annihilates the Christian only to transform him into Himself."⁸⁰⁰ To make room for God, the Quietist wanted to eliminate "the Adamical life"⁸⁰¹ through a

⁷⁹⁴ Guyon, *Union with God*, p. 50.

⁷⁹⁵ Guyon, *Experiencing the Depths of Jesus Christ*. Formerly entitled: *A Short and Very Easy Method of Prayer*, p. 126.

⁷⁹⁶ Guyon, *Union with God*, p. 54.

⁷⁹⁷ Guyon, *Madame Guyon, an Autobiography*, p. 210.

⁷⁹⁸ Guyon, *Experiencing the Depths of Jesus Christ*. Formerly entitled: *A Short and Very Easy Method of Prayer*, p. 127.

⁷⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰⁰ Guyon, *Spiritual Torrents*, p. 58. See also J. Guyon, *Final Steps in Christian Maturity*. (Sargent, Georgia: The SeedSowers Christian Books Publishing House, 1985), p. 92.

⁸⁰¹ Guyon, *A Short and Easy Method of Prayer*, p. 45.

complete elimination of self, and all the activity of self, so that “that the activity of God may be substituted in its place.”⁸⁰² Self-annihilation was for Guyon “the true prayer of worship.”⁸⁰³ “All that is of your doing, all that comes from your life—even your most exalted prayer—must first be destroyed before union can come about.”⁸⁰⁴ True adoration, the supreme acknowledgement of God’s existence, is known only by the destruction of self. Guyon wrote:

We can pay due honour to the All God, only in our own annihilation;
which is no sooner accomplished, than He, who never suffers a void in
nature instantly fills us with Himself.”⁸⁰⁵

Mystical death was the means whereby the finitude of self was exchanged or absorbed by the Infinite Self—God.⁸⁰⁶ Souls are thus perfected by a destruction of self through which they access power beyond the visible world. In “oneness with the Spirit of God”⁸⁰⁷ the soul is released from “the cramped and limited quarters.”⁸⁰⁸ The soul, in union with God, is “more energetic, more vibrant than anything we could ever initiate within ourselves.”⁸⁰⁹ Guyon thus suggested that through the loss of self, we pass

into the Lord, our will is made one and the same with that of the Lord,
according to the prayer of Christ, ‘As thou Father are in me, and I in thee,
grant that they also may be one of us.’ John 17:21. Oh, but it is then that
the will so rendered marvelous, both because it is made the will of the

⁸⁰² Ibid.

⁸⁰³ Guyon, *Experiencing the Depths of Jesus Christ*. Formerly entitled: *A Short and Very Easy Method of Prayer*, p. 90.

⁸⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 125.

⁸⁰⁵ Guyon, *A Short and Easy Method of Prayer*, p. 41.

⁸⁰⁶ Guyon, *Spiritual Torrents*, p. 80.

⁸⁰⁷ J. Guyon, *The Song of the Bride*. (Sargaent, Georgia: The SeedSowers Christian Books Publishing House, 1990), p. 93.

⁸⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁰⁹ J. Guyon, *Experiencing God Through Prayer*. (New Kensington, Pennsylvania: Whitaker House, 1984), p. 68.

Lord, which is the greatest of miracles ... Scarcely has it willed but the thing is done.⁸¹⁰

Thus, Quietists like Guyon favored a mystical absorption of “self” so that the activity of the soul is said to be God’s activity; the principle acting “in and through her; and that principle is God.”⁸¹¹ A soul absorbed by God is both freed and forgetful of self-ambition and desire, and as a result displays a holy indifference to all events, be they good or evil. Some feared that a doctrine of irresponsibility resulted from the pursuit of passivity and holy indifference.

Like many Quietists, Guyon mishandled the Prayer of Simplicity by insisting not upon simplicity, but passivity. Guyon thus adapted the Prayer of Simple Regard⁸¹² and promoted her one act of passivity to all people. This then was the fourth quality of Quietism, that through the “shorter path” of passivity, any soul may enter the unitive state regardless of maturity, education or godliness.^{813 814} According to Guyon, the Prayer of Simplicity was practiced by all ranks of people, by “kings, by priests, by soldiers, by laborers, by children, by women, and even by the sick.”⁸¹⁵

Obviously Quietism had an egalitarian impulse, for in engaging all people in their cult of passivity, the Quietists sought to elevate all souls into the highest mystical states, whether or not they had a mystical vocation. Too often, Guyon complained, education and human ability had replaced actual experiences and intimacy with God. Those who are faithful are more often intimate with God “than those with great intellect and reasoning... those who would rather study about prayer and spiritual matters than experience them.”⁸¹⁶ According to Guyon, the intellect can never pray with the depth of the heart, and it is prayer that “comes out of the heart [that] is not interrupted by thinking.”⁸¹⁷

⁸¹⁰ Guyon, *Madame Guyon, an Autobiography*, pp. 234-235.

⁸¹¹ Bertot, as quoted by Pourrat, p. 145.

⁸¹² Guyon, *Experiencing the Depths of Jesus Christ*. Formerly entitled: *A Short and Very Easy Method of Prayer*, p. 21.

⁸¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁸¹⁴ Pourrat, p. 131.

⁸¹⁵ Guyon, *Experiencing the Depths of Jesus Christ*. Formerly entitled: *A Short and Very Easy Method of Prayer*, p. 4.

⁸¹⁶ Guyon, *Spiritual Torrents*, p. 11.

⁸¹⁷ Guyon, *Experiencing the Depths of Jesus Christ*. Formerly entitled: *A Short and Very Easy Method of Prayer*, p. 4.

Nothing can interrupt the Prayer of Simplicity, because it is an experience “of Christ deep within.”⁸¹⁸ All who have abandoned human strength live with “less difficulty and with less interruption than you now live by the air which you take into you.”⁸¹⁹

Intellectual effort is useful in reading the Bible, yet “that studious kind of reading will not help you when it comes to matters that are divine!”⁸²⁰ Books, even the Bible, cannot impart that intimacy with God that the higher mystical states provide. The best book of all is not a book, but a relationship, an experience that even the illiterate may enjoy. She wrote:

Because you cannot read, you may feel that you are in a weaker state than most Christians. You may feel you are unqualified to know the depths of your Lord. But in fact, you are really blessed. The blessing in not being able to read is that prayer may become your reading! Do you not know that the greatest book is Jesus Christ Himself? He is a Book who has been written on within and without. He will, teach you all things. Read Him!⁸²¹

Here we observe Guyon elevating personal experience over religious learning. Her reluctance to acknowledge theological scholarship as an authoritative element in faith may have offended the ecclesial authorities who ultimately critiqued and condemned her work. Perhaps Guyon was referring to the doctors of the Sorbonne when she suggested that there are those who believe only the intellectually gifted can know Christ, and that the less educated or the simple are “incapable of this inner relationship with Christ.”⁸²² In her opinion, however even simple souls often makes great progress in relationship with Christ. For God can turn “factory workers into Prophets!”⁸²³ Believing that the highest mystical states are attained by the ignorant and powerless, Guyon argued that clever words can never replace the speechlessness of a heart that is awestruck with love for God. She wrote:

⁸¹⁸ Ibid., p. 5.

⁸¹⁹ Ibid.

⁸²⁰ Ibid., p. 8.

⁸²¹ Ibid., p. 15.

⁸²² Ibid., p. 120.

⁸²³ Ibid., p. 123.

That is right! Your Father is far more pleased with these words-words which He sees pouring out from a heart that is full of love—than He could ever be by elaborate-sounding words that are dry and lifeless.⁸²⁴

Guyon's advocacy of Quietism was also an advancement of equality, in that anyone might attain spiritual authority and power without the consent from Church officials. Since ability, education, gender or class did not preclude one from attaining the highest mystical states, Guyon therefore advanced her Prayer of Simplicity on all people.

We have just shown that Guyon's work exhibited the four assertions of Quietism, that holiness or perfection can be attained through a "shorter path," through a continuous state of contemplation, mediated by passivity, whereby the Divine absorbs the human self including the will, and this then fulfills all religious duty.

While the Quietists' innovations were welcomed by many in Europe during the 17th century, some claimed these alterations were pernicious, and the innovators were often interrogated and in some cases imprisoned. Despite a strenuous critique of Quietism, two centuries later the Holiness and Keswick Movements embraced aspects of Guyon's Quietism. The scholarly community overlooked the characteristics of Quietism that Keswick shared not only with Madame Guyon but also with Thomas Upham, as we shall explore shortly. Scholars have likewise failed to observe how the Quietists' adaptation of the Prayer of Simple Regard became part of Keswick's system of sanctification, in that passivity or "rest" was said to usher in the highest mystical state of perfection. Moreover, no scholar has noted the rejection of Keswick's passivity by leaders such as Jessie Penn-Lewis.

The appeal or attractiveness of the Prayer of Simple Regard is obvious. It functioned to still the mind and imagination, through "a simple act of faith in God's presence."⁸²⁵ Through the Prayer of Simplicity, the "soul is content with a 'loving looking at God and at Jesus Christ.'"⁸²⁶ By deliberately resisting images, actions or emotions in prayer, one

⁸²⁴ Ibid.

⁸²⁵ Pourrat, p. 124.

⁸²⁶ Ibid.

remained quietly “attentive to God’s presence,”⁸²⁷ through which one was promised to bring forth ““good fruits of purity and union with God to the soul,””⁸²⁸ under the supervision of a wise spiritual director.⁸²⁹ What was missing at Keswick, of course, was the advice of skilled spiritual directors.

Though subtle, the alterations made to the Prayer of Simplicity by the Quietists had far reaching consequences not only for the 17th century, but also for generations to come. Guyon’s Quietism can be followed through the work of Thomas Upham, who suggested that faith rather than passivity mediated the highest mystical states leading to perfection. It was Upham who served as a proponent of the Higher Life notion of sanctification by faith, and it is to Thomas Upham that we now turn our attention.

VI. The Quietism of Thomas Upham (1799 - 1872)

As we have seen, for both Phoebe Palmer and later with Penn-Lewis, sanctification was always an act of the will—a cooperation of human volition with the Divine. However, for Thomas Upham the highest mystical states were attained by a passive and an annihilated will, a notion he undoubtedly acquired from Madame Guyon. In addition, Upham promoted Guyon’s Quietism by suggesting first that perfection can be attained through a continuous state of contemplation or passivity, and second, that a continuous state of passivity encompasses the whole of religious duty. The now perfected soul resists the inward tendency of human activity, aware that human effort circumvents God’s work in the soul.⁸³⁰ Third, from a state of passivity the human will is absorbed by the Divine and thereby assumes a holy indifference, a passive condition of “complete abandonment to God’s good pleasure.”⁸³¹ Finally, Upham stressed in a new way the notion that passivity is the work of faith. Faith, void of words, images and emotion ushered souls into a high mystical state, and thus passivity played an efficacious role in perfecting the soul, a notion he promoted to all who would listen.

⁸²⁷ Knox, p. 247.

⁸²⁸ Pourrat, p. 123.

⁸²⁹ Ibid.

⁸³⁰ Ibid., pp. 148-149.

⁸³¹ Ibid., p. 149.

The first quality of Quietism was the assertion that a continuous state of contemplation was the portal to perfection. We observe this characteristic of Quietism in Upham's call to a moment by moment faith which he believed subdued not only the "natural desire and human strength,"⁸³² but the will as well. Through a continuous act of faith the soul is united to God, where it receives "what is necessary for the restoration and perfection of [its] nature."⁸³³ "The doctrine of religious faith involves the doctrine of living by the moment."⁸³⁴ For faith, insisted Upham, "concentrates eternity in each moment, as it passes, and regarding God in every event of that moment, pronounces him righteous."⁸³⁵

Quoting the Flemish Quietist, Antonia Bourignon (1616 - 1680), Upham claimed that the true condition of the Christian is a "state of continual prayer."⁸³⁶ Such prayer is unceasing and ongoing, whether we walk, sleep, work, or even at rest. "In our sleep our affections and will ought to be in such a state, that we may regard them as blessing God always."⁸³⁷

Therefore the prayer of faith is a moment by moment acquisition of perfection. For such a prayer enables the soul to glorify God one moment after the next. The continual prayer of faith is one in which the soul is therefore always right.⁸³⁸

In whatever his hand finds to do, God approves him... He who thus prays, glorifies God moment by moment; wherever he goes, and whatever he does, whether in the place of retirement, or in the place of public action, or in whatever other diversities of situation Providence has seen fit to place him. He meets all occasions in a proper manner, because he always meets them in the divine relation.⁸³⁹

⁸³² T. Upham, *Life Religious Opinions and Experience of Madame Guyon*. (London, England: Allenson & Co., Ltd., 1933), p. 77.

⁸³³ T. Upham, *Life of Faith*. (Boston: Waite, Pierce and Company, 1854), p. 61.

⁸³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 233.

⁸³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 323.

⁸³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 397.

⁸³⁷ Antonia Bourignon, as quoted by Upham, *Life of Faith*, p. 398.

⁸³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 403.

⁸³⁹ *Ibid.*

The soul united to God through a continual prayer of faith ⁸⁴⁰ participates in a “deep experience in holy living.” ⁸⁴¹ They have “a real and permanent foundation,” ⁸⁴² based on “the doctrine of ‘Living By the Moment.’” ⁸⁴³ The continual prayer of faith elicits “a perpetual foundation laid of permanency, the perpetuity, the everlastingness” ⁸⁴⁴ of God’s immediate presence.

This then is the first quality of Upham’s Quietism, that perfection is reached through a continual act of contemplation, a ceaseless prayer based and rooted in faith. Upham suggested that there is a connection between “the state of continual prayer with that of continual faith.” ⁸⁴⁵ All of the religious life is built upon faith, Upham reasoned. ⁸⁴⁶ Thus, faith, rather than effort, is the portal to holiness.

Upham, like the Quietists before him, embraced a “shorter path” to perfection that circumvented the more arduous path of mortification and purification. ⁸⁴⁷ This then was the second quality of Quietism, that a continuous state of contemplation was also a state of mental, emotional, and volitional passivity, which also encompassed or satisfied “all other acts of religion and of Christian virtue in an eminent degree.” ⁸⁴⁸ According to Upham, acts of mortification can never replace faith in sanctifying the soul. Once united to God through continuous faith, systems of purification, purgation or mortification are no longer necessary. ⁸⁴⁹ “The end for which mortification was practiced is accomplished, and all is become new.” ⁸⁵⁰ “Acts of austerity and mortification” ⁸⁵¹ do not furnish an expiatory or “an atoning element.” ⁸⁵² Guyon said those who have died mystically have “no further need of mortification.” ⁸⁵³ By adapting a Shorter Method of Prayer, Guyon believed that passivity supersede spiritual disciplines and purgation in the path towards

⁸⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 408-409.

⁸⁴¹ Ibid., p. 414.

⁸⁴² Ibid.

⁸⁴³ Ibid.

⁸⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 400.

⁸⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 401.

⁸⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 48.

⁸⁴⁷ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 198 & ff.

⁸⁴⁸ Pourrat, p. 148.

⁸⁴⁹ Upham, *Life Religious Opinions and Experience of Madame Guyon*, p. 59.

⁸⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁸⁵¹ Ibid.

⁸⁵² Ibid.

⁸⁵³ Guyon, *Madame Guyon, an Autobiography*, p. 85.

mystical union. Therefore passivity assumed the totality of spiritual duty, a notion Upham likewise embraced.

At this point we should note that what Upham perceived in the work of Guyon was a like-minded ally—a fellow Protestant whom he believed made faith the basis of salvation as well as sanctification. Upham therefore hailed Guyon as an “honorary Protestant,”⁸⁵⁴ and as such he suggested that she suffered persecution from the Catholic Church, not because she was a Quietist, but as a result of her alleged Protestant profession of salvation and sanctification by faith alone.⁸⁵⁵ According to Upham, since human accomplishment leads to spiritual pride, Guyon advanced faith or passivity rather than effort not only as the path to spiritual heights, but also as the means of satisfying all religious duty. The great premise of the religious life, and thus all Christian virtue, stems from faith argued Upham. Faith enveloped all that is holy. By faith “we are justified from the sins of the past.”⁸⁵⁶ The same faith is “equally necessary to keep us from sin in time to come ... faith is the great foundation of the religious life.”⁸⁵⁷ He wrote:

Take almost any other Christian grace, such as the spirit of submission, of gratitude, or of prayer, and it will be found that they sustain intimate relations with other states of the mind, particularly with faith; and that in reality they cannot possibly exist without faith. When they are closely examined, all the Christian graces, however divergent and remote they may now appear, will be found to converge to one centre, and to rest upon one foundation.⁸⁵⁸

Faith, therefore, sustains or encompasses all other Christian virtues and duties. According to Upham, faith is to the soul what gravity is “to the physical universe; uniting all, harmonizing all, but always without confusion and noise, and with the greatest simplicity of operation.”⁸⁵⁹ A form of simplicity or rest, those who enjoy the higher mystical states

⁸⁵⁴ Knox, p. 235.

⁸⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 236.

⁸⁵⁶ Upham, *Life of Faith*, p. 48.

⁸⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁵⁹ Upham, *Life Religious Opinions and Experience of Madame Guyon*, p. 362.

are like “the great masters of science—a Newton for instance,”⁸⁶⁰ whose genius appears effortless.

Upham also followed Guyon in suggesting that as human action and volition are absorbed or replaced by God, whereby the soul enjoyed freedom “from all personal desires and passions.”⁸⁶¹ This then was the third characteristic noted in Upham’s work, that through a state of passivity volition, desire and effort are absorbed by the Divine after which the soul experiences a holy indifference, a passive condition of “complete abandonment to God’s good pleasure.”⁸⁶² Divine control ensues as the soul reaches a state of pure faith and self-annihilation such that the absence of earthly approbation produces no pain. In a state of pure faith and perfection, the soul has no pleasure, no desire, no will of its own.⁸⁶³ Therefore God allowed Christians to undergo many severe trials in order that they might learn to relinquish every support “separate and distinct from that of unmixed, naked faith. ‘We walk by faith,’ says the Apostle, ‘and not by sight.’ (2 Cor. V. 6,7)”⁸⁶⁴ The highest mystical states demanded, Upham claimed, a silence and still soul, a soul completely empty of self and self-interest. Passivity of mind and will were prerequisites to Upham’s “shorter path” of faith, a phenomenon he claimed existed in the lives of many the great mystics. Upham wrote:

The reader, who is acquainted with the history of ecclesiastical opinions, will probably recognize in them the old Mystic doctrine, that the soul must become a ‘Tabula Rasa,’ a tablet without inscription, a canvass without line or color upon it, in order to experience the divine union. That is to say, we must be divested of every thought, which is not of divine inspiration, and of every feeling, which is not in harmony with God, in order to be in God without any thing intervening or separating. And it is undoubtedly true, as a general doctrine, that, the freer the soul is from the

⁸⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 361.

⁸⁶¹ Charles Edward White, “What the Holy Spirit Can and Cannot Do: The Ambiguities of Phoebe Palmer’s Theology of Experience.” *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, 20 (1985), p. 111.

⁸⁶² Pourrat, p. 149.

⁸⁶³ T. Upham, *Principles of the Interior or Hidden Life: Designed Particularly for the Consideration of those Who are Seeking Assurance of Faith and Perfect Love*. (Boston: Waite, Pierce and Company, 1854), p. 364-365.

⁸⁶⁴ Upham, *Life of Faith*, p. 104.

images of human things and the more exempt from human prejudice and passion, the more direct, the more easy, and the more intimate and deep, will be its communion with the Infinite Mind.⁸⁶⁵

Until self is completely annihilated, the soul is overly active and acutely self-conscious. Those who enjoy the highest mystical states are detached, disinterested, freed from a self-orientation. Guyon was tormented by an acute self-consciousness, prior to entering mystical union with the Divine. According to Upham, Guyon even had trouble walking the streets without noticing “the impulse of the ‘life of self.’”⁸⁶⁶ Such comments suggested to Upham that Guyon was redeemed, but not yet sanctified. Upham writes:

She seemed to be in the condition described in the seventh chapter of Romans—a description which will apply both to the struggles of the enlightened sinner when deeply convicted of his transgressions, and to the inward conflicts of the partially sanctified Christian. ‘I delight in the law of God after the inward man; but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin.’⁸⁶⁷

Without faith the soul remains self-oriented and enslaved to human adulation. To live “by emotions, to draw our activity and our hope from sensible joys, is to live by sight rather than by faith.”⁸⁶⁸ Faith then works to “purify and subordinate the lower principles,”⁸⁶⁹ the appetites of the ‘self-life.’ Those who have truly abandoned themselves to God through faith, “will remain calm, peaceful, and thankful, under interior as well as exterior desolation.”⁸⁷⁰ There is power in faith to initiate a “meekness or quietness of spirit,”⁸⁷¹ and the “grace of silence.”⁸⁷² The fruit of faith gives rise to a quiet mind that “has no

⁸⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 394.

⁸⁶⁶ Upham, *Life Religious Opinions and Experience of Madame Guyon*, p. 68.

⁸⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 103.

⁸⁶⁹ Upham, *Life of Faith*, p. 175.

⁸⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 182.

⁸⁷¹ Ibid., p. 253.

⁸⁷² Ibid., p. 270.

preference, no election, which results from the impulse of its own tendencies.”⁸⁷³ Once God absorbs human volition, then all the soul’s activity is centered in faith, and there it remains, peaceful and holy because it is wholly of God.

Upham recalled the experiences of Madame Guyon who in a state of quiet enjoyed the efficacy of a purified soul.

I possessed God after a manner so pure and so immense, as nothing else could equal. In regard to thoughts or desires, all was so clean, so naked, so lost in the divinity, that the soul appeared to have no selfish movement ... both the powers of the mind, and the very senses being wonderfully purified. Sometimes I was surprised to find that I was destitute, so far as I could perceive, of any intellectual action. Everything was calm and quiet within me. The imagination, formerly so restless, now no more troubled me. I had no more perplexity or uneasy reflections. The will, being perfectly dead to all its own tendencies, was become void of every human inclination, both natural and spiritual, and only inclined of God to whatever he pleased ... The limitations of self seemed to be demolished; and the soul went cheerfully out into the unbounded freeness of God’s will.⁸⁷⁴

A state of perfection was, for Upham, initiated by faith. Faith was the means whereby the Divine evacuated from the soul all human activity, limitations and inclinations, including volition. As a Quietist, Upham postulated that God perfects the soul first by destroying the will and by replacing it with the Divine will.⁸⁷⁵ For though the soul can submit “to God in the matter of its salvation through Christ, it was still proud of its own wisdom, and inordinately attached to its own will.”⁸⁷⁶ Nothing opposes God’s operation in the soul more than willfulness, insisted Upham. Until self-will is eliminated, the soul is enslaved to sin and hence disjoined from the Divine. Therefore, the will must die in a

⁸⁷³ Ibid., p. 360.

⁸⁷⁴ Guyon, as quoted by Upham, *Life of Faith*, pp. 325-326.

⁸⁷⁵ Upham, *Life Religious Opinions and Experience of Madame Guyon*, p. 90.

⁸⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 100.

“crucifixion of nature”⁸⁷⁷ so that it might live a “life of sanctification.”⁸⁷⁸ In union with God, through “an inward death,”⁸⁷⁹ the soul is perfectly obedient, with the simple faith of a child who “recognizes no will but God’s will.”⁸⁸⁰ As a state of self-volition is terminated, the soul “yields readily and without reluctance,”⁸⁸¹ when “it comes in conflict with others.”⁸⁸² Because volition is the last authority within the soul, if God controls the will, God “has control of the man.”⁸⁸³

Harmony with the Divine is found by a “continual losing our will in the will of God.”⁸⁸⁴ In return the soul receives peace, perfection, and “God’s eternal order.”⁸⁸⁵ Living through God’s will each moment, the soul regards their efforts “as nothing more nor less than God’s plans, begun, prosecuted, and either continued or abandoned as God chooses.”⁸⁸⁶ Upham wrote:

He, who approaches nearest to an annihilation of his own will, approaches nearest to the state of entire sympathy and harmony with the Divine Mind. The prostration of our own will, in such a sense that it shall not in any respect oppose itself to the will of God, seems to be the completion or consummation of those various processes, by which the inward spirit is purified.⁸⁸⁷

For Upham, the distinguishing mark of intimacy with the Divine was not mystical experiences of visions or revelations, but a will subdued. As we give ourselves to God, we become closely engaged in God’s purposes. Upham writes:

⁸⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸⁸² Ibid.

⁸⁸³ Upham, *Life of Faith*, p. 219.

⁸⁸⁴ Upham, *A Method of Prayer: An Analysis of the Work of Madame De La Mothe Guyon*, p. 21.

⁸⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 21.

⁸⁸⁶ Upham, *Life of Faith*, p. 213.

⁸⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 211.

Isaiah, and Ezekiel, and Daniel, and Peter, and John, and Paul experienced God's favor and were his beloved and adopted children, not exclusively or chiefly because they had visions and proclaimed God's revealed messages and wrought God's miracles; (missions and attributes, which, so far as we can perceive, might have been assigned to other less holy persons or even to unholy persons,) but because, they had given themselves to God in consecration and in faith, because their hearts were sanctified and their wills were subdued.⁸⁸⁸

Upham broadly displays the centrality of his Quietism by suggesting that a denuded will produced a state of blessedness, a "holy disinterest." "There is no result so desirable, and no blessedness so pure and heaven-like as that of entire union of the human will with the divine."⁸⁸⁹ Those who enjoy the highest mystical states are untroubled by the trials of life because they have no "desire, no choice, no will of their own."⁸⁹⁰ Bernard, according to Upham said that: "He, who destroys his self-will, destroys hell."⁸⁹¹ To destroy hell is to enter heaven. Upham argued:

He, who lives in his self-will, just so far as he does so, lives in hell; and he, who lives in the will of God, just so far as he does so, lives in heaven. As those therefore, who have confidence in the power of faith.⁸⁹²

In Upham's system of Quietism, faith served as the portal to perfection. Through faith the will is absorbed into "God's overruling providence,"⁸⁹³ whereby the soul entered perfection or heaven and became an unresisting instruments of God.⁸⁹⁴ Through a passive faith all human action is thus fully identified as the action of God alone. There is a complete "transformation of the soul's activity into God's."⁸⁹⁵

⁸⁸⁸ Ibid., pp. 88-89.

⁸⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 224.

⁸⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁸⁹¹ Bernard, as quoted by Upham, *Life of Faith*, p. 224.

⁸⁹² Bernard, as quoted by Upham, *Life of Faith*, pp. 224-225.

⁸⁹³ Ibid., p. 213.

⁸⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁹⁵ Pourrat, p. 144.

Upham therefore extended faith an efficacious role in mediating perfection. A passive, "pure and naked faith"⁸⁹⁶ was the portal to perfection in Upham's Quietist formulation of holiness. Faith accessed a mystical or interior death that united "the soul immediately with the divine essence."⁸⁹⁷ We can trace this idea to Abbé Bertot, Guyon's first spiritual director, who wrote:

When the soul has been given the spirit of faith she remains for a very long time in interior darkness and solitude ... dying through faith to self and all its inclinations. And so, losing and dying, she gradually reaches a state of nakedness; or rather, she becomes so simply unadorned that at last she is only a bare point, or nothing.⁸⁹⁸

The soul that has thus been annihilated possesses a "spirit of faith,"⁸⁹⁹ and through such faith comes "a repose [that] gradually overtakes the soul,"⁹⁰⁰ whereby all self-activity is transformed into God's activity.⁹⁰¹ As the activity of the soul is absorbed by and transformed into God's, the Quietist insists upon a "holy indifference," and thus emerges the "doctrine of more or less irresponsible passivity,"⁹⁰² the third characteristic of Quietism.

Through passive faith the soul transcends the finite world,⁹⁰³ enters into God⁹⁰⁴ and enjoys not only a "holy indifference" but also an infinite capacity, "not every hour of every day, but every minute."⁹⁰⁵ In his turn, Upham was to write:

When we arrive at full faith ... the soul enters upon the state of broad and full emancipation; knowing all things by being willing to be ignorant of all things; enjoying all things by renouncing everything; and by rejecting the

⁸⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 142.

⁸⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁹⁸ Ibid., pp. 142-143.

⁸⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 142.

⁹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 144.

⁹⁰¹ Ibid.

⁹⁰² Ibid.

⁹⁰³ Ibid.

⁹⁰⁴ Bertot, as quoted by Pourrat, p. 145.

⁹⁰⁵ Ibid.

contracted and contracting desires of the creature, enlarging itself, so far as our present capacity will permit, into the infinity of God's desires.⁹⁰⁶

A soul absorbed by Christ therefore possesses perfection because the soul enters Christ's disposition and claims as the "apostle Paul did, 'I live; and yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.'"⁹⁰⁷ Upham, like Quietists before him, insisted upon full identification with the Divine.⁹⁰⁸ The soul in union with God attains moral perfection, as their actions are thus "entirely acceptable to God."⁹⁰⁹ A person perfected by faith might

commit a physical or prudential error; he may perhaps take a course which will be followed by the loss of his property or an injury to his person, but he cannot commit a moral error.⁹¹⁰

The Quietists constructed a religious and moral system in which passivity was not only the sole requirement of religion,⁹¹¹ but also the basis where human action was fully identified with Divine activity. Because of this, Bossuet condemned the Quietist's "shorter path" as a doctrine of irresponsibility, which he believed, ultimately led to antinomianism.⁹¹²

Though Guyon was denounced as a Quietist, and her teachings were damned as pernicious, despite her "bonds and imprisonments,"⁹¹³ Upham believed Guyon was led "by infinite wisdom"⁹¹⁴ and through obedience to this wisdom she followed the road to perfection through faith, despite persecution. Upham considered her fate similar to those of the Protestants during the Reformation, who, in Upham's view, also made faith rather than effort the means of true spiritual fecundity. While Protestants were persecuted for insisting upon faith as means of salvation, according to Upham, Guyon likewise received

⁹⁰⁶ Upham, *Life of Faith*, p. 330.

⁹⁰⁷ Upham, *Life Religious Opinions and Experience of Madame Guyon*, p. 163.

⁹⁰⁸ Knox, pp. 334, 350-351.

⁹⁰⁹ Upham, *Life of Faith*, p. 240.

⁹¹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹¹ Pourrat, p. 126 & ff.

⁹¹² Ibid., pp. 146, 181.

⁹¹³ Upham, *Life Religious Opinions and Experience of Madame Guyon*, p. 156.

⁹¹⁴ Ibid.

harsh treatment from Church for suggesting that faith rather than effort ushered in perfection. Upham's admiration for Madame Guyon was therefore constant. He wrote:

[Guyon] uttered a word from her burdened heart, in her simplicity, without knowing or thinking how widely it would effect the interests of humanity, or through how many distant ages it would re-echoed. And that word was Sanctification by Faith ... In the Protestant Church, it would have been hardly tolerable; but in the Roman Catholic Church, which is characterized by ceremonial observances, the toleration of a sentiment which ascribes the highest results of inward experience to faith alone, was impossible. So that, instead of being regarded as a humble and devout Catholic, as she supposed herself to be, she found herself suddenly denounced as a heretic.⁹¹⁵

To live by faith, rather than works, was an affront to the Catholic Church, insisted Upham, and any "life which rests upon faith ... could reasonably expect nothing but persecutions."⁹¹⁶ According to Upham, Guyon was imprisoned in the Bastille because she advanced sanctification by faith, over and against the religious rituals such as acts of mortification promoted by the Catholic faith. Just as the apostle Paul was persecuted because he advanced faith over Jewish ritual observances, any soul who advances the truth which Upham himself championed—sanctification by faith⁹¹⁷ will suffer persecution. According to Bossuet, however, it was not Guyon's view of sanctification by faith, but her Quietism that led to her inquisition and subsequent four-year stay in the Bastille.⁹¹⁸ Yet Upham clearly understood her significance quite differently.

Of course Upham does not appear to understand sacramental theology, but the crucial point for him seems to have been Guyon's freedom from clerical authority, apart from that of her spiritual director. Independent of clerical authority, Guyon advanced the doctrine of sanctification by faith, which had been forgotten by the medieval Church,

⁹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 155.

⁹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 156.

⁹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 261.

⁹¹⁸ Pourrat, p. 184 & ff.

though not unfamiliar to the “pious of former times.”⁹¹⁹ In Upham’s view, Guyon dedicated herself to proclaiming “holiness based upon faith,”⁹²⁰ as the “privilege and possession”⁹²¹ of all Christians. Taking up her cause, as he viewed it, Upham also advanced a “shorter path” to perfection through faith just as widely as Guyon imposed her “shorter path” through passivity on all the faithful. Both Upham and Guyon endeavored to make accessible to every Christian “what is special to high mystical states into a general rule for contemplation.”⁹²² The “popularizing” of the Quietists’ “shorter path” was thought to lead to an inauthentic mystical experience, and placed many on the “brink of falsehood.”⁹²³ To promote the one act of passivity on the “weak and strong, the mediocre and the good, the most unmortified and ignorant as well as the most understanding”⁹²⁴ is thus the fourth characteristic of Quietism, a characteristic noted in the work of Upham.

VII. A Critique by Ronald Knox

Ronald Knox, a convert to Catholicism and an ordained Catholic priest, offered a critique of the Quietism of Guyon and Upham.⁹²⁵ According to Knox, Upham reworked Madame Guyon’s *Autobiography* with one goal in mind, to “substitute, at every turn, the jargon of Evangelical piety for the Quietist jargon in which Madame Guyon wrote.”⁹²⁶ Upham viewed Guyon as an “honorary Protestant,”⁹²⁷ who suffered at the hand of the Catholic Church which Upham supposed was hostile to her Protestant profession of sanctification by faith. Upham seemed unaware that Guyon’s *Autobiography* was written to defend her Quietism. For Upham, Guyon had discovered the true foundation of religion—faith, the means of both justification as well as sanctification.⁹²⁸ Knox wrote:

⁹¹⁹ Ibid., p. 163.

⁹²⁰ Ibid., p. 158.

⁹²¹ Ibid.

⁹²² Pourrat, p. 139.

⁹²³ Father Surin, as quoted by Pourrat, p. 132.

⁹²⁴ Guilloiré, as quoted by Pourrat, p. 131.

⁹²⁵ Knox, p. 231 & ff.

⁹²⁶ Ibid., p. 236.

⁹²⁷ Ibid., p. 235.

⁹²⁸ Ibid., p. 236.

Whether we call this state of experience pure love, or whether we call it ... *assurance of faith* is perhaps not very essential ... 'The way of forgiveness and salvation by faith in Christ alone,' 'Sanctification by faith' ... 'A heart truly redeemed and sanctified through the blood of Christ' such phrases as these, by constant repetition, hypnotize the reader into the impression that he is studying the experiences of some Evangelical lady in the early nineteenth century. But they are not her phrases, they are the phrases which Upham has considerably lent her ... It is true enough that the Quietists described their approach to the interior life as 'the way of faith'. And, to a mind saturated with Reformation thought, the word 'faith' inevitably suggests a contrast between faith and good works.⁹²⁹

Upham seemed to have one concern with respect to his advocacy of Guyon. He harnessed her "shorter path" to perfection, through passivity and naked faith, as an endorsement for his scheme of sanctification by faith, apart from effort. Moreover, while Upham suggested that eminent saints throughout history achieved sanctification without effort,⁹³⁰ he failed to observe that the purgative path often characterized classical mysticism. Instead, Upham relied upon the Quietist's mishandling of the Prayer of Simple Regard, which embraced passivity rather than simplicity, an error easily promoted to many people.

Certainly, Upham is vulnerable to criticism here, as Ronald Knox was to discern in his book on *Enthusiasm*, first published in 1950. Knox was right to note that Upham assimilated Guyon into a form of Evangelical Piety. What Knox does not seem to have noticed was that Madame Guyon's "shorter path" was being assimilated by Evan Hopkins and Jessie Penn-Lewis, much closer to his own time (and within his own country), and both Hopkins and Penn-Lewis did a better job of it than Thomas Upham. Moreover, at least in the case of Penn-Lewis, she did not have to convert to Roman Catholicism (or become a priest at that) to

⁹²⁹ Ibid.

⁹³⁰ Upham, *Life of Faith*, p. 394.

appreciate the apparent problems associated with Madame Guyon's Quietism, as Underhill has also noted.⁹³¹

Knox and others vigorously resisted the Quietists' assertion that a continuous state of passivity encompassed the whole of religious duty.⁹³² A state of "complete abandonment to God,"⁹³³ whether it leads to salvation or damnation, was nothing more than the doctrine of irresponsibility.⁹³⁴ Equally repugnant to Knox was the notion that through a state of passivity the soul was fully absorbed and thus identified with the Divine.⁹³⁵ For such souls, even the most horrible deed could not "contaminate."⁹³⁶ "Whoever has ceased to be, cannot sin,"⁹³⁷ for "that is done in them is the work of God."⁹³⁸ Fasting, mortifications and "acts of virtue"⁹³⁹ were thus viewed as "useless to those in the 'way of the spirit.'"⁹⁴⁰ To render moral effort unnecessary was viewed as a dangerous departure from classical mysticism.⁹⁴¹

The Quietists demanded passivity in the same way Keswick and Higher Life teachers like Upham demanded rest, and thus both shunned effort while advancing the one act of passivity in attaining perfection. The goal was to make holiness God's work alone. However, by doing so, the Quietist, through their "shorter path," offered the highest mystical state to any soul, regardless of their maturity. By contrast, the classical mystical tradition suggested that union with God is the result of years of spiritual discipline and direction. With the Quietists however, union with God—the highest mystical state was now being offered indiscriminately to anyone, regardless of their calling or their spiritual development, and this through spiritual inactivity. Quietists like Guyon and Upham promoted their "shorter path" indiscriminately. An inadequate or shallow mysticism was thought to result.⁹⁴²

⁹³¹ Underhill, *Mysticism*, pp. 321-327, 419, 472 & ff.

⁹³² Knox, p. 243 & ff. See also Pourrat, pp. 148-149.

⁹³³ Pourrat, p. 149.

⁹³⁴ Knox, p. 263, See also Pourrat, pp. 146, 181.

⁹³⁵ Knox, pp. 334, 350-351.

⁹³⁶ Pourrat, p. 181.

⁹³⁷ Ibid.

⁹³⁸ Ibid., p. 172.

⁹³⁹ Ibid., p. 171.

⁹⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁹⁴¹ Knox, pp. 334, 350.

⁹⁴² Pourrat, pp. 131-132.

Summary Remarks

Palmer, Guyon and Upham shared a passion for holiness, and each explored the mystery of faith in the path toward perfection. In the case of Upham and Guyon, their “shorter path” to perfection was a deviation from classical mysticism as they insisted that the highest mystical states were acquired through passivity, free from effort and purgation. Moreover, for Quietists such as Guyon and Upham, the will is absorbed in the highest mystical states. For Palmer and eventually Penn-Lewis however, sanctification always engaged the will, but as we will observe shortly, Penn-Lewis’s mysticism engaged the states of purgation as well, and thus she clearly re-aligned herself with the classical mystical tradition.

We have analyzed the elements of Quietism in the work of Guyon and also Upham. Both, perhaps unaware, adapted the Prayer of Simple Regard, confusing simplicity with passivity in the case of Guyon, and passive faith in the case of Upham. By advancing a “shorter path” to holiness void of the purgative path, Upham and Guyon represent a deviation from classical mysticism. According to classical mysticism, “grace perfects nature,”⁹⁴³ and that “the will, with the help of grace, must fight strenuously against temptation, however strong it may be.”⁹⁴⁴ Quietists like Guyon and Upham insisted that “grace conquered nature.”⁹⁴⁵ Upham’s rereading of Guyon advanced Quietism among his followers by suggesting that higher mystical states were attained through a denuded will. Inactivity coupled with indifference, and holiness mediated by faith, were concepts Upham claimed came directly from Guyon, though it does represent a reinterpretation of Guyon’s Quietism. Upham also suggested that Guyon was persecuted for her emphasis on faith (not passivity) as mediating sanctification, just as in his view the Apostle Paul was condemned for preferring faith to the observance of Jewish laws.

The Holiness Movement as it was expressed within the Keswick Conventions adopted Upham’s “shorter path,” i.e. that faith, void of human effort, mediated the highest mystical states. Like the “shorter path” of Upham and Guyon, Keswick’s sanctification

⁹⁴³ Mark Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995), p. 11.

⁹⁴⁴ Pourrat, p. 149.

by faith also initiated the fruits of union whereby the soul attained the holiness of God. Through a continuous act of faith, it was suggested that sin was suspended—a notion Keswick expressed through their moment by moment motif,⁹⁴⁶ whereas the American Holiness Movement argued that sin was eradicated by a single step of faith. Upham, however, goes even further by insisting on full identification with God such that human volition is not only passive, but also ultimately annihilated and replaced by God's will. Therefore, the actions of a soul in a state of perfection originate completely with God.⁹⁴⁷

Both Upham and Keswick suggest that sanctification by faith occurs as an event after conversion, and both attempt to align their views with the historic Church,⁹⁴⁸ particularly with mystics—most of whom did engage moral effort and purgation in the path to holiness. Thus, both fail to notice that their “shorter path” was a deviation from classical mysticism, which did embrace both effort and spiritual discipline.

We now turn to the distinctive contributions of Jessie Penn-Lewis.

⁹⁴⁵ Upham, *Life Religious Opinions and Experiences of Madame Guyon*, p. 90.

⁹⁴⁶ Barabas, p. 80.

⁹⁴⁷ W.E. Boardman, *In The Power of the Spirit: Or, Christian Experience in the Light of the Bible*, pp. 33-34.

⁹⁴⁸ Sloan, p. 9.

Chapter Five

Mysticism & Jessie Penn-Lewis

“True mystical achievement is the most complete
and most difficult expression of life.”⁹⁴⁹

I. Introduction

Authentic mystics, according to Evelyn Underhill, embrace the mortifying path of “self-surrender,”⁹⁵⁰ and because of this the mystical path represents the most arduous “expression of life.”⁹⁵¹ The transmutation of self, intrinsic to classical mysticism, engaged effort and volition, as well as purgation in the path toward union with the Divine. However, once the primitive self is fully purified, the soul enjoys, in the unitive state, an impenetrable serenity and inordinate power for service in which “heroic activity and creative work”⁹⁵² often characterize the mystical life. Through union with the Divine the soul has access to enormous fecundity, an “amazing strength, that immovable peace, that power of dealing with all circumstances.”⁹⁵³ Hence, history is replete with examples of mystics who were great “religious and social reformers,”⁹⁵⁴ and whose prodigious energies attracted many disciples.

The fruit of the unitive life, however, is never self-directed. Rather, the industry of the mystic has social meaning. For the mystics give to others out of their abundance.⁹⁵⁵ Freed from a false self by the purgative path,⁹⁵⁶ and from a position of self-abandonment and abundance, the mystics “attacked the sins of their generation.”⁹⁵⁷ They were often

⁹⁴⁹ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 84.

⁹⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁹⁵¹ Ibid.

⁹⁵² Ibid., p. 416.

⁹⁵³ Ibid., p. 417.

⁹⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 414.

⁹⁵⁵ Penn-Lewis, *Thy Hidden Ones: Union with Christ as Traced in the Song of Songs*, p. 125.

⁹⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 437.

⁹⁵⁷ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 459.

“pioneers of humanity,”⁹⁵⁸ for they challenged the moral and social ills of their times,⁹⁵⁹ frequently without human or divine consolation.

It is the purpose of this section to outline the salient qualities of Penn-Lewis’s mysticism as evidenced in her personal experiences with the Divine. To accomplish this, we will draw upon her letters, diary, and mystical writings. We will also consider the history of mysticism as it developed over time, giving attention not only to the stages of the mystical path, but also analyzing the way in which mysticism came to focus upon God’s actions upon the soul, through a consciousness of the inner life. I will then show that Penn-Lewis passed through the stages of mysticism herself, as outlined by Evelyn Underhill.⁹⁶⁰ Underhill has described the process by which the soul undergoes purification, along the mystical path, as a five-stage process. It is of interest that Penn-Lewis’s mystical theology resembles the five stages of mysticism as suggested by Underhill. While Penn-Lewis (1861-1927) and Underhill (1875-1941) were contemporaries, though both were British and Anglican, yet they appear unfamiliar with each other.

Let us begin, then, with an analysis of the mystical tradition, as the development of mysticism came to include an awareness of suffering and transcendence, as part of the interior path toward union.

II. The Development of Christian Mysticism: From the Early Church to the Modern Era

Oliver Quick in his significant essay, “The Value of Mysticism in Religious Faith and Practice,”⁹⁶¹ noted the difficulty in identifying the characteristics of mysticism. Religious mysticism, however, is described as a particular type of consciousness. Quick writes:

⁹⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁶⁰ Though Jessie Penn-Lewis (1861-1927) was born fourteen years before Evelyn Underhill (1875-1941), they do not appear to have been familiar with one another.

⁹⁶¹ Quick, O. “The Value of Mysticism in Religious Faith and Practice,” *The Journal of Theological Studies*, January, Volume XIII, 1912, 161-200.

The word 'Mysticism' has been used with many and diverse significations, from what is little more than a fanciful use of an epithet up to an over-mastering experience which has been the guiding power of a life. In speaking, however, of religious mysticism ... we are dealing with a kind of consciousness which claims to give the mind a certain knowledge of reality.⁹⁶²

William Inge, in agreement with Quick, argued that the mystics are those who have been initiated into "some esoteric knowledge of Divine things."⁹⁶³ Encounters with the Divine gives rise to a mystical consciousness, according to Evelyn Underhill, which for Underhill cannot come by way of ascension to religious "objects or facts,"⁹⁶⁴ but through an encounter with "living facts experimentally known at first-hand."⁹⁶⁵ According to Underhill, a mystic is one who is conscious of having had

to a greater or less degree, such a direct experience—one whose religion and life are centred, not merely on an accepted belief or practice, but on that which [they] regard as first-hand personal knowledge.⁹⁶⁶

Throughout history, there are those who claim to have acquired knowledge of the Divine through spiritual encounters. Moses, Ezekiel, Isaiah, Hannah, and Mary the mother of Christ were said to have had experiences with God whereby they attained divine insights. The initiates (or *mystae*) of the Greek mystery cults⁹⁶⁷ (from which the term mysticism arises) claimed to have had a divine vision through which they possess not only esoteric knowledge, but also the ability to live on a higher plane.⁹⁶⁸

As the Christian Church arose from within the Greco-Roman world, there were those who spoke of the Christian mysteries as teachings that were "carefully guarded from the

⁹⁶² Ibid., p. 161.

⁹⁶³ Inge, p. 4.

⁹⁶⁴ Underhill, *The Mystics of the Church*, p. 10.

⁹⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶⁶ Ibid., pp. 9-10.

⁹⁶⁷ C. Herbermann, editor, *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol 10, (New York: The Encyclopedia Press Inc. 1911), p. 662.

⁹⁶⁸ Underhill. *The Mystics of the Church*, p. 10.

knowledge of the profane.”⁹⁶⁹ It was Philo (20 BCE - 50 CE) who suggested that Christians were those who have received some hidden or secret insight into the Scriptures.⁹⁷⁰ Thus, the early Christians also used the term “mystery,” preserving much of its original meaning.⁹⁷¹

Efforts to characterize Christian mysticism have inspired differing responses from scholars throughout the years, as we have shown.⁹⁷² Therefore, a historical review of mysticism reveals the fact that the Church has stressed different aspects of the mystical tradition over the centuries.⁹⁷³ Christian mystics in the early centuries, as we have indicated, were those who professed knowledge of the hidden meaning of the Scriptures.⁹⁷⁴ The early Church did not understand “mystical” as a private experience. On the contrary, the Christian mystery centered on the “hidden meaning and transformative understanding”⁹⁷⁵ that God seeks to be united to creation through Christ’s life, death and resurrection. To experience the mystery of Christ was not a solitary but a corporate journey, enacted sacramentally, through a eucharistic community.⁹⁷⁶ Thus, early Christian mysticism was bibliocentric, Christocentric and communal.

⁹⁶⁹ Herbermann, p. 662.

⁹⁷⁰ H. Egan, *Christian Mysticism, the Future of a Tradition*. (New York: Pueblo, 1984), p. 2. See also F.C. Happold, *Mysticism: A Study and an Anthology*, 1933; (reprinted, Baltimore, MD: Penguin Books, 1963), p. 18.

⁹⁷¹ Underhill. *The Mystics of the Church*, p. 10.

⁹⁷² For example, J. Aumann in his work, *Spiritual Theology* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1980), pp. 16, 81-82, 123-132, made a distinction between Ascetical Theology and Mystical Theology. The former refers to the mystical path of purgation, illumination and union acquired through effort or “ordinary grace,” whereas the latter refers to infused contemplation and the “epiphenomena” which may accompany this state. B. McGinn argued that mysticism should not be defined as an experience but as a consciousness. Yet, to what extent is a consciousness an experience? See McGinn, *The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism, Volume One, The Foundations of Mysticism*. (New York: Crossroad, 1991), pp. xiv-xvii. E. Underhill followed a similar path by suggesting that there is a mystical consciousness that conforms or coincides with mystical experiences. See Underhill, *The Mystics of the Church*, p. 10 & ff. See also Quick, O. “The Value of Mysticism in Religious Faith and Practice,” *The Journal of Theological Studies*, January, Volume XIII, 1912, p. 161. In contrast to E. Underhill, G. Jantzen insisted that there is no “essence of mysticism.” See Jantzen, p. 331. McIntosh suggests that a mystical consciousness is first noted in the late Middle Ages and reaches new heights in the Modern Era. See McIntosh, p. 44 & ff.

⁹⁷³ D. Turner suggested in *The Darkness of God: Negativity in Christian Mysticism*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), that a modern notion of mysticism, based solely on private experiences, has replaced a more traditional understanding of mysticism—that of the path to union with God via “interiority and ascent.” See Turner, pp. 209-210, 248 & ff.

⁹⁷⁴ McIntosh, p. 42. See also Herbermann, p. 662.

⁹⁷⁵ McIntosh, p. 43.

⁹⁷⁶ Ibid. See also L. Boyer, “An Essay on the History of the Word,” *Understanding Mysticism*, (New York: Image Books, 1980), pp. 49 & ff.

Among the early Christian mystics, most notably Origen and Pseudo-Dionysius, Christian mysticism was understood through the soul's interior ascent by way of a three-fold process of purification, illumination and union. However, this process did not center solely on inner experiences, but borrowed significantly from Neoplatonic notions of moral and intellectual purification.⁹⁷⁷

By the 12th century, Christian mysticism and the soul's interior ascent was greatly influenced by the affective tradition of St. Bernard (1090 - 1153). It was Bernard who gave greater attention to personal experience as a means of assessing God's activity within the soul. As Louth and McIntosh observe, mystics of the late medieval period also ascribe affective and experiential meaning to the work of earlier mystics such as Pseudo-Dionysius (also called Denys).⁹⁷⁸ Whereas patristic mysticism concerned an intellectual and moral ascent, by the time of Bernard, emotion and experience more typically characterized the interior path toward union. The attention given to mystical experiences, and an interest in a mystical consciousness, reaches full bloom in the modern era.⁹⁷⁹

Not only was the work of early mystics reinterpreted through the affective tradition, there was also a decided shift in the language used to describe the soul's ascent by late medieval mystics. Take for example the use of personal language. With the Fathers, such usage was rare, but by the late medieval period it was common to describe the ascent of the soul in personal terms.⁹⁸⁰ It was as if the affective tradition gave rise to the notion of an inner self upon which God acts. The shift in language is believed to represent a historical shift within mysticism so that the soul, rather than the intellect, becomes the locus of God's activity.

Earlier mystics such as Denys believed that the soul transcends

the intellect, and in that way negates it: but the intellect is only rejected because it is *no longer* useful, not because it is of no use at all. On the contrary, the stage of intellectual purification can only be accomplished by means of the intellect. During the Middle Ages there develops the idea

⁹⁷⁷ Pourrat, pp. 69 & ff, 219 & ff.

⁹⁷⁸ Louth, p. 181.

⁹⁷⁹ McIntosh, p. 68.

⁹⁸⁰ Louth, pp. 182-188. See also McIntosh, p. 62 & ff.

that the mystical organ in the soul is not intellectual at all but affective: it is in virtue of the *principalis affectio*, which is the *apex mentis*, the summit of the mind, that the soul has contact with the divine.⁹⁸¹

Later mystics understand Denys to say, not that the intellect must be transcended, but that the intellect must be rejected “in favour of the will or feelings.”⁹⁸² Denys is thought to reject the intellect in preference of emotion. Such a reinterpretation of early Christian mystics takes the mystical tradition in a new direction and explains the “contrast between the theoretical character of Patristic mysticism and the dramatic and affective character of later Western mysticism.”⁹⁸³

Or again, as Denys explored the soul’s interior ascent, he used the term “darkness” in a metaphoric sense to note a theoretical concept—the transcendence of the ontological difference between God who is not a created being, and the creation of humankind. For Denys, the soul’s interior ascent carries it beyond images (which are created), into the darkness—the image-less, transcendence of God. For the late medieval mystic—John of the Cross (1542 - 1591)—the “Dark Night is the night of faith when images and concepts are stripped from the intellect as part of its preparation for union.”⁹⁸⁴ The more abstract language of Denys thus becomes the language of experience, so that the Dark Night is a painful and tormenting experience for late medieval mystics.⁹⁸⁵ According to John of the Cross, as the soul endures the Dark Night, the influx of Divine Light has a purifying effect and renders the soul suitable for union. John then ponders why anyone should call it a night when in fact the Divine Light is illuminating the soul? He offers the following answer:

There are two reasons why this divine wisdom is not only night and darkness for the soul, but also affliction and torment. First, because of the height of the divine wisdom which exceeds the capacity of the soul.

⁹⁸¹ Louth, p. 183

⁹⁸² Ibid.

⁹⁸³ Ibid.

⁹⁸⁴ Louth, p. 184.

⁹⁸⁵ Ibid.

Second, because of the soul's baseness and impurity; and on this account it is painful, afflictive, and also dark for the soul.⁹⁸⁶

John's language is clearly more introspective and experiential, whereas the language of the Fathers was theoretical. Mystical thought has now moved closer towards private piety,⁹⁸⁷ as the mystery of being a Christian gives way to the discovery of an inner self, for medieval mystics were now focused on the inner life upon which, they believe, God acts.

The focus on the inner self and its alterations, as influenced by God, thus became a primary feature of the later mystical tradition. Though earlier mystics sought the mystical meaning of Scripture, Bernard suggested that only personal experience can "unfold the meaning"⁹⁸⁸ of the Song of Solomon. Moreover, Bernard proposed that personal experience is an interpretative method, best used in private, rather than in a corporate context.

An awareness of the inner self grew in tandem with the expansion of Scholasticism. Inasmuch as the early Christian mystics understood knowing God as being drawn into God such that loving God was inseparable from knowing God. Medieval mystics were concerned with love as it altered the inner self. Knowing God was, for medieval mystics, the work of theologians. Whereas in the early period, mysticism was a transcendence of intellect, for the mystics of the affective tradition, abandoning the intellect came too easily. Thus, by the 1600s, the Quietists of France were not only abandoning the intellect in their ascent toward the unitive state. They were also abandoning effort and volition as well. By the modern era, many considered personal experience the essence of mysticism.

While the affective tradition of the medieval period may be responsible for the chasm between knowing and loving God, it has been proposed that the apophatic tradition of the late medieval period bridges this gulf.⁹⁸⁹ It was the apophatic tradition of Bonaventure (1217 - 74) that placed Neoplatonism "in the context of the paschal narrative,"⁹⁹⁰ thereby

⁹⁸⁶ Louth, p. 185.

⁹⁸⁷ McIntosh, p. 64.

⁹⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 66.

⁹⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 77 & ff.

⁹⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 78.

uniting an interior ascent with personal experience, as part of the mystical path. For Bonaventure, mystical union “entails a participation in the bodily apophysis of the Cross,”⁹⁹¹ and this serves as a vehicle “within which the believer passes over into the presence of the Father.”⁹⁹² Christ’s bodily passion becomes the juncture or medium whereby “divine meaning and human knowing are able to converse.”⁹⁹³ The apophysis of the Cross, according to Bonaventure, engaged real human suffering, not simply bodily, but also emotional as well as spiritual suffering. It is in “bodily terms that God chose to communicate divine meaning.”⁹⁹⁴ Moreover, the knowing that is shared in bodily suffering, is, as McIntosh suggests, a form of public and communal theological speech. So the pouring out of bodily pain was an imitation of Christ, noted first in the Middle Ages. Thus, the way of the Cross is a means of describing the mystical journey in terms of Christ’s passion. The way of the Cross is not merely a symbol of the soul’s interior ascent. The imitation of Christ was also the

inchoate and inexplicable interior darkness is ... a concrete manifestation of the paschal mystery. This ‘bodily’ mysticism, therefore, might be said to effect a crucial transposition: ultimate detachment is transposed from a metaphysical problematic into the salvation—historical terms of Jesus’ suffering and death. The significance of this lies precisely in its ability to transpose the fundamental key of late medieval mystical thought—from a personal and possibly self-preoccupied spiritual journey (in which attention is focused on the states of the soul’s inner accomplishments), to a more communal mystical theology in which the contemplative journey is seen in terms of participation in the common, ecclesial, mystery of Christ.⁹⁹⁵

The more bodily the incarnation, the more available Christ was to humanity, and as we

⁹⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹⁹² Ibid.

⁹⁹³ McIntosh, p. 79.

⁹⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁹⁵ Ibid., pp. 81-82.

participate in the apophysis of the Cross, we too become available to others. McIntosh writes:

The knowledge that comes from sharing in the bodiliness of Jesus, from feeling the burden of his grief, the pain of his suffering, the scintillating joy of being given new life to forgive those who had betrayed him—this is not a case of being ‘trapped’ in a world of physical sensations, but rather these actual sensations are, Christians believe, the very structures of a new creation. They are the patterns of a new, emergent reality which is fully noetic and intelligible, but which cannot be ‘known’ apart from the practical bodily commitment of one’s whole being.⁹⁹⁶

This form of apophatic mysticism, noted first in the late medieval period, stressed the radical release from the limitations of ego, and the desire to

manipulate, possess and control persons and things for the ego’s own ends. Such an ecstatic freedom... means to discover the foundations of one’s true self; the higher the soul ascends into God, ‘the deeper it descends into itself; the union (of the soul and God) take place in the innermost sphere of the soul, in its deepest ground. So the journey into God is seen not ultimately as a loss of self but as a homecoming in the divinely beloved self, beyond the false selves.’⁹⁹⁷

Thus we have seen how the early period of Christian mysticism understood the soul’s interior ascent through intellectual and moral purification, articulated in non-personal, communal terms. By the late medieval period however, the interior ascent was expressed by personal, experiential means so that a divorce ensued between a spiritual consciousness and doctrinal truth. Yet, it was the apophatic tradition of the late medieval period that joined early patristic mysticism with the affective tradition through a sharing

⁹⁹⁶ McIntosh, p. 82.

⁹⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 206.

in the sufferings of the Cross. The soul is united to God and humanity, through the apophasis of the Cross.

It is through the apophatic knowing of the Cross that the soul finds purification and union with God, and this form of mysticism closely resembles the mysticism of Jessie Penn-Lewis, as we will see.

Thus, the transition from the early mystical tradition, to the late medieval period, enables us to observe why the stages of mysticism now incorporate personal experience in the soul's interior ascent along the mystical path. Let us take a closer look at this matter.

III. The Soul's Ascent: The Stages of Mysticism

As I have said, the early Christian mystics believed, as did the Greeks, that union with God meant overcoming the "ontological gulf between God and his creation, a real difference of being."⁹⁹⁸ This gulf is bridged, according to Plato, through the soul's ascent, beginning with awakening—the first step in the mystical path.

Awakening occurs as the soul recognizes that it is "immersed in what only appears to be reality, that our knowledge is mere opinion."⁹⁹⁹ The awakened soul embarks on the process of detaching itself from all illusions and "from false reality."¹⁰⁰⁰ According to Plato, detachment is also a process of purification, a process of educating the mind, the body, and the moral or ethical life. For Plotinus, purification is ultimately a longing within the soul "for its true self,"¹⁰⁰¹ which was also a necessary component of the soul's search for God. Purification is required not only because "the fallen soul has become self-centered,"¹⁰⁰² but also because the soul has become focused on a false self. After having passed through purification and detachment, the soul is suddenly "swept out of itself into union."¹⁰⁰³ Ecstasy means to stand outside oneself, a condition in which the soul finds

⁹⁹⁸ Louth, p. xv.

⁹⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 6.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰¹ Ibid., p. 42.

¹⁰⁰² Ibid., p. 43.

¹⁰⁰³ Ibid., p. 48.

itself “overwhelmed by the reality of its union with the One.”¹⁰⁰⁴ The soul has passed beyond itself into God.

Origen explored the soul’s ascent through the three-fold process “of purification, illumination and perfection.”¹⁰⁰⁵ For Origen, the successive stages noted in the soul’s ascent began with ethics, or the “formation of virtues,”¹⁰⁰⁶ coupled with a struggle against passion. Thus, the early Christians mystics were dependent upon Platonic ideals that aimed at freeing the soul by subduing the body.¹⁰⁰⁷ For the Greeks, the soul undergoes education and purification within the mystical path in order to return to its source—God. For the Christian, however, seeking union with God is the soul’s response to God’s love as demonstrated in the Divine’s “descent and condescension in the Incarnation.”¹⁰⁰⁸ Hence, the epicenter of Christian mysticism, which distinguished it from Greek mystical thought, was love of God and love within the body of Christ. To be united to God “is both singular and corporate,”¹⁰⁰⁹ and is therefore “inseparable from the mystery of the Church.”¹⁰¹⁰

Thus, in response to God’s love and initiative, the soul seeks intimacy with God through holiness by way of the purgative path, the resisting of sin, and by participation in life of the Church.¹⁰¹¹ Union with God meant not only union with Christ, but also union with other believers.¹⁰¹² Christian baptism was, of course, available to all, and in this sense Christian mysticism was derived from both a communal and egalitarian impulse, and was viewed as the root of the Christian life.

Having briefly assessed the mystical tradition from the early centuries to the late medieval period, we have noted that the early Christian mystics shared “with Platonic (and, for that matter, Buddhistic) mysticism a common structure: that of a threefold path to God, consisting of purification, contemplation, and final union.”¹⁰¹³ ¹⁰¹⁴ Evelyn

¹⁰⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 49.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Ibid., pp. 170-171.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 59.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 60.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 197.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 200.

¹⁰¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 199 - 200.

¹⁰¹¹ King, p. 18 & ff. See also Louth, p. 168 & ff.

¹⁰¹² Louth, p. 199 & ff.

¹⁰¹³ R. Lovelace, “English Devotional Literature,” L. Dupré L. & D. E. Saliers, *Christian Spirituality: Post-Reformation and Modern*. (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1989), p. 318. The three-fold

Underhill, who studied the mystical tradition during the same era as Jessie Penn-Lewis, outlined five states or stages of the mystic's path that incorporate the notion of an inner self, as acted upon by God. Hence, Underhill explored a "mystical consciousness" that evinces five stages, and each stage assessed God's actions within the soul, as well as the soul's response to, and experience of, God. Underhill's five stages: Awakening, Purgation, Illumination, the Dark Night, and Union with God,¹⁰¹⁵ incorporate the affective tradition (of Bernard) which considered early Christian mysticism (awakening, purgation and illumination) according to the experiences of the inner life. Thus Underhill expands the three-fold path of the mystic, mentioned in the first few pages of this thesis, into a five-stage path as she explores, for example, purgation through the Dark Night which, as we have seen, understands the abstract language of Denys in terms of personal experience. Like Bernard, Penn-Lewis also assessed the transmuting and painful experiences of the Dark Night within the soul as the soul suffers with Christ on the Cross.

Perhaps because Underhill was keenly interested in the inner psychological manifestations of the mystical path,¹⁰¹⁶ she therefore often appraised the lives of the mystics through their experiences of the Divine.¹⁰¹⁷ According to Underhill, each of the five stages along the mystical path drew the mystic into union with the transcendent God, though not all mystics achieved the fifth and final stage—the unitive state. Nor does every mystic demonstrate all the characteristics of each stage,¹⁰¹⁸ and therefore no one mystic "can on that account be treated as typical."¹⁰¹⁹ Moreover, to attempt to categorize the inner life of the mystic is, as Underhill suggested, "delicate and elusive."¹⁰²⁰

mystical path was observed first in the Christian writings by Origen, and also emphasized by other early Christian writers such as Dionysius the Areopagite, see Louth, pp. 54-55. See also King, p. 19 & ff and Jantzen, p. 88 & ff.

¹⁰¹⁴ Egan, *Anthology of Christian Mysticism*, p. xvi. See also Louth, p. 55.

¹⁰¹⁵ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 167.

¹⁰¹⁶ Underhill was a student and spiritual directee of Friedrich Von Hügel (1852-1925), author of *The Mystical Element of Religion*. (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1999) Von Hügel, like his student, Underhill, wrote extensively on the phenomenon within the Christian mystical tradition. See A. Loades, *Evelyn Underhill*. (Great Britain: Fount Paperbacks, 1997)

¹⁰¹⁷ Jantzen, p. 317 & ff. Unlike Underhill and Von Hügel, Jantzen ardently opposed the view among scholars like Underhill, that subjective experience identifies a mystical core of religion. See Jantzen, pp. 332, 338 & ff.

¹⁰¹⁸ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 167

¹⁰¹⁹ Ibid., p. 168.

¹⁰²⁰ Ibid., p. 167.

However incomplete a systematization may prove, Underhill suggests we will gain more by the effort than we will lose.¹⁰²¹

A brief description of the five stages, according to Underhill, will provide a framework whereby to assess the mystical path within Penn-Lewis's Cross Theology.

i. **Awakening:** The awakened soul has become aware of the Transcendental.¹⁰²² It has seen for the first time, the landscape of the invisible world. As an awareness of the Divine is born, it disrupts the equilibrium and turns the focus of the soul in a new direction.¹⁰²³ Recognition of the Divine places the things of the present world out of sight, if for only a brief moment. As the awakened soul begins to recognize false reality, it turns away or detaches from illusion.

As the soul awakens, it experiences a joy that is short lived. An awareness of its inadequacies, egotism, sinfulness and self-centeredness¹⁰²⁴ is a painful realization. There is thus an oscillation between joy and pain. After encountering the invisible world there develops a disturbing awareness that one is too flawed to remain in such a perfect world. To fully enter the invisible world will ultimately require a complete reorientation or transmutation of self, not the mere change of focus, which the awakened state provides. A complete reorientation of the soul is required if it is to reach the final state—union with the Divine.¹⁰²⁵ This may come in time, but until it does, habitation in the invisible world is denied.¹⁰²⁶

ii. **Purgation:** The awakened soul responds by efforts of purification, by ridding itself of sin, deceit and illusion, and dedicates itself to the pursuit of holiness.¹⁰²⁷ The purgative stage is a call to holiness. Purgation, then is the "purification of character and detachment from earthly interests,"¹⁰²⁸ so that the soul is purged or detached from falsehood, self-

¹⁰²¹ Ibid., pp. 167-168.

¹⁰²² Louth, p. 6 & ff.

¹⁰²³ Underhill, *Mysticism*, pp. 176-177.

¹⁰²⁴ Louth, p. 42.

¹⁰²⁵ Ibid., p. 43.

¹⁰²⁶ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 193.

¹⁰²⁷ Ibid., p. 198 ff.

¹⁰²⁸ Underhill, *The Mystics of the Church*, p. 26.

love¹⁰²⁹ and other moral imperfections which create distance between God and the soul. Christian mystics turn to Christ as a model of the perfectly purified soul, for “Christ’s human nature was so utterly bereft of self, and apart from all creatures, as no man ever was, and was nothing but a ‘house and habitation of God.’”¹⁰³⁰

iii. **Illumination:** The effort exerted in the purgative state results in a “peaceful certitude of God”¹⁰³¹ in which “the mind is ravished into the abyss of divine Light.”¹⁰³²

Illumination is thus a state of visions, joy and ecstasies.¹⁰³³ Ecstasy “comes from the Greek *ek-stasis*, which literally means ‘standing outside oneself,’”¹⁰³⁴ often outside one’s intellect. Thus, in the state of illumination the soul has become decidedly more God-oriented rather than self-oriented.¹⁰³⁵ Though supreme intimacy with God or union has not been achieved, nonetheless the soul that has been cleansed and purified now contemplates God more often than self, though without being fully immersed in God.¹⁰³⁶ This is betrothal, not marriage.¹⁰³⁷ Visions and artistic expressions of joy often typify illumination. The mystic is often an artist-minstrel, who in the state of illumination longs only to enjoy the Divine Beloved.¹⁰³⁸ But a further stage has to be endured.

iv. **The Dark Night:** Negation and pain most clearly characterize the Dark Night of the soul. It is a slipping away of that joy experienced in the state of illumination.¹⁰³⁹ Moreover, it is a state of loss and an absence of communion and comfort of one’s closest relations, and most importantly the consolations of the Divine. As the mystic outgrows their “illuminated consciousness, these selves begin also to realize how partial and symbolic that consciousness—even at its best—has been.”¹⁰⁴⁰ The suffering of this state

¹⁰²⁹ Jantzen, p. 121.

¹⁰³⁰ *Theologia Germanica*, (Chapter 15) http://www.ccel.org/t/theo_ger/theologia21.htm

¹⁰³¹ Underhill, *The Mystics of the Church*, p. 27.

¹⁰³² Richard of Saint – Victor, *The four Grades of Violent Love*
<http://home.earthlink.net/~livingflame/Mysticism.html>

¹⁰³³ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 241.

¹⁰³⁴ Jantzen, p. 106. See also McIntosh, p. 140.

¹⁰³⁵ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 234.

¹⁰³⁶ Louth, p. 43.

¹⁰³⁷ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 240.

¹⁰³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 239.

¹⁰³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 382.

¹⁰⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 394.

is so terrible that it “plunges the self into the state of negation and misery.”¹⁰⁴¹ The mystic feels utterly abandoned by God and their dearest relations. Through the Dark Night the last grip of self is purged completely, and the ego has been transcended, subdued, and it ceases to “be its ‘own centre and circumference.’”¹⁰⁴² The soul has learned to surrender all to God—“the price of final peace.”¹⁰⁴³

v. **Union:** The final stage of mysticism, the unitive state, is often imaged as spiritual marriage between the soul and the Divine Lover.¹⁰⁴⁴ Union with God is the proper response to God’s love.¹⁰⁴⁵ Lost in the love of the Divine, the soul has perfected self-forgetfulness, it is a complete harmony between the soul and the Divine. The surrender of the human will to the Divine renders the mystic at one purpose with the Divine will. The mystic is to God “what his own hand is to the person.”¹⁰⁴⁶ God is the vine, and the soul is the branch (John 15:5). It is not ‘I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me,’ said Paul (Gal 2:20).

Union represents the transmuted self, and elimination of egotism, of the “I, the Me, the Mine,”¹⁰⁴⁷ through the “self-naughting which the trials of the Dark Night tended to produce.”¹⁰⁴⁸ Through the Dark Night, the false self has been fully conquered, an “imperative condition of the attainment of the unitive life.”¹⁰⁴⁹ Because the false self has been purified and penetrated by the Divine, union with God opens a universe of power, strength, and energy for ministry and work. “I live, yet not I but God in me.”¹⁰⁵⁰

IV. Jessie Penn-Lewis: Conversion and the Mystical Path

Introduction

¹⁰⁴¹ Ibid., p. 382.

¹⁰⁴² Ibid., p. 397.

¹⁰⁴³ Ibid., p. 398.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 415.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Louth, p. xv.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Underhill, *The Mystics of the Church*, p. 27

¹⁰⁴⁷ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 425.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 416.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 425.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 417.

The soul's interior ascent, in the life and work of Jessie Penn-Lewis was a crucicentric path. Penn-Lewis's apophasis was expressed within a paschal context which we will now assess.¹⁰⁵¹

Penn-Lewis's spiritual leadership, feminism and prolific industry are inseparable from, and driven by, a perception that she had been united with Christ on the Cross. Her literature thus radiates a profound mystical element and she herself walked the mystical path, as documented by her letters, diary and biographers. Her mysticism also had social meaning, as she championed several causes, chief among these was her support of women's public ministry. Despite her life-long battle with tuberculosis, she managed to write for, and speak to, international audiences, admitting that the power to do so came through an intimate encounter with the Cross.

Penn-Lewis was adamant about one matter, that her ongoing capacity to serve Christ was fueled by an inner awareness that she has died in Christ in order to live life anew with Christ. Like the apostle Paul, Penn-Lewis repeats over and again the proclamation of St. Paul, "I live, yet not I."

Penn-Lewis's mystical understanding that she had been crucified with Christ represented an inner reality that her primitive self had died and transmuted so that she might walk in newness of life in Christ. When Penn-Lewis implied that the crucified Christ must have crucified messengers she was suggesting that the path of interiority, the path to union with God, was located in a participation in the purgations of the Cross.¹⁰⁵² Not only does she participate in the mystical path and preach a mystical theology, through her crucicentrism she compelled others to also experience the path of interiority through the Cross.

Penn-Lewis therefore, viewed herself as a prophet of the Cross, a role she shared with P.T. Forsyth. Like all prophets, Penn-Lewis received criticism not only from her contemporaries, but also from the leaders of Keswick. Yet, she had her own complaint against the Church. Penn-Lewis charged that the "message of the Cross was rarely preached, except in its first application to the forgiveness of sins,"¹⁰⁵³ an interpretation

¹⁰⁵¹ McIntosh, p. 78.

¹⁰⁵² Price & Randall, p. 156.

¹⁰⁵³ Gerrard, p. 197. See also Bebbington, p. 156.

she found inadequate. The Cross, she argued, was not only the means to justification. The Cross was also the path to holiness through an “identification of the sinner with Christ in His death to sin and to the world.”¹⁰⁵⁴ The path of interiority that Penn-Lewis associated with the purgations of the Cross was the “half-forgotten truth which God ordained Mrs. Penn-Lewis to proclaim.”¹⁰⁵⁵ Holiness, or power over sin, was, according to Penn-Lewis, attained in a mystical union with Christ’s death and resurrection, a message she took to pulpits around the world. In more detail then, I now trace the mystical path of Penn-Lewis, which gave shape to the person she became.

Our analysis of Penn-Lewis will include an assessment of her conversion and mystical awakening. Our purpose is to identify and analyze the sequence of events that helped form her mystical theology. We will then observe the spiritual experiences of Penn-Lewis, as she proceeds along the mystical path. Lastly, we will explore the social implications of Penn-Lewis’s mysticism, noted foremost in her feminism and her call for women’s emancipation within Christian work, but also in her insistence upon unity within the body of Christ. Another consequence of Penn-Lewis’s Cross Theology resulted in her opposition to the inadequate mysticism that trailed the Keswick revivals.¹⁰⁵⁶

Breaking Through: A Mystical Call

Penn-Lewis was born “in the midst of religious surroundings.”¹⁰⁵⁷ She was the granddaughter of a Calvinist, Methodist pastor and the daughter of a Temperance worker. Her conversion came as a “true inward change of heart,”¹⁰⁵⁸ only after she married William Penn-Lewis, and after the couple moved to Brighton, some distance from her family. Once settled in Brighton, the couple decided to attend the Church of the Annunciation. Jessie, however, became dissatisfied with the Anglo-Catholic vicar whose

¹⁰⁵⁴ Gerrard, p. 197.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 271.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 6.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Ibid.

high Church views she found unpersuasive. For example, Jessie had no interest in confession, a rite the vicar tried to impose upon her.¹⁰⁵⁹

Eighteen months later, Mrs. Penn-Lewis found herself driven by a “deep inward desire to know that [she] was a child of God.”¹⁰⁶⁰ Her longing for a more personal relationship with God led her into an experience she calls conversion, which occurred, she claimed, like the Apostle Paul’s, “without the aid of any human instrument.”¹⁰⁶¹ Following her conversion, Penn-Lewis developed a longing for holiness. Thus, she set out to conquer sin, even though her best efforts “ended in abject failure, and the succeeding few months were a record of bitter repentance and many tears”¹⁰⁶² over sin and weakness she could not master.

Simultaneous with these events, Mr. and Mrs. Penn-Lewis relocated to Richmond, Surrey, where they joined Holy Trinity Church. In contrast to the High Church atmosphere of Brighton, here the couple enjoyed “the deep spiritual teaching of the Reverend Evan H. Hopkins, whose every sermon was ‘an opening of heaven’”¹⁰⁶³ to Mrs. Penn-Lewis’s “intense and hungry soul.”¹⁰⁶⁴ Hopkins, as we have suggested, was the chief theologian and mentor of the early Keswick Conventions. It was at Holy Trinity Church where Penn-Lewis learned of the “Spirit-filled life,”¹⁰⁶⁵ that promised “victory over sin.”¹⁰⁶⁶

The plea for holiness, in anticipation of Christ’s imminent return, was a central theme of the premillennialism of the late 19th century.¹⁰⁶⁷ In like fashion, the early Keswick Divines offered power over sin in preparation for Christ’s final return. It is no surprise therefore that Penn-Lewis’s self-condemnation and longing for holiness was fueled by Hopkins’¹⁰⁶⁸ premillennial teaching that called the Church “to be more single-eyed to His glory.”¹⁰⁶⁹

¹⁰⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 7.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶² Ibid., p. 8.

¹⁰⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Bebbington, p. 152.

¹⁰⁶⁸ J.C. Metcalfe, *In the Mould of the Cross*, p. 16.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Gerrard, p. 9.

In pursuit of holiness Penn-Lewis propelled herself into a variety of ministries throughout Richmond. She led Bible classes and assumed leadership both at a Rescue Mission and also within the local YWCA. She also counseled young women who were “seeking spiritual help.”¹⁰⁷⁰ Though deeply engaged in ministry, Penn-Lewis remained dissatisfied with her own spiritual life. She perceived that Christ was leading “His child deeper, and even deeper, down into fellowship with Himself,”¹⁰⁷¹ that there were “depths and heights”¹⁰⁷² that she had yet to discover. Thus, she set her face as “flint to press on to the fullest blessing.”¹⁰⁷³

A deeper spiritual experience came as Penn-Lewis had anticipated, without warning. As she was traveling “alone in a railway carriage,”¹⁰⁷⁴ she sensed her soul had penetrated the transcendental world. I will quote again an important passage from her diary:

Suddenly my spirit broke through into the spiritual world and I was caught up into the bosom of the Father! For days afterwards I felt that I was as a babe lying in the Father’s bosom with all the world below lying in darkness whilst I was in Light, clear as crystal and so pure that every speck of sin stood out in blackness. The people walking the streets looked to me as in another world... the Lord stood by me and I clasped his very feet ... the room seemed filled with glory.¹⁰⁷⁵

As this portion of her diary illustrates, Penn-Lewis’s spiritual perceptions were awakened. Though this experience was so pure and pleasurable, yet an awareness of every “spec of sin” disturbed her.¹⁰⁷⁶ The awakening of her soul, though joyful, was accompanied by a painful awareness of her own inadequacies. She was acutely aware that her sinfulness disrupted the pleasures of a breaking in of the spiritual world. Thus she

¹⁰⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 12.

¹⁰⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷² Ibid., p. 13.

¹⁰⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 27.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Ibid., pp. 27-28.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 27.

oscillated between pleasure—for having entered the invisible world, she had a noxious awareness that her sins prevented permanent habitation. A complete transformation of her imperfections would be necessary if her soul was to enjoy, without interruption, the pleasures of the invisible world.¹⁰⁷⁷

For months afterwards Penn-Lewis enjoyed a continual “breaking through into the supernatural world,”¹⁰⁷⁸ which she experienced as a “melting into tears.”¹⁰⁷⁹ The awakened state, however, was transitory and there was a “gradual cessation of this heavenly experience.”¹⁰⁸⁰ She was shown by “the wisdom of God,”¹⁰⁸¹ that the interior path was negotiated through an apophysis of the Cross, rather than via sensible consolation. She wrote:

I began to dread the loss of my experience, and to seek now the ‘experience’ that seemed to be slipping from me. At this point, I was shown, by the mercy of God, the path of the Cross, and the wisdom of God in withdrawing the gifts of God, for the soul to rest entirely in Him, and not in joy or ecstatic communion, which made me spiritually self-absorbed. I only wanted to be left alone to retire within the communion with my Beloved. The physical being was not in the least involved, and the ecstasy of delight was purely in the spirit, keeping me ... But when I saw that the loss of this spiritual delight and ecstasy meant fruit, through death and a life in God Himself above His gifts, I gladly chose the path of the Cross and consented to walk in the night of faith to that goal where God would be All in All.¹⁰⁸²

Here we observe Penn-Lewis preferring the “night of faith”, to pleasures of spiritual ecstasy, in order to transcend self-absorption. Love of the Divine, above all spiritual pleasures, motivates the mystic to endure the apophysis of the Cross, through “night of

¹⁰⁷⁷ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 193 & ff.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Gerrard, p. 28.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸² Ibid.

faith." For a "mystic does not enter on his quest because he desires the happiness of the Beatific Vision, the ecstasy of union with the Absolute, or any other personal reward."¹⁰⁸³

As Penn-Lewis welcomed detachment, the loss of "spiritual delight and ecstasy"¹⁰⁸⁴ choosing instead the "night of faith"¹⁰⁸⁵ she embraced the Cross, that "God would be All in All."¹⁰⁸⁶ While many of her peers within Keswick were seeking Pentecost experiences, and suggesting that faith initiates the highest mystical state apart from the Cross, Penn-Lewis embraced another path. She wrote:

And I saw that after all, the Baptism of the Spirit, which I had thought was the goal of the Christian life, was really meant by the Lord to be but the beginning of a path which should lead the believer into the fellowship of the Cross, and through the death of the Cross into union with the Ascended Lord in the bosom of the father.¹⁰⁸⁷

Thus, she was implicitly engaged in a major criticism regarding the significance of the religious experiences of many of Keswick divines—a dangerous position to assume.

Having enjoyed entrance into the invisible world, Penn-Lewis's awakened soul enters a state of purgation where she seeks to please the Divine Beloved.¹⁰⁸⁸ Her "brave and constant struggle for victory"¹⁰⁸⁹ over sin was motivated by the longing for her life to be "lost in His,"¹⁰⁹⁰ a "sweet sense of 'nothing between'"¹⁰⁹¹ her soul and God's. The awakened soul desires the Beloved as much as it hates its own imperfections, and the soul thus seeks to purge itself "of all that stands between it and goodness."¹⁰⁹² Penn-Lewis

¹⁰⁸³ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 92.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Gerrard, p. 28.

¹⁰⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 29.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 198 & ff.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Gerrard, p. 8.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁰⁹¹ Ibid., p. 10.

¹⁰⁹² Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 199.

therefore sought "the fellowship of the Cross,"¹⁰⁹³ that she might be an empty vessel to "be filled with the Heavenly Treasure."¹⁰⁹⁴

While Penn-Lewis said, "I sought to conquer my besetting sins,"¹⁰⁹⁵ years later she realized that apart from God, she "initiated nothing, built up nothing, 'pushed' nothing."¹⁰⁹⁶ Ultimately, it was through the cleansing of the Dark Night, by way of the "principle of death"¹⁰⁹⁷ the soul overcomes ego and dependence upon accolades. The real business of purgation, Underhill suggests, is to be rid of "those foolish interests in which the surface consciousness is steeped."¹⁰⁹⁸ Purgation therefore can be understood as a "complete detachment of all finite things."¹⁰⁹⁹ Through the purgative path Penn-Lewis recognized that spiritual depths are attained alone, without human consolation. She wrote:

I discovered that I had been longing for human companionship in the pressing on, and I saw that I must be content to be alone in soul if I would press on to the heights... I remembered that Jesus was lonely in soul, and I saw that if I would press on, I must be content to be lonely too.¹¹⁰⁰

Spiritual heights are reached not only through the loss of human relations, but also through a detachment from our ego and our false self. Perhaps the most important task of purgation is therefore the stripping of self.¹¹⁰¹ Likewise, Penn-Lewis perceived that she must become free from her own self-orientation that was manifest in many ways, but most painfully through a relentless self-consciousness.¹¹⁰² Penn-Lewis acknowledged that she was imprisoned by a self-orientation that immobilized not only her intimacy with

¹⁰⁹³ Gerrard, p. 29.

¹⁰⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 51.

¹⁰⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 7.

¹⁰⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 53.

¹⁰⁹⁷ Gerrard, p. 54.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 204.

¹⁰⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 205.

¹¹⁰⁰ Gerrard, pp. 12-13.

¹¹⁰¹ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 204 & ff.

¹¹⁰² "Plotinus was, perhaps, the first to see that self-consciousness, self-awareness, can be a hindrance to the soul's progress." Louth, p. 43.

Christ but her Christian work as well. She longed for freedom, particularly when speaking in public, which “no practice ever made speaking less difficult.”¹¹⁰³ She said,

‘I give time every morning to read and pray: I have put everything right in my life as far as I know.’ But the Lord still said, ‘It is YOU.’ And then He began to break me, and there came to me a terrible revelation that every bit of this activity, this energy, this indomitable perseverance, was myself after all, though it was hidden under the name of consecration.¹¹⁰⁴

Penn-Lewis underwent purgation to find release not only from self-consciousness but also from the disharmony it provoked between her soul and the Divine. An awareness of her self-orientation and willfulness was “truly a horror,”¹¹⁰⁵ like “a handful of filthy rags,”¹¹⁰⁶ she admitted. Thus, in her abasement she saw that self must die on the Cross.

¹¹⁰⁷ Her diary notes:

Then came the still small voice once more, and this time it was the one little word—‘Crucified.’ ‘Crucified!’ What did it mean? I had not asked to be crucified, but to be filled. But now Romans 6:6-11 became a power to me, and I knew the meaning of ‘our old man was crucified with Him...’ and what Paul meant in his words, ‘crucified with Christ’ (Gal. ii: 20).¹¹⁰⁸

Penn-Lewis endured purgation, as other mystics had, because the primitive self or the “‘old Adam’ of St. Paul—is wholly incapable of super-sensual adventure,”¹¹⁰⁹ even while it craves “harmony with the Absolute.”¹¹¹⁰ Thus, the crucifixion of self was the

¹¹⁰³ Gerrard, p. 18.

¹¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 19.

¹¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 25.

¹¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁰⁸ Penn-Lewis, *The Leading of the Lord: A Spiritual Autobiography: A Spiritual Autobiography*. (Devon, UK: Gospel Press, 1903), p. 7. See also Gerrard, p. 25. Gal ii.20: ‘I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.’

¹¹⁰⁹ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 199.

¹¹¹⁰ Ibid.

portal to unbroken communion with God and “the final prize of peace.”¹¹¹¹ Penn-Lewis concluded that the path to abundant life where “the human spirit [is] set free”¹¹¹² from sin and self comes through a mystical death of self on the Cross. God, according to Penn-Lewis, never gives spiritual power to “the old creation, nor the uncrucified soul ... Satan will give power to the ‘old Adam,’ but God will not.”¹¹¹³ Freedom from an inner prison of egotism came by way of the Cross.¹¹¹⁴ Through the purgations of the Cross, Penn-Lewis received the grace of illumination.

In the state of illumination the soul is now more God-oriented than self-oriented, though supreme union has not been achieved. Yet in the state of illumination the cleansing of purgation has enabled the soul to contemplate God more often than self, and this lends the soul a significant degree of power and spiritual freedom.¹¹¹⁵ As the soul emerges from the grips of self-centeredness, Jesus is manifest “in the human vessel,”¹¹¹⁶ and Penn-Lewis found that her spirit was suddenly released from “every bond, and seemed to break through into the heavens as from some inward prison, finding its place in the heart of God.”¹¹¹⁷ Illumination, or as Penn-Lewis seemed to call it, the resurrection experience, comes only as one is “crucified with Christ, which is the other half of the experience, ‘risen with Him’—‘twin parts of one fact.’”¹¹¹⁸

Visions frequently typify the illumination of the mystic, often with powerful noetic consequences.¹¹¹⁹ Penn-Lewis’s diary documents several visions whose meaning she interpreted afterwards.¹¹²⁰ Though she believed that God does not “force the brain to retain the revelations made to the heart,”¹¹²¹ her visions often directed her choices. For example, in a state of illumination Penn-Lewis experienced a vision whose meaning was clear. Following a serious recurrence of tuberculosis, she found herself alone in a cottage, aware that she was facing death. She questioned whether she was prepared to “be

¹¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 397.

¹¹¹² Gerrard, p. 26.

¹¹¹³ Ibid., pp. 26-27.

¹¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 27.

¹¹¹⁵ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 233 & ff.

¹¹¹⁶ Gerrard, p. 26.

¹¹¹⁷ Ibid., 27.

¹¹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 58.

¹¹¹⁹ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 240 & ff.

¹¹²⁰ Ibid., pp. 171-172, 274-275, 284-285.

¹¹²¹ Ibid., p. 172.

suddenly taken to the heavenly home,"¹¹²² or should she hasten back to her doctors. The vision offered her guidance and consolation. She wrote:

From this 'Mount of Vision' I could see you all in your battle on the plains. Was I never again to help strengthen your hands with the words of life, and share in your faith victories? For myself it was absolute peace, and readiness to 'depart and be with Christ which is very far better,' but so much the Lord had promised me I should finish before that time came, rose to my vision... I turned from the blessed prospect of relief from the conflict of these days, and looking into the face of the Lord, I told Him I must go back to the work if He would permit me. And He did.¹¹²³

This vision, noted in her diary, informed Penn-Lewis's "surface consciousness and another intelligence which purports to be divine."¹¹²⁴

Similarly, Penn-Lewis claimed to receive guidance and ability through God's illuminating presence. For example, she said she wrote *The Word of the Cross*,¹¹²⁵ *The Magna Charta of Woman*,¹¹²⁶ *The Song of Songs*¹¹²⁷ and *The Story of Job*,¹¹²⁸ guided by God's illuminations, or what seemed "like the voice of God."¹¹²⁹ Always aware of her physical limitations, Penn-Lewis encountered extreme physical exhaustion while writing *The Story of Job*. It was at this point she sensed God asking her to "drop her 'body' at the Cross as never before,"¹¹³⁰ and afterwards she sensed the "Risen Life began to flow again."¹¹³¹ The next day she sat at her desk and began to write, and "God began to pour His light through."¹¹³² She wrote for hours, as "fast as He gave it to me."¹¹³³ God, Penn-

¹¹²² Ibid., p. 285.

¹¹²³ Gerrard, p. 285.

¹¹²⁴ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 240.

¹¹²⁵ Gerrard, p. 151.

¹¹²⁶ Ibid., p. 268. Penn-Lewis stated that "A woman who is called to preach is likewise called to an understanding of the Word which will agree with that inward voice."

¹¹²⁷ Ibid., pp. 174, 190.

¹¹²⁸ Ibid., pp. 150, 190.

¹¹²⁹ Ibid., p. 149.

¹¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹¹³¹ Ibid., p. 150.

¹¹³² Ibid.

¹¹³³ Ibid.

Lewis believed, had guided her hand as she wrote *The Story of Job*, one of her most mystical works. Similarly, when writing *The Word of the Cross*, Penn-Lewis claimed that God had given her this book in one day. "His hand was upon me, writing all He showed me."¹¹³⁴

I waited before the Lord for the last chapter, and on my knees there came to me the vision of the Lamb in the midst of the Throne. The last chapter seemed to be let down from the glory—and so it was finished.¹¹³⁵

Thus, in the state of illumination Penn-Lewis's spirit embraced visions, she wrote under the direct guidance of God, and she enjoyed a continual breaking in of the invisible world. In each case, the state of illumination imparted clarity of insight,¹¹³⁶ by which she was able to perceive and participate in God's purposes for her life and work. Writing to her husband during her travels to Scandinavia, she told him:

I can truly say that all that would be fascinating to the flesh here is utterly naught to me. It does not appeal to one chord in me. Nothing but the yearning over souls and the intense vision of what they *are to Him* through Calvary could uphold.¹¹³⁷

Just as "Calvary" was a central motif to Penn-Lewis's mysticism, by reading and reflecting on her own mystical work, "Calvary" was often understood in terms of the Dark Night—the final path of purgation. Thus, the Dark Night is most clearly understood as a state of negation and pain, the apophatic path of interiority whereby the primitive self is finally transcended and ceases to "be its 'own centre and circumference.'"¹¹³⁸ As the soul is thrust into a state of loss of both human and or divine consolations, the Dark Night therefore entails "bitter suffering: far worse than that endured in the Purgative Way."¹¹³⁹

¹¹³⁴ Ibid., p. 151.

¹¹³⁵ Ibid., p. 153.

¹¹³⁶ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 241.

¹¹³⁷ Gerrard, p. 144.

¹¹³⁸ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 397.

¹¹³⁹ Ibid., p. 389.

Penn-Lewis's own life is clearly characterized by pain and loss. Her biographer suggested that that she suffered every bit as much as Job.

Mrs. Penn-Lewis proved herself not merely to have intellectually and intelligently comprehended the [book of Job], but to have entered spiritually and experimentally into its inmost thought, and to have in spirit passed through, in some degree, the sorrows of the patriarch.¹¹⁴⁰

In depicting the Dark Night, Penn-Lewis implied that the soul must embrace the negations of the Cross before entering the life of resurrection. The "self must 'lose to find and die to live.'"¹¹⁴¹ Penn-Lewis described her own Dark Night as 'drinking of 'His cup,'¹¹⁴² a dying on the Cross with Christ.¹¹⁴³ Her notion of the Dark Night engaged the "triumphant emergence into life,"¹¹⁴⁴ only so far as it has entered "into 'His death.'"¹¹⁴⁵ For Penn-Lewis, the Cross:

of Christ is the instrument God uses to deal with the 'flesh,' the old nature, the Adam life. God does not cleanse the flesh, He condemns it to death.¹¹⁴⁶

Most unnervingly, as though paralyzed on a Cross, the Dark Night is viewed as an unselfing process in which the self "loses the power to Do; and learns to surrender its will to the operation of a larger Life."¹¹⁴⁷ The self-naughting operation, intrinsic to the Dark Night, is an interior path that deprives the self of its

'perception, knowledge, will, work, self-seeking,' the I, the Me, the Mine,-
-loses itself, denies itself, unforms itself, drawing 'ever nearer' to the One,

¹¹⁴⁰ Gerrard, p. 190.

¹¹⁴¹ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 402.

¹¹⁴² Gerrard, p. 152.

¹¹⁴³ Ibid., pp. 54, 161, 197, 199, 237.

¹¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 289.

¹¹⁴⁵ Ibid., pp. 288-289.

¹¹⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 303.

¹¹⁴⁷ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 389.

till 'nothing is to be seen but a ground which rests upon itself'—the ground of the soul, in which it has union with God.¹¹⁴⁸

Oswald Chambers, a popular Christian writer and contemporary of Penn-Lewis, congratulated Penn-Lewis on her book, *The Word of the Cross*. Chambers, in appreciation said that her book offered insight into the whole process of self-negation. He wrote:

Your 'Cross of Calvary' is pre-eminently of God. The splendid treasure of pain, your pain, has merged into the greatness of God's power. Your book teaches clearly and grandly what the Spirit witnesses to in the Bible and in our hearts, viz: that 'the Way of God' flatly contradicts common sense, and by utmost despair the Holy Ghost leads to resurrection triumph. The breakdown of the natural virtues seems to be the point wherein most regenerated lives are cast into despair. Your book will help these to understand that this despair must end in death to natural goodness and self, and be raised by the power of God into inconceivable glorious power and peace and liberty. You are clearer and clearer each time you write, and each day you grow from those past days of mysterious crucifixion, which is an open secret to those of us who have the witness of the Spirit.¹¹⁴⁹

Whereas Chambers understood her, many did not. For she challenged too much of what they had come to hold dear. They did not want to hear of the necessity of the pain of purgation, or the endurance demanded of the 'Dark Night,' let alone the 'naughting' of the soul this entailed. Thus, there were many in Keswick who opposed the purgation and self-stripping of Penn-Lewis's mystical theology. For Keswick preferred the shorter path of the Quietist, rather than the arduous interior path of the mystic.

Undeterred, she continually made the sufferings of Calvary the central motive of her Cross Theology. For example, while addressing the Bridge of Allan Conference, Penn-

¹¹⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 401.

¹¹⁴⁹ Gerrard, p. 220.

Lewis was asked to speak to the learned "Presbyterian Divines, Doctors of Divines, and Ministers of all denominations."¹¹⁵⁰ Necessarily, she spoke of the purgative ways of the Cross, and the following excerpt from her biography draws upon her recollections of that occasion.

As she walked up the aisle of the Tent ... with nothing but a deep, deep sense of her own emptiness and utter insufficiency for such an occasion, the thought came to her: Should she give an ordinary Bible Reading, as she so well could, on some beautiful pleasing theme from the Word? Or should she- dare she- be faithful to her 'commission' as a crucified messenger of the Crucified Lord, and tell out to that concourse of Ministers and white-haired Divines the oft times unwelcome message, that the Cross, in its personal application to the servant of God, means a deep experimental circumcision of the heart, a laying down of the 'natural' gifts of the soul, the 'own' eloquence, the 'own' power for service; that out of the depths of the spirit, where Christ dwells, may flow to others the life of the Risen Lord, unchecked and unhindered by the human channel. Then, as she mounted the platform, the Lord Himself poured through her lips the message He had for that gathering, in a faithful proclamation of Paul's Gospel of the Cross.¹¹⁵¹

The sufferings of the Dark Night are heightened by the misapprehensions of some who view the Dark Night not as a state of spiritual purification, but as a state of spiritual decline. As the soul undergoes stripping in the Dark Night, the soul feels impotent and weak. "Every vice is reawakened,"¹¹⁵² and the soul finds itself bereft of good deeds. Many, in fact, deem the soul to be in a state of spiritual decay. Penn-Lewis encountered a woman in such a state, though Penn-Lewis quickly discerned that she was "manifestly a surrendered soul"¹¹⁵³ undergoing what appeared to be a Dark Night. All "winter she had

¹¹⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 195.

¹¹⁵¹ Ibid., pp. 195-196.

¹¹⁵² Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 392.

¹¹⁵³ Gerrard, p. 155.

been passing through it, and others had said she was 'backsliding.'"¹¹⁵⁴ Even though she did not understand the experience, she "had the assurance herself that she was in the Hand of God."¹¹⁵⁵ Penn-Lewis comforted this woman who seemed unfamiliar with the interior path, the "conformity to the death of Jesus,"¹¹⁵⁶ and through Penn-Lewis the woman discerned "what God was doing"¹¹⁵⁷ in her own soul. This is just one example of how Penn-Lewis functioned as a spiritual director and the woman's response, "You have come this time for me!"¹¹⁵⁸ may well have been that of many others.

Through the strippings of the Dark Night, the self is purged not only of ego, but also of false dependence on human and divine consolation. Penn-Lewis often claimed that she was "the crucified messenger of the Crucified Lord,"¹¹⁵⁹ and this was certainly the case towards the end of her life. One month following the death of her beloved husband, Penn-Lewis suffered the loss of her trusted secretary and biographer, Mary Gerrard. During these challenging circumstances Penn-Lewis maintained extraordinary calm and peaceful repose. In a private letter, Penn-Lewis acknowledged the stripping of the Cross, through the Dark Night. She wrote:

Now, I must be poured out for God as never before... Truly God was stripping His beloved child, so as to leave her 'no shadow of anything to cling to, or rest upon, outside of Himself.'¹¹⁶⁰

Fortunately she also knew the experiences of union with God, beyond the pain. As a result of the transmuting process of the Dark Night, the soul had perfected a self-forgetting, the soul had transcended egotism, thus making possible a state of union with the Transcendent. Rightly characterized as spiritual marriage, in the unitive state the soul is now capable of "being to the Eternal Goodness what his own hand is to a man,"¹¹⁶¹ one in purpose. Spiritual union for Penn-Lewis was thus imaged as intimacy and oneness

¹¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 195.

¹¹⁶⁰ Gerrard, p. 291.

¹¹⁶¹ Underhill, *The Mystics of the Church*, p. 27.

of purpose and will. In a “‘face to face’ communion and fellowship,”¹¹⁶² the unified soul claimed to know, “with a deep inward consciousness, that of herself she could ‘do nothing’—but whatsoever she saw the Father doing.”¹¹⁶³ The soul thus shared with Christ in the “‘mighty ordination of His pierced hands,’”¹¹⁶⁴ and only through the sharing of Calvary does the human “spirit becomes truly ‘joined to the Lord’ as ‘one spirit.’”¹¹⁶⁵

In the fully matured mystic, “self, though intact, is wholly penetrated—as a sponge by the sea—by the Ocean of Life and Love to which he has attained. I live, yet not I but God in me.”¹¹⁶⁶ In the same way, after receiving praise from her audience, Penn-Lewis said that “it was absolutely the work of God Himself... I had no part in it at all. All they said passed over me to Him, for ‘I am not.’”¹¹⁶⁷

The mystical path provides the soul with a profound degree of detachment that enabled it to accept human accolades as well as fiery trials with equanimity. For the unitive life, “though lived in the world, is never of it.”¹¹⁶⁸ Whatever might befall the mystics, they remain at peace because they “live at transcendent levels of reality,”¹¹⁶⁹ they breathe “an atmosphere whose true quality we cannot even conceive.”¹¹⁷⁰ Penn-Lewis’s way of expressing the repose of union was to say that no human circumstance disrupts the soul who is “transfused by a spiritual glow.”¹¹⁷¹ She explains:

[The] Lord is truly our ‘casing,’ our covering, as we abide in Him, and the awful ocean-weight of the world’s atmosphere cannot get in as we hid in him, and keep the spirit open by prayer to the heavenly air by which alone we can breathe and live through these awful days.¹¹⁷²

¹¹⁶² Gerrard, p. 53.

¹¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹¹⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 66.

¹¹⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 237.

¹¹⁶⁶ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 417.

¹¹⁶⁷ Gerrard, p. 111.

¹¹⁶⁸ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 414.

¹¹⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 413.

¹¹⁷⁰ Ibid. See also Underhill, *The Mystics of the Church*, pp. 49-50.

¹¹⁷¹ Underhill, *The Mystics of the Church*, p. 49.

¹¹⁷² Gerrard, p. 258.

As far I know, Penn-Lewis was the first to see the implications of the unitive state for women. In addition to the peace and repose evidenced in her mystical consciousness, the unitive state is also one in which the soul is “conscious that [she] is now at length cleansed ... and has become in a mysterious manner, ‘that which [she] beholds.’”¹¹⁷³ The primitive self has undergone transmutation through the Dark Night and now possesses the real and eternal qualities of the Beloved. The implication as Penn-Lewis argued, was that both flesh and gender have likewise been transformed such that women, in the unitive state, transcend the weakness associated with their gender.¹¹⁷⁴ While speaking in Scandinavia, Penn-Lewis reminded women that throughout time, those who have pursued the path of purgation receive, as their reward, the fruit of union. She writes:

God’s army of women [are]... ‘foolish enough to depend upon God for their wisdom; ‘weak’ enough for the endynamiting with God’s strength; ‘base’ enough to have no ‘honour’ but God’s honour; ‘despised’ enough to be kept in the dust at His feet, and better than all, ‘Not’ – ‘nothing’ enough for God to be everything!’¹¹⁷⁵

According to Evelyn Underhill, the self-stripping process of the Dark Night ushers the soul into the unitive state with its renewing power. In a similar fashion, the Apostle Paul experienced self-conquest “so vividly described in Romans”¹¹⁷⁶ that resulted in the unitive experience in which Paul states; “I live, yet not I.”¹¹⁷⁷ Paul’s experiences on the road to Damascus, and his subsequent visions and ecstasies, gave him a “vivid consciousness of [Christ’s] reality and presence.”¹¹⁷⁸ This intense awareness of communion with God is again noted in the Apostle, who speaks of the Christian process as a death and rebirth in Jesus (i.e., Christian baptism). He is not, Underhill argued, “borrowing an image from the pagan mysteries, but describing something through which

¹¹⁷³ Underhill, *Mysticism*, pp. 417-418.

¹¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷⁵ Gerrard, p. 74.

¹¹⁷⁶ Underhill. *The Mystics of the Church*, p. 35

¹¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

he has passed.”¹¹⁷⁹ Paul’s statement in Romans 6: 5-6 has been repeated in the lives of mystics throughout time,¹¹⁸⁰ including Jessie Penn-Lewis’s.

According to Underhill, Paul’s purgation in Arabia (Gal 1:17), is followed by an illuminative state complete with visions and ecstasies described in Acts 22:17, Galatians 2:2 and 2 Corinthians 12:2.¹¹⁸¹ The mystical path for Paul, with its self-abandonment, visions, revelations, communion with the Divine, imparted a newness of life. As a new creature, Paul is profoundly conscious that he is born of a free woman rather than the slave.¹¹⁸² As such, he can now do all things through Christ who strengthens him. He has reached the theopathic life, union is complete and Paul is “humbly yet deeply aware of the actual energy of God operative within each deed and decision of his own.”¹¹⁸³ He is in a state of perfect peace and he enjoys complete self-abandonment, despite the difficult trials of his life. Paul wishes everyone to walk in this newness of life, which he knows is not an end in itself. Nor are the visions (2 Cor. 12) and ecstatic expressions (1 Cor. 14:18), which characterized his life, a goal in and of itself. He treats these events with a dispassion, Underhill observed.¹¹⁸⁴ The mystical “communion of his soul with Christ must not be a matter of personal enjoyment.”¹¹⁸⁵ The social meaning Paul ascribes to these mystical experiences supports rather than supplants¹¹⁸⁶ his service as an apostle to the Church (1 Cor 14). The social impact of Paul’s life was therefore most keenly noted in that his experiences empowered his efforts on behalf others.

Like the Apostle Paul, Penn-Lewis’s unitive consciousness was also expressed in tireless service to others, noted most explicitly in her opposition to gender bias. Yet, Penn-Lewis also recognized that part of her purgation included a gender bias, for though a woman, her mission was to exhibit, and exhorts others to enter into the power she had attained through an experience with the Cross. While she recognized that there was no “denial of the Divine seal, there was no getting away from the evidence of the

¹¹⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 41.

¹¹⁸⁰ Romans 6:5-6: “For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united, with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed and we might no longer be enslaved to sin.”

¹¹⁸¹ Underhill. *The Mystics of the Church*, p. 41 & ff.

¹¹⁸² Ibid., p. 47.

¹¹⁸³ Ibid., p. 50.

¹¹⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 44.

¹¹⁸⁵ Ibid., pp. 44-45.

¹¹⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 45.

results,”¹¹⁸⁷ there were occasions she sought a male messenger, so that audiences might heed the fullest meaning of the Cross without gender prejudice. She eventually came to see that women who desire to preach are “likewise called to an understanding of the Word which will agree with that inward voice.”¹¹⁸⁸ Penn-Lewis devoted much of her life to advancing gender equality in Christian ministry, an equality she believed grew out of a mystical encounter with the Cross.

Women, Penn-Lewis suggested, are used by God to illustrate the power of the Cross. She herself was used in such a manner. For this reason, women who sense God leading them to preach the gospel must also offer a biblical defense for their public service and ministry. Penn-Lewis wrote:

I am strongly impressed that, for the strengthening of the position for the Lord's handmaidens' freedom for use by the Holy Spirit in proclaiming the wonderful works of God, I must now set forth in print the evidences that this is the purpose of God, as I have proved it in my own life. I no longer say to the Lord, 'Why has thou made me a woman?' ... For the 'Message of the Cross' is its motive and its end, showing how, for the members of the Body of Christ, the 'enmity' was 'slain' at Calvary not only as between Jew and Gentile, but between 'bond and free,' and 'male and female' (Ephes. ii. 11-19, Gal. iii. 28)—both having died with Christ, that 'out of both' might be made anew creation, i.e., the spiritual Body of Christ, of which He is the Head.¹¹⁸⁹

Through the mystical path of the Cross, not only are the weakness associated with women crucified, transmuted and transcended, but the prejudice against women are also overcome. As Cross unites souls to God, as well as to each other, the Cross thus subdues the enmity between women and men. Penn-Lewis writes:

¹¹⁸⁷ Gerrard, p. 266.

¹¹⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 268.

¹¹⁸⁹ Ibid., pp. 267-268.

In the home sphere she is woman, wife, mother, sister; but in the Church and in service for God, praying or 'proclaiming godliness' (1 Tim ii.10 lit) she is a 'partaker the Divine nature,' a messenger of the Lord of Hosts, a member of the heavenly Body the Church- in both spheres seeking, with a meek and quiet spirit, to do the will of her Head in heaven.¹¹⁹⁰

A man "with a strong prejudice against the ministry of women"¹¹⁹¹ was astonished at the skill and power manifest in Mrs. Penn-Lewis's ministry. He admitted to her afterwards that he did not think it possible that "God would use a woman like that!"¹¹⁹² She took this occasion to suggest that: "God never does use a woman like that, or a man either! God only uses a new creation!"¹¹⁹³ Gender is transcended at the Cross.

Therefore a soul that has attained union with God through a "stripping off of the I, the Me, the Mine,"¹¹⁹⁴ is thus "made part of the mystical Body of God; and, humbly"¹¹⁹⁵ takes its "place in the corporate life of Reality."¹¹⁹⁶ Mysticism, as it operated in the work of Penn-Lewis, was a unifying force not only between the soul and the Beloved, but also between souls that are united to Christ. In so far as each soul "experiences the in-working power of the Cross, whereby the... fallen life"¹¹⁹⁷ dies, the soul may rise "above the death of nature which is ours in Adam."¹¹⁹⁸ Calvary is therefore a "place of unity between Jew and Gentile (Eph ii. 11-18), and that there can be no divisions in Christ, for Christ cannot be divided."¹¹⁹⁹ The power of Calvary releases the soul from bondage to prejudice and sin, ending "the spirit of the world, the spirit of division, the power of the devil, and the life of self-pleasing."¹²⁰⁰ Penn-Lewis's Cross Theology also had implications for the conflict that often exists between different denominations. Penn-Lewis wrote:

¹¹⁹⁰ Ibid., pp. 268-269.

¹¹⁹¹ Ibid., p. 269.

¹¹⁹² Ibid.

¹¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁹⁴ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 425.

¹¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁹⁷ Gerrard, p. 284.

¹¹⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 289.

¹¹⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 225.

¹²⁰⁰ Ibid., pp. 225, 284.

When the Proclamation of the Cross and its message had been considered ... see how rich and full had been the unveiling of the Atoning Cross of our Risen and Glorified Lord, and how marvelously it had been proved that Ministers of many denominations ... could meet together in one spirit, and without controversy over divergent points of view, on the basis of the Cross. Also it was plainly visible again and again as the days went by that in the full unveiling of the Cross, all manifestations and workings of the 'flesh' were eliminated, and the pure working of the Spirit of God made possible.¹²⁰¹

Those who have conquered, or transcended their Adamic or flesh-life have access to new resources and capacities for unity. According to Underhill, as the soul attained union a "fresh life is imparted,"¹²⁰² and "new creative powers are conferred."¹²⁰³ As such the soul has "new responsibilities and is often called to effort and endurance on a mighty scale."¹²⁰⁴

Despite her shy personality and chronic illness, Penn-Lewis's life was one of extraordinary energy, noted throughout her international career.¹²⁰⁵ While she engaged in a life-long battle with tuberculosis, even her doctors were amazed. One said that; "Mrs. Penn-Lewis is a law unto herself."¹²⁰⁶ Her strength and endurance often surpassed those who were young and healthy. While speaking in Sweden, Penn-Lewis seemed to go from strength to strength while her translators were steadily exhausted. Her diary reads:

I never quite realized how the Lord carries me, until I was side by side with my interpreters. As I give forth the 'Word of Life,' I seem to become more vigorous, while they seem to flag and grow weary. Even a strong man, interpreting, grew weary, though I was as free as when I began, and

¹²⁰¹ Ibid., p. 276.

¹²⁰² Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 428.

¹²⁰³ Ibid.

¹²⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁰⁵ Penn-Lewis's diary suggests she had avoided refining her skills, such as public speaking, in order that out "of the depths of the spirit, where Christ dwells, may flow to others the life of the Risen lord, unchecked and unhindered by the human channel." See Gerrard, p. 195.

¹²⁰⁶ Gerrard, p. 297.

resumed at my next meeting as if I had not spoken before! This is the difference between the 'power of His endless life' to quicken physically, and the natural resources.¹²⁰⁷

Near the end of her life, her sponsors were surprised by the paradox of her gaunt and weak body, yet all the while her voice and message captivated audiences for long periods. Her biographer wrote:

That little frail body! We almost wondered sometimes how the flesh and bones hung together. And yet what a power she was. How she flamed for God! Has she flamed out? No, the flame was so mighty for God that He has delivered it from the weak vessel of clay that it might flame to its uttermost in His presence for ever... Her fruit remains, for it is living seed planted in the hearts and lives of God's children in every corner of the world—it is a host of living souls delivered from the power of the enemy, and brought into fellowship and union with God, by the testimony of the Holy Spirit through her lips and pen.¹²⁰⁸

The vitality of her life was contagious. Such souls are like holy mothers who "bring forth souls by their labours."¹²⁰⁹ Penn-Lewis's offspring also radiate "new transcendental life,"¹²¹⁰ and through them new mystical "energy is actually born into the world."¹²¹¹ Indebted to Penn-Lewis as his spiritual mother, one man wrote:

I am your son in this service. You have seen what I did not see, and believed for what I did not think possible, and have cheered and helped me when all was dark and blank. Someday, in the glory, we will talk over it all. One thing I entreat—do not cease to pray for me. Do you remember

¹²⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 166.

¹²⁰⁸ Ibid., pp. 306-307.

¹²⁰⁹ Underhill, *The Mystics of the Church*, p. 85. See also p. 82.

¹²¹⁰ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 431.

¹²¹¹ Ibid., p. 432.

your last prayer for in me in my room here? It was like the 'mighty ordination of pierced hands.' Please take me still as one of your burdens to the Master's feet.¹²¹²

Christians around the world were empowered by her teaching. One admiring individual said, following her sermon on the Cross; "It is difficult to explain the influence of your teaching on my mind, but somehow it is teaching that teaches, and I find that few do that now."¹²¹³ Likewise, F.B. Meyer, an eminent Keswick writer, pastor and leader, also claimed that Penn-Lewis's teaching imparted a "definite blessing"¹²¹⁴ and gave a "bed-rock teaching of the soundest description."¹²¹⁵ He went on to say that through her teaching:

We saw our deep need of the experimental fact of Calvary. Our death-union in Christ was the only way to our life-union in Him. I thank God for His dear child, and for her untiring witness to the blood-stained Cross of Calvary, in the fulness of its applied power.¹²¹⁶

During the last week of her life, though frail and unable to walk, Penn-Lewis's biographer suggested that she "seemed to be enjoying herself interiorly."¹²¹⁷ When asked to "comment on the pace at which she was living life, she replied, 'Oh, this is life to me!'"¹²¹⁸ Her last sermons were filled, audiences claimed, with "remarkable lucidity and power... but not referring to physical strength... but the kind of power which conveys the truth to the hearers."¹²¹⁹ She reflected in her own person "tranquillity according to His essence, activity according to His Nature: absolute repose, absolute fecundity."¹²²⁰ Like

¹²¹² Gerrard, pp. 196-197.

¹²¹³ Gerrard, p. 197.

¹²¹⁴ Ibid., p. 286.

¹²¹⁵ Ibid.

¹²¹⁶ Ibid.

¹²¹⁷ Gerrard, p. 299.

¹²¹⁸ Ibid., p. 300.

¹²¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²²⁰ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 434.

many mystics, Penn-Lewis was an invincible force who appeared to transcend many of the obstacles and limitations in her life.¹²²¹

Summary Remarks

Penn-Lewis does not identify herself as a mystic, nor does she appear conscious that her spiritual path progresses through five stages of mysticism, as outlined by Underhill. Yet, this appears to be the case. Penn-Lewis's interior ascent resembled the five stages of mysticism:¹²²² Awakening, Purgation, Illumination, the Dark Night and Union. Through the purgative path and the apophysis of the Cross, Penn-Lewis follows the late medieval tradition which depicts the soul's ascent through introspective and experiential language. Moreover, like Bonaventure, Cross Theology engaged personal suffering within the context of the paschal narrative whereby the interior ascent is joined with personal experience. In this way, Cross Theology was the means of transcending the false selves, required by the Greeks and early Christian mystics, as well as the way in which the soul is transformed by Christ's passion and become more available to others.

The way of the Cross is not merely a symbol of the soul's interior ascent. The imitation of Christ was also the

inchoate and inexplicable interior darkness is ... a concrete manifestation of the paschal mystery. This 'bodily' mysticism, therefore, might be said to effect a crucial transposition: ultimate detachment is transposed from a metaphysical problematic into the salvation—historical terms of Jesus' suffering and death. The significance of this lies precisely in its ability to transpose the fundamental key of late medieval mystical thought—from a personal and possibly self-preoccupied spiritual journey (in which

¹²²¹ Ibid.

¹²²² The psychological stages proposed by Underhill are viewed as contrivances by Jantzen (see Jantzen p. 317 & ff), when in fact these stages seem to describe the soul's ascent toward union with Divine within Penn-Lewis's personal life, as well as in her mystical literature. If the spiritual lives of individuals like Penn-Lewis follow a pattern of experiences, might this pose a defense for the Christian faith based on experience? See Appendix A.

attention is focuses on the states of the soul's inner accomplishments), to a more communal mystical theology in which the contemplative journey is seen in terms of participation in the common, ecclesial, mystery of Christ.¹²²³

The more bodily the incarnation, the more available Christ was to humanity, and as we participate in the apophysis of the Cross, we too become available to others. McIntosh writes:

The knowledge that comes from sharing in the bodiliness of Jesus, from feeling the burden of his grief, the pain of his suffering, the scintillating joy of being given new life to forgive those who had betrayed him—this is not a case of being 'trapped' in a world of physical sensations, but rather these actual sensations are, Christians believe, the very structures of a new creation. They are the patterns of a new, emergent reality which is fully noetic and intelligible, but which cannot be 'known' apart from the practical bodily commitment of one's whole being.¹²²⁴

This form of apophatic mysticism, noted first in the late medieval period, stressed the radical release of the limitations of ego, and the desire to

manipulate, possess and control persons and things for the ego's own ends. Such an ecstatic freedom... means to discover the foundations of one's true self; the higher the soul ascends into God, 'the deeper it descends into itself; the union (of the soul and God) take place in the innermost sphere of the soul, in its deepest ground. So the journey into God is seen not ultimately as a loss of self but as a homecoming in the divinely beloved self, beyond the false selves.¹²²⁵

¹²²³ McIntosh, pp. 81-82.

¹²²⁴ Ibid., p. 82.

¹²²⁵ Ibid., p. 206.

Penn-Lewis's diary suggests she attained freedom from the prison of self-consciousness. In the unitive state, the primitive self was overcome and her soul evidences the Divine fruitfulness, so typical of the great mystics. Though she suffered from tuberculosis, Penn-Lewis's assumed a demanding schedule and overcame significant prejudice not only because of her message, but also because of her gender. Through it all, she was more than resilient. She preached and taught internationally, and her message challenged gender bias by insisting that in union with Christ, divisions according to race, class and gender have likewise been transcended through the Cross.

While mysticism has been associated with ineffable, personal experiences, some believe that the mystic is thus marginalized, and left without a voice either for theological discourse or to address social issues.¹²²⁶ It can be argued, however, that mystics have raised their voices and worked for social change, and this was seen as a characteristic of the mystical tradition from early on.¹²²⁷ Scholars have noted that mystics are not focused solely on private experience. Mystics also give attention to the well being of others, which resulted both in articulate speech and in social action, and this may be considered a social consequences of the mystical path. While criticism of this point can be advanced,¹²²⁸ there is evidence that mystics such as Catherine of Siena, Francis of Assisi, Teresa of Avila and Hildegard von Bingen offered great impetus to social and religious reform. Jessie Penn-Lewis is yet another example of a mystic who challenged the Church both by her mystical writings, and by her biblical literature that advanced women's equal service alongside men. The power to resist social, political and religious domination was a product of the unitive life for Jessie Penn-Lewis, as we shall see in a later section. For the moment, however, we turn to Penn-Lewis's mystical path transmitted through her published work. Those who could not hear her in person could certainly learn from what she wrote.

¹²²⁶ McIntosh, p. 137

¹²²⁷ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 92.

¹²²⁸ According to Jantzen, because Christian mysticism focused on personal experiences, women mystics were systematically excluded from political and ecclesiastical structures. Therefore, Jantzen argues, mysticism failed to achieve full social and structural justice for women. See Jantzen p. 326 & ff.

Chapter Six

The Mystical Literature of Jessie Penn-Lewis

“All spiritual truth radiates from the Cross.” ¹²²⁹

I. Introduction

Here we will observe the classical mysticism operative in four primary works by Penn-Lewis: *Thy Hidden Ones*; *Union with Christ as Taught by The Song of Songs*, *The Story of Job*, *Face to Face: Glimpses into the Inner Life of Moses*, and *The Message of the Cross*. Penn-Lewis's interior path, expressed through Cross Theology, was a message she not only advanced through her mystical literature, but one she also directed at Christian leaders who she felt relied too heavily upon rational expressions of faith, to the exclusion of more interior encounters with the Cross. In her opinion, the “theologizing” of her contemporaries failed to lead souls into a transformational encounter with the Cross. Penn-Lewis complained that the power available in the Cross was rarely preached “even in evangelical pulpits, and then only but a reference, or few words, as if it were only a ‘doctrine.’” ¹²³⁰ When Christians fail to engage the Cross and omit an interior apophysis of Calvary, they are unable to access the richness of God. “It is easy to preach about the Cross, but to be taken into the heart of Calvary” ¹²³¹ is an experience many preachers have overlooked. To encounter the Cross is to touch upon a depth that is fathomless, and this is what many modern preachers have yet to experience. ¹²³² She wrote:

¹²²⁹ Penn-Lewis, as quoted by Gerrard, p. 169.

¹²³⁰ Penn-Lewis, *The Cross as the Touchstone of Faith*, p. 23.

¹²³¹ Penn-Lewis, *The Message of the Cross*. (London, Marshall Brothers, 1898), p. v.

¹²³² Ibid. According to Louth, the mystical tradition proposes that “God is unknowable in Himself, He is not an object of knowledge. With our understanding we can grasp God's manifestation of Himself in creation, but in the very act of understanding God's manifestation of Himself we realize that the One thus manifested transcends His manifestation.” See Louth, p. 172.

The Holy Spirit of God is manifestly calling the messengers of the churches to more definite preaching, not alone of 'Jesus Christ crucified,' as the one only and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, but also of the sinner's death in the Substitute as the only basis of the fullest working of the Eternal Spirit, and the manifestation of the life of Jesus to a world that knows Him not.¹²³³

Only those who have journeyed through the apophysis of Calvary can preach the fullest message of the Cross, Penn-Lewis insisted. "Only those who live the 'Cross' can preach it effectively."¹²³⁴ Too often pride and ambition compel preachers to exalt self-centered manifestations of spiritual power. In contrast, those who have been crucified with Christ do not "think more of the 'wisdom of words.'"¹²³⁵ Freedom from a self-consciousness and a self-orientation is possible only as the Cross is preached by those who have experienced its severing and slaying power.¹²³⁶ For the "crucified Lord must have crucified followers."¹²³⁷

Those enamoured with worldly power, knowledge and social position find the Cross an offense, Penn-Lewis posits. Since the Cross renders null earthly ambition and human distinctions such as Jew, Greek, slave and free, male and female, any who claim superiority based on worldly categories and education have not experienced the liberating and self-transcending power of Calvary. To be enlightened by a mystical consciousness is to realize that "nothing availeth but a new creation."¹²³⁸

Thus, Penn-Lewis suggests that the basis for intimacy with God is not dependent upon our understanding alone, but as souls participate in the interior path of the Cross they seem to transcend knowledge. In her mystical work, *The Story of Job*, Penn-Lewis uses the story of Job to suggest that through his sufferings, Job is carried beyond defining the undefinable, in order to enjoy a revelation and a fellowship with God that far exceeded a life without suffering.

¹²³³ Penn-Lewis, *The Message of the Cross*, p. v.

¹²³⁴ Gerrard, p. 274.

¹²³⁵ Penn-Lewis, *The Message of the Cross*, p. 59.

¹²³⁶ Penn-Lewis, *The Conquest of Canaan*, pp. 21-22.

¹²³⁷ Penn-Lewis, *The Message of the Cross*, p. 48.

¹²³⁸ Ibid., p. 61.

Let the intellect be occupied with the 'How' and the soul will generally fail to know the fellowship with God in experience ... Why is it [the soul] being disturbed by those who want indefinable things defined? ... He little knew that this path of suffering was to end in a revelation of God, and a fellowship with Him richer and fuller than aught he had ever conceived of in his days of prosperity.¹²³⁹

Like mystics before her, Penn-Lewis articulated the unitive state, the final stage in the mystical path, through the language of love, *eros* and marriage.¹²⁴⁰ The *Song of Songs* therefore offered Penn-Lewis a perfect medium—a love story, through which she harnessed *eros* as an image for union with the Divine. In Penn-Lewis's mystical theology, it is the Cross that unites the soul to God through a union more powerful than the force of *eros*. To illustrate the intimacy of the unitive state, Penn-Lewis suggested that whereas Eve was taken from Adam's side, so also the Church is planted or joined to the second Adam—Christ. Moreover, through death on the Cross, each Christian is joined not only to God, but also to the other members of Christ's Body. Note the personal as well as the corporate implications of union, for the bride is both singular as well as plural.¹²⁴¹ Penn-Lewis wrote:

The bride for the first Adam was taken out of his side during his sleep; made of his own nature and presented to him by her Creator—a marvelous foreshadowing of the mystery of Christ and His Church! All the redeemed ones, born of the first Adam and under the curse, planted into the God-Man, the Second Adam, hanging upon the Cross of Calvary ... Planted into Him, baptized into His death, there emerges a Bride, formed of many members, taken out of His side in the sleep of death, partaking of His divine nature, eventually to be presented unto Him to share His throne.¹²⁴²

¹²³⁹ Penn-Lewis, *The Story of Job*, pp. 52-53.

¹²⁴⁰ Louth, p. 192.

¹²⁴¹ Louth, pp. 199-200.

¹²⁴² Penn-Lewis, *Thy Hidden Ones: Union with Christ as Traced in the Song of Songs*, pp. 35-36.

By participating in the mystical path of Christ, through the experiences of Calvary, the soul is separated from sin and weakness by sharing “in Him, Upon His Cross.”¹²⁴³

Hidden with God, planted into Christ’s side, dying with Christ on the Cross, were the metaphors Penn-Lewis used to describe the interior path towards where the soul not only shares in the Divine nature but also partakes of Divine power.

Penn-Lewis’s mystical literature compares the experiences of awakening to that of the unitive state. The five stages of mysticism, noted in the previous chapter, are illustrated not only Penn-Lewis’s spiritual journey, but also through the mystical literature she wrote. In the pages that follow, we will explore the five stages of mysticism outlined in the previous chapter as it appears in Penn-Lewis’s more prominent mystical literature.

II. Penn-Lewis’s Mystical Literature and the Soul’s Ascent

As we have already suggested, the awakened soul is characterized by a new orientation to the Divine. To be awakened to the mystical path, is to glance a compelling new landscape. It is to sample the spiritual world that leaves the soul hungry for more. Hence, the awakened soul “is moved to ask for the fullest knowledge of her God that is possible,”¹²⁴⁴ and through the heavenly vision, the soul is “drawn out of itself and away from the things of earth.”¹²⁴⁵ Again, writing of the soul that has been awakened, Penn-Lewis said:

The heavenly vision has come! Somehow, somewhere, by the grace of God, she has had the revelation of a life of union with Christ that stirs her heart to intense desire.¹²⁴⁶

Though an intensely pleasurable experience, the state of awakening ends as the soul glimpses not only the Beloved, but also its own imperfections, and this is the cause of

¹²⁴³ Ibid., p. 38.

¹²⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 3. See also Louth, p. 6 & ff.

¹²⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 4.

¹²⁴⁶ Ibid.

great pain. There is then an oscillation between pain and pleasure so that while impassioned by the sight of the Holy, the soul longs for more of God and less of self.

“‘Draw me, we *will* run after Thee.’ ‘That I may know Him,’ is the cry awakened by the Divine Spirit.”¹²⁴⁷ A state of awakening is a condition in which the soul hungers for the Heavenly King, and this marks “the earliest stage of the surrendered life.”¹²⁴⁸ When first aroused or awakened by a sighting of the Divine, the soul finds new strength to purge itself of “all that stands between it and goodness,”¹²⁴⁹ in the hopes of winning the affections of the Divine lover.

Having met the perfect Lover, the soul operates under a powerful motive and hastens to purify itself. The awakened soul is thus carried through the “unnatural acts of abnegation,”¹²⁵⁰ which strips, frees and enables the soul to place the Divine Beloved at the center of its life and affections. Purgation is thus the business of “getting rid, first of self-love; and secondly of all those foolish interests in which the surface-consciousness is steeped.”¹²⁵¹

Penn-Lewis illustrates the purgative path through her mystical literature, for where the biblical examples were insufficient because there is little to parallel Moses or Paul, Penn-Lewis writes her own examples, notably the maid in *Thy Hidden Ones*. The maid suffered the awakened awareness that her sins were displeasing to her Lover. Penn-Lewis wrote:

Her detestation of sin, heightened by the knowledge of its exceeding sinfulness as revealed in the light of His Holiness, is so deep, that she could have borne any suffering, so long as she knew that her conscience was void of offense. The agony of having wounded her Well-Beloved is unspeakable.¹²⁵²

¹²⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 5.

¹²⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 3.

¹²⁴⁹ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 199.

¹²⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 203.

¹²⁵¹ Ibid., p. 204.

¹²⁵² Penn-Lewis, *Thy Hidden Ones: Union with Christ as Traced in the Song of Songs*, p. 86.

Thus the awakened soul pursues the path of purgation and seeks to master “every known sin, refusing to let it reign.” ¹²⁵³ Purgation assumed two forms in the work of Penn-Lewis, that of detachment and mortification.

Through detachment the soul becomes freer from its dependence upon the visible world, so that loss of material or social status is no longer a source of pain or humiliation. Compelled to be pure, the awakened soul works to empty, strip, or detach itself from anything that might inspire an illusory dependence upon the material world. Penn-Lewis likened detachment of the soul to the weaning of a child where the soul learns, through “many tears,” ¹²⁵⁴ to loosen its dependence upon the things of the visible world and acquires the discipline required by “the heirs of God.” ¹²⁵⁵ Like a patient parent God waits

for his babes until they are weaned, and able to bear the detaching from things necessary at first ... In His time, and by His own tender dealing, the soul must be weaned and taught to walk alone, even though it means through many tears. ¹²⁵⁶

Just as a child is weaned, or detached, and learns to walk through many tears, or the Dark Night, so too the maid in Penn-Lewis’s *Thy Hidden Ones*, seeks her Divine Lover “with a broken spirit, desolate and crying in the darkness after Him.” ¹²⁵⁷ Both the weaned child and the maid learn to pass through the pains of detachment. Detached from the visible world the soul seeks her invisible Lord, and by doing so, the soul stretches beyond “the rigid limits of” ¹²⁵⁸ its previous existence. The search for the Beloved moves the soul beyond the familiar and sensible world so that it enjoys the expanse of the spiritual world. God, Penn-Lewis suggests, teaches souls as the Divine Lover taught the maid, as Christ instructed “the disciples on the lake, when in the storm, ‘He would pass by them,’ so as to

¹²⁵³ Penn-Lewis, *The Cross of Calvary and its Message*, p. 40.

¹²⁵⁴ Penn-Lewis, *Face to Face, Glimpses into the Inner Life of Moses*, p. 16.

¹²⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁵⁷ Penn-Lewis, *Thy Hidden Ones: Union with Christ as Traced in the Song of Songs*, p. 87.

¹²⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 43.

draw out their cry of need.”¹²⁵⁹ As the soul submits to the painful process of detachment, the soul also discovers that “there is something deeper, fuller, higher, than being delivered from suffering, and that is being triumphant in it.”¹²⁶⁰

How then, does Cross Theology engage the process of mortification? Mortification is, for Penn-Lewis, a continual process of submitting to the severing power of the Cross so that the base elements of the flesh and the soul are subdued and transcended. For the flesh and the self-life, Penn-Lewis said, can only be managed through the Cross, and thus our lives must be held under the painful blade of the Cross.

The flesh must be kept under the knife of the Cross for if there is any self indulgence or anything doubtful in your life ... the enemy will come back on you. And fastening on that uncrucified ‘ground’ in you will press against you with appalling power. You must have the knife of the Cross steadily, persistently and unbrokenly applied to the flesh.¹²⁶¹

If finding themselves in temptation, or in a temper, or assailed by the old life, Penn-Lewis advised her audiences to undergo mortification—to deny themselves of all that displeases God. Therefore mortification was the exertion of moral effort,¹²⁶² coupled with faith, to oppose that which offends the Divine Beloved. She gave precise and specific advice, informing her hearers and readers to “quietly and deliberately [take their] position with Christ at Calvary”¹²⁶³ and there to say:

‘Lord Jesus, I have died to that temper, on the Cross with Thee, and I count upon the Holy Spirit to separate me from it, for I have died to it. I cannot manage it; it is beyond me, but I have died to it.’ In the center of

¹²⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 43.

¹²⁶⁰ Penn-Lewis, *The Message of the Cross*, p. 44.

¹²⁶¹ Penn-Lewis, *The Conquest of Canaan*, p. 22.

¹²⁶² Penn-Lewis opposes passivity and calls on souls to resist evil. See Penn-Lewis, *Conquest of Canaan*, pp. 85-86.

¹²⁶³ Penn-Lewis, *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, pp. 32-33.

your will take 'an attitude' of death, and say, 'I have nothing to do with it; I refuse it, because I have died with Christ.' ¹²⁶⁴

What is central here is the sense of dependence on the cleansing power of God. Thus the maid in Penn-Lewis's *Thy Hidden Ones* wondered how her feet became defiled after she had just labored to bathe them. Penn-Lewis suggested that cleanliness cannot be our doing. Only the Holy One can replace the primitive self with the Divine. She wrote: "Soul, thou art forgetting that in thyself thou art black; in thee dwelleth no good thing; thou art but a capacity for God: a 'nothing' that God may be All in all!" ¹²⁶⁵

This was a lesson to be learned that though propelled to acts of purgation by a longing for the Divine, absolute purity cannot be accomplished by effort alone. Despite acts of detachment and mortification, the grip of selfhood is far too strong. God's work alone has the power to sever, finally and completely, all self-adoration. Thus, the process of purification, begun in the state of purgation, must be completed by the hand of God alone, and the recollection of the delights of "illumination" will see the soul through what may be the distress of this experience.

As we have said, the state of illumination is characterized by joy. The illuminated heart is rapturous and provides a foretaste of the unitive state. Having sampled the God of all delights, the soul redoubles its pursuit of the Divine Lover, and desiring the pleasures of the Heavenly Lover, the self undergoes stripping through the Cross's Dark Night, and only then on to union with God. Thus the soul

must always have a 'heavenly vision' to draw it out of itself, and away from the things of earth. The 'eyes' of the 'heart' must be 'illuminated' to know the hope of its calling. The clearer the vision, the more entire the abandonment to the Holy Spirit for its fulfilment, and the more intense the thirst after God—a 'furnace of intense desire' which must be created by the Eternal Spirit Himself, and which is the supreme condition for

¹²⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁶⁵ Penn-Lewis, *Thy Hidden Ones: Union with Christ as Traced in the Song of Songs*, p. 82.

knowing God ... We lose only 'dross' when we exchange the earthly for the heavenly.¹²⁶⁶

This longing for God thus carries the soul through the arduous and painful apophysis of the Dark Night, which otherwise would be unendurable. Strengthened by illumination, the soul disdains the visible world and all sensible consolations and suffers the painful path towards union with the Divine. According to Cross Theology, God has created a desire in us, through the illuminative state, that we might conform to the death of Christ and emerge in triumphant life.¹²⁶⁷

Looking away from the things seen to Him who is invisible, we too, shall endure. Dwelling within the veil with our glorified Lord, we shall see the Cross from God's standpoint, and glory in it. The joy set before us, the joy unspeakable and full of glory, shall even now break forth, as with unveiled face beholding the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord.¹²⁶⁸

Likewise Moses, in *Thy Hidden Ones*, through a desire for God, learned to trust in the world that is invisible. God became to Moses a greater "reality than the 'things that are seen,' ... until the unseen grew more real and tangible to him than the visible."¹²⁶⁹

Similarly, the maid in *Thy Hidden Ones* longs for union, though she is conscious of separation between her and the Beloved. As the Divine Lover hides from the maid, his absence creates an intense longing as well as a painful awareness that self must be purified before union is possible. Through Illumination, the maid has experienced the "day-dawn," as the bright Morning Star woos within her heart and she desires her Divine Lover above all others. Penn-Lewis wrote:

¹²⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 4.

¹²⁶⁷ Gerrard, p. 289.

¹²⁶⁸ Penn-Lewis, *The Message of the Cross*, p. 33.

¹²⁶⁹ Penn-Lewis, *Face to Face, Glimpses into the Inner Life of Moses*, p. 68.

The risen Lord now hides Himself to see what silence will do ... His silence and the hiding of His face arrests her in her self-absorption. She is evidently conscious that there is a cloud, and she seems to know now that she is not yet so fully in union with Him as she thought. She is still in the 'day-dawn' of the spiritual life, but yet the Bright and Morning Star has arisen in her heart to herald the coming day of her one life with Him—a day which will be 'as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, a morning without clouds.' ¹²⁷⁰

Longing for the day without clouds when union is complete, the soul is aware that the final stage of the mystical life has not been reached. Separation from the Divine, though painful, is overcome by desire and a willingness to face the final purgation—the Dark Night. Marriage or union is embraced as the ultimate goal, and thus the purpose of Illumination has been achieved, the soul presses on through the Dark Night—a condition most distressing indeed, as it embraces not only the loss of family and friends but also the absence of God's sensible consolation.

For Penn-Lewis, the way of the Cross was the Dark Night whereby the annihilation of the ego are undertaken. To transcend the shallow attachments of this life is a painful experience, and thus the soul attempts to resist its own crucifixion. ¹²⁷¹ Yet those who "have been illuminated by the Sun of His glorious Presence" ¹²⁷² recognize that the Dark Night offers release to the new and inner person from the constricting bonds of the carnal self. Penn-Lewis said that: "'pain has other and higher functions than penalty,' for 'the outer man must be sacrificed in the interests of the man within, and the world of man without, and unseen worlds beyond.'" ¹²⁷³

Enveloped within the Dark Night, the presence of God withdraws and the soul sinks into despair, a suffering that is made worse by the scorn of family and friends. Often physical pain or deterioration of health and mental abilities accompanies this transmuting

¹²⁷⁰ Penn-Lewis, *Thy Hidden Ones: Union with Christ as Traced in the Song of Songs*, p. 40.

¹²⁷¹ Penn-Lewis, *The Message of the Cross*, p. 48.

¹²⁷² Penn-Lewis, *Thy Hidden Ones: Union with Christ as Traced in the Song of Songs*, p. 142.

¹²⁷³ W.W. Peyton, as quoted by Jessie Penn-Lewis, *The Story of Job*, p. 31.

process, as the soul learns to share in the tortures of Calvary.¹²⁷⁴ Thus Penn-Lewis, like Bonaventure, placed the paschal experience within the context of a personal apophysis.¹²⁷⁵ For both Bonaventure and Penn-Lewis, the mystical path “entails a participation in the bodily apophysis of the Cross,”¹²⁷⁶ and this serves as a vehicle “within which the believer passes over into the presence of the Father.”¹²⁷⁷

And so it was with Job, who like Christ endured every torture afforded by the Dark Night. The “keenest pain of all”¹²⁷⁸ in Penn-Lewis’s *The Story of Job*, was not only the obliteration of family, but the loss of one’s closest friends. Can any state offer more desolation, asked Penn-Lewis, than to be denied one’s most intimate friends, whose counsel Job had shared, whom he “thought would cling to me and believe in me whatever come, even they whom I tenderly loved?”¹²⁷⁹

Job’s sufferings are, Penn-Lewis believed, God’s method of eliminating the soul’s dependence upon the illusory world. She wrote:

The outward man had been broken down on every side, and in the breaking all natural power of endurance and self-restraint had gone. The once dignified Job had not been able to hide his sufferings behind a barrier of reserve, nor had he been able to protect himself from the humiliation of pleading for pity from his misjudging friends ... He knew that God was refining him as gold, and he understood that He was only performing for him the deep purposes of His heart for eternal blessing ... Job does not know how the fire is doing its work in him. A soft, or melted heart, can only be obtained by fire ... A soft heart has lost resistance to the Hand of God—not only in will, for the will may have been unresisting long before—but in an involuntary hardness that makes its capacity small and narrow.¹²⁸⁰

¹²⁷⁴ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 385.

¹²⁷⁵ McIntosh, p. 78.

¹²⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁷⁸ Penn-Lewis, *The Story of Job*, pp. 78-79.

¹²⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 79.

¹²⁸⁰ Ibid., pp. 97-98.

Through the Dark Night, family and friends spurned Job, as was the maid in *Thy Hidden Ones*. Seeking her Divine Lover she searched and called for him, and enlisted the help of her friends. Yet, those who discovered her abandonment mocked and exposed her shame. She found no solace among friends or family. Without human consolations, and in the absence of the Beloved, her life was “like the Man of Sorrows when on earth, and must be so increasingly.”¹²⁸¹ She was learning to endure the desolation of the Dark Night with patience, and in faith.

To be united to Christ on the Cross, is to share in the agony and disgrace of Calvary. Likewise, the betrothed maid in *Thy Hidden Ones* shared in the earthly humiliation and rejection of her Divine Lover, to be like Him in all things, including the Cross. Penn-Lewis wrote:

Because she is joined to Him in His resurrection, the Well-Beloved reveals Himself to his betrothed as the Rejected one, that his bride may share His lot, and be identified with Him as He was, and is, in this world; He was rejected when on earth in human form; He is rejected still. His Sister-Bride must go with him, and be rejected also, in the world that hates her Lord, if she faithfully cleaves to her heavenly Bridegroom, and is truly conformed to His image, following his steps.¹²⁸²

Union with God, enjoyed both by Job and the maid, came at a price—a separation from family and friends. So too with Moses, who was separated initially from his family in Egypt, but was also distanced from the Israelites. While the mystical path will mean the loss of human companionship, it also promises union with the Divine Lover. Wearing a veil to mask his shining, illuminated face, Moses’ intimacy with God also implied separation from the Hebrew people. Thus, Penn-Lewis claimed that Moses was

¹²⁸¹ Penn-Lewis, *Thy Hidden Ones: Union with Christ as Traced in the Song of Songs*, p. 61.

¹²⁸² *Ibid.*, pp. 75-76.

veiled to men but unveiled to God ... What loneliness, what isolation this meant to him, for he could not have close fellowship with Jehovah without separation from others—unto Himself alone. This is what ‘face to face’ fellowship with God means... separated from the things of earth, as one ‘not living in the world’... as dying but behold we live; as chastened, and not killed... that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal body. For we have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.¹²⁸³

A crucified Lord, said Penn-Lewis, must have crucified followers.¹²⁸⁴ As Christ was made perfect through suffering, so we by our own choosing freely follow Christ in “His path of rejection, and to be conformed to His likeness as the Lamb.”¹²⁸⁵ To participate in Christ’s death and humiliation we accept the Cross and consider ourselves fortunate to be “counted worthy to suffer.”¹²⁸⁶ Union with God is found only through the “‘Via Dolorosa,’ the way of the Cross.”¹²⁸⁷ The Calvary experience, within the Dark Night, is the absence of God’s sensible presence, and represents the height of all suffering. In the case of Job, Penn-Lewis tells us that he cannot “perceive a trace of His Presence or His workings.”¹²⁸⁸ To be denied a sensible awareness—a conscious perception of the presence of God, is the climactic agony of the Dark Night, and hence the greatest tribulation that must be endured. Therefore Penn-Lewis stated: “This hiding of God gives the bitterest pain of all.”¹²⁸⁹

Intended to teach Christians to love and seek God for the Divine’s sake alone, apart from God’s presence and provision, the Dark Night is therefore the final schoolmaster in the mystical path. Penn-Lewis wrote:

¹²⁸³ Penn-Lewis, *Face to Face, Glimpses into the Inner Life of Moses*, pp. 91- 92.

¹²⁸⁴ Penn-Lewis, *Thy Hidden Ones: Union with Christ as Traced in the Song of Songs*, p. 79.

¹²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

¹²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

¹²⁸⁷ Penn-Lewis, *The Story of Job*, p. 229.

¹²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

¹²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

Every advancing soul must come sooner or later to the place where it can trust God, the bare God ... It must learn to have its joy in Him alone, and to rejoice in Him when all else in Heaven and earth shall seem to fail. The only way in which this place can be reached, I believe, is by the soul being compelled to face in its own experience the loss of all things both inward and outward ... the soul must find itself, from either inward or outward causes, desolate, and bereft, and empty of all consolations. It must come to the end of everything that is not God and must have nothing else left to rest on within or without. It must wade through the slough, and fall off the precipice, and be swamped by the ocean, and at last find in the midst of them, and at the bottom of them, and behind them, the present, living, loving, and omnipotent God! ¹²⁹⁰

“Oh the pain of walking through darkness with no illumination” ¹²⁹¹ complained Job, who learned to endure “as all suffer, when being led by the Spirit out of the path of illumination,” ¹²⁹² being guided by “pure faith in the Faithful one.” ¹²⁹³ Job did not realize “how much he had relied upon the light of God, rather than God Himself.” ¹²⁹⁴

Why must the Dark Night be endured? It alone can “cure the soul of the innate tendency to seek and rest in spiritual joys; to confuse Reality with the joy given by the contemplation of Reality.” ¹²⁹⁵ In short, the soul must become free of a childish dependency on spiritual gluttony in order to “make its love absolutely disinterested, strong, and courageous.” ¹²⁹⁶ Thus, the maid in *Thy Hidden Ones*, though conscious of the joys of God’s presence, realizes that her faith must carry her through the Dark Night, and beyond the pleasures of God’s manifestations.

¹²⁹⁰ Ibid., pp. 229-230.

¹²⁹¹ Ibid., p. 110.

¹²⁹² Ibid.

¹²⁹³ Ibid.

¹²⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁹⁵ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 395.

¹²⁹⁶ Ibid.

Now she needs to be taught a trust in Himself alone, apart from His conscious revelations to her heart. Her faith must rest upon His character and His word, rather than upon His manifestations. She must care more for *Him* than for His vineyards.¹²⁹⁷

Likewise, Job had to mature beyond his need for Divine consolation in order to reach the heights of union with the Divine. For the “hiding of God gives the bitterest pain of all,”¹²⁹⁸ “the pain of walking through darkness with no illumination [with] no certainty of being led by His light through the darkness,”¹²⁹⁹ cried Job. As Penn-Lewis reflected:

Job was suffering, as all suffer, when being led by the Spirit out of the path of illumination into the walk of pure faith in the Faithful one. He did not know how much he had relied upon the *light* of God, rather than upon God Himself; how he had walked almost by sight when the path was so illuminated, and not by faith alone.¹³⁰⁰

Faith gives the soul the ability to endure such desolation:

Thou hast learnt to live in His faithfulness, when ‘for a little while’ thou wast ‘put to grief in manifold trials.’ (1 Pet. i. 6) The proof of thy faith, proved by fire, is more precious to Him than gold that perisheth, and will be found unto praise and honour at His appearing. (1 Pet. i. 7)¹³⁰¹

Our temptation, claimed Penn-Lewis, is to grasp for the manifestations of illumination or the resurrection life, where all senses are heightened and the soul is intoxicated by the presence of God. Yet, the call of the Dark Night is the call of the Cross—to suffer and die with the crucified King. We are called not to expect “an increasing knowledge of the

¹²⁹⁷ Penn-Lewis, *Thy Hidden Ones: Union with Christ as Traced in the Song of Songs*, p. 29.

¹²⁹⁸ Penn-Lewis, *The Story of Job*, p. 93.

¹²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

¹³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰¹ Penn-Lewis, *Thy Hidden Ones: Union with Christ as Traced in the Song of Songs*, pp. 93-94.

Lord as the Risen and Glorified One”¹³⁰² but to learn to fully identify experience “the death of our Substitute.”¹³⁰³ Thus our knowledge of God is directly proportional to our sharing in the fellowship of His sufferings, “becoming conformed unto His death.”¹³⁰⁴

Penn-Lewis articulated her mystical path through a Cross motif, and as such she beckoned others to encounter personally the Cross, and through the Cross to partake of “a spiritual region”¹³⁰⁵ unreachable any other way.¹³⁰⁶ Hence, the Cross functioned like a sharp knife severing the old creation “that we may know the power of the new.”¹³⁰⁷

Penn-Lewis’s vivid experience of the Cross drew her to the theology of P.T. Forsyth, who also had a capacity to articulate the atonement as a vivid reality. Forsyth, like Penn-Lewis, was a prophet of the Cross and he too exalted in a personal experience of the Cross. Forsyth identified something of fundamental importance when he wrote that

A faith that lives outside the atonement must lose humility, as so much Christian faith in a day like this has lost it, as so much worship has lost awe. It is very hard, unless we are really and inly broken with Christ on the Cross, to keep from making our self the centre and measure of all the world ... This happens even in our well doing ... This personal masterfulness of ours needs mastering. And it is mastered only by the Cross.¹³⁰⁸

Forsyth would not, perhaps, be so ready to use the erotic metaphors by which Penn-Lewis explored this state of humility, though as we know, he was far from indifferent to the works of poets and artists. Yet, for Penn-Lewis, the Cross was the locus of supreme surrender “and sacrifice to God,”¹³⁰⁹ through which the “spirit is freed to break through

¹³⁰² Ibid., 76.

¹³⁰³ Ibid.

¹³⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 77.

¹³⁰⁵ Underhill, *The Essentials of Mysticism and Other Essays*, pp. 51-52.

¹³⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 28.

¹³⁰⁸ P.T. Forsyth, *Christian Perfection*. (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1899), pp. 137-138. See also T. A. Hart, “Morality, Atonement and the Death of Jesus: The Crucial Focus of Forsyth’s Theology” pp. 16-36, edited by Trevor A. Hart, *Justice the Only True Mercy: Essays on the Life and Theology of Peter Taylor Forsyth*, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1995)

¹³⁰⁹ Penn-Lewis, *The Story of Job*, p. 82.

into a realm of light and knowledge of God never possible before.”¹³¹⁰ Following the desolation of the Dark Night, Job too “breaks out in a burst of triumphant faith ... he has the glorious assurance that he shall yet see God. Job’s spirit is set free, and breaks out into the light,”¹³¹¹ and enters union with the Divine.

Characterized as spiritual marriage, as an absolute surrender of self to God,¹³¹² union with the Divine enabled the soul to be one in purpose with God. Thus the maid, now a bride in *Thy Hidden Ones*, avoids anything that might be contrary to the desires of the Beloved.¹³¹³ Through a condition of abandonment, a self-orientation is displaced by a more powerful life or consciousness¹³¹⁴ so that the soul can say as Paul has said, “I have been crucified with Christ ... it is no longer I that live.” (Galatians 2:19) No external force can thus disrupt the harmony of those who exist in a state of perfect peace, experienced in the unitive state. As the maid in *Thy Hidden Ones*, achieved this state of perfect rest, she was able to fully cooperate with the Risen Lord. She was but a vine that abides in Him.

*He brings forth the fruit. There is now no struggle or effort, she is, so to speak, ‘asleep’ as to her own separate activities, yet never was she more awake to Him, listening for the faintest indication of His will through the Spirit, for the cry of her whole being is- ‘That I may know Him.’*¹³¹⁵

The soul united to God is quintessentially self-forgetting. She is wholly concerned with that which concerns the Beloved. A God-consciousness had replaced a self-consciousness. The “mine” of life has vanished, and the soul in union with God is centered on God alone. It is His desire she longs to fulfill, that “she may be all He wants her to be—this fills her mind and thoughts.”¹³¹⁶

¹³¹⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹¹ Ibid., p. 80.

¹³¹² Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 396 & ff.

¹³¹³ Penn-Lewis, *Thy Hidden Ones: Union with Christ as Traced in the Song of Songs*, p. 67.

¹³¹⁴ Underhill, *Mysticism*, pp. 433-434.

¹³¹⁵ Penn-Lewis, *Thy Hidden Ones: Union with Christ as Traced in the Song of Songs*, p. 74.

¹³¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 133-134.

In union with the Divine, the soul waits God's bidding, and remains apprehensive to act on her own impulse. Hence Penn-Lewis suggests that the soul united to God displays childlike trust and obedience, taking action only where she is called. This state of humility can read like a nearly gendered state of a female sent in subjection and dependence in relation to a 'male' God. But Penn-Lewis is alert to this possibility and she sees the many gifts and graces which this relation to God makes possible, particularly for women. Thus she claims that as the soul abides in God she receives discernment, she judges not after "the flesh and sight of eyes"¹³¹⁷ but in the spirit, as God leads. She has learned, in stillness, to know her God,¹³¹⁸ and the divine manifested in others. Those who embrace the mystical path become "thy hidden ones," for their souls find transcendence in God. Penn-Lewis wrote that one who has "passed through deep waters in fellowship with her Lord; and, in the consequent brokenness, her spirit has been freed from much that kept her from full knowledge of the life with Christ in God."¹³¹⁹

Thus, human volition works in concert with the will of God; the two have become inseparable. Penn-Lewis's maid, in *Thy Hidden Ones*, is likened to a beautiful garden (Song of Songs 4:12-14) who yields her fruit willingly. Those who are brought into complete union with God co-operate and fully participate in God's existence. The maid in *Thy Hidden Ones* has

gladly sunk her separate identity in Him, for she wishes only to have nothing of her own, and to be 'found in Him.' (Phil. iii. 9.) She is called the Shulammite, the 'Daughter of Peace,' the feminine of Solomon, the Prince of Peace. She is identified with Him in the eyes of others, and shares His Name.¹³²⁰

As self-orientation has been naughted through the Dark Night, and the personality is realigned so that the soul is one with Christ in God, "God is no longer distinct from the

¹³¹⁷ Ibid., p. 126.

¹³¹⁸ Ibid., p. 126 & ff.

¹³¹⁹ Ibid., p. 101.

¹³²⁰ Ibid., p. 110.

soul; it is in God as in the atmosphere natural to it.¹³²¹ Living but in the Divine Lover, the soul discovers “itself clothed with the inclinations of Christ.”¹³²² The Shulammitte has “no light but him.”¹³²³ The soul united unto the Lord is therefore a perfect mirror of God, reflecting clearly the Beloved. Though the maid sees herself as unlit, lacking all luminosity, yet others tell her she imparts light. In fact, she is filled with light because “she is occupied with Him, Who is her Sun.”¹³²⁴ She has progressed from light to light, becoming “more and more an illuminated vessel of clay.”¹³²⁵ The soul manifests God with “every word, look, and action ... even in that which appears to be the least.”¹³²⁶ So the maid reaches complete union as “every word, look, and action”¹³²⁷ reflects her Beloved to the world. She and her Divine Lord are one. The maid now enjoys all the power and expanse possessed by the Divine. Her weakness and limited existence has been stripped through the Dark Night, from which she has emerged in union with Him. She has exchanged mortality for immortality, frailty for endless power, a finite existence for life without limits. This was the reward for those who complete the mystical path, through the deprivations of the Cross.

III. Quietism & Cross Theology

As we have noted, Quietism advanced a passivity in which the self was annihilated, absorbed and joined to “the Divine Essence,”¹³²⁸ in union with the Divine.¹³²⁹ While the classical mystical tradition embraced effort and purgation in the path towards union, the Quietists promoted a “half-hypnotic state of passivity”¹³³⁰ as the portal to union. Souls were thus “exempt from the usual duties and limitations of human existence.”¹³³¹

¹³²¹ Penn-Lewis, *Life Out of Death*, p. 45.

¹³²² Ibid.

¹³²³ Penn-Lewis, *Thy Hidden Ones: Union with Christ as Traced in the Song of Songs*, p. 114.

¹³²⁴ Ibid.

¹³²⁵ Ibid., p. 115.

¹³²⁶ Ibid., p. 154.

¹³²⁷ Ibid.

¹³²⁸ The Catholic Encyclopedia, by E. A. Pace, Transcribed by Paul T. Crowley, New Advent Web Site <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12608c.htm>

¹³²⁹ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 320 & ff.

¹³³⁰ Ibid., p. 322.

¹³³¹ Ibid.

Authentic mystics, according to Ruysbroeck, never attempt to enter a state of passivity, for they regard the repose of the mystical state as a “supernatural gift, beyond [their] control.”¹³³² By a misapplication of the Prayer of Simple Regard—a state of passivity made “what is special to high mystical states into a general rule for contemplation.”¹³³³ Quietism was, therefore, the “doctrine of the one act; passivity,”¹³³⁴ after which the soul needs only to rest “in the Divine Life, be its unresisting instrument.”¹³³⁵

Did Cross Theology embrace the Quietism noted among the early Keswick leaders such as Evan Hopkins? Was Penn-Lewis’s call to die on the Cross an act of passivity that circumvented effort, purgation, and other religious duty so that the soul was not surrendered but wholly absorbed by the Divine? Here we will assess Cross Theology comparing it to the salient qualities of Quietism in order to assess whether Penn-Lewis advanced, in part or in whole, the shorter path of the Quietist.

As we have suggested, Quietism asserts, firstly, that holiness or perfection can be attained in this life by a ‘shorter path,’ through a “continual act of contemplation.”¹³³⁶ Was Penn-Lewis’s “continual dying with Christ” the shorter path of perfection advanced by the Quietists? This is an important point to consider because Penn-Lewis frequently adjured her followers to assume a “death-position”¹³³⁷ not as an “attitude of yesterday, but of the present moment... It must be the first thing in the morning, and right on through the day.”¹³³⁸ Thus, Penn-Lewis called souls to

Retake your position, crucified and ‘buried with Christ’ in the Jordan death of His cross, and count upon the Holy Spirit still more deeply to make it a fact in your practical life and give you keener insight to discern and cast off in quick obedience all that belongs to the past.¹³³⁹

¹³³² Ruysbroeck, *De Oranatu Spiritualium Nuptiarum*, 1. ii caps. lxvi. (condensed), as quoted by Underhill in *Mysticism*, p. 322.

¹³³³ Pourrat, p. 139.

¹³³⁴ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 325.

¹³³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³³⁶ Pourrat, p. 148.

¹³³⁷ Penn-Lewis, *Conquest of Canaan*, p. 85.

¹³³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

While Quietists claimed that the will is absorbed in passive contemplation, Cross Theology implored the soul to work in cooperation with the Divine Spirit in attaining union. Similar to Phoebe Palmer's Altar Theology, Cross Theology sustains free will, faith and effort whereby the soul participates with God in the path towards sanctification. The exertion of the soul is noted in the following passage as Penn-Lewis suggests that "new life in Christ" is "gained through conflict," and by overcoming "opposing powers." The soul encounters not only suffering, but also triumph in attaining new-life in Christ. Such victory is far from the passivity advanced by the Quietists. Penn-Lewis writes:

Look again at the way the Israelites crossed Jordan...The new life begins from the riverbed of death, just as the new nation—and then the new inheritance, gained through conflict—began for Israel; and the new life in Christ begins similarly for us, with its inheritance through war with opposing powers, its suffering and its triumphs. All that was new to them began there, symbolized by the taking of twelve stones from Jordan and carrying them into the new life of the new land... Through the cross, identified with Christ into death, you come into union with Christ in life—and into the sphere where it is a forward march to take the land and to dislodge the enemy from every point.¹³⁴⁰

Therefore, the "death-position" of Cross Theology is not a passive or effortless death but rather an active struggle in which the soul submits to the crucifying power of the Holy Spirit which purifies, rather than absorbs the sullied or fallen aspects of the soul. The soul allows God's Spirit to "take the knife and deal with whatever there may be of the 'flesh' dominating your life. He will bring about what Paul calls the 'circumcision of the heart; which is the true circumcision of God.'" ¹³⁴¹ Victory over sin, the ultimate goal of Cross Theology, is attained both by a refusal to allow the desires of the flesh to master the soul, as well as through

¹³⁴⁰ Penn-Lewis. *Conquest of Canaan*, pp. 19-20.

¹³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

an active participation in the life of the Spirit. Therefore, separation from sin is a rejection of the

lusts of the flesh. You can declare death, not only to the world and all things of the flesh, but death also to the powers of darkness, giving them no right to you, as one who is in Jesus Christ—hidden in Him—refusing them any admittance or control, or right or power over you. This is your fighting position, and your footing for continual victory... Your footing for victory is not your experience of this but what Christ has already done, applied to you by the Holy Spirit.¹³⁴²

Death, through Cross Theology, was active rather than passive in its opposition to evil. Addressing the matter directly, Penn-Lewis opposed passivity as a dangerous posture in the spiritual life, particularly when confronting the forces of evil. She writes:

The danger when you have your footing on Romans 6 is that you could become passive, thinking that 'death' means passivity, i.e., that because you are in the attitude of death you are not to act, and not to go on and do anything! But passivity is a sphere where the spiritual enemy is active is fatal. Therefore, while you declare your position in Christ's death, you must also take the offensive against the enemy, in the activity of the spiritual power of the life of God. When the enemy attacks you, and tries to drive you into yourself and cause you to say 'I am only this and that, and the other,' the best answer is, 'I resist you [James 4:7]; in the name of Jesus Christ—depart.'¹³⁴³

¹³⁴² Ibid., pp. 81-82.

¹³⁴³ Ibid., pp. 85-86.

Therefore, Cross Theology advanced a death in which the soul resisted self-indulgence, passivity and therefore Satan.¹³⁴⁴ All that is sinful or part of the Adamic, fallen order, must enter an active death, “every moment.”¹³⁴⁵ If there is “any self indulgence or anything doubtful in your life,¹³⁴⁶ the evil one will “fastening on that uncrucified ‘ground’ in you will press against you with appalling power.”¹³⁴⁷ Victory is found only as the Cross is “steadily, persistently, and unbrokenly applied.”¹³⁴⁸

Not only did Cross Theology oppose the passivity and absorption of the soul advanced by the Quietists, but it also engaged an active death that included mortification and purification. Therefore, Cross Theology included “acts of religion and of Christian virtue.”¹³⁴⁹ Through a continual dying with Christ, the soul also worked in concert with the Holy Spirit, engaging in acts of holiness, charity, mortification, and other forms of spiritual discipline that the Quietists considered unnecessary. Cross Theology therefore resisted the one-act of passivity of the Quietists.

The mystical literature of Penn-Lewis likewise embraced suffering and purgation, and in this way she again avoided the one-act of passivity noted among the Quietists. For example, Penn-Lewis claimed that the awakened soul, aware of its sins, searches for the Divine Lover “in the solitary place with her broken spirit, desolate and crying in the darkness after Him. It is the darkness over her spirit, that is now so terrible.”¹³⁵⁰ For the crucified Lord, said Penn-Lewis, must have crucified followers.¹³⁵¹ The passivity of the Quietism had no room for the suffering intrinsic to Cross Theology. Penn-Lewis’s mystical theology offered souls the sufferings of Christ because in their union,

the Well-Beloved reveals Himself to his betrothed as the Rejected one, that his bride may share His lot, and be identified with Him as He was, and is, in this world; He was rejected when on earth in human form; He is rejected still. His Sister-Bride must go with him, and be rejected also, in

¹³⁴⁴ Penn-Lewis, *More that Conquerors*, p. 7.

¹³⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁴⁹ Pourrat, p. 148.

¹³⁵⁰ Penn-Lewis, *Thy Hidden Ones: Union with Christ as Traced in the Song of Songs*, p. 87.

¹³⁵¹ Ibid., p. 79.

the world that hates her Lord, if she faithfully cleaves to her heavenly Bridegroom, and is truly conformed to His image, following his steps.¹³⁵²

Note also, the painful transmutation of the soul within the Dark Night as it transcends all that is, moving towards union with God, as illustrated within the mystical literature of Penn-Lewis. She writes:

The soul must find itself, from either inward or outward causes, desolate, and bereft, and empty of all consolations. It must come to the end of everything that is not God and must have nothing else left to rest on within or without. It must wade through the slough, and fall off the precipice, and be swamped by the ocean, and at last find in the midst of them, and at the bottom of them, and behind them, the present, living, loving, and omnipotent God!¹³⁵³

Cross Theology not only welcomes the suffering typical of the purgative path, Penn-Lewis also turns away from sensible consolations or states of illumination in order that the soul may enter the desolations of the Dark Night. The maid pursued the classical mystical path with all of its loneliness and solitude. For her "faith must rest upon His character and His word, rather than upon His manifestations. She must care more for *Him* than for His vineyards."¹³⁵⁴

Thou hast learnt to live in His faithfulness, when 'for a little while' thou wast 'put to grief in manifold trials.' (1 Pet. i. 6) The proof of thy faith, proved by fire, is more precious to Him than gold that perisheth, and will be found unto praise and honour at His appearing. (1 Pet. i. 7)¹³⁵⁵

¹³⁵² Ibid., pp. 75-76.

¹³⁵³ Ibid., pp. 229-230.

¹³⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 29.

¹³⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 93-94.

Both mortification and detachment comprise the purgative path within Cross Theology. Mortification, as we have noted, occurs as the soul actively receives the painful severing of the Cross that works to remove pride, ambition, and “all the elements which make up the fallen Adam.”¹³⁵⁶ The Cross not only justifies, it also purifies the soul, as the old life—the Adamic life is eliminated, “the new life has room to grow.” Christ, therefore, not only atoned for sins, the sinner is taken to the Cross with Christ.¹³⁵⁷

God becomes a reality to you; and you, although in the world, instead of being conformed to it, become crucified to the world by the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the only true way to have victory over sin. It is not saying ‘I will not get into a temper,’ but it is quietly and deliberately taking your position with Christ at Calvary, and saying, ‘Lord Jesus, I have died to that temper, on the cross with thee, and I count upon the Holy Spirit to separate me from it, for I have died to it. I cannot manage it; it is beyond me. But I have died to it. In the center of your will you take ‘an attitude’ of death, and say, ‘I have nothing to do with it; I refuse it, because I have died with Christ.’¹³⁵⁸

Here we find another important nuance that differentiates Cross Theology from Quietism. While the Quietists insisted upon full identification with God, Cross Theology suggests that the soul dies with, or in Christ who mediates God to us. As prophet of the Cross, Penn-Lewis was commissioned

as a crucified messenger of the Crucified Lord, and tell out to that concourse of Ministers and white-haired Divines the oft-times unwelcome message, that the Cross, in its personal application to the servant of God, means a deep experimental circumcision of the heart, a laying down of the ‘natural’ gifts of the soul, the ‘own’ eloquence, the ‘own’ power for

¹³⁵⁶ Penn-Lewis, *Conquest of Canaan*, p. 23

¹³⁵⁷ Penn-Lewis, *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, p. 31.

¹³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

service; that out of the depths of the spirit, where Christ dwells, may flow to others the life of the Risen Lord, unchecked and unhindered by the human channel.¹³⁵⁹

By participating in the mystical path of the Cross, through the mortifying experiences of Calvary, the soul is separated from sin and weakness by sharing "in Him, Upon His Cross."¹³⁶⁰ While death preceded the unitive state, the fruits of union are acquired through discipline and "tears," rather than via the holy indifference of the Quietist. As the soul learns to detach from dependence upon material support, it learns to pass from death to life. Yet, the soul must first acquire the discipline necessary to become heirs of the highest mystical state. Thus, God

waits for his babes until they are weaned, and able to bear the detaching from things necessary at first... In His time, and by His own tender dealing, the soul must be weaned and taught to walk alone, even though it means many tears. At last, like a sobbing infant, it sinks to rest in the will of God, and says, 'Surely I have stilled and quieted my soul; like a weaned child with his mother; my soul is with me like a weaned child.' (Ps. Cxxxi 2, R.V.).¹³⁶¹

Throughout Penn-Lewis's mystical writings we observe a "rest" or passivity which, at times, resembles the rest and passivity of the Quietist, yet with an important difference. While the rest of the Quietist may mimic the supernatural repose of the authentic mystic, there remained one significant difference. The passivity of the Quietist usually implies an absorption of the will and personality by the Divine, whereas the repose of the mystic connotes surrender of the will which leads to spiritual renewal. Thus, the passivity or the rest of the Quietist was viewed as idleness and thus contrary to the authentic repose one

¹³⁵⁹ Gerrard, pp. 195-196.

¹³⁶⁰ Penn-Lewis, *Thy Hidden Ones: Union with Christ as Traced in the Song of Songs*, p. 38.

¹³⁶¹ Penn-Lewis, *Face to Face, Glimpses into the Inner Life of Moses*, p. 16.

finds in classical mysticism.¹³⁶² The “holy indifference” of the Quietist was not the rest of the mystic—which, for scholars such as Ruysbroeck, was a gift beyond one’s control.

The active repose within the unitive state is likewise noted within Penn-Lewis’s mystical literature. While the soul hidden or joined to the Divine may sleep, it is actually quite awake, as the quote below suggests. Moreover, in union with the Divine, the soul is planted rather than absorbed into the Divine life. As the fallen-self is severed from the soul, the Divine life is fully manifest in works of holiness. Penn-Lewis wrote:

The hidden one suggests to us her spiritual experience at this point in the words, ‘I sleep, but my heart waketh.’ Her whole being is so possessed by her Beloved, and dominated by the Holy Ghost, that she can only liken it to sleep. She knows now that she is hidden in the Cleft of the Rock—the wounded side of the Substitute on Calvary’s Cross. Consequently the ‘I’ life is so displaced to her consciousness, that she can only say in the language of Paul, ‘I have been crucified with Christ... it is no longer I that live.’ (Gal ii. 20.m.) She is so indwelt and environed by the Lord Himself, that she is kept in an indescribable calm. Nothing breaks her rest; she is in perfect peace, stayed upon Him. The fruit of the Spirit---‘love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control’ (Gal v. 22.m.) is so manifested that she is visibly like a ‘watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters fail not.’ (Isa. lviii. 11.) The living waters flow spontaneously, and she has heavenly abundance for all the weary hearts who seek her out, drawn to her by the Divine Spirit.¹³⁶³

While Cross Theology seemed to endorse a repose in which the soul remained passive, yet the following passage shows how the soul exerts its will and cooperates with the Risen Lord, and by doing so, the soul may appear asleep, yet “never was she more awake.”¹³⁶⁴ Her entire focus is oriented towards the Divine-Lover, including her will.

¹³⁶² Ruysbroeck, “De Oranatu Spiritualium Nuptiarum,” l. ii caps. lxvi. (condensed), as quoted by Underhill in *Mysticism*, p. 322.

¹³⁶³ Penn-Lewis, *Thy Hidden Ones: Union with Christ as Traced in the Song of Songs*, pp. 73-74.

¹³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

This is not absorption but submission, and it yields not indifference but a desire to actively please the Divine Lover, ready to attain holiness or perfection, and ever ready to admit that sinlessness has not been attained, so the soul presses on.

Her co-operation with the Risen Lord is but that of the Vine-branch—she abides in Him, and He brings forth the fruit. There is now no struggle or effort, she is, so to speak, ‘asleep,’ as to her own separate activities, yet never was she more awake to Him, listening for the faintest indication of His will through the Spirit, for the cry of her whole being is:- ‘That I may know him... if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect; but... I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high-calling. (Phil. iii. 10.14) ¹³⁶⁵

Cross Theology does not render the soul God’s unresisting instrument, for God will not act on the soul’s behalf. God respects human volition.

God will not change even the tone of your voice for you, as if you were a machine. He will put His laws into your mind and write them on your heart, but you are the person to act upon them ... It is for you to choose the way you will speak, think, and act, and as you choose, the Holy Spirit will enable you to carry out God’s laws. ¹³⁶⁶

Finally, did Cross Theology teach, as the Quietists did, that the highest mystical states are attainable to all that share Christ’s death on the Cross? In other words, did Penn-Lewis impose her Cross Theology on the spiritually mature as well as the spiritually immature? As part of the mystical tradition, Penn-Lewis advances Cross Theology on any who are willing to share in the mortifications of Christ, for the crucified Savior must have crucified followers. The path towards union is

¹³⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶⁶ Penn-Lewis, *Face to Face. Glimpses into the Inner Life of Moses*, p. 21.

one that develops spiritual maturity, though not every soul submits to the purgative and mortifying process that culminates in union with the Divine. Therefore, not every soul endures the self-negation of the Dark Night. Taking her own life as an example, repeatedly Penn-Lewis submits to the purgative path, filled with loneliness and sorrow, as it made its way toward union with the Divine. She wrote:

Now, I must be poured out for God as never before... Truly God was stripping His beloved child, so as to leave her 'no shadow of anything to cling to, or rest upon, outside of Himself.'¹³⁶⁷

Comparing her life to that of Job, Penn-Lewis's biographer suggested that she knew the sufferings of Job both spiritually as well as intellectually. For her spirit followed the path of Job.

From first to last, the terrible experiences of the sufferer, and the restoration and the joy at last, are shown to be the dealings of the only wise God our Saviour with His child, whom in love and faithfulness He afflicted and exalted.¹³⁶⁸

Summary Remarks

We have explored the mystical stages of Awakening, Purgation, Illumination, the Dark Night and Union operative within the mystical writings of Jessie Penn-Lewis. It has been clear from this analysis that Penn-Lewis employs the Cross as a primary mystical motif whereby the soul undergoes the path of purgation. Through the path of the Cross the primitive self is purified by the Holy Spirit, and the soul is thus prepared for union with the Beloved.

¹³⁶⁷ Gerrard, p. 291.

¹³⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 190.

We have shown that Cross Theology avoided the shallow mysticism of the Quietists. Through effort and acts of purification, Penn-Lewis's mystical path resisted the one-act of passivity that the Quietists implied led to the highest mystical states. While Penn-Lewis's death with Christ resembled the repose of the Quietist, it was in fact a state in which the will actively submitted to the Divine Lover, and by doing so Cross Theology resembled the classical mystical tradition that extended effort in the path towards union. Lastly, Penn-Lewis's mysticism, while available to all, was a call to suffer on the Cross with Christ where the soul was first purified, then united to God. Within Cross Theology the will actively cooperated with the Divine, and by doing so resisted the absorption of the Quietists. Moreover, within Penn-Lewis's mystical path, the soul encounters significant suffering and sacrifice rather than indifference and passivity, and in this way Cross Theology opposed the shorter path of the Quietists.

How was it that Penn-Lewis's spiritual experiences as well as her mystical literature reflects so clearly Underhill's five-fold path of mysticism, even while Penn-Lewis does not quote Underhill? Where did she learn to use, as she does, the term illumination to illustrate the very meaning Underhill had in mind? It is hard to say, and this fact may in fact lend support to an epistemic pattern of faith. In any case, like Underhill, Penn-Lewis was keenly interested in the inner experiences of God's activity within the soul. Incorporating the affective tradition of Bernard coupled with the apophatic tradition of Bonaventure, Penn-Lewis placed the soul's ascent within the context of the apophysis of the Cross, and thus she combines an interior ascent with personal experience, as part of Cross Theology.

The fruit of mysticism is a unified soul that has been freed from the world of illusions, the grip of selfhood, and the need for human or divine consolations. The matured mystic lives in extraordinary repose. In the unitive state, the soul shares in the riches of life with the Beloved and therefore she possesses all that belongs to her Beloved—power, peace and holiness. But, the treasures of union are not for her alone. She has been called to a heroic task, for there are social consequences to mysticism. And it is to these we now turn.

Chapter Seven

Overcoming Eve: The Social Consequences of Cross Theology

“From the point of Eternity, in whose light they lived,
they attacked the sins of their generation.”¹³⁶⁹

I. Introduction

Having undergone the apophysis of the Cross through the Dark Night, the soul now enjoys the unitive state with its “filial participation in Eternal Life.”¹³⁷⁰ Released for “new purposes,”¹³⁷¹ the derivative life has been “invaded and enhanced by the Absolute Life.”¹³⁷² In union with Christ, the soul is a “‘triumphing force’ over which circumstances have no power.”¹³⁷³ Wed to the Divine, the soul receives the strength and authority of the Beloved “which results in a complete sense of freedom, an invulnerable serenity, and usually urges the self to some form of heroic effort or creative activity.”¹³⁷⁴

Completed mystics evidence a spiritual and social fecundity through which they address the spiritual and social ills of their time with astonishing tenacity and force. United to the purposes of the Beloved, the mystics address “the sins of their generation”¹³⁷⁵ with what seems like an endless reserve, giving us a sense of the “super-normal vitality of which they partake.”¹³⁷⁶

The transmuting process now complete and mystical union established in her own life, like many mystics, Penn-Lewis’s life was filled with heroic efforts whereby she

¹³⁶⁹ Underhill, *Mysticism*. (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1961), p. 459.

¹³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 416.

¹³⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 429.

¹³⁷³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 416.

¹³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 459.

¹³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 414.

addressed several spiritual and social issues. First on her agenda was to redress the sexism that limited women's scope of service within the Church. Second, Penn-Lewis confronted the shallow mysticism and quietism intrinsic to the Keswick Conventions. For as we have shown, her Cross Theology advanced the stages of purgation that the shorter path of the Quietist circumvents. Like P.T. Forsyth, she advanced a crucicentrism even while many of her contemporaries disdained the doctrine of the atonement and 'penal substitution' so characteristic of some Protestants.

This chapter will assess the spiritual and social consequences of Penn-Lewis's Cross Theology. Primarily, we will assess the biblical defense for women's equality in spiritual service alongside men. We will observe how Cross Theology provided a confidence that the failings of Eve, along with all "Adamic life," are transcended through the apophysis of the Cross. As souls participate in the purgative process of the Cross, they also enjoy newness of life as they transcend or detach from the visible world through the purifying process the Cross. In this sense Cross Theology was egalitarian as it opened the highest mystical states to any soul that undergoes the privations of the Cross. Penn-Lewis determined to demonstrate the victories of Calvary—that women as well as men overcome their inherent failings—not only through her own personal experiences of the Cross, but also through a mystical as well as an egalitarian interpretation of the Bible.

II. Joel's Prophecy Fulfilled

Cross Theology therefore had significant social as well as spiritual meaning for women who had been denied equal access to public ministry based on the words of the Apostle Paul. It was Paul after all, whom Penn-Lewis regarded as a model of the mystical experience. Moreover, Penn-Lewis understood from her own experiences and that of other women in her own day, as well as those in the past, that mystical union with God was as much a part of women's lives as it was of men's. She therefore believed that profound consequences must follow those who attain the highest mystical states. Part of Penn-Lewis's work therefore was to reinterpret the texts that had been used to keep women silent in the Church. Evaluating gender relations through her own experiences with the Cross, Penn-Lewis challenged what we would now call the structural

suppression of women, through her biblical theology, by example, and in beckoning others to experience the power of the Cross to release women for Christian service alongside men.

Through an egalitarian reading of the biblical texts, Penn-Lewis suggests that a primary consequence of Cross Theology was to usher in a new order, to create a harmony where the distinctions of gender had been transcended. Those who had died with Christ on Calvary were grafted in to a new life, into the body of Christ in which there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female. In the new millennium, the fruit of Cross Theology was characterized by a unity among all believers.

Harmony between Christians of every denomination, and from every continent, gained momentum during the Holiness revival which itself was an interdenominational Movement.¹³⁷⁷ Unity between Christians was therefore viewed as a sign of their cleansing from sin.¹³⁷⁸ Penn-Lewis wrote:

Christ upon the Cross of Calvary broke down the middle wall of partition between man and man, as well as between man and God. He died that in Him there might be a new creation, one new man, 'perfected into one.' All divisions caused by sin cease in Him.¹³⁷⁹

Calvary for Penn-Lewis, was a place of blessing, a point of reconciliation,¹³⁸⁰ thus distinctions of race, class, and gender as part of the old creation cease as souls die with Christ on the Cross.¹³⁸¹ Calvary, as a place of unity, released each member of Christ's body to participate equally in service to God,¹³⁸² and this was part of the newness of life Christ imparts to the Church.¹³⁸³ Penn-Lewis insisted:

¹³⁷⁷ Bebbington, p. 159.

¹³⁷⁸ Dayton, *The Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, p. 89.

¹³⁷⁹ Penn-Lewis, *Thy Hidden Ones: Union with Christ as Traced in the Song of Songs*, p. 30.

¹³⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹³⁸¹ Penn-Lewis, *The Climax of the Risen Life*, p. 32.

¹³⁸² Penn-Lewis, *The Cross of Calvary and its Message*, p. 61.

¹³⁸³ Ibid.

The 'old creation,' in its form of 'Jew and Gentile', must die to make way for a new creation 'after the image of Him' that created him; where ... there can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; for ye are one in Christ Jesus. In the face of these words we cannot wonder that the Cross is a stumbling-block, and its message likened to a sword or knife, for it cuts deep into the very core of the pride of the old creation. God's cure... is not a superficial one ... Nothing but the Cross will bring about the unity He desires.¹³⁸⁴

Other supporters of women's spiritual emancipation made their appeal somewhat differently. Male clerics like William B. Godbey (1833 - 1920) and Adoniram Gordon (1836 - 1895), who wrote respectively; *Woman Preacher*¹³⁸⁵ and *The Ministry of Women*, appealed to Pentecost and Joel's prophecy as the basis for women's equality in ministry.¹³⁸⁶ These men believed that millennial glory included the partnership of women. Support for women in ministry was also shared across denominational borders. The founders of the Church of the Nazarene; the Mennonite Brethren; the Salvation Army; the Quakers; the Methodists; the Methodist Episcopal Church; the Presbyterians; and the members of the Pentecostal Church either extended women ministerial privileges, or published a defense of women's public ministry.¹³⁸⁷

Equality as now reinterpreted in verses such as Galatians 3:28, became the standard for the Church rebuilt by Holiness's vision of Pentecost.¹³⁸⁸ Martin Wells Knapp (1853 - 1901) along with Seth Cook Rees (1854 - 1933) were cofounders of the Apostolic Holiness Union and Prayer League, and together these men envisioned the Pentecostal Church as one that included women as equal to men in Christian ministry. Both Cook Rees and Wells Knapp were married to women preachers. They insisted that nothing but

¹³⁸⁴ Penn-Lewis, *The Climax of the Risen Life*, p. 37.

¹³⁸⁵ W. B. Godbey, *Woman Preacher*. (Atlanta, Georgia: Office of the Way of Faith, 1891).

¹³⁸⁶ A. Gordon, *The Ministry of Women*. (Beltsville, Maryland: NCR Corp. for the ATLA Board of Microtext, 1978)

¹³⁸⁷ Dieter, *The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century*, pp. 41-44.

¹³⁸⁸ Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, p. 88.

jealousy, prejudice, bigotry, and a stingy love for bossing in men have prevented woman's public recognition by the church. No church that is acquainted with the Holy Ghost will object to the public ministry of women.¹³⁸⁹

The Keswick Movement was not only interdenominational it was also "seen as a landmark in the emancipation of women, at least in the religious sphere."^{1390 1391} Revival meetings guided by principles of Holiness teaching often resulted in some form of equalizing between women and men. Therefore, it was not uncommon to observe, during the Keswick and Holiness revivals,

a young girl of eighteen speak under the evident control of the Holy Ghost, whilst in the big pew sat ministers and elders, oft-times with tears coursing down their faces. The servants and handmaidens were prophesying as foretold by Joel.¹³⁹²

Jessie Penn-Lewis, as I have noted, did not make a straightforward appeal to the Spirit as the basis for women's equal service beside men. Once, however, the relation of the Spirit to the Cross was established, she could endorse this long-standing appeal to Joel and Pentecost. Joel's prophecy, realized at Pentecost, was the fruit of Cross Theology, claimed Penn-Lewis. Calvary consequently initiated a new order, a new race, "under the headship of the Second Adam."¹³⁹³ Distinctions such as male and female, "Jew and Gentile must be crucified and die, and thus He would 'create' in Himself the twain one new man."¹³⁹⁴ The old race, the old Adam, with the subsequent categories of nationality, race, class, and gender belonged to the old order.¹³⁹⁵ Those who cling to the old order,

¹³⁸⁹ S. Cook Rees, *The Ideal Pentecostal Church*. (Cincinnati, Ohio: Revivalist Office, 1897), p. 41, as quoted by Dieter, *The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century*, pp. 43-44.

¹³⁹⁰ Bebbington, p. 174. See also Dieter, *The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century*, pp. 42-44.

¹³⁹¹ Dieter, *The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century*, p. 42.

¹³⁹² Penn-Lewis, *Awakening in Wales (1904-1905), Glimpses into Some of the Hidden Springs*. (Bournemouth, England: The Overcomer Book Room, 1905), pp. 29-30.

¹³⁹³ Penn-Lewis, *The Climax of the Risen Life*, p. 36.

¹³⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁹⁵ Penn-Lewis, *All things New*, p. 41.

like the "Judaizers,"¹³⁹⁶ will find themselves excluded from life in the Spirit, life recreated by the Cross.¹³⁹⁷ The old creation failed to achieve Christian unity because it upheld the subjection of one class to another, one race to another and men over women.¹³⁹⁸ Yet God's plan is "unmistakably expressed in the prophecy of Joel foretelling the out-pouring of the Spirit at Pentecost ... And so it has been all down the centuries ever since."¹³⁹⁹

The domination of sin prevailed in the old order, and thus women were subjugated to men. The Cross, however, abolished the old order and conquered the final vestiges of sin. Through the Cross the long arm of Eve's failings is severed and no longer limits the ministry of women, argued Penn-Lewis.¹⁴⁰⁰ Cross Theology therefore initiated women into the body of Christ, where there is perfect unity and equality.¹⁴⁰¹

Those who bid "a redeemed woman always to enter His presence with a reminder of Eve's fall upon her head"¹⁴⁰² dishonored the work of Christ, Penn-Lewis warned. Women should be viewed as equal partners with men, a partnership initiated by the "Cross of Calvary where the old creation life was slain."¹⁴⁰³ She therefore compelled Christian men and women to live in union with the second Adam, and therefore as members of Christ's mystical body, where they experience equality and mutuality. Women therefore should stand

in God's presence under her Federal Head- The Last Adam, the Lord from heaven. And stand also towards her fellow members of Christ's Body in the carrying out of the will of the Head in testimony and service for God.¹⁴⁰⁴

¹³⁹⁶ "Judaizer" was a term used by Penn-Lewis, which, may not be entirely free of anti-Semitic prejudice, yet a "Judaizer" was, for her, someone working within the Church, who wished to deny women's full spiritual authority and equality.

¹³⁹⁷ Penn-Lewis, *All things New*, p. 62.

¹³⁹⁸ Penn-Lewis, *The Magna Charta of Woman*, p. 97, See also pp. 10-11.

¹³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

¹⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

¹⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 98-99.

¹⁴⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 99.

¹⁴⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 99-100.

Women's freedom to serve as equals alongside men through the Cross is a message that Satan has suppressed throughout history, suggested Penn-Lewis. The forces of evil not only conceal the message of the Cross, but they also work to misinterpret the words of Paul as they relate to the new order and the emancipation of women. Cross Theology offered an antidote not only to faulty exegesis, but it also unmasked the demonic efforts to conceal the power within the Cross as it empowers women's service.

III. Demonic Forces

Penn-Lewis dealt extensively with the subject of evil and the spiritual conflict between the agents of God and the demonic world. She believed God had given her the task of exposing Satan's attack on revival and the instruments of revival such as women. In collaboration with Evan Roberts, Penn-Lewis organized her interpretation of spiritual conflict into a classic work entitled, *Warfare on the Saints*. First printed in 1897, *Warfare on the Saints* remains in print today.

Subsequent to the Enlightenment, the Church has been reluctant to acknowledge the reality of evil and the activity of demons.¹⁴⁰⁵ Holiness preachers like Penn-Lewis and Evan Roberts had no difficulty incriminating the forces of evil which they believed opposed the message of the Cross. Revival was for Penn Lewis

the hour and power of God, and of the devil, for the descent of the Divine power brings the accompanying onslaught of evil supernatural powers. It means movement in the spiritual realm.¹⁴⁰⁶

As revival accelerated, Penn-Lewis believed that the forces of evil offered a counter offensive by opposing, accusing and oppressing revival workers. What was the nature and form of this demonic opposition? Penn-Lewis identified various techniques used by Satan, however, the two most prominent ways evil has opposed women's emancipation

¹⁴⁰⁵ Richard Lovelace, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life*. (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1979), p. 256.

¹⁴⁰⁶ Penn-Lewis, *War on the Saints*. (Kent, England: Diasozo Trust, 1987), p. 282.

includes first an ignorance of theology and Scripture, and second, a shallow exegesis that leads to deception.

Keeping women theologically ignorant was a plan promoted by evil through the centuries, argued Penn-Lewis.

She was thoroughly deceived once, whispered the serpent, who, alas, has since extended his operations, and thoroughly deceived the whole inhabited earth (Rev 12:9). 'See how the woman leads in all kinds of heretical movements today,' cry some. 'Is it not a proof that she is open to deception as much as she was in Eden?' ... But is it not probable that women are being swept into the wiles of the devil today because the truths of God which they should have learned have been kept from them? ... Centuries of ignorance of the things of God have left their marks upon her; but women may learn at last, and men, too, will learn by the stern logic of experience that it has been a perilous policy for the Christian church.¹⁴⁰⁷

An inadequate method of biblical interpretation was yet another impediment to women's public ministry. She suggested that 1 Corinthians 14:34 and similar passages that appear to restrict women's public service "should have been interpreted by translators and expositors in the light of Acts 2 and not Genesis 3:16."¹⁴⁰⁸ Penn-Lewis implored her audiences to read the Bible consistently. She wrote:

For we dare not attribute satanic power, without danger of sinning against the Holy Ghost or quenching the Spirit in those whom God has moved to proclaim the Gospel, to ... differentiate and say that only the men were inspired by the Holy Spirit and all the women at the same time, in the same place, were inspired by Satan.¹⁴⁰⁹

¹⁴⁰⁷ Penn-Lewis, *The Magna Charta of Woman*, pp. 58-60.

¹⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 101-102.

¹⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 102.

Penn-Lewis interpreted those biblical passages that were used to limit women's ministry through the mystical path of the Cross as it extended to women like Penn-Lewis's all the privilege and power of the Beloved. Any woman who dies and rises with Christ may only serve not only on the platform alongside their brothers, they are also equipped to withstand the forces of evil that oppose their equal service to Christ. Moreover, Cross Theology transformed the misperceived notion that women are more closely aligned with the failings of Eve rather than with the victories of their Beloved. In this sense Cross Theology redressed the noetic effects of the fall. That is to say, the outcome of Cross Theology meant not only extraordinary power in service, but also extraordinary intellectual or spiritual perception as it assisted the Church to interpret more consistently the Scriptures in revealing not the fallen nature of women, but women's renewal through the Cross.

Transformed by an experience with the Cross, Penn-Lewis believed that her call to public ministry was likewise confirmed by the Bible. Through the power of the Cross, women discover that their inclination to serve on platforms around the world was also confirmed through the full support of the Scriptures. An experience of the Cross is not understood solely as a experience of power in service, but it also imparted the ability to reinterpret or reframe the biblical texts themselves. Therefore, one of the social consequences of the Cross was the capacity to offer an egalitarian interpretation of the Bible, giving women a biblical confirmation for their inner desire to preach and teach alongside men.

IV. Reframing the Texts

In defense of women's public ministry, Penn-Lewis wrote *The Magna Charta of Woman*, a book she believed was God-inspired. Convinced that God had given her a "specific commission to proclaim the message of the Cross,"¹⁴¹⁰ Penn-Lewis saw that while doors opened to her message, there was often one objection, that she was a woman. She wrote:

¹⁴¹⁰ Gerrard, p. 266.

There was no quarrel with the message, there was no denial of the Divine seal, there was no getting away from the evidence of the results. But none of these did away with the fact that I was a woman ... whilst God opened doors for me in some quarters, others were fast closed to the message I bore purely and only because I was a woman ... I knew only too well what the letter of the Scripture said, in just three passages of the Apostle Paul's writings, but I was certain ... if we only knew the exact original meaning of those passages, they were bound to be in harmony with the working of the Holy Spirit in the 19th century.¹⁴¹¹

Penn-Lewis's *The Magna Charta of Woman* was a summary of Katharine Bushnell's extensive and systematic approach to the biblical material on women. Bushnell's *God's Word to Women*, was a series of one-hundred Bible studies on "woman's place in the divine economy."¹⁴¹² While simplifying Bushnell's work, Penn-Lewis raised several of her own concerns. Chief among these was her desire to reconcile the Pauline passages with her own experiences with the Cross, and her subsequent call to lead others to a mystical encounter with Calvary.¹⁴¹³ It was Penn-Lewis's conviction that Paul's writings were misunderstood, that evil is behind the confusion, and that it is incumbent upon women to provide an accurate biblical exegesis defending their right to preach.

Anticipating concerns posited by a modern world, Penn-Lewis suggested that while the world continues to liberate women, the Church at the same time continues to restrict them. Ultimately, women will be pressed to question the Church's relevancy, the importance of Scripture, and the justice of God. How can it be, asked Penn-Lewis

that the women of today are to be liberated for full share in the work of the world and at the same time have restrictions placed upon them in the work of God ... In this matter the Bible itself is challenged ... It has consequently

¹⁴¹¹ Ibid., pp. 266-267.

¹⁴¹² Katherine Bushnell, *God's Word to Women*. (Piedmont, California: Published via reprint, ed. Ray Munson, Box 52, North Collins, New York, 1976), first published in 1926 in the United States. Bushnell, working in the original languages, compiled nearly 400 pages of careful biblical scholarship in support of women's equality in the Church and the home.

¹⁴¹³ Gerrard, p. 267.

become imperative that Christian women themselves should now search into the question and 'explain themselves' and their true status from these Scriptures, so that it may be seen that the Bible is not an antiquated Book, out of harmony with the present times.¹⁴¹⁴

The day has come, asserted Penn-Lewis, for women to do their own exegetical work¹⁴¹⁵ in order to restore women's confidence both in Scripture, and the God reflected in the Bible. Women need to know the truth that Paul did not relegate women to "perpetual subordination on account of Eve's deception."¹⁴¹⁶ Such a notion has clouded women's "sense of the justice of God and their apprehension of the fullness of the gospel message."¹⁴¹⁷

Paramount to *The Magna Charta of Woman* was the determination to reconcile Scripture with a woman's inward call to public ministry.¹⁴¹⁸ Because women can learn the ancient languages, as well as methods of biblical interpretation, they should understand for themselves the disparity between the alleged biblical prohibition of women's preaching with what they have experienced as the true call of their Lord. Penn-Lewis wrote:

In days past it was impossible for women to grasp the means of solving these problems that face Christian women—why the Holy Spirit should seem to move in one direction, and the Bible point the other way, but that day has passed. Our colleges and universities are open to women. They can study Greek and Hebrew, and with essential help, as well as men. And now, they should surmount these mental and spiritual perplexities.¹⁴¹⁹

¹⁴¹⁴ Penn-Lewis, *The Magna Charta of Woman*, p. 11.

¹⁴¹⁵ Ibid., p. 16.

¹⁴¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 9-10.

¹⁴¹⁹ Katherine Bushnell, *God's Word to Women*, as quoted by Jessie Penn-Lewis, *The Magna Charta of Woman*, p. 10.

The emancipation of women in secular work had begun in the late 19th century,¹⁴²⁰ and this served as an example to Christian women who searched the Bible for their own liberation in the spiritual realm. Is there a Scriptural basis for the equality of women in ministry, asked Penn-Lewis? Is the Bible able to address the challenges of each generation? While women are liberated to pursue non-religious work, there are “restrictions placed upon them in the work of God.”¹⁴²¹ It was therefore women’s secular emancipation, insisted Penn-Lewis, which challenged the lack of freedom women had within the sacred sphere.¹⁴²²

Women liberated in secular work are not bound to concern themselves with the teachings of the Bible. Christian women, however, “born of the Spirit ... seek to conform their lives to the Word of God.”¹⁴²³ Until women discover that their emancipation is rooted and in “harmony with that Word of God... they will hold back from fulfilling the purpose of God for them in these closing days of the Age.”¹⁴²⁴ Christian women therefore, require a Scriptural basis in order to serve with conviction in public ministry.

Penn-Lewis relied heavily upon the scholarship of Katharine Bushnell, a physician, missionary, and a close colleague of Josephine Butler (1828 – 1906).¹⁴²⁵ Bushnell had promised the dying Butler she would use her formidable grasp of the biblical languages to educate other women “on God’s teaching about women in the Scriptures.”¹⁴²⁶ Dr. Bushnell, in keeping her promise to Butler, conducted a series of Bible courses for women “under the title of *God’s Word to Women*.”¹⁴²⁷ From Genesis to Revelation, Bushnell’s detailed exegesis of the Hebrew and Greek texts provided a consistent biblical and egalitarian theology. Moreover, she offered historical and biblical background to the alleged subordination of women in Scriptures. An able teacher and writer, Penn-Lewis believed Bushnell’s work was a

¹⁴²⁰ J.D.F. Inkipin, *Combatting the ‘Sin of Self-Sacrifice’: Christian Feminism in the Women’s Suffrage Struggle: (1903-18)*, Ph.D. Thesis, University of Durham, 1996, p. 25 & ff. See also Penn-Lewis, *The Magna Charta of Woman*, p. 10.

¹⁴²¹ Penn-Lewis, *The Magna Charta of Woman*, p. 11.

¹⁴²² *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.

¹⁴²³ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

¹⁴²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.

¹⁴²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

¹⁴²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴²⁷ *Ibid.*

revelation direct from God to those who have sought to be faithfully obedient to the Spirit of God in His leadings to public service, convinced that in His own season God would bring to light the true meaning of the words of St. Paul which appeared to be opposed to the known mind of the Holy Spirit in their personal experience.¹⁴²⁸

Following her thorough examination of the ancient texts, Dr. Bushnell blamed faulty Bible translators and expositors, sin, as well as Satan for the centuries of oppression of women within the Church.¹⁴²⁹ As women like Bushnell engaged in biblical scholarship, they exposed the “veil of misunderstanding,” and freed themselves for Christian service alongside men, with the support of Scripture.¹⁴³⁰

1 Corinthians 11: 11-12 & 14: 34-35

Leaning upon the erudite Bushnell, Penn-Lewis began her book by suggesting that Bushnell was a careful scholar who viewed Scripture as “the infallible Word of God.”¹⁴³¹ Penn-Lewis then summarized Bushnell’s interpretations of the apostle Paul and women. Paul’s command that women keep silent in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 appeared to conflict with his earlier command in 1 Corinthians 11:5. How could Paul ask women to keep silent in chapter 14, when three chapters earlier he instructs women how they should dress when speaking? According to Bushnell, Paul was quoting “what the ‘Judaizers’ in the Corinthian church were saying.”¹⁴³² “Judaizers” were individuals who attempted to impose Jewish law and culture on the Christian Church. According to Bushnell, Paul challenged their insistence upon the silence of women in 1 Corinthians 14:36. In an effort to restore Jewish Law among Christian converts living in Corinth, the “Judaizers” attempted to pressure the Corinthian Church by appealing to the oral Law that forbids

¹⁴²⁸ Ibid., pp. 13-14. Bushnell’s *God’s Word to Women* remains in print today and is published by Christians for Biblical Equality, www.cbeinternational.org. *God’s Word to Women* was originally published in 1923, in the United States.

¹⁴²⁹ Penn-Lewis, *The Magna Charta of Woman*, p. 16.

¹⁴³⁰ Ibid., p. 15.

¹⁴³¹ Ibid., p. 14.

¹⁴³² Ibid., pp. 22-23.

women to speak in the presence of men.¹⁴³³ By appealing to the oral Law in Corinthians 14:35, Paul exposed their attempt to undermine women's freedom in Christ (indicated in 1 Corinthians 11:2ff).¹⁴³⁴ In 2 Corinthians 10:12 and in Galatians 2:4, we find further evidence that the Church in Corinth was disturbed by "Judaizers" or intruders, who sought to limit the liberty that converts, particularly Jewish converts, enjoyed. Penn-Lewis wrote:

Therefore the words 'it is not permitted' and 'as also saith the law' must refer to some 'rule' outside of Scripture ... Paul never appealed to the 'law' for the guidance of the Church of Christ, but, on the contrary, declared that believers were 'dead to the law by the body of Christ' (Rom. 7:4), that they might serve in newness of spirit and not the oldness of the letter (v.6).¹⁴³⁵

Penn-Lewis attempts to show that Paul was "always consistent in word and practice."¹⁴³⁶ Searching for a reason the Apostle Paul would suggest that a woman's veil was a sign of her authority, Bushnell explored head coverings and hair length in the ancient world. From the 'tallith' Jewish men wore on their heads as a "condemnation for sin,"¹⁴³⁷ to women's hair customs, Bushnell concluded that Paul was opposing a Jewish inference that to cover one's head was to acknowledge one's "guilt or condemnation."¹⁴³⁸ Hence, Paul forbids Christian "men to veil (since there is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus)."¹⁴³⁹ However, since it was improper for women to be seen in public unveiled, Paul affirmed women's spiritual authority when veiled. Unwilling to view the veiling of women "as a command,"¹⁴⁴⁰ Paul stated that "contrary to the teaching of the Jews, there is nothing for a woman to be ashamed of in showing her hair, for it is a

¹⁴³³ Ibid., p. 26.

¹⁴³⁴ Ibid., pp. 25-26.

¹⁴³⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴³⁶ Ibid., p. 35.

¹⁴³⁷ Ibid., p. 36.

¹⁴³⁸ Ibid., pp. 38-39.

¹⁴³⁹ Ibid., p. 45.

¹⁴⁴⁰ Ibid.

‘glory’ to her.”¹⁴⁴¹ A woman’s hair is her veil and she “need not be ashamed of uncovering it, whatever the Judaizers might say.”¹⁴⁴² Thus, Paul is not requiring that women cover their heads, though he does show that women have authority even when veiled.

Moreover, because the early Christians had been widely persecuted, the Jews endeavored to distinguish themselves from Christians, particularly with regard to their cultic practices. “At no point was the contrast greater at this time than in the Christian treatment of women,”¹⁴⁴³ because women were prominent not only as martyrs, but also as students of Scripture, as preachers, teachers and missionaries. Domestic life may have thus been viewed as a distraction to women who placed their Christian duties ahead of their role of wives and mothers, and this, Bushnell posits, offended Roman authorities.¹⁴⁴⁴ As the Jews in Corinth bitterly opposed “the teaching of women,” and because of their anger, Paul feared they might “complain to the authorities and bring grave danger upon the whole body of believers.”¹⁴⁴⁵ Therefore, in fear of further persecution, Paul advised Timothy to silence women (in 1 Timothy 2:11) because “the times were indeed perilous for Christian women.”¹⁴⁴⁶ At the same time this passage offered women an extraordinary gift.

1 Timothy 2:11-15

Penn-Lewis reframed 1 Timothy 2:11-15 as a text that liberated women from subordination to man—one of the consequences of the fall. Far from silencing women or excluding them from positions of service alongside men, Paul remembered God’s promise to Eve, in Genesis 3:15, that through her seed the Savior will be born. For this reason, Penn-Lewis referred to 1 Timothy 2:11-15 as the Magna Charta of woman. Women’s Magna Charta is an exhortation “from God to women,”¹⁴⁴⁷ though “hidden

¹⁴⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴² Ibid., p. 46.

¹⁴⁴³ Ibid., p. 49.

¹⁴⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 50.

¹⁴⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 54.

¹⁴⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 56.

from them for centuries, under mountains high of the misinterpretations of expositors.”¹⁴⁴⁸ Mary’s son was foretold in Genesis 3, which was the most significant “event of the world having its culmination at Calvary. The promise is clear.”¹⁴⁴⁹ Through woman, evil would be crushed. Though the serpent deceived Eve, whereas Adam was “a deliberate sinner,”¹⁴⁵⁰ the female gender will not remain for all time, “under the shadow of Eve’s ‘deception.’”¹⁴⁵¹ Let women learn that their power over sin will come through the birth, death and resurrection of Christ. Therefore, the second chapter of Timothy foretells women’s final release through the Cross.

Because Paul recounts God’s promise to women in Genesis, that Mary’s son would conquer sin on Calvary,¹⁴⁵² Penn-Lewis exhorts women to learn that they are not enslaved to sin and subordinate to men through the failings of Eve. Rather, they are the “progenitor of a Saviour who would eventually destroy the serpent’s power.”¹⁴⁵³ Through Calvary, women are elevated to a position equal to men. According to both Bushnell and Penn-Lewis, Paul’s Magna Charta for woman was intended to raise women “until she stands on [man’s] level.”¹⁴⁵⁴ Her role in bringing forth the Messiah is “women’s evangel”¹⁴⁵⁵ and the Savior will overcome “all the effects of the Fall in Eden.”¹⁴⁵⁶ Thus, the promise of Christ suggested by 1 Timothy 2:11-15, redresses the consequences of the fall and the subordination of women, cited in Genesis 3:15.

Paul opposed the long-standing tradition of excluding women from biblical scholarship. He therefore exhorts Timothy to “‘let the woman learn’ ...and learn of her redemption from the Fall in the birth of the Saviour.”¹⁴⁵⁷ In opposition to Jewish culture, Paul instructed the Church at Ephesus to allow women to become students of Scripture. Had the Church heeded Paul’s instruction to Timothy, by allowing women to learn, the

¹⁴⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 57.

¹⁴⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵² Ibid.

¹⁴⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 59.

¹⁴⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 57.

Church might have avoided “all kinds of heretical movements.”¹⁴⁵⁸ According to Penn-Lewis, Satan has opposed the scholarship of women since Eden in order to advance evil through their ignorance. She wrote:

Ah, here we have the key to Satan’s endeavor to fasten upon all women down the ages the results of his work in Eden. ‘The woman must not learn,’ said the Jews in Paul’s time, and ‘the woman must not learn,’ said many of the theologians of the Christian Church, influenced by Judaism. ‘She was thoroughly deceived once’ whispered the serpent, who, alas, has since extended his operations and thoroughly deceived the whole inhabited earth (Rev. 12:9)... Had the woman been encouraged to ‘learn’ as the Apostle advised Timothy, might not her greater spiritual capacity have resulted in an accession of spiritual force to the church?¹⁴⁵⁹

Rather than elevating women through education, that they might learn of their full inheritance in Christ, the Church has instead advanced women’s ignorance and suppression. Women are too easily deceived, said the “theologians of the Christian Church.”¹⁴⁶⁰ Yet, if women had become Bible scholars as Paul had advised, their learning would have made them far less vulnerable to deception by evil, observed Penn-Lewis. With sadness she notes that “the truths of God which they should have learned have been kept from them.”¹⁴⁶¹ Therefore, *The Magna Charta of Woman* implored women to become Bible scholars as a means of discerning and redressing their oppression through sexist interpretations of the Bible.

Genesis 3:13-19

In redressing sexist interpretations to Genesis, Penn-Lewis opposed the notion that Genesis prescribed the subordination of women because Eve was the first to eat of the

¹⁴⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 58.

¹⁴⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 57-58.

¹⁴⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 58

¹⁴⁶¹ Ibid.

forbidden fruit. Citing Bushnell, Penn-Lewis suggested that women were not cursed as a punishment for Eve's sin. Rather, according to Bushnell, Genesis teaches that the only creature cursed was the serpent.¹⁴⁶² Quoting Bushnell, Penn-Lewis wrote:

The teaching that God punished Christian women for the sin of Eve, is a wicked and cruel superstition, and unworthy the intelligence of Christians, ... it has laid a blighting hand upon woman's self-respect, self-confidence and spiritual activity, from which causes the entire church of Jesus Christ suffers moral and spiritual loss.¹⁴⁶³

According to *The Magna Charta of Woman*, Eve was not cursed "but forgiven and restored,"¹⁴⁶⁴ and counted as a worthy opponent to Satan. Hence, God placed enmity or separation between women and Satan. For this reason, Eve becomes the prototypical Christian, one who is set apart from evil, the "first type and representative of all the separated ones who constitute the church of God."¹⁴⁶⁵ Though the result of sin for Adam was death, Eve in contrast is called the mother of all that lives or all that are spiritually alive. Hence, woman is not the origin of sin, but the mother of all believers, because through the "'seed of the woman'"¹⁴⁶⁶ the world receives the Savior.

Ephesians 5:21-24

In another significant text, Ephesians 5:21, Paul states that Christians should "subject yourselves one to another." His intended meaning was the subjection of all Christians, a mutual submission—the "Christian grace of yielding one's preferences ... rather than asserting one's rights."¹⁴⁶⁷ The mutual submission of Christians was a Pauline social and moral principle, argued Penn-Lewis. She compared the term "subjection" as used by Paul in Ephesians 5:21, to passages where the same term is also used (such as 1 Pet. 5:5, 1

¹⁴⁶² Ibid., p. 71.

¹⁴⁶³ Bushnell, as quoted by Jessie Penn-Lewis, *The Magna Charta of Woman*, p. 72.

¹⁴⁶⁴ Jessie Penn-Lewis, *The Magna Charta of Woman*, p. 67.

¹⁴⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 68.

¹⁴⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 70.

¹⁴⁶⁷ Bushnell, as quoted by Jessie Penn-Lewis, *The Magna Charta of Woman*, p. 77.

Cor. 16:16, 1 Col. 3:18, Titus 2:5).¹⁴⁶⁸ She concludes that the Apostle is requiring all Christians to exhibit mutual submission or cooperation, which Penn-Lewis understands as a Pauline principle. Sadly however, not only did the “Judaizers” fail to notice Paul’s call for mutual submission, but they also rendered the term “submission,” which connotes a voluntary act, to mean obey, to rule over, or to have domination over. This misinterpretation of Paul has done violence to his original intent that Christians be mutually submitted to one another. To be subject to one another is a New Testament principle for members of Christ’s church. Penn-Lewis wrote:

In Ephesians 5:21, R.V., we read ‘submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ.’ Here we have an admonition written to all Christians irrespective of sex. Again in 1 Peter 5:5 A.V., ‘all of you be subject one to another...’; and in 1 Cor 16:16 the Apostle urges the Roman Christians to be in ‘subjection’ unto everyone that ‘helpeth in the work’ (some of these being women as shown by Rom 16:23 and 12) ... In Col 3:18 and Titus 2:5 we have again ‘subjection’ enjoined upon wives, as is ‘fitting in the Lord’—in each case the Greek word being the same as rendered ‘subjection one to another.’ Again this shows that the meaning of New Testament ‘subjection’ is not the ‘rule’ of Gen. 3:16, which Eve fell under because of her own turning to Adam and not by the preordination of God.¹⁴⁶⁹

Scripture does not require men to rule over women, observed Penn-Lewis. Rather, the Bible teaches mutual submission, which is a “grace of the Spirit.”¹⁴⁷⁰ It is a courtesy and a way of life between the “sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty, who always say the one to the other, ‘You first—I gladly go ‘next after.’”¹⁴⁷¹

If men no longer rule over women, what does it mean for a husband to be the head of his wife? In considering the relationship of Christ as head of the Church, Penn-Lewis

¹⁴⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶⁹ Ibid., pp. 77-78.

¹⁴⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 78.

¹⁴⁷¹ Ibid., pp. 78-79.

insisted that Paul, in Ephesians 2:6, suggested that Christ extended co-regency to the Church. Hence, Christ shares His rule of all things with the Church. Is this not a picture of mutuality, asked Penn-Lewis? Headship therefore implies shared authority.¹⁴⁷² Penn-Lewis wrote:

True 'headship' is won by self-sacrificing love, even as Christ won His Church—not by rule or domination but by laying down His life for her. Reverence is gained by love; it can never be demanded as right, nor created in the one who is to give it in any other way than by being 'ahead' in manifesting the character of Christ.¹⁴⁷³

V. Gender Bias and Bible Translation

Diakonos: A Gender Inclusive Term?

Attending to yet another misunderstood passage, Penn-Lewis believed that, blinded by a prejudice against women, translators throughout the history of the Church have rendered the word "*diakonos*," (a term that appears thirty times in the New Testament) "minister" in most cases, when the term refers to a male. However when used in connection with Phoebe in Romans 16:1, she is referred to as a "servant."¹⁴⁷⁴ Yet, the term "*diakonos*" implied an ecclesiastical office and thus the translators are inconsistent or biased when they single out Phoebe as a "servant."¹⁴⁷⁵ Paul writes: "I commend unto you Phoebe, our sister, who is *diakonos* of the church which is at Cenchrea."¹⁴⁷⁶ Thus for Paul the term "*diakonos*" is a gender inclusive term, suggesting the mutual service of women along with men as co-workers, as deacons and ministers of the gospel.

¹⁴⁷² Ibid., p. 82.

¹⁴⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 83.

¹⁴⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷⁶ Ibid.

Deborah, Huldah and Miriam

And, of course, there were eminent examples from an earlier era, of women leaders such as Deborah, Huldah and Miriam. Though the biblical record provides ample evidence of the leadership of such women, yet translators have been reluctant to render “the original [languages] faithfully when it ran across their prejudices connected with the position of women.”¹⁴⁷⁷ Suspicious of Jewish translators, Bushnell blamed the Septuagint, the text mostly likely read by the Church in Corinth, for omitting entire phrases such as Exodus 38:8 and 1 Samuel 2:22. Citing Bushnell, Penn-Lewis wrote:

For the translators [of the Septuagint], who were Jews, rendered the Hebrew word as ‘fasting women’ in Ex. 38:8 and omitted the entire phrase containing the words in 1 Samuel 2:22 [the women who served at the entrance to the tent of the meeting] ... ‘It is evident that by the time when the Septuagint translation was made, the idea of women ministering at the Tabernacle had become so odious that it was wilfully mistranslated.’¹⁴⁷⁸

Phoebe, Priscilla, Phillip’s Daughters and Junia

Returning to the New Testament, Bushnell’s grasp of New Testament Greek enabled her to observe the leadership of women leaders throughout the New Testament, a leadership Bible translators had obscured, complained Penn-Lewis. For example, Bushnell realized that Phoebe was called a *prostatis*, a word Paul used to connote “champion, leader, chief protector, patron! The verb form of *prostatis* means to rule, as noted in 1 Timothy 3:4, 5, 12, and 5:17.”¹⁴⁷⁹ As a *prostatis*, Phoebe held the same relationship “to the Church at Cenchrea that Paul says, ‘church officials’ should hold to their children and household.”¹⁴⁸⁰

¹⁴⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 87.

¹⁴⁷⁸ Ibid., Penn-Lewis quotes Professor Margoliouth of Oxford.

¹⁴⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 89.

¹⁴⁸⁰ Ibid.

Like Phoebe, Priscilla was also a leader in the early Church. A capable teacher, Priscilla instructed the learned Apollos, “a man ‘mighty in the Scriptures.’”¹⁴⁸¹ Paul honored Priscilla’s leadership in a number of ways. First, Paul called Priscilla his fellow-laborer, or *synergos*, a term he reserved for “Evangelists and Teachers.”¹⁴⁸² Second, Paul mentioned Priscilla before her husband in four of the six references to the couple, indicating that she was the more prominent of the two. Penn-Lewis rehearses the bold way Paul speaks of the leadership of women who instruct men, and this during a time when Paul had allegedly relegated women to a position of silence in the presence of men. Penn-Lewis reprimands the Church for overlooking the historical prominence of Priscilla and emphasizing the silence of women instead.¹⁴⁸³

Concluding her survey of women leaders in the New Testament, Penn-Lewis touches upon key biblical, historical and archaeological evidence that point to women as leaders in the early Church. She recalls Philip’s four prophesying daughters mentioned in Acts 2:9, as well as the female apostle—Junia mentioned in Romans 16:7. She also cites the works of Eusebius, Chrysostom, Theophylact, Irenaeus, Jerome and Tertullian—all of whom were known to refer to women who had preached, taught, prophesied and held “Apostolic orders”¹⁴⁸⁴ along with men in the early Church.¹⁴⁸⁵ Lastly, Penn-Lewis points to the Catacomb artwork that likewise highlights women “presiding at the Lord’s Supper.”¹⁴⁸⁶ Once this evidence is given serious consideration, Penn-Lewis determines that women evangelists and missionaries may indeed work alongside men, as they did in the early Church, taking the Christian faith to destinations around the world—just as she had. As the prophet Joel foretold, God’s spirit is poured out without regard to gender.

In her view, women’s leadership, though sanctioned by Paul, was challenged by the Jewish legalists after his death. Sadly, the teachings of the Jewish Rabbis shaped Bible translation and as a result “the status of Christian women in the church changed.”¹⁴⁸⁷

¹⁴⁸¹ Ibid., p. 90.

¹⁴⁸² Bushnell as quoted by Jessie Penn-Lewis, *The Magna Charta of Woman*, p. 91.

¹⁴⁸³ Ibid., p. 91.

¹⁴⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 92.

¹⁴⁸⁵ Ibid., pp. 90-93.

¹⁴⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 93.

¹⁴⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 94.

While alive, Paul successfully combated the “Judaizers” along with their efforts to deny Christians their freedom in Christ. In the end, however, “Judaizers” did insist upon restricting women’s service in the church, and in this way they “fasten circumcision”¹⁴⁸⁸ upon Christians, in a manner of speaking, and the result was a “robbing the church of the active ministry of women.”¹⁴⁸⁹ Penn-Lewis concludes her survey of history by engaging the metaphor of “circumcision,” which was certainly a rite for the males alone, and a powerful image to make her point that the Jewish legalists insisted upon the exclusion of women from public ministry within the church.

VI. The Church as the Body of Christ

Penn-Lewis is primarily concerned for the mission of the Church. To limit women’s service renders the Church incapable of fulfilling its purpose on earth. If a member of Christ’s body “cannot fulfil its office, how can the Body reach full growth, and ‘make increase with the increase of God?’”¹⁴⁹⁰ Gender bias therefore injures every member of the Church, she insisted. For, “if a member of the Body, in which Paul says there cannot be ‘male or female,’ fails to carry out the will of the ‘Head,’ it checks the life of the entire Body and the manifestation of the Spirit through all its members.”¹⁴⁹¹

Penn-Lewis’s mystical theology enabled her to distinguish between the Church as a formal institution, with rules and laws of governance,¹⁴⁹² and the Church as a living organism, comprised of individuals who are mystically joined to Christ and therefore joined to one another as “the mystical Body of Christ.”¹⁴⁹³ It is the function of the Holy Spirit to govern the latter according to the desires of Christ—the Head of the Church, while human laws dating back to the “Judaizers” govern the former.¹⁴⁹⁴ Women need to understand that when they preach they are submitting to the leadership of the Holy Spirit as well as to Christ—the Head of the body. Such women are asserting their authority

¹⁴⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹⁰ Bushnell, as quoted by Penn-Lewis, *ibid.*, p. 96.

¹⁴⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

¹⁴⁹² Ibid.

¹⁴⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹⁴ Ibid.

from a “spiritual position in the Body of Christ, as a new creations in Him.” ¹⁴⁹⁵ By doing so, these women exhibit their spiritual authority, that is “what footing they stand as they speak.” ¹⁴⁹⁶ The highest law is the law of the Spirit “which governs members of the Body according to the will of the Head.” ¹⁴⁹⁷ The body of Christ reaches full maturity only as each member is “free to obey the Spirit” ¹⁴⁹⁸ and only in that freedom, is “the Body of Christ” ¹⁴⁹⁹ able to “increase with the increase of God.” ¹⁵⁰⁰

It is through a mystical death on the Cross that women attain spiritual authority and their position as equal members of Christ’s body, insisted Penn-Lewis. The Cross alone renders null the enmity between Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female. By annihilating sin and thus the ordinances and enmity between races, classes and between men and women, the Cross creates a new race comprised of diverse, though fully equal members. Thus she claimed that:

On the Cross, where the old Adam was slain, the Jew and the Gentile-as Jew and Gentile—died, the one with his ordinances and the other without, so that out of both might be created a new creation, neither Jew nor Gentile, but Christ. For only through the Cross and the slaying of the old Adam is the ‘New Man’- the Body of Christ- created; and there is no way into the membership of the Body but by way of the Cross. ¹⁵⁰¹

By dying mystically with Christ, the failings of the “old Adam” are overcome, and the soul is united to the “New Man--” the mystical body of Christ where there are no divisions based on ethnicity or gender. For Penn-Lewis, the Cross worked to eliminate the wall of partition that the Jews set up in the Temple, which divided men from women, as well as Jews from Gentiles. Who can now approach God within the Holy of Holies? Anyone covered by the blood, claimed Penn-Lewis. Thus, women identified with Christ

¹⁴⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 98.

¹⁴⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 97.

¹⁴⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰¹ Ibid., pp. 98-99.

on Calvary stand with equal dignity and status, and serve with equal authority alongside men. She wrote:

Has man or woman any right within the veil except on the ground of the atoning blood? Is it honoring the blood of Christ to believe that God bids a redeemed woman always enter His presence with a reminder of Eve's 'fall' upon her head, or is she to point to the atoning blood and to the Cross of Calvary where the old creation life was slain and stand in God's presence under her new Federal Head—the Last Adam, the Lord from heaven? And stand also towards her fellow members of Christ's Body in the carrying out of the will of the Head in testimony and service for God.¹⁵⁰²

Through the Cross women are equal members of Christ's body and thus partakers "of Christ's divine nature,"¹⁵⁰³ cooperating with the will of Christ, their Head. It is not, nor was it ever, God's intention to silence women, for each member of Christ's body is a "channel of the Spirit,"¹⁵⁰⁴ argued Penn-Lewis. Similarly, the apostle Paul affirmed the spiritual equality of women, though his words have been mistranslated and badly misinterpreted—an issue addressed in Bushnell's extensive research. As a result of Bushnell's work, women may now have confidence that the Bible is in harmony with their inward call to preach.¹⁵⁰⁵ The movement of God's Spirit throughout Church history has always involved women prophesying, as on the day of Pentecost. Joel's prophecy has been fulfilled through an army of women who have been obedient in using their gifts in service to Christ.

Language like "let your women keep silent" was simply Paul quoting, in order to correct, the "Judaizers," reasoned *The Magna Charta of Woman*. How does one know? Because, Paul would not tell women to be silent in one part of Corinthians (1 Corinthians

¹⁵⁰² Ibid., pp. 99-100.

¹⁵⁰³ Ibid., p. 100.

¹⁵⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 101.

14:34), while telling them earlier (1 Corinthians 11:5) how to dress when prophesying. She wrote:

For it is obvious that the Apostle would not speak at one moment of the ‘spiritual’ status of the ‘Body’, and each member as a channel of the Spirit and in the next moment lapse to the dealing with one section of it on the status of the Fall! ¹⁵⁰⁶

To silence women whom God had gifted and given opportunity to preach is to silence the Holy Spirit. Any group, sect, race or sex that “attempts a monopoly of the Spirit’s voice and power, will find that the Holy Spirit will flee far from it.” ¹⁵⁰⁷ God is emancipating women, and it will be “woe to the world” ¹⁵⁰⁸ and a great loss to the Church if women are not likewise emancipated by their fellow believers. Should women learn of their power through Christ, “their triumphant Head,” ¹⁵⁰⁹ and likewise discover Satan’s “utter defeat at Calvary” ¹⁵¹⁰ what assurance of faith, what maturity for the Church, and what momentum in revival work that would mean, suggested Penn-Lewis.

Bushnell’s scholarship converged with Penn-Lewis’s Cross Theology to advance a biblical and mystical basis for women’s equality within Christian service. Moreover, *The Magna Charta of Woman* also insists that faulty exegesis and biased Bible translation, which work to subordinate women and thwart the gospel, are rooted in evil. As women are united to Christ on the Cross, they receive the power needed to unmask and overcome the root of their oppression—Satan. Cross Theology not only exposed Satan’s deceit but also called upon women to expose Satan and to participate as full members of Christ’s body, through an intimate experience with the Cross whereby women become full-participants in that new millennium in which there is no gender bias. Penn-Lewis stated:

¹⁵⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 100.

¹⁵⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 102.

¹⁵⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 103.

¹⁵¹⁰ Ibid.

We are in the throes of the most crucial changes in the world, when 'our God is marching on' into the fulfillment of His purpose for the Church and for the world. 'All things,' said Paul, 'are for your sakes.' God's time has come for the emancipation of women, but it will be woe to the world and terrible loss to the Church if they are not won for Christ and for His service. For it is certain that if Christ does not get hold of women of today, the devil will. And on the other hand, in the light of Gen. 3:15 prophecy and evangel, it will be woe to the 'serpent' and to his kingdom if those whom he has so oppressed and persecuted lay hold of the fact of his utter defeat at Calvary and in the power of their triumphant Head turn upon their foe in assurance of victory.¹⁵¹¹

The "great mystics can never keep their discoveries to themselves."¹⁵¹² Likewise, *The Magna Charta of Woman* celebrates the triumphs of Cross—that sin and the devil are defeated; that perfect harmony and equity greet those who are joined to Christ's mystical body.

The Magna Charta of Woman concludes with an exhortation to see Scripture working in concert with the Spirit's leading in the lives of Christian women. In the revivals of the late 19th century, as with the early Church, the Spirit of God is no respecter of persons. She wrote:

God's purpose for redeemed women, as well as redeemed men, was unmistakably expressed in the prophecy of Joel foretelling the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost ... And so it has been all down the centuries ever since. The Spirit of God has never been poured forth in any company, in any part of the world, in any nation, without the 'handmaids' prophesying, and this as the spontaneous and unvarying result of the Spirit of God moving upon women as well as men, as at Pentecost.¹⁵¹³

¹⁵¹¹ Ibid., pp. 102-103.

¹⁵¹² Underhill, *The Mystics of the Church*, p. 11.

¹⁵¹³ Penn-Lewis, *The Magna Charta of Woman*, p. 101.

In conclusion, Penn-Lewis suggests that if Pentecost is the paradigm of revival, then the Church that restricts women's service will also be found to restrict the power of the Holy Ghost.¹⁵¹⁴ If women are to fully participate in revival work, they will need to confront ignorance, deception, and faulty or insufficient biblical exegesis. But, as Penn-Lewis recalled, our battle is not against flesh and blood alone, but also against the unseen powers that operate in and through human institutions, including the Church.

Summary Remarks

As a "pioneer of humanity"¹⁵¹⁵ and a "'great active' among the saints,"¹⁵¹⁶ the mystic is also a "painfully practical person."¹⁵¹⁷ In a similar fashion, Penn-Lewis pioneered new territory for women's service through very practical means—by popularizing Bushnell's extensive biblical scholarship. By rendering Bushnell's academic work accessible to uneducated women, Penn-Lewis offered the broadest spectrum of the Church a biblical premise for the equality of men and women in ministry. While *The Magna Charta of Woman* explored the Pauline passages on women, like all of her work, Penn-Lewis advanced a Cross-centered mysticism, which, she believed, established unity between men and women through a union with Christ. Union with Christ was also the portal to spiritual power whereby the demonic forces that have oppressed women throughout history are at last overcome.

As a crucicentrist, Penn-Lewis perceived all spiritual truth as arising from the Cross.¹⁵¹⁸ Only the Cross can supplant weakness and sin and unite souls into the mystical body of Christ where there is perfect mutuality. Thus, the egalitarian truth emanating from the Cross was to identify women with the victories of Christ, rather than the failures of Eve. Cross Theology therefore offered a corrective to the biased notion, perpetuated by the Church, that identified women through Eve's sin (Genesis 3: 16), rather than through

¹⁵¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵¹⁵ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 414.

¹⁵¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵¹⁸ Gerrard, p. 169.

the power of the Cross. Penn-Lewis sought to prove women's equality both as a biblical reality, as evidenced through Bushnell's scholarship, as well as the mystical reality, as noted in women's intimate union with Christ. Thus, Penn-Lewis insisted that biblical exposition must also be accompanied by a personal experience of the Cross.

Penn-Lewis confronts the Church for its suppression of women through faulty biblical exposition, and biased Bible translation. For centuries the Church has undermined the mission of the Cross by subordinating women, and by denying them their rightful place as equals within Church, on the mission field, and in the new millennium. Penn-Lewis claimed that if the Church will not embrace the new order—that of equality among men and women, women will question the validity and integrity of the Christian faith. Therefore, Penn-Lewis was compelled to ask; if sin has been overcome, what does this mean for women, perhaps women like me? One cannot overlook the personal reasons Penn-Lewis had for writing *The Magna Charta of Woman*, a book she vowed to write in defense of her own inward experiences, as well as her international ministry.

The mysticism of Cross Theology consistently challenged male hegemony within the Church by offering women an egalitarian hermeneutic, whereby they not only reinterpret the Pauline passages that appear to silence women. She also recognized the need to offer women an intimate identification with Christ (rather than Eve). She also summoned women to pursue their inward call to ministry with the awareness that all intellectual and spiritual opposition to their service has been conquered at Calvary.

Finally, *The Magna Charta of Woman* challenged women to engage in biblical scholarship. By doing so, women will discover for themselves that the biblical record is not preferential to men, nor does it oppose women's inward call to serve alongside men, as women have done so faithfully, throughout the history of the Church. Rather, the biblical record is in harmony with their experiences of emancipation on the Cross.

In the next and final section, I will assess what this thesis has achieved, and how it has been achieved.

Chapter Eight

The Achievements of Jessie Penn-Lewis and Cross Theology

What is paramount are the central doctrinal truths of Christianity: that there has been a true incarnation in the true humanity of the true God, and that the church can only live as the true body of this incarnate Word by living ever more truthfully into Christ's dying and rising—thus to participate in that self-giving love which is truly the life of the triune God. 'All the history of Christian dogma unfolds itself about this mystical centre.'¹⁵¹⁹

I. Introduction

In this concluding section, I will summarize my research as it expands our understanding of Jessie Penn-Lewis's theological contributions. In order to appraise her theology, I have considered her letters, diary, published works, as well as the biographical material on her life, all of which provide ample material for theological research. The reader will find an exhaustive bibliography of Penn-Lewis and early Keswick luminaries in Appendix C. To assist the reader, I have also outlined a chronology of Jessie Penn-Lewis's life through a Time Line, in Appendix A. Appendix B includes electronic copies of her letters, diary and lecture notes, as well as news articles exploring her ministry. These materials suggest the significant role she played in the early Keswick movement.

Because the scholarly community has not apprehended the importance of Penn-Lewis's life—as it challenged the Quietism and male hegemony of the Keswick Convention, this thesis has endeavored to recover the legacy of Jessie Penn-Lewis— theologian, mystic, egalitarian and leader. Let us summarize, in greater detail, what was accomplished by this thesis.

¹⁵¹⁹ McIntosh, p. 40.

II. The Contributions of the Keswick Convention & Cross Theology

To study the early Keswick Movement is to encounter an extraordinary group of leaders. Creative and industrious, the early Keswick luminaries were founders of world-renowned mission organizations; they were prolific poets and authors of devotional literature and hymns that the world continues to enjoy. That we continue to sing the hymns of Frances Ridley Havergal and read the books of F.B. Meyer, Andrew Murray, Jessie Penn-Lewis and many others, is a testimony to the enduring qualities of Keswick's vision and energy. Mission and student organizations that began during the early Keswick Conventions continue to impact the world today.¹⁵²⁰ For example, the China Inland Missions (now called the Overseas Missionary Fellowship) as well as InterVarsity Christian Fellowship grew out of the Keswick Convention more than one hundred years ago. That both organizations have expanded over the years is a testimony to the abilities and vision of their founders.

What was it about the Keswick Conventions that proved so indomitable and enduring? How did Keswick cast vision for future generations? Holiness teachers proffered victory over sin, not by doing but by dying, not by resisting but by resting. Whereas the old way of doing religion a century earlier relied upon effort, Keswick's method of faith came through effortless victory. Pentecost therefore became the model, with its immediate infusion of power—void of struggle or exertion. Joel's prophecy fulfilled at Pentecost included not only an infusion of spiritual power, but also evinced unity among diverse Christians. Unity among believers was the social expression of Keswick's inner experience, and perhaps in this way Keswick served as a guiding force to subsequent generations. Keswick also made a plea for unity among Christians long before a

¹⁵²⁰ China Inland Missions began under the leadership of Hudson Taylor and was recently restructured under Overseas Missionary Fellowship (OMF), while InterVarsity Christian Fellowship began in 1893 with two students, Donald Fraser from Scotland, and Robert Wilder from the United States. Together they established the Keswick Student Movement. InterVarsity Christian Fellowship now largely headquartered in the United States, continues its work on college campuses, through conferences and missionary work around the world.

Protestant ecumenical movement. Yet, in spite of this vision, Keswick leaders were reluctant to embrace gender equality. It was Jessie Penn-Lewis who insisted that unity among believers, said to be the consequence of a life influenced by the Keswick message, must include gender equality.

Penn-Lewis's egalitarian conviction was a source of tension between her and the Keswick leadership. According to Penn-Lewis, spiritual encounters with the Cross will not only evidence gender equality as the fruit of Divine union, but effort and mortification will be necessary as the soul co-operates with the transforming work of the Holy Spirit. While some within the Keswick Movement stressed the passivity of the Quietists, Penn-Lewis suggested that to abandon volition in spiritual experiences was the road to folly, disarray, hysteria, and for some, demonic possession. Penn-Lewis thus stressed human agency in spiritual experiences. According to Penn-Lewis, the soul must co-operate with the Holy Spirit in conquering and transcending the false self, or "Adamic life." For Penn-Lewis, the Cross offered power over sin not through rest, but through a classical mysticism that carried the soul through stages of detachment and mortification, culminating in union with Christ. The fruit of union gives rise to unity among believers and offers new opportunities for women in Christian service.

We will now enlarge upon the accomplishments of Cross Theology.

i. Crucicentrism

Penn-Lewis lamented that throughout history the Church had failed to apprehend the fullest benefit of the Cross. While some turn to the Cross solely for salvation, Penn-Lewis believed it was her mission to proclaim the ultimate power of the Cross. According to Penn-Lewis, only the Cross can unite souls mystically to Christ's death and resurrection, wherein lies the only path to a victorious life.

Ultimately, the power of Calvary extended beyond justification. We are not only identified with Christ as our substitute, whereby sins are forgiven, but also when united in solidarity with Christ's death we die to, and are separated from the power of sin. Beyond that, in mystical union with Christ, we follow Christ who was the first of many to

overcome sin.¹⁵²¹ Therefore, an experience of the Cross imparts not only solidarity with Christ's righteousness, but also solidarity to Christ's holiness—his power over sin.¹⁵²²

She wrote:

The Cross and the Fall exactly and perfectly correspond- the one as the remedy for the other. First, by the death of the Saviour on the Cross ... sin had to be put away, and the way made possible for the Holy God to pardon the sinner, and (2) then the sinner must be given a way of escape from the bondage.¹⁵²³

In other words, Christ's work on Calvary not only justifies, but it also sanctifies. While the Church has often failed to understand the organic union of the soul with Christ's power over sin, Cross Theology, in its fullness, was the call to embrace union with Christ whereby deliverance from the power of cancelled sin is realized.¹⁵²⁴ Penn-Lewis wrote:

It is one thing to have your sins blotted out, it is another thing to be delivered from their power so that you are not under their mastery. You may get rid of the guilt of sin, the burden of sin, without understanding how to get the victory over the power of sin... So also the way of victory over and freedom from sin is not only to believe that the Lord Jesus Christ bore our sins on the Cross, and that God will, on that account, forgive them ...[but] you must also understand that you yourself died with Jesus Christ on the Cross... It is just as if you yourself were on Calvary's Cross, looking at your old life with a gulf of death between you and it.¹⁵²⁵

¹⁵²¹ Bebbington, p. 173.

¹⁵²² Penn-Lewis, *All Things New*, p. 44.

¹⁵²³ Penn-Lewis, *Soul and Spirit*, p. 10.

¹⁵²⁴ Penn-Lewis, *The Centrality of the Cross*, pp. 14-15 and p. 9. See Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, pp., 87-108.

¹⁵²⁵ Penn-Lewis, *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, pp. 28-29.

The Cross was the central motif for Penn-Lewis, and for this reason she is considered among the noted crucicentrists ¹⁵²⁶ of the late 19th century. This thesis has shown that Penn-Lewis shared her commitment to the Cross, as the center of Christian experience, with the eminent theologian P.T. Forsyth. For Penn-Lewis and Forsyth, it was Calvary and Calvary alone that initiates union with Christ, and solidarity with Christ's holiness. For crucicentrists like Penn-Lewis and Forsyth, any expression of faith void of the Cross was impotent and therefore dangerous. All power and truth emanates from the Cross, and without the Cross souls remain powerless against sin, the demonic, and the grip of selfishness. As prophets of the Cross, Penn-Lewis and Forsyth sought to restore the centrality of the Cross to Christian faith and experience. Crucicentrists of the late 19th Century not only opposed a rationalistic expression of faith, but they also rejected a religious subjectivism that omitted the Cross. Penn-Lewis's work was aimed at articulating the Cross as the ultimate portal of spiritual power, and as the bridge to solidarity with Christ. A union of solidarity with Christ through the Cross is the origin of holiness, and the means whereby God creates a new race that are coheirs not only with Christ, but also with one another.

ii. Keswick's Quietism Challenged by Cross Theology

The theological roots of the late 19th century Holiness Movement were nourished by the Romantic mood of the day, where crisis overcame process, and mood and milieu overwhelmed debate and dialectic. As a branch from the Higher Life tree, the Keswick Convention did not concern theology or doctrine but was centered on an experience of power, advanced through a prolific industry of music, poetry, and devotional literature. ¹⁵²⁷ Keswick's method was to lead souls first to a dissatisfaction with moral and spiritual weakness, and second to a decision of rest whereby, they insisted, extraordinary spiritual power was imparted as souls entered union—the highest mystical state.

The Higher Life message centered on power through a passive faith. By way of rest—through an abandonment of effort and volition—Keswick promised instantaneous power

¹⁵²⁶ Bebbington, pp. 14-16.

¹⁵²⁷ Underhill, *The Essentials of Mysticism and Other Essays*, p. 47.

over sin. The Keswick Convention wooed souls with their music, literature, personal testimonies, the beautiful surroundings, as well as through an absence of erudition and emotional fervor. They had one goal, to advance a spiritual passivity, suggesting that “rest” or “faith” extended souls the power of Pentecost, the ability to conquer sin and the capacity for extraordinary power in Christian service. Keswick therefore advanced a mystical quietism—that through the one-act of passivity the soul reached the highest mystical state—union.¹⁵²⁸ By omitting effort and purgation, the Quietists of Keswick therefore offered a ‘shorter path’ to union with God through passivity.¹⁵²⁹

The scholarly community has failed to make a distinction between the classical mysticism of Jessie Penn-Lewis and the Quietism of the early Keswick Conventions.¹⁵³⁰ To suggest, as Keswick did, that faith rather than effort both initiates and sustains the fruits of union is not simply Romanticism, as scholars have proposed. Rather, it is clear that Keswick drew upon the tradition of the Quietists who advanced passivity and a continuous act of faith as the portal to the highest mystical states,¹⁵³¹ as I have shown. While scholars admit that Keswick’s path to holiness was one of crisis rather than process, what they have not observed is the way in which Keswick, like many Quietists, engaged the Prayer of Simple Regard.¹⁵³² By promoting a continuous state of “rest,” Keswick engaged the Quietist’s Prayer of Simple Regard, and they therefore confuse simplicity with passivity, and in doing so they circumvent the arduous path of purgation noted within the classical mystical tradition.

I have traced Keswick’s theological antecedents to Jeanne Guyon and Thomas Upham, both of whom were widely read by the early Keswick luminaries. I have established that both Guyon and Upham demonstrate the four characteristics of Quietism, as outlined by Pourrat. We have also observed how Penn-Lewis’s Cross Theology takes a

¹⁵²⁸ Pourrat, p. 186 & ff.

¹⁵²⁹ Hopkins, *The Law of Liberty in the Spiritual Life*, p. 119.

¹⁵³⁰ Bebbington, p. 172.

¹⁵³¹ Pourrat, p. 186 & ff.

¹⁵³² Bebbington suggests that the Quietism noted with the early Keswick Conventions was due to the influence of Quaker spirituality, as it was introduced to the early Keswick leadership by Hannah Whitall Smith (Bebbington: 170). Bebbington has not observed that Quietism, as a deviation of the mystical tradition, confused passivity with simplicity through a misappropriation of the Prayer of Simple Regard, as I have noted in the work of Thomas Upham. Upham was very influential within Keswick circles. Or again, Bebbington cites Keswick’s “moment-by-moment faith or trust in Christ” (Bebbington: 170) without attributing this to a Quietist formulation, as I have shown.

turn toward classical mysticism as Penn-Lewis rejected passivity and Divine absorption, preferring instead mortification and effort, working in cooperation with the Divine. Moreover, Penn-Lewis's personal life and writings manifest the more classical stages of mysticism as outlined by Underhill: Awakening, Purgation, Illumination, the Dark Night and Union. Unlike the Quietists, who shunned effort and suffering in the path toward union, Penn-Lewis's Cross Theology exalted the stages of Purgation and the Dark Night, whereby the primitive self was stripped, in its ascent toward union with the Divine. The apophysis of the Cross, advanced by Penn-Lewis, called for mortification and suffering which she herself had experienced, and because of this, Penn-Lewis's longer path brought her into conflict with the leaders of Keswick.¹⁵³³

Another important distinction between Keswick's method of sanctification and that of Penn-Lewis, which has also been overlooked by the scholarly community, concerns the primacy of human agency or volition. Whereas the Quietists embraced passivity and a Divine-absorption of volition, Cross Theology, as I have shown, asserts the primacy of volition, as the will is active and cooperates with the Divine in the purgative path. In this way Penn-Lewis avoided the passivity and full identification with the Divine noted among the Quietists. While there are instances in which Cross Theology does indeed resemble the passivity of the Quietist, Penn-Lewis makes it clear that the death she advances is one in which the will is actively submitted to, rather than absorbed by, the Divine Lover. Therefore, Penn-Lewis promoted not the annihilation of human volition, but rather human agency and responsibility, and because of this, Penn-Lewis avoided the charge of antinomianism.

Free will was also important to Penn-Lewis because she believed volitional passivity led to demonic possession. The pursuit of spiritual experiences through passivity rendered souls vulnerable to the demonic, she insisted. Penn-Lewis also suggested that the cause of hysteria and spiritism noted within the revivals of her day, particularly the Welsh Revival of 1903,¹⁵³⁴ was the result of spiritual passivity, void of the Cross. Though Penn-Lewis was known to quote Guyon and Upham,¹⁵³⁵ both of whom stress volitional

¹⁵³³ Price & Randall, p. 156. See also Jones, *The Trials and Triumphs of Mrs. Jessie Penn-Lewis*, p. 62.

¹⁵³⁴ Gerrard, p. 271.

¹⁵³⁵ Penn-Lewis, *Life Out of Death*, p. 10.

passivity in attaining holiness, by the time of the Welsh revival, Penn-Lewis expressed concern for the priority given to the abandonment of the volition in spiritual experiences.¹⁵³⁶ Why the change? Demonic torment, many conjectured, was the cause of the emotionalism noted during Welsh revivalist meetings, which ultimately led to Evan Roberts' nervous breakdown and his lengthy convalescence with Mr. and Mrs. Penn-Lewis. Therefore, she argued that to relinquish volition through a call to "rest" was the means through which demons gained access to the human will. Penn-Lewis devoted considerable time to an analysis of demonic possession—a situation she believed was the result of a religion based on passivity.¹⁵³⁷

iii. Feminism

I have also shown that Cross Theology inspired an egalitarian interpretation of the Bible. The mysticism of Penn-Lewis asserts that as women die mystically, they transcend the old order and are thus united in mystical solidarity with Christ. Here most fully Cross Theology redressed a spiritual inequity that associated women with the failings of Eve rather than the victories of Christ. In union with Christ, women are co-heirs not only with Christ, but they co-heirs with men, bearing equally the fruits of the theopathic life.

Penn-Lewis, an ever practical mystic, popularized one of the most systematic, egalitarian treatises of her day—*God's Word to Women*, by Katharine Bushnell. Juxtaposing the mysticism of Cross Theology with the biblical scholarship of Katharine Bushnell, the *Magna Charta of Woman* suggests that through the Cross, women are emancipated for service beside men, as the Scriptures have long suggested. Penn-Lewis also exposed the gender bias evident in many translations of the Bible, as well as in the ways in which the Bible has been interpreted, all of which obscure women's spiritual unity with Christ, as well as with men in Christian service. Penn-Lewis encouraged women to engage in their own biblical scholarship, so that they might learn, independent of Church authorities and biased Bible translators, that the Cross confers on women a

¹⁵³⁶ Gerrard, pp. 205-206.

¹⁵³⁷ Penn-Lewis & Roberts, *War on the Saints*. (Kent, England: Diasozo Trust, 1987). *War on the Saints* was an extensive analysis of the demonic.

spiritual equality with men, in the Church, on the mission field, and in the new Millennium.

The *Magna Charta of Woman* likewise suggests that the historical suppression of women is an agenda advanced by the forces of evil, an agenda Penn-Lewis calls the Church to oppose. Cautioning her readers, Penn-Lewis warned that unless the Church embraces the new order—that of gender equality, women may ultimately reject a faith rooted in gender bias.

Through an egalitarian hermeneutic, Penn-Lewis reinterprets the Pauline passages that appear to silence women. She also sought to advance women's equality as a biblical and spiritual reality. In doing so, Penn-Lewis suggests that biblical exposition must also be accompanied by a personal experience of the Cross. She summoned women to pursue their inner call to ministry with the awareness that the intellectual and spiritual opposition to their service has been overcome through the power of the Cross.

Penn-Lewis's mysticism extended spiritual authority to women that they might reframe the biblical texts to fundamentally ascribe women's value, dignity and service through their organic union to Christ's holiness and power, rather than to Eve's sin and weakness. As souls attain union with Christ, they also participate in the "mystical Body of God,"¹⁵³⁸ and enjoy "the corporate life of Reality."¹⁵³⁹ The fecundity of a life transformed on the Cross participated in "the real activity which is called humility, service, love of our neighbour."¹⁵⁴⁰

iv. Authority

By virtue of their intimacy with God, mystics are individuals who possess extraordinary authority.¹⁵⁴¹ Jantzen describes the mystic's influence and power as follows:

¹⁵³⁸ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 425.

¹⁵³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴⁰ McIntosh, p. 99.

¹⁵⁴¹ Jantzen, pp. 1-2.

The connection of questions of power to questions of mysticism is obvious as soon as one stops to think of it: a person who was acknowledged to have direct access to God would be in a position to challenge any form of authority, whether doctrinal or political, which she saw as incompatible with the divine will. It is obvious, too, that if defining mysticism is a way of defining power, whether institutional or individual, then the question of who counts as a mystic is of immediate importance.¹⁵⁴²

It therefore became critical that those who claimed intimacy with God “should be contained within the structures of the church, since the power of the church would be severely threatened if it should be acknowledged that access to divine authority was possible outside its confines.”¹⁵⁴³ An experience of power, on offer at the Keswick Conventions, initiated not only spiritual authority but also independence from denominational and ecclesial control. Though relatively unconstrained by denominational authority, the Keswick Convention did establish its own authority structure, via a board of directors, yet all of these individuals were male. As the women of Keswick claimed to possess intimacy with the Divine, they too spoke authoritatively, and they eventually posed a threat to the established male hegemony within Keswick. Jessie Penn-Lewis was perhaps the most prominent example. Her leadership, preaching and devotional literature won enormous popularity both within Keswick circles and beyond.¹⁵⁴⁴ She ultimately challenged the directives of Keswick leadership, not only because her Cross Theology resisted Keswick’s Quietism, but also because she questioned her exclusion from mixed audiences, and this of course led to her withdrawal from the Keswick Convention.

Penn-Lewis not only resisted authority structures as they worked to limit the fullest expression of Cross Theology, but she also endeavored to liberate others, particularly women, from a faulty exegesis that rendered them susceptible to oppression and spiritual ineffectiveness. Through a mystical reading of the Scriptures, as well as through her own mystical journey, Penn-Lewis imparted a spiritual authority to women by disassociating

¹⁵⁴² Ibid.

¹⁵⁴³ Ibid., p. 2.

¹⁵⁴⁴ See Appendix A, B and C.

them from sin, particularly Eve's sin. Perhaps unlike any other mystic, Penn-Lewis identified the ultimate authority mysticism held for women—that through the unitive state, women are identified with the power of the Holy, over and above the perceived weaknesses of the female gender.

Was this the fundamental reason why the leaders of Keswick excluded Mrs. Penn-Lewis from the main platform? Were the leaders of Keswick uncomfortable with the authority that mystical union imparts to women? Penn-Lewis acknowledged her authority each time she accepted an invitation to preach to mixed audiences; an authority evident in the international demand for her service, an authority that fueled her independence of Keswick, and her leadership around the globe.

Intrinsic to Cross Theology was a spiritual authority rooted in an intimacy with the Christ's passion and resurrection, through which Penn-Lewis participated in the theopathic life, and she was therefore, an individual that was difficult to control. In and through her theological and social endeavors, Penn-Lewis proved to be a woman of indomitable energy. Despite her physical frailty and the social limitations of women, Penn-Lewis displayed a "super-normal vitality"¹⁵⁴⁵ that is noted among the mystics. She was, as her physician stated, "a law unto herself."¹⁵⁴⁶

v. Justice

As we have noted, Penn-Lewis's Cross Theology challenged the assertion that the mystical element of religion had little interest in justice, that mysticism does not address the "structural or political injustice or the ways in which spirituality or mysticism might have a bearing upon it."¹⁵⁴⁷ Far from providing a "private religious way of coping with life, whatever the external circumstances,"¹⁵⁴⁸ Cross Theology, as it operated within the life of Jessie Penn-Lewis, offered the spiritual authority and a theological basis to challenge the patriarchy of Keswick. In this way Penn-Lewis offered a mysticism that

¹⁵⁴⁵ Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 414.

¹⁵⁴⁶ Gerrard, p. 297.

¹⁵⁴⁷ Jantzen, pp. 18 & ff.

¹⁵⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

equipped the weak and disenfranchised in their journey towards spiritual empowerment and equity.

While Grace Jantzen claims that the mystical life was a sedative to oppressed individuals such as women, it does little, Jantzen argues, to provoke them to think critically “about the social causes of [their] stress, let alone about the ways in which the structures”¹⁵⁴⁹ might be overcome. Penn-Lewis, I would suggest, is an example of a female whose mystical theology not only imparted enormous physical and spiritual stamina in addressing gender-bias, but it also equipped her with a biblical defense for women’s emancipation. She was far from lulled by her mystical journey. Rather, Penn-Lewis’s mysticism supplied a reasoned, biblical challenge to the male hegemony of the Keswick Conventions, and in the Church at large. Through Cross Theology, she viewed her authority in concert with God’s.

Jantzen suggested that the pursuit of the mystical meaning of Scripture was “profoundly entrenched [in] the authority of the church, and that left little place for women.”¹⁵⁵⁰ Penn-Lewis provides an example to the contrary, for she was a woman whose mystical reading of the Scriptures harnessed the authority of Scripture to oppose a patriarchy that excludes, oppresses, or diminishes the dignity and ministry of women. Because the Cross purifies and unites men and women to God’s purposes for the world, to exclude women as full gospel-partners limits the Church’s capacity to fulfill its mission in the world. For if women, as members of Christ’s body, “cannot fulfil [their] office, how can the Body reach full growth, and ‘make increase with the increase of God?’”¹⁵⁵¹ Thus, Cross Theology viewed mystical union as personal as well as corporate. For, “if a member of the Body, in which Paul says there cannot be ‘male or female,’ fails to carry out the will of the ‘Head,’ it checks the life of the entire Body and the manifestation of the Spirit through all its members.”¹⁵⁵² To suppress any member of Christ’s mystical body is constraint to the “life of the entire Body.”¹⁵⁵³

¹⁵⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 83.

¹⁵⁵¹ Bushnell, as quoted by *The Magna Charta of Woman*, p. 96.

¹⁵⁵² Ibid., p. 97.

¹⁵⁵³ Ibid.

Moreover, it is the purpose of mystical union, proffered by the Cross, to eradicate the enmity between those who are united to Christ. Through the Cross, there is neither “Jew nor Gentile, but Christ. For only through the Cross and the slaying of the old Adam is the ‘New Man’- the Body of Christ- created; and there is no way into the membership of the Body but by way of the Cross.”¹⁵⁵⁴ Therefore, Cross Theology recognized that the implications of mystical union included equity among diverse members of Christ’s mystical body, and in this way mystical knowledge “cannot be separated from efforts for justice.”¹⁵⁵⁵ Though Cross Theology concerned a “private religious” ¹⁵⁵⁶ experience, it was through a personal encounter with the Cross that souls receive the power to manifest the concerns of the Head of the Body—Christ, where distinctions based on ethnicity, class or gender are overcome. Penn-Lewis’s Cross-centered mysticism advanced a non-hierarchical unity between men and women.

vi. Beyond Ineffability

Unlike some within the modern mystical tradition, Penn-Lewis does not identify mystical states with ineffability. On the contrary, Cross Theology concerned not an absence of language, but a skillful use of words noted in her mystical writings and in her egalitarian hermeneutic. While Jantzen notes the correlation between mystical experiences with ineffability, as a way of silencing women “in the public arena of the secular world: women may be mystics, but mysticism is a private intense experience not communicable in everyday language and not of political relevance.” ¹⁵⁵⁷ In contrast, Penn-Lewis devoted her life to compelling women to encounter the Cross that they might attain both power and a voice. Penn-Lewis was rarely silent, and she did not remain within the confines of her home. Rather, she had an international career that advanced the mystical path of the Cross, as well as women’s public ministry.

Jantzen is correct to object to “an understanding of mysticism which allows that women may be mystics, but which makes mysticism a private and ineffable

¹⁵⁵⁴ Ibid., pp. 98-99.

¹⁵⁵⁵ Jantzen, p. 171.

¹⁵⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵⁷ Jantzen, p. 326.

psychological occurrence and which detaches it from considerations of social justice.”¹⁵⁵⁸

Yet, as we have shown, Penn-Lewis believed it was through a Cross-centered apophysis that she received the power to challenge patriarchal structures. Penn-Lewis restrained neither voice nor pen, and her opposition to the leaders of Keswick was such that they worked to exclude her voice and limit her influence.

Penn-Lewis remains a poignant example of a mystic whose “life of prayer informs the life of action.”¹⁵⁵⁹ In Penn-Lewis, as with other mystics, we find abundant evidence that “the mystical and moral always go together, action and contemplation interact with each other.”¹⁵⁶⁰ Mystics are not limited by private, ineffable experiences, but they can find power within their mystical encounters whereby to advance justice, and this we observe in the mystical theology, life and work of Jessie Penn-Lewis.

Summary Remarks

As I have stated, in researching the theological perspective of Jessie Penn-Lewis, I acquired as much of her autobiographical and published material as possible. I interviewed individuals who published on her life, or who had known those with whom she had worked. I also visited institutional archives throughout the United Kingdom and the United States where Keswick materials are housed. Here I photocopied reams of material, and within a couple of years, I amassed a significant collection of her work.

The next challenge was to unravel Penn-Lewis’s Cross motif, clearly central to her system of sanctification. She described encounters with the Cross as they imparted not only intense suffering, but also enormous spiritual effectiveness, and new venues of service. Yet, sanctification for Penn-Lewis did not correspond to the tradition of the Reformed or Wesleyan Protestants.¹⁵⁶¹ Rather, her Cross Theology resembled the classical mystical tradition, as outlined by Underhill. Like the other mystics cited in

¹⁵⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵⁹ Underhill, *The Mystics of the Church*, p. 12. See also Dupré & Wiseman, *Light from Light: An Anthology of Christian Mysticism*. Second Edition. (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2001), p. 9.

¹⁵⁶⁰ King, p. 49.

¹⁵⁶¹ See Chapter One of thesis.

Underhill's, *Mysticism*, Penn-Lewis's mystical life progressed through the five stages of the mystical path, and this more closely paralleled Penn-Lewis's system of sanctification.

I then considered how the Romantic mood of the late 19th century brought forth a renewed interest in mysticism, which David Bebbington has noted.¹⁵⁶² Protestants of the late 19th century rejected Enlightenment methods of sanctification that relied upon effort. Reaching for a religion of rest, through an experience of power, over and against the slow grinding process of Enlightenment rationalism, the Protestants of Penn-Lewis's era came under the sway of the Romantic mood with its reliance upon feelings and experience.¹⁵⁶³

For this reason, the Holiness Conventions were held in some of the most beautiful and serene locations in Great Britain and Europe. Most significantly, Holiness leaders rejected effort in the path toward sanctification, preferring insisted rest and spiritual abandonment. Readily assimilating Quietists like Upham and Guyon, the Holiness Movement pursued an effortless perfection, by way of a shorter path, and this provided a refreshing spirituality to those overwhelmed by the Modern world. The result was a revival of Quietism, with its one-act of passivity, as the means of sanctification.

Yet, Mrs. Penn-Lewis was not convinced. She was dissatisfied with a faith that relied upon passivity and abandonment. While her own spiritual journey was one of breaking through to the spiritual world, by way of the Cross, she said she was taken into the passion of Christ, which necessarily entailed great suffering. As her spiritual life unfolds, her diary, letters and publications suggest that she encountered a spiritual awakening, followed by experiences of purgation, illumination, and ultimately the Dark Night, entering finally into union with the Divine. Thus Penn-Lewis evinces the five stages of mysticism, as outlined by Underhill, whereby one is left questioning whether this very fact might well pose an epistemic pattern of faith. How was it that Penn-Lewis's spiritual experiences, noted within her diary and mystical literature, reflect so clearly Underhill's five-fold path of mysticism, even while Penn-Lewis does not quote Underhill? Where did she learn to use, as she does, the term illumination to illustrate a notion that resembled the very meaning Underhill had in mind? While Penn-Lewis never described her spiritual journey as classical mysticism, yet the mystical path advanced in her writings seemed, in

¹⁵⁶² Bebbington, p. 171.

¹⁵⁶³ S. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*, p. 585. See also Bebbington, pp. 151 & ff.

an unusual way, to conform to Underhill's five stages. Does this fact authenticate certain spiritual experiences as intrinsic to Christian belief? Despite Jantzen's protestation, that these stages were contrivances by Underhill, yet they describe the soul's ascent toward union with the Divine, as noted within the body of Penn-Lewis literature.

Like Underhill, Penn-Lewis was keenly interested in God's activity within the soul as manifest through spiritual experiences. In this way, she incorporated the affective tradition of Bernard, with its interest in inner spiritual experiences. Additionally, Penn-Lewis takes on the apophatic tradition of Bonaventure that placed the soul's ascent within the context of the negations of the Cross. Cross Theology, then, was a path of transcendence through illumination, purgation and union. Yet, the Cross, for Penn-Lewis was more than a symbol for the soul's ascent. The path of Calvary moved beyond the introspection of late medieval mysticism, with its focus on an inner self, as well as early mystical tradition, with its intellectual and moral perfection. For Cross Theology was a call to participate bodily, psychologically as well as spiritually in the suffering of Christ so that souls share in the common, communal and ecclesial work of Christ—Church.¹⁵⁶⁴ To die with Christ, is to be inextricably united with the Savior, and Christ's work in the world. For Penn-Lewis, a sharing in the work of Christ of Calvary was inextricably bound to an empowerment of women. Her mysticism had a spiritual and social consequence that included not only a rejection of the inadequacies of Quietism, but it also cast vision for gender equality.

For the higher we ascend, "the deeper it descends into itself; the union (of the soul and God) takes place in the innermost sphere of the soul, in its deepest ground. So the journey into God is seen not ultimately as a loss of self but as a homecoming in the divinely beloved self, beyond the false selves."¹⁵⁶⁵

Through the path of the Cross, Penn-Lewis ultimately found release from a paralyzing self-consciousness, and as she descended into the deepest sufferings of the Cross, she emerged freed to serve others, far from the prison of her ego. Beyond the confines of "Adamic life," she cooperated with the purposes of the Beloved, and through this intimacy she redefined women's identity and potential for service. United to Christ,

¹⁵⁶⁴ McIntosh, pp. 81-82.

¹⁵⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 206.

through the path of the Cross, women were no longer viewed as inferior, sinful and weak. Penn-Lewis gave women a new reality—that of union with Christ, heirs of God's power and full partners with all the members of Christ's body.

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Truth.* London: John M. Watkins, 1951

Appendix A: Time Line

Jessie Penn-Lewis, 1861-1927	Year	World Events
Jessie Jones was born on February 28 th , in Neath, South Wales. She is the second daughter of a Civil Engineer. Her grandfather was the Reverend Samuel Jones, a Calvinist, Methodist Minister. Her mother was active in the Temperance Movement.	1861	Abraham Lincoln voted President of the US. The American Civil War begins.
Attends a boarding school in Swansea because of poor health. She was diagnosed with Tuberculosis.	1871	Darwin writes <i>The Descent of Man</i> .
Through her mother's encouragement, Jessie is initiated into the Temperance Movement. She becomes the Chief Presiding Officer of the Juveniles. Jessie joins a Quaker school.	1873	Moody arrives in England. A Higher Life Convention is convened in London.
Attends St David's, an Anglican rather than the Calvinist, Methodist Church.	1874	Disraeli becomes Prime Minister. Holiness Conventions are held at Broadlands, Oxford, and Brighton. The first Keswick Convention is convened one year later.
Her father dies leaving behind Jessie's mother and eight siblings.	1877	Victoria made Empress of India.
Marries William Penn-Lewis.	1880	The United States limits Chinese immigration.
Professes a Christian conversion on New Year's Day. On March 5 th , she experiences a profound spiritual awakening.	1882	The Triple Alliance is established.
Jessie and her husband relocate to Richmond, Surrey. They begin attending Holy Trinity Church where the Rev. Evan H. Hopkins resides.	1883	Nietzsche writes <i>Thus Speaks Zarathustra</i> .
Undergoes a profound spiritual experience.	1884	First underground railroad built in London. Mark Twain writes <i>Huckleberry Finn</i> .
Jessie volunteers as a librarian. She also teaches Sunday Bible class, and works at the Rescue Home for Girls alongside Mrs. Albert Head.	1886	Nietzsche writes <i>Beyond Good and Evil</i> .
Her tuberculosis worsens.	1889	T.H. Huxley writes <i>Agnosticism</i>
Jessie is appointed Secretary of the YWCA, Richmond, despite the objection of her doctor. She reads <i>A Short Catechism</i> , by Madame Guyon.	1890 1890	First movie produced in New York. Suffragist groups unite in the United States.
Experiences a mystical encounter with the Cross, after extending great effort to overcome sin and her battle with Tuberculosis. She attends first Keswick Convention, where Hopkins, Meyer, Elder, and Moody preach.	1892	Ellis Island established to process immigrants to US
begins public speaking at YWCA Eastbourne. Helps establish branches of the YWCA in Swansea and Neath.	1894	Great Depression incites rail strike and Coxey Army.
Received criticism after addressing the Keswick Ladies' Meetings on "Reliance upon the Holy Spirit." Miss Soltau, head of the Missionary Training Home of the China Inland Missions, invites Penn-Lewis to address the Mildmay Convention, and the	1895	Japanese defeat the Chinese in the first Sino-Japanese War. The French dominate West Africa.

YWCA Institute published her lecture, <i>The Pathway to Life in God</i> . She lectured at the YWCA, Dublin. Completes <i>Handbook for Workers</i> .	1895	
essie and her husband relocate to Leicester when William becomes City Treasurer. She addresses the first Scandinavian, YWCA conference in Stockholm, Sweden. Her lecture was based on Psalm 68, "An Army of Women Proclaim the Glad Tidings." Russian royalty attend her forum in Stockholm.	1896	Ethiopia wins Independence from Italy. Great Britain captures Ghana.
Completes <i>Conflict in the Heavens</i> , based upon her 1887 lecture at the China Inland Mission. This lecture is expanded into <i>The Warfare with Satan and the Way of Victory</i> , which becomes the basis for <i>War on the Saints</i> , a book that remains in print today. She lectures widely in Sweden, Finland, Russia (St. Petersburg), Switzerland, Berlin and Copenhagen. In Copenhagen, she introduces her work, <i>Pathway to Life</i> . Penn-Lewis lectures on spiritual warfare at the C.I.M. Hall, in London. The <i>Pathway</i> leaflets and <i>The Glorious Secret</i> are translated into Russian. Participates in Rothesay and Langland Bay (South Wales) and Coventry Conventions, as well as meetings in Norwich, Derby, Manchester, London, Glasgow, Dunfermline, Edinburgh, Birmingham, Doncaster, Brighton, Richmond, Walsbury, Leicester, Swansea, and Belfast. Sends her booklets to the Australian Conventions. Finnish and Swedish translation of booklets completed (titles are not specified). Begins her <i>Pathway</i> leaflets.	1897	The Rev. Enoch Sontonga composes melody for national anthem (God bless Africa), used by Tanzania and Zambia to oppose apartheid.
returns to Russia, Finland, Sweden and Denmark, accompanied by Londoner Sophie Wolkoff. Envisions and writes <i>The Message of the Cross</i> . Translated into Swedish, <i>The Message of the Cross</i> enlarged as <i>Cross of Calvary and its Message</i> . Penn-Lewis is a featured speaker at a Conference in Edinburgh, and meetings at Liverpool. She also addresses the Ladies' Meeting at Keswick.	1898	The Fashoda Incident. Britain claims the Nile Basin.
returns to Russia where she writes the <i>Song of Songs</i> . Completes <i>My Hidden Ones</i> and <i>Abandonment to the Spirit</i> . Addresses the Ladies Meetings at Keswick. Penn-Lewis meets Professor W. R. Inge, Assistant-Superintendent of the Moody Bible Institute, Chicago.	1899	Poulsen of Denmark records sound magnetically.
addressed the Keswick Convention as well as the Moody Bible Institute, Chicago. Visits China Inland Mission in Toronto. Declines speaking tour at American Theological Colleges. Addressed gathering in the home Mrs. Cortland de Peyster Field, New York. Mrs. Moody arranges lecture at Mount Hermon Seminary, where she addressed a chapel of 400. Speaks to audiences at the Gospel Tabernacle (of Rev A. B. Simpson) and YWCA, Harlem, New York. Gives address entitled, "Opened Heavens" at Quiet Days, a Christian workers conference in New York. Completes <i>Face to Face</i> .	1900	The English defeat the Boers in South Africa. Boxer revolt in China. Max Planck develops Quantum Theory. The first Zeppelin is built.

Writes <i>The Story of Job</i> while in Switzerland. Returns to Russia, Sweden and Denmark. Marshall Brothers publishes <i>Bible Readings on the Inner Life</i> . Asked to address the Ladies Meetings at the Scottish Keswick, The Bridge of Allen. Due to a cancellation, Penn-Lewis addresses the main session.	1901	Queen Victoria dies. The Socialist Party is founded in Russia.
Addresses the Bridge of Allan Conference, Scotland.	1902	Women gain voting rights in Australia
Participates in Llandrindod Wells Convention, and the Bridge of Allen Conference. Completes <i>The Leading of the Lord</i> , <i>The Word of the Cross</i> , <i>The Cross of Calvary and Its Message</i> , and <i>The Message of the Cross</i> . Returns to Keswick Convention and addresses the Ladies Meeting. Once again, men attend her meetings. Speaks to audiences in Bombay, Madras, Bangalore, Coonorr, and Ootacamund, India. <i>The Word of the Cross</i> and her lectures in India were published in Tamil and other dialects through the Madras Mission Press. ¹⁵⁶⁶ <i>The Word of the Cross</i> was translated into Hebrew, Yiddish and Dutch.	1903	The Wright brothers construct their first airplane flight. The British control Northern Nigeria. Construction of the Panama Canal begins. First message sent over cable across the Pacific, from San Francisco to the Philippines.
Completes <i>Face to Face</i> and <i>Glorious Secret</i> . Travels to Egypt and speaks to 400 students at the Assiut schools. For the next four years, she writes a weekly column for <i>Life of Faith</i> . Writes for <i>The Christian</i> for the next two years, and her work is later published under the title: <i>An Hour of Peril</i> .	1904	Freud publishes <i>Interpretation of Dreams</i> . The Welsh revival begins.
Speaks at a conference for Christian workers in Germany. Completes <i>Life of Faith</i> . Marshall Brothers published <i>Awakening Wales</i> .	1905	Einstein develops theory of special relativity. Welsh Revival continues.
Addresses the Llandrindod Wells Convention. Evan Roberts, the central figure of the Welsh Revival, collapses in nervous exhaustion and convalesces in the Penn-Lewis home for 8 years.	1906	Albert Schweitzer writes <i>The Quest for the Historical Jesus</i> . Women gain the vote in Finland
Promotes the Swansea Conventions and addresses audiences at the Cardiff and Leicester Conferences. Completes <i>Warfare with Satan and the Way of Victory</i> . Begins a bimonthly circulation (8 pages), entitled: <i>The Word of the Cross</i> .	1908	Oil discovered in Persia. First Skyscraper is built in New York. Henry Ford begins mass production of the first "Model A" automobile.
Withdraws from the Ladies' Meetings at the Keswick Convention. Publishes <i>The Overcomer</i> journal, which gains an international audience. Completes <i>Soul and Spirit</i> and <i>The Climax of the Risen Life</i> .	1909	Lois Blériot flies across the English Channel. Paris airs first newsreel.
Withdraws from the Llandindrod Wells Conventions. Completes <i>Conquest of Canaan</i> .	1911	New York fire kills 146 young women workers.
Initiates the Matlock Conference in 1912. Evan Roberts and Jessie Penn-Lewis write <i>War on the Saints</i> , 1912.	1912	The Titanic sinks.
Speaks to audiences in Finland and Sweden. Writes <i>Communion with God</i> and <i>Spiritual Warfare</i> . Addresses audiences at the Matlock Conference.	1913	Niels Bohr conceives structure of the atom. Suffragists march on Washington.
Spends publication of <i>The Overcomer</i> until 1920. Holds	1914	WWI Begins. Women gain vote in

¹⁵⁶⁶ I have viewed these documents at The Donald Gee Study Center, Mattersey Hall, Doncaster, England.

conference at Whitsuntide. Addresses last conference held at Matlock. Other conferences cancelled as a result of WWI.	1914	Norway. Gandhi returns to India. The Panama Canal opens.
Returns to Copenhagen, Stockholm and St. Petersburg.	1915	Without warning, the Germans sink the first British steamship.
<i>War on the Saints</i> is translated into French.	1916	The United States sends first troops to Europe as conflict escalates.
Releases <i>All Things New</i> . Organized a Conference on prayer, from which the booklet a <i>Revival of Prayer</i> was compiled. Sent <i>Overcomer</i> subscribers an "Occasional Papers," over next four years. Becomes editor of <i>The Friend of Israel</i> and <i>The Time of the End</i> .	1917	Russian Revolution begins. US declares war, ending the conflict one year later.
Completes <i>The Magna Charta of Woman</i> .	1919	Versailles Peace Conference held. Poland invades Russia. Massacre in Amritsar, India. War erupts in Afghanistan.
Resumes publication of <i>The Overcomer</i> . Penn-Lewis addresses the "Overcomer Conference" in Swanwick, and her lecture, <i>The Logos of the Cross</i> , is published under the title, <i>Centrality of the Cross</i> .	1920	Ireland granted home rule. H.G. Wells writes <i>Outline of History</i> . Women gain vote in US.
Penn-Lewis is a featured speaker at Swanwick "Overcomer Conference."	1921	Lenin introduces economic reforms in Russia
Penn-Lewis addresses crowds at the Swanwick Convention	1922	James Joyce writes <i>Ulysses</i> .
Swanwick becomes the site of annual Overcomer Conferences. Many ministers attend, including F.B. Meyer. Penn-Lewis too ill to participate. Mr. Penn-Lewis retires one year hence.	1923	Nonstop flight crosses the United States. The Ku Klux Klan is exposed. Earthquake kills 200,000 in Tokyo.
Eccleston Hall, a conference or "Prayer Centre," is donated to Mrs. Penn-Lewis. She relocates the "Overcomer Book Room," resides in, and conducts her ministry from Eccleston Hall.	1924	Vladimir Lenin dies. Trotsky and Stalin battle for dominance over the Soviet state
William Penn-Lewis dies. Jessie addresses crowds at Swanwick. She also returns to Copenhagen and Stockholm for a YWCA affiliate conference.	1925	Kafka writes the <i>Trial</i> . Tennessee outlaws teaching of evolution in public schools.
She takes up full residence at Eccleston place.	1926	British coal miner's strike leads to martial law.
In the last year of her life, Penn-Lewis presides over the main features at Swanwick Conference. She travels to the Keswick Convention in July, and speaks at the Llandrindod Wells Convention on July 29 th . Penn-Lewis dies on August 15 th .	1927	Lindbergh crosses Atlantic. Television is introduced. Radio and Telephone becomes Transatlantic.

The Overcomer journal was edited by Penn-Lewis in the years: 1909, 1910, 1911, 1913, 1914, 1920, 1921, 1922, 1923, 1924, 1925, 1926, 1927.

Appendix B: Historical Material

Jessie Penn-Lewis's Cross Theology had international appeal, for she not only traveled and lectured widely, but her lectures and booklets were also translated into many foreign languages. As a mystic of the classical tradition, Penn-Lewis resisted the Quietism of early Holiness and Keswick conventions. In addition, a particular concern of Cross Theology was to advance women's equality in Christian ministry. Therefore, the purpose of this section is to provide historical examples of Penn-Lewis's international work, along with excerpts of Cross Theology's as it opposed the Quietism of Keswick while advancing women's equal serve alongside men in Christian work. The historical material herein represents a sample of Penn-Lewis's international appeal, her rejection of passivity in experiencing the Cross, as well as her egalitarian impulse, as noted in her lecture and diary notes, letters, lecture leaflets and notices, and other items gathered throughout North American, Wales and England.¹⁵⁶⁷

This original announcement features Penn-Lewis's New York City lecture, October 16-19, 1900. According to the *Herald of Light*, the location of these lectures was No. 21 East Twenty-Sixth Street, which was the home of Mrs. Cortland de Peyster Field. We know Penn-Lewis also addressed audiences at A. B. Simpson's Gospel Tabernacle, 8th Ave and 44th Street in New York, in 1900.¹⁵⁶⁸

Bible Readings

on the Deepening of the Spiritual Life

will (D. V.) be given by

Mrs. Penn-Lewis of Leicester, England,

at 21 East 26th Street, New York,

as follows:

Tuesday, October 16th Thursday, October 18th

Wednesday, " 17th Friday, " 19th

at 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. each day.

Christians of all denominations cordially welcomed

¹⁵⁶⁷ The historical material within Appendix C represents digital copies of original documents collected throughout Wales, England and the United States.

¹⁵⁶⁸ Announcement provided by Brynmor Pierce Jones of Wales.

The following is a copy of the original advertisement of Penn-Lewis's three-lecture series at the China Inland Mission, in Harlem, New York, September 2 - 4, 1900.¹⁵⁶⁹

BIBLE READINGS

FOR CHRISTIANS

Will (D.V.) be conducted by

MRS. PENN-LEWIS

(of Leicester, England, one of the speakers at Keswick),

at the

Young Women's Christian Association

18 Elm Street

ON

Sunday, September 2nd,

at 2 p.m.

At the CHINA INLAND MISSION,

507 Church Street,

Monday Afternoon, Sept. 3rd, at 3 o'clock,

and on

Monday and Tuesday Evenings at 8 o'clock.

also

At the residence of MRS. DUNCAN-CLARK,

111 St. George St. on Tuesday, Sept. 4th.

at 11 a.m.

Christians of all denominations will be cordially welcomed

(PLEASE KEEP THIS FOR REFERENCE.)

¹⁵⁶⁹ Brynmor Pierce Jones, of Wales, provided Penn-Lewis's YWCA lecture notice.

Penn-Lewis addressed the Harlem YWCA, in New York City, October 11-12, 1900.¹⁵⁷⁰

QUIET DAYS

IN PREPARATION FOR THE WINTER'S WORK
AT THE
HARLEM YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION
74 WEST 124TH STREET

MRS. PENN-LEWIS
OF ENGLAND

KNOWN AS A SPEAKER AT THE NOTED KESWICK
CONFERENCES, AND AS THE AUTHOR OF
MANY DEVOTIONAL BOOKS

WILL CONDUCT MEETINGS

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 11TH, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 12TH
3 AND 8 P. M.

THE MEETINGS WILL BE OPEN FOR BOTH MEN AND WOMEN

CHRISTIAN WORKERS ARE SPECIALLY INVITED
TO ATTEND

Penn-Lewis's Moody Bible Institute lectures were held in Chicago, Illinois, September 28 - October 1, 1900.¹⁵⁷¹

Special Meetings for Christians

TO BE ADDRESSED BY
Mrs. Penn-Lewis
of Leicester, England.

IN THE
Moody Bible Institute Lecture Hall
Friday, Sept. 28 to Monday, Oct. 1

Friday : 10:30 a. m.
 4:00 p. m.

Saturday : 10:30 a. m.
 7:00 p. m.

Sunday : 4:00 p. m.

Monday : 10:30 a. m.

— Especially those seeking

The primary qualifications for admission are a consecrated heart, a special fitness for, and a distinct call to, direct work for Christ and souls.

The most thoughtful and loving attention is given to each student individually by those in charge, and earnest spiritual counsel continually offered. Opportunity is provided each day for private devotion, that each one may have the privilege, for a certain length of time, of being alone with God. Devotional exercises for morning and evening.

The tuition, as usual will be free. The moderate charge of \$4.00 per week will be made for board, including room, heat and light.

For further information, regular manual, and application blanks, address,
A. E. Funk, Secretary,
Nyack, New York.

¹⁵⁷⁰ Brynmor Pierce Jones, of Wales, provided Penn-Lewis's Quiet Day Lecture notice.

¹⁵⁷¹ Brynmor Pierce Jones, of Wales, also provided Penn-Lewis's Moody Bible Institute lecture announcement.

Mrs. Penn-Lewis assumed oversight of the 1914 Matlock Conference, as the welcome below suggests.¹⁵⁷² As a prelude to the conference, the welcome begins by celebrating the abundant life. It continues by contrasting between two types of people, those who live on a lower plane and those who reach for the heights. There are those with struggles who are, writer suggests, ever "stretching out to new planes of spiritual aspirations and experiences." Notice the active metaphor. It is by stretching, we are told, that one reaches the heights, "where the snow is pure and the sunrise glorious." We are then asked to distinguish between passivity and grace. Those who are passive know nothing of the struggles that enable some to reach higher altitudes. Reaching the higher planes, where peace is attained, is distinguished from passivity. The speaker warns not to "mistake passivity for grace: do not mistake passivity for confidence and security." For the cause of "passivity is unconsciousness," while the cause of peace is that the life forces have been arrested, presumably through union with Christ.

Penn-Lewis spoke at the Matlock Conference in 1912, 1913 and 1914.

MATLOCK CONFERENCE 1914.

Saturday May 30.

"Welcome Meeting".

Mrs Penn-Lewis has asked me to say a few words at this point, and I have asked the Lord what I shall say, because rightly or wrongly, the first public utterance tells the spirit of all that follows, and Oh, that we may be all "in the Spirit". I came across this word since I came into the Hall - the angel standing at the prison door, speaking to the imprisoned disciples, and this is the message that they got from the angel: "Go, stand and speak to the people all the words of this life". How simple, but how profound

Dear friends, I do not think we have come here simply to split controversial hairs, but we have come that we might receive as from God the words of this life. We so seldom remember, that life, and life only is the crown and the purpose of teaching, and I gather that we have been drawn here from various parts of the kingdom that we might get yet more of the abundant life, and the abundant life is the victorious life, the ascendant life, an ever-ascending life, a life that is so Divine in its inception and in its power that its crown is a translation into the likeness of the Source of Life Himself.

May that be our joy and blessing at this time, that we may go away from this Conference of the Lord's people with a new hold on this abundant life. Many come to Matlock from all parts of the Continent in order that they may repair the ravages of disease, and by the potency of the waters they go away with renewed strength. Well, there are two classes of people here.

There are those who have problems and difficulties, and the people who have none, and the people who have difficulties and problems are the people who are ever stretching out to new planes of spiritual aspiration and experience, and very often the people who have none are those who are content with the lower plane of life. They know nothing of the struggles, in order to gain these higher altitudes, where the snow is pure, and the sunrise is glorious.

Friends, do not mistake passivity for grace: do not mistake passivity for confidence and security. I do not know anyone more passive than a person who has fainted by the way, but the cause of the passivity is unconsciousness, the cause of the peace is that there is a paralysis of the forces of life. It is not death, but a similitude of death.

I pray that this Conference may awake some souls from spiritual faintness. It is better to be in perplexity than to live in a false paradise. So here we are, by the mercies of God, once more. As a resident of Matlock I am glad to see you, I offer you a very hearty welcome to our town, I trust that you will be invigorated in body as well as in spirit, and that you may go home strengthened for what lies before you, for tomorrow is in the hands of God, and we know not what tests there will be. We know not what lies before us that will test the fortitude of our character, the depth of our faith, and the vitality of this abundant life we have received from Him Who is the Way, and the Truth, and the Life.

So if you have a life that you are proud of, I pray God that you may lose it, in order that you may gain it. That you may lose what the world calls liberty, and gain that which the

Master knows to be the most precious of all, a victorious spirit, a dominating spirit, dominating not over flesh and blood tender to all men - but dominating in that ever-increasing wrestle against principalities and powers, and the rulers of this world's darkness. May the Lord meet us graciously.

¹⁵⁷² Copy of the 1914 Matlock Convention Welcome was provided by the Donald Gee Center, Doncaster, England.

Penn-Lewis's Leicester Convention lecture ¹⁵⁷³ reveals her concern that revival is God's work, rather than a human invention. Distinguishing between the abuses of revival with understanding genuine revival, Penn-Lewis suggested that authentic revival is initiated as the Holy Spirit enables the church to confront sin, particularly personal sin. She writes: "It is a mockery to pray God to put others right, if we refuse to let him put us right! Revival means war against sin and Satan. Enthusiasm will die out. We do not want enthusiasm: But the working of the Spirit of God..."

Revival, or God's renewing presence through the Holy Spirit, must function in cooperation with humans, rather than through human initiative alone. Thus, the Holy Spirit, is "the presiding presence in the church," and as such must initiate and lead revival work. Christians must rely upon the Holy Spirit and for this reason there was an empty chair placed on or near the platform, to suggest that the real chairman of the Convention was the presiding Holy Spirit, rather than a person.¹⁵⁷⁴ Penn-Lewis writes:

[The Holy Spirit] can manifest His Presence in such flood-tide power that no human channel, however God-filled, can preside but must stand back in awe, as at Pentecost. To this end a “leader” is acting in co-operation with the Spirit of God moving among the people...¹⁵⁷⁵

Penn-Lewis addressed the Leicester Convention in 1897 and 1908.

The Object of "Revival"

Further notes on the Leicester Convention
By Wm. Penn Lewis

We have for six years been praying for a world-
wide awakening, & at the present time we are devout
prayer upon Great Britain asking for a "revival"
"Revival" throughout the land, but alas, as soon
we begin to translate prayer into action, & to move
forward ^{into the new} ~~the~~ revival so that God may ^{be able} ~~be able~~
to answer our petition, we are discovering that
the minds of many children of God this is a prepa-
ration against the ~~very~~ ^{very} revival, based upon wrong concepts
of what "revival" really means. They seem to see

religion. If this is so, it is obvious that one of
most serious hindrances ~~to~~ in the way of ~~God's~~
~~petitioners~~ being answered, lies among the people by
for ~~their~~ ~~own~~ pray for "Revival" with any hope of a real
response ~~only~~ from God, when He sees in the mind
of so many a prejudice & fear which will co-
ther to at once cheer or quench the ~~first~~ work
of His Spirit when He moves? It is ~~this~~ sa-
to leave to say therefore that the first work in
preparation for Revival must be to ~~remove~~ ~~the~~

[illegible]

How much we need light upon what Revival means & how little we know intelligently the conditions & to co-operate with God for the triumph of His about His & still more how to keep "Revival" when it comes many of us do content it to be on the last day of the seventh conviction, but through the asperities of which there are certain main principles existing, and which are eternal and sure that if the children of God will put away their prejudices & set themselves

"Peter was nominally, a apparently, the

¹⁵⁷³ Penn-Lewis's Leicester Convention thirteen-page lecture was copied with permission from the Donald Gee Center, Doncaster.

¹⁵⁷⁴ Penn-Lewis, "Leicester Convention Lecture," p. 8.

1575 Ibid.

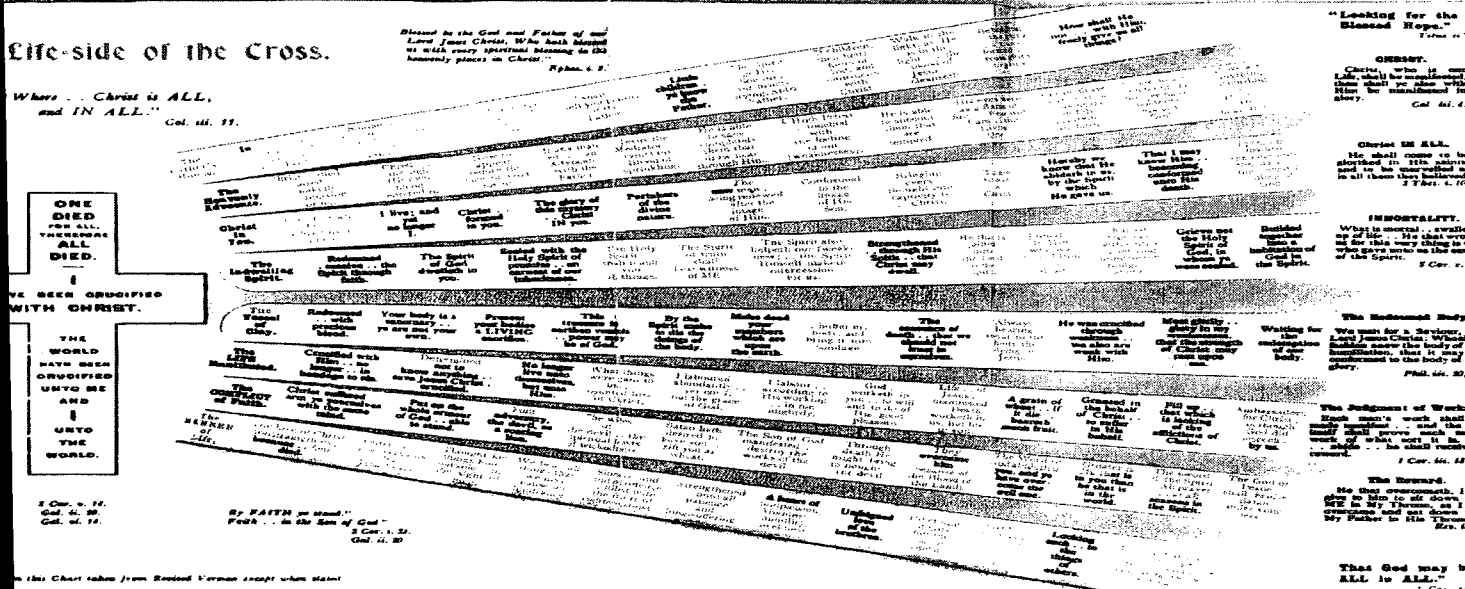
Said the speaker, but not "best". We must be "best"
preaching, we can't preach any more for the sake of
preaching, but feel that we must die if we do not win souls.
"How shall I reach the people in that public house?"
Said a deaconess, respecting possibly some light or
method, but "Get at God" & "You will soon get at its
people", said Mr. Roberts, for a revival it is God
come down - God every where - God in the street & the
train & the market place & the land.

But it was on the Thursday, after the meeting in the
Lodge Hall, that the Confession reached its highest point.
The hall was full, & men crowded in the corridor & even out
into the open. Mr. Roberts began by saying that the first
need after the meeting was to have the "burdens" lifted off
for how could they pray for others when crowded and
saddened by burdened hearts. "Now all bring out your
personal burdens" he said, "I will take them to God!
Has the stream come - "My five sisters answered; "my
father," "my church," "my brother" - such a volume
of "needs" until all were "unloaded." In the midst
of the stream a brother rose with something more than
personal need. "No, if you please," said Mr. Roberts
"I would entirely break the current, & direct the
effluvia of the moment." So the brother sat down, & the
volume & needs kept pouring forth until all men talked
to God, & the whole meeting visibly lightened. Now
said the leader, you are free for others. God has a
higher claim for this meeting yet." So we waited a

He said
the young men of Leicester, & then another
volunteer came ^{as by} a thousand bearing towards
Lord the needs of Leicester, & then the world - all
& mission world of all kinds. Now to reach the
the prison, the slums, the people, the higher &
the tide rose, & hearts were being fired with hope
fire. He whose mission was filled with life
power ~~intended~~ ^{revival} the dominant force in the church
& God ready to be liberated if it can only be done
& given outlet.

And ~~was~~ ^{about} ~~what was~~ ^{some of the results?} On the Market Square on the Friday morning could be seen a ~~number~~ ^{of} about sixty or more of the Company, ~~the~~ ^{the} hands of the three brethren giving breakfast to unemployed, & preaching the Gospel. What a scene was. ~~In witness of the power of the~~ ^{the} stood three Welsh men & a noble band of young men who had come to the Convention, as well as some lady-workers. The "Court" had turned out to the Market Square! The power of the Spirit rested upon the crowd in a tense hour in answer to the appeals numbers came out for Christ. Men were saved, talks on their knees in the street; a visible object lesson given, not of the Presidency of the Holy Spirit in a meeting, but ~~a~~ ^{of} what God can do in the soul.

Diagram of *The Life-Side of the Cross*. 1576



Photographs of Jessie Penn-Lewis

Jessie and William Penn-Lewis ¹⁵⁷⁷



Penn-Lewis at her desk ¹⁵⁷⁸





Gerrard & Sons 15
162, BLDANE ST. LONDON, S.W.
and at RICHMOND, SURREY.

Penn-Lewis in India. ¹⁵⁷⁹



MRS. PENN-LEWIS IN INDIA, 1903.

<p>Penn-Lewis with her Bible. ¹⁵⁸⁰</p>  <p><i>Jessie Penn-Lewis.</i> OCTOBER 1905</p>	<p>Penn-Lewis in Russia. ¹⁵⁸¹</p>  <p>MRS. PENN-LEWIS IN RUSSIA.</p>
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¹⁵⁷⁷ Gerrard, p. 256.
¹⁵⁷⁸ Picture provided by the Donald Gee Center, Doncaster.
¹⁵⁷⁹ Gerrard, p. 208.
¹⁵⁸⁰ Ibid., p. vi.
¹⁵⁸¹ Ibid., p. 88.

The *Herald of Light*¹⁵⁸² published a summary of Mrs. Penn-Lewis's American lectures. The author disapproved of Penn-Lewis's disdain for crosses worn as jewelry, which for Penn-Lewis represented a morbid delight in the "suffering, shame, agony for the One we profess to love!"¹⁵⁸³

HERALD OF LIGHT

AND MISSION WORKER

A Monthly Review of Aggressive Christian Work and Thought.

By E. C. FERRY, Editor-in-Chief and
Publisher.
HARVEY BLAKE LONERGAN, Editor.
V. JOSEPH PERRY, Contributing Editor.

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NOVEMBER, 1900.

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By WILLIAM R. NEWELL.

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College Girls and Christian Work.

By Miss EDITH C. TORREY,
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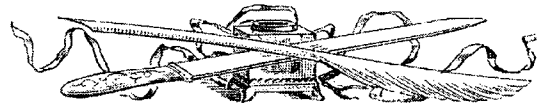
Sunshine Settlement Opens.

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HERALD OF LIGHT.



COLLEGE GIRLS AND CHRISTIAN WORK.

AN INTERVIEW WITH MISS EDITH C. TORREY, OF MOUNT HOLYOKE COLLEGE, MASS.

In the ranks of the martyrs who have recently given their lives for Christ in China, we find the name of Miss Mary L. Partridge, a graduate of Mount Holyoke Seminary. Mary Lyons's garment is not without a wearer, and the Lord need not look in vain for servants within the walls of this and many other woman's colleges. Mount Holyoke supplies teachers to the South Hadley (Mass.) Church Sabbath School, has Bible and mission classes, and sends several hundred dollars yearly for the spread of the Gospel in heathen lands. Besides this, Mount Holyoke girls help in the religious work at the poor farm, and look after several girls' clubs in Holyoke. Miss Edith C. Torrey, daughter of the Rev. R. A. Torrey, of Chicago, is a student there, and in an interview with the editor of the *HERALD OF LIGHT*, said the other day: "Our college is fine educationally and spiritually. There are 522 students here, and of these 475 are members of the Y. W. C. A. The students here are not apt to be skeptics or irreligious, for the influences round about them are too good for that. I would think that any girl who is not a Christian would feel uncomfortable here. The oft-repeated statement that a college education hinders marriage, is, I think, false. I do not see why one has to be ignorant in order to marry. The time before marriage may be longer, but it will not be hindered ultimately. During the past year there has been a considerable increase in wedding invitations from former students.

"I think a college education to be most desirable for a Christian worker. The training of her mind enables her to grasp a foreign language easily (if she be a foreign missionary), and helps her, no matter what her work is, to solve many

problems that an uneducated girl would fail before. Of course, a college education will not separate a girl from the common people, provided she studies with the right end in view. If she just crowds her brain with study she had better stop at once, but if she studies that she may be better fitted for her life work, her education will be a blessing to her. Some of the college studies develop an interest in politics, and in the general welfare of the country, and just now we are all deeply interested in the coming election, but I do not think that many of us care about woman suffrage. I think that a college life helps a girl physically. The regular hours which a student must keep here at Mount Holyoke, together with the gymnastic work which is required of her, tend to make her stronger. Of course, some girls persist in studying when they ought to be resting, and then they break down. On the whole, I think that a college education is one of the finest aids to a consecrated girl."

MRS. PENN LEWIS IN NEW YORK.

Mrs. Penn Lewis, of England, has been giving very successful addresses throughout the United States during the past few months. After leaving the Moody Bible Institute at Chicago, where she taught for several days at the big convention held there, she came on to New York. Special services were conducted by her at the home of Mrs. Cortland de Peyster Field, No. 21 East Twenty-sixth street, and a great deal of appreciation was expressed because Mrs. Field had brought her on to New York. Some of Mrs. Penn Lewis's gems were: "The very spiritual person is not apt to be practical; the trouble with him is that with his head in heaven he forgets that his feet are on earth. * * * The Bible says, 'All have sinned and come short of the glory of God,' and this is how we read it: 'All have sinned and come short of the glory

¹⁵⁸² The *Herald of Light*, vol VII, no. 11, November, 1900, pp. 5-6.

¹⁵⁸³ Ibid., p. 6.

of God—but me.’ * * * I detest the fashion of wearing crosses and using them as emblems of our faith. The cross means suffering, shame, agony for the One we profess to love! Is it not a morbid delight that we take in it? Imagine a parent wanting to kiss and reverence the knife of the Boxer who cut off her daughter’s head! We shudder at the death of a dear friend, a father, a mother, a husband, a child, but we glory and rejoice in the emblem of Christ’s sufferings. Think over this—does it not mean that our love is not as true as for earthly loved ones?”

In these quotations we have attempted to give Mrs. Penn Lewis’ thoughts, not to quote her exact words, and if we are allowed a word of comment here, we would say: “We believe that the cross is really worn by thousands *because they love Christ in truth*, and by others who do not care a mite for Him. There is a vast difference between the love we bear our Saviour and that we bear earthly friends. *The cross stands for our salvation*, while the death of friends only stands for their physical suffering and ours. The cross precedes resurrection, and the glory life, and the very reason we should wear it is this: It was an emblem of shame until Christ died upon it. Since then it has been *honored, a royal emblem, a thing to be exalted*; God forbid that I should glory *save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.*”

Mrs. Penn Lewis has said many grand things and is a truly taught teacher, but on a question like this we all have a right to an opinion. Many will agree with her, some with us. Let us thank God that we are all members of His Body.

STIMULANTS AND THE EYE.

Dr. Reik says that excessive use of alcohol and tobacco affects the eyes very seriously, and that for some people tobacco is a poison and produces a lesion in the nerve of the eye leading to blindness. The most important thing of all, however, in order to take care of the sight, is to get sufficient light to work and read by. The most desirable location of a light to read by is from above, behind, and to the left of the body. Of artificial lights, the incandescent electric is the best, though the use of incandescent mantles has much improved gaslight. Where coal oil is the only illuminant, the so-called student lamps make a very satisfactory light.

THE CANTEN AND MCKINLEY.

During the past few weeks we have been in receipt of letters for and against our article in last month’s issue entitled: “McKinley and the W. C. T. U.” In that article we tried to show that the W. C. T. U. *was not in politics*, and that the sensational papers had misquoted that grand body of women. We neither defended nor attacked the President. We do not know how others have felt about it, but when the canteen question came up a few years ago, we felt he needed and deserved our prayers more than our criticism. There is a sin that is as ugly as one as we can think of, and that is imputing the very worst motives to everyone who does not agree with us. In Danville, Ill., there is an old soldiers’ home, and the engineer (a good Protestant) told us that the establishment of a temporary canteen “kept the lock-up clear of drunks, and when they were obliged to go again to the low saloons for rum, it was full all the time, and every cent they had went.”

May it not be that the President believed, with a good many of his officers and surgeons, whose opinions were published in various papers, that the canteen was better than the low groggery? We do not say he was right—we only refrain from abusing him. We are for temperance *first, last and always*—in drinking, eating, talking, judging, and even in preaching. There are hundreds of true Christian men in the army and out of it who think the canteen is *a curse*, and the President its sponsor. We respect their views, and mayhap they are right. The settlement of the saloon question lies with our millions of voting church members, not with the President solely. Two letters from esteemed readers follow:

To the Editor: I have been a subscriber for your paper for about three years. I am pained to find in your last issue an attempt to gloss over McKinley’s canteen record. I know a little something about the work you are doing in the slums of New York, and know that rum is the cause for the need of most of it, and so do you, and when you go out of your way to defend a person who could do much to stop its ravages in our army I must rebuke you for it. Last year I sent you a list of subscribers for the *Mission Worker* and intended to do the same this year, but must refuse to do so under the circumstances. It is not a matter of personal opinion whether Mr. McKinley is right or wrong: it is simply a fact that Congress passed a law prohibiting the sale of intoxicating liquors in any camp of the army, and the law has been nullified by the President of the United States. If you had not been called upon to defend the President, had not said anything about political matters, I should

Keswick's popular hymnist—Frances R. Havergal, wrote the popular hymn, "Like a River Glorious."¹⁵⁸⁴ Havergal's hymn reflects Keswick's emphasis on rest with its subsequent mastery over life's temptations and challenges.

THE KESWICK HYMN-BOOK

Compiled by the Trustees of the
KESWICK CONVENTION

MARSHALL, MORGAN & SCOTT, LTD.
London :: Edinburgh

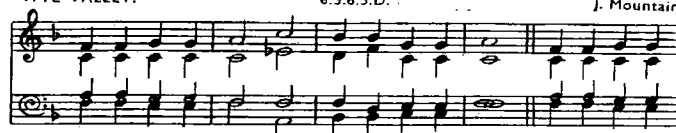
UNION WITH CHRIST

WYE VALLEY:

6.5.6.5.D.

213

J. Mountain.



* REFRAIN



- 1 Like a river, glorious
Is God's perfect peace,
Over all victorious
In its bright increase,
Perfect, yet it floweth
Fuller ev'ry day,
Perfect, yet it groweth
Deeper all the way.
*Stayed upon Jehovah,
Hearts are fully blest;
Finding, as He promised,
Perfect peace and rest.*
- 2 Hidden in the hollow
Of His blessed hand,
Never foe can follow,
Never traitor stand;
Not a surge of worry,
Not a shade of care,
Not a blast of hurry,
Touch the spirit there.
- 3 Ev'ry joy or trial
Falleth from above,
Traced upon our dial
By the Sun of Love.
We may trust Him fully
All for us to do;
They who trust Him wholly
Find Him wholly true.

F. R. Havergal.

¹⁵⁸⁴ *The Keswick Hymn-Book*, compiled by the Trustees of the Keswick Convention. (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, Ltd., 1936), p. 191.

Our Onward Way published Penn-Lewis's summary of the Rev. Andrew Murray's Wimbledon homily entitled, "Our Summer Outing." 1585

Aug. 1895

OUR ONWARD WAY.

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Our Summer Outing.



THE loveliest day we have ever had," was the unanimous verdict of the Richmond Institute Members and Friends on the way home on July 3rd from their "Summer Outing." Mr. and Mrs. Albert Head had most kindly invited us to Corrie Lodge, Wimbledon, while their guests, the Rev. and Mrs. Andrew Murray, were with them, and it was with happy expectations that we started in brakes from Richmond early in the afternoon.

We sought the presence of the Lord in prayer ere we left the Institute, and then enjoyed a drive through Richmond Park to Wimbledon Common, where Mrs. Head met us, and led us to a cosy little nook among the trees above Queen's Mere, for "Afternoon Tea." The time was all too short in this lovely spot, and then we wended our way to Corrie Lodge, where, at 6.30, we gathered on the lawn for tea. The weather had been lovely, but a sharp shower came just in time to send us into the Drawing-room for the closing word from Mr. Murray. The room was quite crowded, our party numbering about 100.

Mr. Head led the Meeting, and after Mrs. Murray had told us of Y.W.C.A. work in Cape Town, and pleaded for intercessory prayer on behalf of the deep needs of young women in South Africa, Rev. Andrew Murray rose to speak to us. We truly felt the presence of God, as he talked quite simply of

"The Heavenly treasure in the earthen vessel," somewhat as follows.

2 Cor. iv. 7. *First, the Treasure.* In Heaven there is a Treasure that fills the heavens, and here am I, just a common little jar, that may be as full as it can hold of the Heavenly Treasure.

God has only one Treasure—His beloved Son. He calls Him "My Treasure," and God has put all His riches and all His treasures into Jesus. In Him are hidden all the treasures (Col. ii. 3). God delights in His Son, and as God delights in Him so may you. You may have a share, and become unspeakably rich in Jesus, as He will pour Himself into you.

"God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," 2 Cor. iv. 6.

The light of God,

The glory of God,

The face of Jesus,

all these are heavenly things.

The face of Jesus is the Treasure. Many believers do not know that they have such a Treasure. Some years ago a field in South Africa containing £40,000 of diamonds might have been bought for £1,000, all because they did not know the value of the diamonds. If we do not know we have this Heavenly Treasure, we are very poor. Do learn to say, I am so rich! I have such a Treasure! I am rich beyond all thought—so rich to give away!

But how does God give this Treasure?

Not as we give. We give perhaps a shilling to a beggar, and he goes away, and we see no more of him. But not so God. This is a shining like the sunshine—it cannot be received and taken away. You cannot bathe in sunlight a minute longer than it shines into you—it must be got from the sun moment by moment. So this Heavenly Treasure keeps me waiting upon God all the day, that it may shine into me.

The Heavenly Treasure is love. The moment love seeks itself it is dead. It is just the love of Jesus shining out and seeking those in darkness. Sunshine cannot keep itself to itself. It is the mysterious nature of this Heavenly Sunshine that directly we begin to grasp it to ourselves it seems to die away. We cannot have sunshine and keep it to ourselves. See the sun shining on that tree. If the tree could say, "Nobody must see me," can it be hidden before the darkness comes on? Whilst the light is on it, it must be seen. We are earthen vessels made to hold the Heavenly Treasure, and nothing else; made to let the life, and love, and riches, and treasures of Jesus shine out.

Now let us look at the earthen vessel. On a table one day, I saw a silver mug with milk in it, and a little brown earthenware jar with cream in it. But nobody refused the cream because it was in an earthen jar. We like the silver jug, but God loves to put His richest treasures in the earthen jar. This is a very important lesson. Christians think so much of their weakness—"I am so stupid, so weak, so foolish; somebody else is gifted, and she can do better"—we forget God wants the earthen jar.

In South Africa there was an infidel, and no one could

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OUR ONWARD WAY.

deal with him, and one day the minister sent the elder of the church, a clever and pious man, to see him. He argued with him, but he could not be convinced: it was of no use. But, there was an old farmer who had prayed for years for that infidel (who was a blacksmith). Early one morning he took his horse and rode to see this man, who greeted him with, "Well, what brings you here at this hour?" The old farmer stammered badly, and when he was greeted like this he could not get a word out. The infidel laughed. This made it worse. At last the old man burst into tears, and stammered out, "I am so anxious about your soul, and hurried away. This led to the conversion of the infidel. Ah! see the Heavenly Treasure in the earthen vessel.

This teaches us courage, but humility. I have nothing in myself. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted"; he that confesses that he is but an earthen vessel, shall be filled with the Heavenly Treasure. Oh, the curse of pride and self. We want God to give us something that we may be something, but God wants us "nothing." A Heavenly Treasure in an earthen vessel. Paul had been in danger of forgetting this. He had preached with the demonstration of the Spirit and power. He had been caught up to the third heaven, and heard things impossible to utter. Then God allowed "a messenger of Satan" to humble him. Paul prayed about it three times, but Jesus said, "No, Paul. I have taken you into the third heaven, and you have been in danger of thinking you are a heavenly vessel. I have sent this to humble you, and My strength is made perfect in weakness." So Paul said, "Praise God. I shall rejoice now in all the troubles that come."

Then Paul says afterwards, "though I have laboured more than all, I am nothing. I never dream that I am doing it. I am not a whit behind the chief apostles, yet it is not I."

Now, after talking of the Heavenly Treasure and the earthen vessel—

What about the application? Who among you desires to be an earthen vessel filled with the Treasure? Ah, the need of it! Four millions in London who never go to a place of worship. How awful in a Christian land. Ought we not to call it a heathen land? And among the one million who do go, how much formality, and what a small number really know Christ and the Heavenly Treasure. If every one here gave up her life to God to be a vessel filled with the Treasure it would not be too many. Nay, if we were a thousand here it would not be too many.

Now, to go back to our illustration. Before the cream was put in that earthen jar, I am sure

It must have been clean. So God must cleanse pride and selfishness from the earthen vessels.

Then that jar must not only have been clean but empty;

no vinegar, or wine, or milk, left in to mix with the cream. So many of the earthen vessels are not full of sin, but full of other things—lawful things, good things. Yes, the good must go out as well as the sin—the things that nobody can say are wicked—or else there is not room for the Heavenly Treasure. The love of father, mother, sister, brother, must be laid down for God to fill with the love of Christ.

Then the vessel must be very low. The lower down the easier to fill. Some vessels may be clean and empty, but not low enough. They do not hide themselves in the dust, therefore God cannot fill them. Oh, let us pray, "lower down, lower down, lower down, Lord; nothing, nothing, nothing, that God alone may be exalted."

This address was listened to with rapt attention, and the time that followed was very precious as one and another led in prayer, seeking to be earthen vessels—clean, empty, and low—for the Heavenly Treasure to be manifested in them. Quietly we then broke up, and made our way to the brakes which awaited us, Mr. Murray giving a little word to the few who were near him. To one it was "You are very rich, richer than Mr. Cecil Rhodes!"

After giving our farewell thanks to our kind host and hostess, with glad and praising hearts we started on our moonlight drive to Richmond, the rain being over and gone. The snatches of hymns, "Oh, the peace my Saviour gives," etc., that occasionally broke on the still night air from the occupants of the different brakes, told of the gladness filling many hearts, as they rejoiced over the Heavenly Treasure which they had seen exalted in the earthen vessel that had brought them the message that night. "And they glorified God in (him)."—Gal. i. 24.

"Oh to be but emptier, lowlier,
Mean, unnoticed, and unknown,
And to God a vessel holier—
Filled with Christ and Christ alone."

JESSIE PENN-LEWIS,

Hon. Sec. Richmond Institute.

Branch News.

BEXLEY HEATH.—On Wednesday, June 27th, by the kind invitation of the Misses Beadle, the Members of this Branch enjoyed their annual Summer Entertainment in the grounds of Millfield. About 50 sat down to a strawberry tea at 5 o'clock, after which the Secretary, Miss Beadle, briefly addressed the Members. Miss Prentice, of London, followed with a very earnest and helpful address. Games were then entered into with great spirit, and a most enjoyable evening was brought to a close about 9.30.

Penn-Lewis's article, "The Leading of the Lord," was a spiritual autobiography, published in *The Christian*, December 24, 1903.¹⁵⁸⁶

DECEMBER 24, 1903.

The Leading of the Lord.

By MRS. PENN LEWIS.

IN response to a request—which came to me bearing the mark of its being the will of God—to tell the story of the way in which God has led and taught me in His service, I have sought to do so briefly and from the spiritual alone. It can easily be seen that it is out a surface sketch. I have also written in the first person, feeling it to be more in accord with the simplicity which is in Christ. It is to the glory of His grace that He should pick up a frail broken vessel, and fulfil its petitions more abundantly than heart could ask, or mind could think. That He may do the same for every reader, is my one desire in telling of His grace.

I was brought up in the very heart of the religious life of Wales, for my grandfather was a Welsh divine, well-known throughout the Principality in his day, and my father's house was a rendezvous for the ministers as they passed hither and thither on their Master's work. My childhood's memories gather round their visits and the great meetings of the Sunday-schools, when often I sat as a tiny child in the midst of the grave elders in the "big pew," listening with intense interest to the "hurl" of the minister. "The mercy of the Lord is . . . to children's children," but as it is often with children brought up in the midst of religious surroundings, the true inward change of heart did not come until I had married and moved away to England. Then it occurred without the aid of any human instrument, but the day—New Year's—and hour are imprinted on my . . .

Only a deep, inward desire to know that I was a child of God; a taking down of my (too little read) Bible from the shelf; a turning over the leaves, and the eye falling on the words, "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all;" again, a casual turn of the sacred pages, and the words, "He that believeth hath eternal life." A quick facing out whether I did believe that God had laid my sins upon the Lamb of God on the Cross; a pause of wonderment that it really said that I had eternal life if I simply believed God's Word; a quick cry of "Lord, I do believe"—and one more soul had passed from death to life, a trophy of the grace of God, and the love of Him who died. The Spirit of God instantly bore witness with my spirit that I was a child of God, and deep peace filled my soul.

The new life bore fruit in that I sought to conquer my besetting sins, whereas hitherto I had found myself at their mercy, as I feebly attempted to restrain them. But my attempts still ended in abject failure, and the succeeding few months was a record of bitter repentance, and many tears over sins I could not conquer. At this point we removed to Richmond, Surrey, and found our way to Holy Trinity Church. The first sermon I heard from Rev. Evan H. Hopkins was an opening of heaven to my soul. I learned the secret of victory, and it was not long before I proved the power of God to deliver from the bondage of sin through the precious blood of Christ.

Under the Spirit-led teaching of Mr. Hopkins, and the earnest loving help of his noble wife, I learned the joy of full surrender, and the possibilities of a Spirit-filled life. But active service for Christ seemed far away from me, for, from childhood, my health had been frail, and now winter after winter was spent in increasing suffering from bronchial and lung attacks. It seemed as if my life was slowly ebbing away. Nevertheless, in 1890, with apparently only a brief span of life before me, I ventured to take the hon. secretaryship of the Richmond Y.W.C.A. Institute—"If only for six months," I said, for my whole heart was drawn out in service for the King.

Gradually I learnt to draw upon the Lord for strength for His work, so that in spite of continued ill-health and suffering, for three whole years, I worked, and organized, and laboured incessantly. In 1891, I became conscious that the spiritual results were not equivalent to the labour of the work. I began to question whether I knew the fulness of the Spirit. Without doubt I had received Him, and had "entered into rest" as concerned my own life and fellowship with God; but, when I compared the small results of my service with the fruit given to the apostles at Pentecost, I could not but own that I did not know the Holy Spirit in the fulness of His power. My weekly Bible-class also was a

The fulfilment of my petitions seemed further away than ever. Then the Spirit of God began to question me, and to bring to light the "thoughts and intents" of my heart.

Why did I desire the fulness of the Spirit? Was it for success in service, and that I should be considered a much used worker? Would I desire the same fulness of the Spirit if it meant apparent failure, and the becoming "the offscouring of all things" in the eyes of others? This had not occurred to me before, and I quickly agreed to any conditions the Lord should please to set before me.

Again came a question: *Would I be willing to have no great experience, but agree to live and walk entirely by faith on the Word of God?* This, too, was a new aspect, but I quickly answered "Yes." Then came the climax when one morning I awoke, and, lo, I beheld before me a hand holding up in terrible light a handful of filthy rags, whilst a gentle voice said: "This is the outcome of all your past service for God." "But, Lord, I have been surrendered and consecrated to Thee all these years. It was consecrated work!" "Yes, My child, but all your service has been consecrated self; the outcome of your own energy; your own plans for winning souls; your own devotion. All for Me, I grant, but yourself all the same." Then came the still small voice once more, and this time it was with one little word—"Crucified."

"Crucified!" What did it mean? I had not asked to be crucified, but to be filled. But since the Spirit of God kept ringing the word "Crucified" in my heart, He must know best. As a little child, I rested on the word thus given; and then, "it pleased God to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him." *I knew the Risen Lord.*

The Holy Spirit already dwelling in my heart had fulfilled His office, and revealed the glorious Lord in full possession of His temple. "Glorious, indeed, is this Anointing! Where will it end? Waters to swim in, no little trickling rivulet!" wrote Mrs. Hopkins to me on March 25, 1892. Immediately the living waters broke out as "torrents" in the work, and like a "tidal wave" lifted it, so to speak, on to a new plane, my fellow-workers coming into the tide with joy.

The Bible-classes were thronged; on all sides souls were convicted of sin, and brought to Christ. The converts became, in their turn, soul-winners. The dead prayer-meetings were changed into times of blessed access to the Father. In such an atmosphere of the Holy Spirit none could be dumb. Answers to prayer rejoiced our hearts. Souls were won for Christ even at our social gatherings.

The usual trouble over finances changed into records of sometimes romantic answers to prayer; we learnt that where the Holy Ghost was free to work, He provided the funds, and deficits in our yearly balance-sheets were things of the past.

We had sought to arouse missionary interest with difficulty, but in the atmosphere of the Spirit our hearts became enlarged. We began to pray for the whole world, and to ask that the living waters flowing amongst us might reach to the ends of the earth—the Lord answering these prayers by the scattering of one and another to various parts of the world, whilst calls poured in upon me to carry the message of abundant life to other places in Great Britain.

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MRS. PENN LEWIS.

From Photograph by Messrs. Goss & Stuart, 103, St. James Street, W.

¹⁵⁸⁶ A copy of *The Christian*, December 24, 1903, pp. 17-18, was provided by the Donald Gee Center, Doncaster. The article is a summary of Penn-Lewis's early years, also documented by Gerrard, *Mrs. Jessie Penn-Lewis: A Memoir*. (London: The Overcomer Book Room, 1930)

Two years had I laboured in my own strength without the anointing Spirit, and four happy years afterwards was I permitted to watch what He could do, when we consent to be crucified, and to give Him right of way through us to souls. My "six months" had been prolonged into *six years* by the wondrous grace of God.

Then came the wider service which God had purposed for me, and which I had not dreamed of, when I sought the fulness of the Spirit; and which, from physical frailty, it seemed impossible ever could be mine. But by this time the knowledge of my resources in God had grown, and I was able to cast myself in utter abandonment upon Him, and find all-sufficiency for all my need, at all times and in all circumstances.

In 1896, we removed to Leicester, and at once came a call to Sweden. Another crisis in my life had come. Raised from the grave, so to speak, for the Lord's service, my husband felt, with me, that my life was a trust from God to be used only for the Master's Kingdom. With one mind we yielded that life anew to Him who claimed it, that He might make the fullest possible use of the frail vessel. Not disobedient to the heavenly vision, I crossed the North Sea to Stockholm for the first Scandinavian Conference of the Y.W.C.A. Delegates from Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Finland gathered together, and the devotional meetings held in the Freemasons' beautiful hall were thrown open to the public. It was my first experience in speaking through an interpreter, and on the last day I saw the Holy Spirit move upon the large audience in a remarkable way; at the close of the afternoon meeting, many broke out into prayer at the same time in their own languages—yet there was no discord. It seemed to me like the music of a rippling brook. Was it thus at Pentecost?

The year after this, came a call to Russia, ere I went for a few weeks two winters in succession, visiting Copenhagen, Denmark, twice, on my way home. In 1898, I went for a second visit to Finland for a great Conference held at Helsingfors, when about eighty delegates were present from all parts of the country. Most of the devotional meetings were entrusted to me, and on the last day I gave the Lord's message, morning, afternoon, and evening, with two translators—Swedish and Finnish—the power of God upon us making the message as clear and full as if it were in the original language of the people.

In the summer of 1900, the way opened for a brief tour in America, where I held meetings amongst the people of God in Canada and the United States, visiting Ottawa, Kingston, Toronto, Chicago (Moody's Bible Institute), Northfield, Philadelphia, and New York City. Again, during the early months of 1903, I visited Southern India, giving Bible-readings in Bombay, Madras, Bangalore, Coonoor, and Ootacamund.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE PURPOSE OF GOD IN THE WIDER SERVICE THUS GIVEN TO ME?

The change in my own life as a Christian worker—working *without* and *with* the fulness of the Anointing Spirit—has been so definite and marked, that from the time of my own emergence into liberty, Christian workers have been the burden of my heart. From the hour

Spirit of God whispered, "Crucified" to me, I also saw clearly the principle of death with Christ as the basis for the full working of God through the believer. It was as great a revelation to me as when at the first I saw my "iniquity laid upon Him" on the tree. In one instant I understood that if my sins were there, they were not on me. In like manner, when I was seeking, with all the in-

tensity of my being, the fulness of the Holy Ghost, after the word "Crucified" came I understood very quickly the key to the full possession and out-working of the blessed Spirit in co-operation with our surrender, trust, and obedience. Crucified with Christ, there is room for Him to fill us; and we have only to consent to be out of His way on the cross, and yield implicit obedience to His workings. How simple the plan, yet how deep, for it gives no place to the creature to glory before God!

The light given of God that day has never since been unseen or questioned. The Lord had revealed to me a principle which, if applied and acted upon, would lead out into unknown realms of blessing, and untreaded of possibilities. We speak of "applied chemistry." What discoveries are made in the laboratory of the scientist, as he applies the principles he knows! So in the spiritual realm. The Lord had mightily sealed His Word to me with a glorious outflowing of the rivers of life; but this would not do to rest upon as a basis for future service. The "experiences" varied and changed, and passed away from my memory; but the principle upon which God would work out His purposes through me never changed. I found it "work" in every circumstance; every new test; every new aspect of life. Every fresh call to wider service was only a fresh occasion for proving the secret I had learned. When each "impossible" thing confronted me, or trial of any kind, I would simply appeal to God to prove His own Word that I was crucified with Christ, and then in childlike faith I would cast myself upon Him to undertake the service, or meet the need through me.

I found also, that, as I thus "continued in the faith, grounded and settled," the Holy Spirit wrought deeper and deeper into my inner life, unveiling aspects of one's being hitherto unknown; but all was met with the word "Crucified," and as I thus consented daily to be made conformable to the death of the Lord Jesus, I found richer and fuller outgoings of the Spirit of God to others. The words of Paul became aglow with light—"death worketh in us, and life in you." Clearer and clearer grew the wondrous plan. Crucified with Christ, the Risen Lord takes the inner throne; and leading us on into ever-deepening fellowship with Him in death, He manifests His life in glorious power, working in us that which is well-pleasing in His sight; fulfilling His promise that out of the depths of our being shall be poured forth torrents of living water.

Thus was I led on, until in the fulfilment of His greater purposes, He took me again to the place called Calvary, and gave me such an unveiling of His death, that it eclipsed all the previous revelations of Himself. The Holy Spirit had whispered "Crucified," and revealed to me the Risen Lord; but now the glorious Risen One Himself poured the light upon His death, until my cross was lost in the sight of His. I could only cry, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world hath been crucified to me, and I unto the world!"

Then I knew the purpose of the wider service He had given me. I saw the word of the Cross to be the power of God, and determined henceforth to know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified. He had spoken the word "crucified with Him," and I had proved the deliverance it brought to me; but now I saw *what Calvary meant to Him*, and yielded myself afresh to the Eternal Spirit for the special service of proclaiming the Cross and passion of the Son of God, that He might see of the fruit of His travail, and be satisfied.

From this time—a few years ago—I have been kept under the "burden" of this message, increased by watching the darkness that is slowly creeping over our beloved land at the very same time that the light of God in His people is burning brighter and brighter. The increasing darkness on the one hand seems to intensify the light on the other.

As to the darkness—"the worst of all the social symptoms is religious indifference, scepticism or unbelief, and its corollary—the growth of superstition. Superstition has spread everywhere; its adepts live upon it, and their victims are legion. Necromancy, clairvoyance, crystal-gazing, palmistry." . . . Do not these words speak of retrogression to the darkness of the Middle Ages? Can it be possible that the Most High God will look on, without giving His people a renewed and mighty testimony to the Gospel of Calvary?

May God the Holy Spirit lay upon every messenger of God to-day, at home and abroad, the supreme need of proclaiming the "Evangel"—the Gospel of the atoning death of the Son of God—and clothe each one with the Holy Ghost to preach the Cross in *all its aspects*, as Paul the Apostle preached it; and then will come the Revival we look for, ere the Lord returns for His own.

Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think; according to the power that worketh in us, unto HIM be the glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus unto . . . the age of the ages. Amen.

"Want of Thought."

"The labourer is worthy of his hire" (Luke x. 7).

Is he worth it? The Lord of the Harvest says he is: some of His followers seem to think otherwise. An evangelist who has laboured faithfully for many years, mostly in quiet but needy country places, writes, in a private letter to ourselves (but, as we withhold names, we think we may justly bring the matter before our readers):—

It seems strange how many who thank me heartily for my preaching, who wish me God-speed, and "hope I will soon come again," never seem to think a preacher needs money like other people. I can vouch for the truth of the following incident:—

A little girl came running in to her mother, and said: "Mother, I thought you said Mr. — lives by faith." "So he does, my dear," said the mother. "I know he don't, for I saw him in the butcher's shop buying some meat!"

I have sometimes thought what an eye-opener it would be if some little known, but true, servants of God gave some of their experiences in *THE CHRISTIAN*; but as a rule these things are left until the butcher is gone home to be for ever with the Lord. Do not suppose I am unhappy when funds are low, for I am not. I always accept the first invitation that comes, money or no money; but it certainly is rather trying if you have to preach three Sundays out of four, and perhaps only get 5s. or 10s. on the last Sunday, and not a penny for the other meetings. The Lord knows all about this, and He often sends money from most unexpected sources; so we praise Him, and go on our way rejoicing, seeking to win precious souls to Christ.

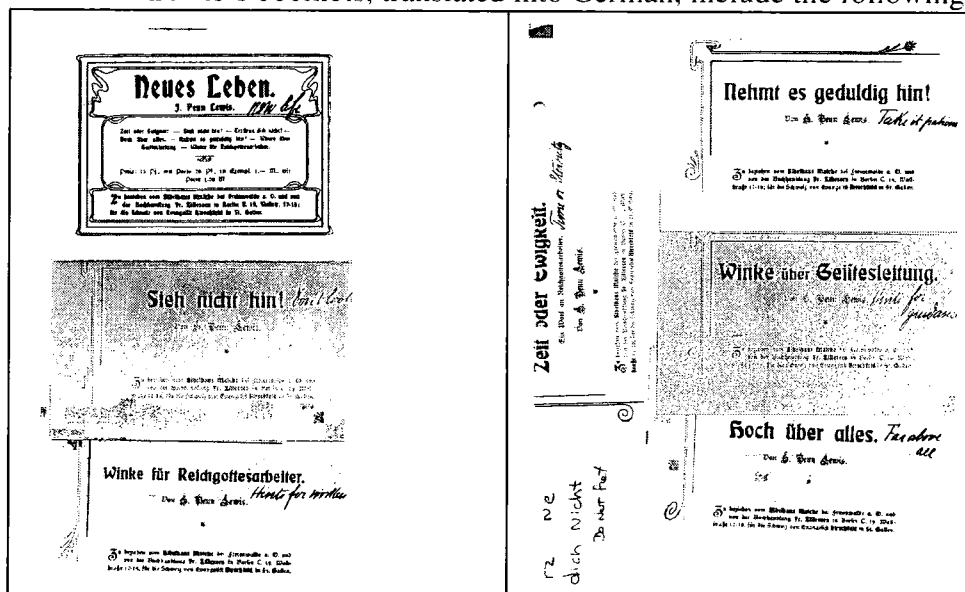
We know of another case in which an evangelist went from London to the Isle of Man, conducted a week's services, and was rewarded at the close with *half-a-sovereign*, out of which to pay his travelling expenses and keep his wife and family at home!

Evangelists, as we know them, are earnest men, whose paramount desire and purpose is to win souls to Christ. They are not money-seekers; but they must *live*! Such treatment as described above may be due to want of thought rather than want of heart, but "these things ought not to be." A little private effort among local friends could easily meet an evangelist's very modest needs in the immediate present; but even then, he is unable to make any provision for future illness or old age. His life is by no means a bed of roses.

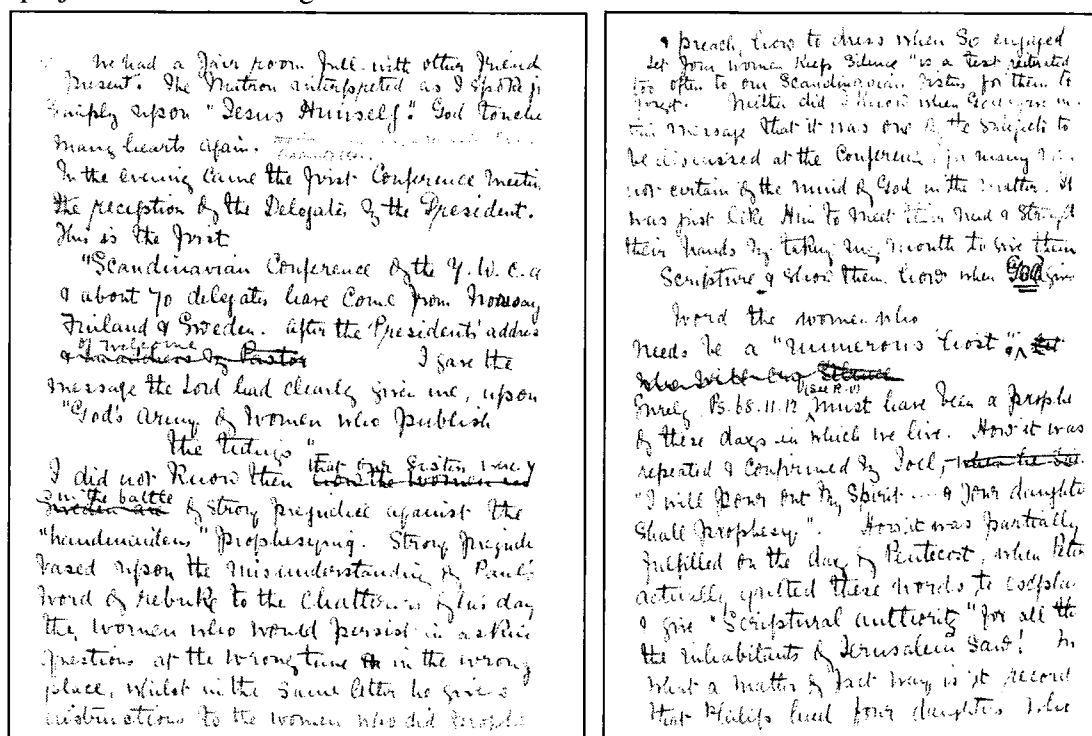
* Review of Russell's "Notes on Social Changes."

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Examples of Penn-Lewis's booklets, translated into German, include the following: ¹⁵⁸⁷



According to Penn-Lewis's 1896 journal, she decided to lecture on "God's Army of Women who Publish the Tidings," before realizing that the delegates had endured gender prejudice and were eager to know "the mind of God in the matter." ¹⁵⁸⁸



¹⁵⁸⁷ Penn-Lewis's booklets, translated into German, are entitled: (from top to bottom, and from left to right) *New Life*, *Don't Look*, and *Hints for Workers*, *Take it Patiently*, *Hints for Guidance*, *Far Above All*, (and on the far left) *Time or Eternity*, and *Do not Fret*. The Donald Gee Center, Doncaster, provided copies of these booklets.

¹⁵⁸⁸ The Donald Gee Center, Doncaster, provided copies of Penn-Lewis lecture diary.

Prophesied " (Act. 21-9). How delightful
to read 1 Cor 1: 27, 28, 29 as the list
of the ranks in God's Army of women.
God Grant ~~that~~ that we may never
forget the clothing of the army
"When the Almighty scattered Kings
for her, she was ~~as~~ white as snow
in Salomon" (Ps 68: 14 & m)
& the whole Secret of Blessing, the inward
part of the army for their Ruins —
"She that turned at home divided
the Spoil" — Ps 68: 12.
"Lord teach us how to pray"

Yes thank God foolish enough to depend
on us for their wisdom weak enough for the
a dry awaiting with God's strength have
enough to have no honour "But God's do
enough to be kept in the dust at His feet
better than all **NOT** nothing is enough
God to be ~~something~~

The following eight pages from Penn-Lewis's diary is an account of the gender prejudice she encountered in Sweden during the 1896 YWCA Convention. ¹⁵⁸⁹

Private Journal —
to the head of those whose
names are on the list.
Gothenburg June 1. 1896

Beloved Friends in God —

I want to write - as I am able -
a brief story of God's leading & dealing in
my Swedish visit - as I count upon your
prayers & you will want to know of His
good hand upon me - only as I shall
write freely of personal matters. I would
be glad for the little to be kept only to those
whose names are on the list.

I left London on Friday, May 29. - dear
Mr. Soltan & Edith Pacy journeying with me
to Göteborg. they were able to come on board
the Swedish vessel "Thorsten" for just
a few minutes - only to see my cabin & to
stand with me in silent prayer as we looked
up to our God for His blessing on every
step of the way. He did not seem like
going alone for there is no loneliness
when Christ is all in all & it was only
a great privilege & joy then to be sent
forth to Him. We sailed out of the
harbour at 2 o'clock & after dinner I sat
on deck wrapped in my cloak - until the
evening came - when we had supper &
most of the ladies retired to their berths.
The two in my cabin were Scotch & English -
the most other passengers were Swedish or
Norwegian. The Stewardess was a Swede
& it was very awkward to realize her
understand anything we wanted - but we
found one of the ladies in my cabin able to
speak the Swedish language so we got on.

I felt overwhelmed at this
our first meeting - God is evidently
going to do great things - & the relief
to my own soul that the interpretation
in ~~the~~ land was not going to be a petty
war - we then went for a
drive & came back to dinner at 4.30.

The meals here are at all hours. At
that first meeting at 12 noon - we had
what we call "after tea" in England -
- something dinner at 2.30 - or at 5.
- all of a jumble it seems to me - & many
meetings are held at 12 noon - or 1.30.

Went to Resume - after dinner - the President
of the Swedish Y.W.C.A. came to see me - less
touching they thank God for bringing me &
how long they all are for blessing. Well
at 7.30 we went to another meeting - a
public one - & had another time of great
liberty - at 8.30 we had tea again
& still they did not want to break up -
so we gathered together again - we took up
the petition before God for an outpouring of the
spirit upon all the women; & then I told them
how God dealt with me. I said we needed
the spirit of utterance & liberty. W! they began
then - there is a great deal of darkness
& stiff conservatism to be broken down here
- their very politeness has become a barrier
& the strong national prejudice against
women speaking has helped to freeze
the meeting - but God has broken already -
- I told them the Holy Spirit was set them free
- on our River we went & there was a
stream of ceaseless prayer - God is most
evidently moving mightily & we near
are ready & the time is soon.

¹⁵⁸⁹ The Donald Gee Center, Doncaster, provided copies of Penn-Lewis's travel diary. Much of her diary is included in M. Gerrard's, *Mrs. Jessie Penn-Lewis: A Memoir*. (London: The Overcomer Book Room, 1930)

Gods army of women are awakening
 & Sweden will know it. The opposition
 to women speaking & praying is here I suppose
 what it was in England in the early
 days. But when God gives the word -
 who can stop it. God has been preparing
 one by one they have been stepping out
 but it seems to me that here the work
 is thin. First Conference - we shall
 reach high tide. After last night's
 meeting my interpreter said - "For leave has
 been to night. Swedes - Norwegians - Finns
 - Russians - English. I answered
 - "How like the day of Pentecost - out of every
 nation - every man hearing in his own language"
 - "we shall have the same outpouring upon
 these daughters" I believe we shall.
 After morning a lady came to see me able
 to speak English & she began "I want to be a
 real New Creation - New altogether & I
 cannot get at it - it seems to slip me"
 - "he was whispering vitally - the Lord gave
 me the word - Spiritual Self - Self denying
 the a new creation - Self struggling
 for victory - Self wanting to be used - Self
 wanting to get from God spiritual riches -
 she said - "a entered into rest" - "it is
 done" she said "the light has come" - "I thank
 Jesus" (Thank Jesus) X
 Sat night -

Friday at 10 o'clock I went to the Training
 Home for Nurses to speak to them &
 dine with them. The Nation interpreted.
 We had a fair room full with a few
 other friends - one friend - a very dear

old friend was there - she is poor
 but dear Homes for different purposes
 all over Sweden - getting money & prayers
 as Muller does - ~~she was there~~ - God
 had been leading her in a deeper path
 & he used me to tell her a little of the
 deeper truth & nobler faith. She was truly
 one who knew God. God blessed many
 hearts that meeting. One lady there was a
 Russian Princess - she & her husband
 had had to leave Russia because they
 had been considered & w^d not leave their
 children baptized in the Greek Church. She
 asked me for a private meeting at her
 house - when she c^d also ask a few
 gentlemen. So it is arranged for Monday.

After this meeting I had a drive & then I
 came to the first meeting of the Conference.
 - God gave me the message about the
 army of women who published the tidings
 & I did not know how the women
 in Sweden are rising the early "The
 Freedom to Speak" - "Let your women
 keep silence" as a strong voice in Sweden.
 I did not know that God gave me
 the message that "one of the subjects
 put down for discussion by the delegates
 - this text has been quoted so long to
 them that many are not free yet - So
 it was just like Him that He took
 my mouth to give them the Scripture
 & show them the hands in Gods army
 of women & the signification of it.

Just on the day of Pentecost.
 It was a special (sp.) meeting.
 One "Pastor" was present. The "Pastor"
 of the Swedish State Church are on
 the whole strongly opposed to women
 speaking. But there is a movement of God
 among them that cannot be stopped - it
 is here just now what I suppose our
 friends had to face in England some
 years ago. To-day I am not at the
 Conference - it is all discussion among
 the delegates & I am not needed. But I
 had a very peculiar private meeting
 in the drawing room of a Baroness -
 of the very "worldly world" people - who
 never hear the simple Gospel - it was
 a sort of thing that we usually kill
 a spiritual meeting but I felt it a very
 solemn opportunity. It was a very
 grand drawing room. Tea was served
 (I wish!) by footmen in livery - & one
 after the other the guests were introduced.
 The Countess this & the Countess the other
 - The wife of the Danish Minister to the
 Swedish Court etc etc - then the Russian
 Princess & finally the Princess Bernadotte
 was brought to me - it was a very
 unusual meeting - about 20 or 25
 of these sort of people. I only felt they
 were souls whom solemn it was to
 speak to them. God kept me in His
 hand - so perfectly at ease - I knew
 He w^d give liberty. They all understood

English - I had to talk to them
 of sin & sinners in the sight of God.
 of peace through the blood of the Cross.
 of inner peace & heart satisfaction
 that the world c^d not give & of the
 blessed life of Jesus lived in an earthly
 vessel. The truth of God stole upon
 us - heads were bowed - tears flowed
 & Jesus Himself stood near. "Oh it
 is now to be a woman of the world" said
 one lady to me & a Countess whispered
 "I shall never forget this morning" we
 went on our knees & our loveliness sobbed
 out a broken prayer. How rarely they hear
 of the real Christ what He can be. He
 after the other thanked me afterwards & I
 gave them "The Glorious Secret" - After
 the Princess Oscar Bernadotte came & we
 talked - She said how she & her husband
 did not want to go into the world & the
 thing was very hard & did not wish them
 much - but with tears in her eyes she said
 went & over the drink of Communion was
 coming & the King had desired their
 presence at a picnic - but she did
 not like to be a Missionary among them -
 so we talked of all seeing God & Christ
 satisfied & being drawn to Him. Truly
 our God is a wonder working God - how
 wonderful an opportunity & privilege
 He has given me. This afternoon I had
 a drive again & then I went to hear
 the Conference discussion. God is
 very manifestly in charge - it is a

5 minutes of Silent Prayer & then
 was a great cheer - I went to the door
 afterwards & numbers thanked me for
 the word - either by the English "Thank you"
 or in tears & a pressure of the hand - then
 I was told the Princess wished to see me
 & I went to him & he was so nice & he said
 "I do long to give you more - but there are
 difficulties - I have thought much
 of the power of the Holy Ghost - this winter I
 leave the Spirit but I need more -" I told
 him of "I died with X!" as the Secret of the
 said - he had not seen it then - then he asked
 me how it came to me & I told him a little
 - one of the reasons of God in him as
 now often tears came to his eyes - then
 the Princess came to us - & he talked again
 of full surrender - His heart was moved
 for them both - I suppose I am all perished
 how he gave up his position as Chamber
 Prince to marry her - She was one of
 the ladies in waiting to the Queen - it is
 lovely to see them such true Christians - but she
 is many thanks God we are free from
 the fetters of royalty - The Secy of
 the M.C.A. then wanted to speak to me
 she told of real conversion work being
 done in the Stockholm Branch.

X Tuesday 8. a.m. X
 I am inquiring to be very crowded up now
 - I can only add a bit - Meeting days meeting
 at the Russian Princess' house - or rather
 apartments - for all live in flats here - was
 most blessed - the most blessed meeting
 by all. The surroundings seemed so
 incongruous - gorgeous in a way.

Very blessed Conference - & in the
 coming days I feel sure we shall see
 wonderful things - because it is then
 that Conference they have depended so upon
 God - The women have been shut up so long
 that they were afraid they will be too timid
 to "discuss" & they were afraid many would
 come - but God has heard their prayers -
 a very large number have come - there
 is great freedom & keen discussion of vital
 subjects - "How to help young believers & a
 Greek had beautiful points - then the Russian
 Hail has been given for the Conference - a new
 never sent for public things - although God
 is in every detail. The praying souls are
 looking on & wondering at their God's power
 from for the "exceeding abundantly."

X Sunday evening X
 Just a short addition to tell of today
 meeting - I only had one - at 1.30 -
 it was very very full & the place full
 - about 4 to 500 people - such a collection
 from the highest to the lowest - factory
 girls - Conference delegates, fashionable
 ladies, military men - & the Princess
 brought her husband Prince Oscar
 Bernadotte - it was an astonishing
 meeting - but God very manifestly moved
 - they say there was very great power - I
 know numbers were weeping - I
 spoke on the work of the Holy Ghost
 - in conversion, cleansing, sanctification
 & service - they hear very little about
 the Spirit they tell me. X is preceded
 & souls are born again but believers are
 (or nearly are) spoken to. M. 200

In the letter below, Penn-Lewis objects to her exclusion from addressing mixed gatherings at Keswick.

May 12, 1908

Dear Mr. Hopkins,

I have received from Mr. Wilson the formal invitation to take part in the Ladies' Meetings at the forthcoming Keswick Convention, and after careful consideration I have written formally to accept it, but I also feel bound to write you now on a matter of very grave importance concerning the Convention.

For some months it has been on my mind to write you about the Sunday afternoon Pavilion Meetings, and I meant to do it before the Trustees' Meeting on April 23, but it appeared wise that I should wait until I received the formal invitation to Keswick which would clearly show me the course the Trustees decided to pursue concerning the Pavilion Meetings. As Mr. Wilson's letter refers only to the Ladies' Meetings I can only assume that the Pavilion Meetings as far as I am concerned, are to cease.

If this is so, it creates a difficult position with more far-reaching issues than may appear on the surface, so that I feel I ought now to put before you the following facts and ask you if you have fully considered them.

You will recollect that at our interview at Mr. Holden's, some time in May 1907, in view of the possible "Tongues" disturbances looming on the horizon, I voluntarily withdrew from the two Sunday afternoon Pavilion Meetings, which I had then been asked to undertake at last year's Convention; and to relieve any possible difficulty in explanation I suggested that I should stay away from Keswick on those two Sundays, giving the lawful reason of needed rest for the Llandrindod Convention which would be following Keswick so closely. I remember, however, that you informed me that although I had been asked to take those two meetings it had already been decided that they should be for women only, and I think you added that the Keswick Authorities did not approve of women speaking to mixed audiences.

So far regarding last year. But the position has still to be faced in connection with this year's Convention for the following reasons:-

- (1) For many years I have had open meetings on the Sundays at Keswick, to meet the need of the brethren who come from other countries, and various parts of Great Britain where I have conducted open meetings, and who are troubled to find that I have no open meetings at Keswick. These meetings have been generally arranged by Mr. Hedges and held in the Wesleyan Chapel, with the exception of one year when the Call. X. lent him their Tent.
- (2) The first time I spoke in the Pavilion on the Sunday afternoon it was through Mr. Faynter, who told me that he was quite clear the Lord had bidden him ask me. I welcomed this arrangement because the packed meeting in the Wesleyan was fraught with serious danger to my health, for having recovered from acute tuberculosis I was open to the same deadly disease being renewed through an excessively poisonous atmosphere.

(3) The meetings in the Pavilion the succeeding year (1906) were arranged, I believe, by the Trustees, and a Chairman appointed, so that after Mr. Paynter's year these open meetings in the Pavilion were officially sanctioned by the Keswick Authorities.

Now after these arrangements in the past if the Pavilion open meetings for me are to cease I fear it will appear that "Keswick" has taken a step of retrogression. If they had continued as arranged only by Mr. Paynter, and if no official sanction had been given by the appointing of a Chairman, and the announcement in the Programme, their cessation now could be more easily explained, and I could have reverted to the open meetings arranged by others, with the Keswick Authorities free of any reflection.

It will also be of very grave importance to the whole Church of Christ, if "Keswick" officially sets its face against Women speaking to mixed audiences, when at this time God is using Women in a very marked way, and the whole current of life moving throughout the (spiritual) Church is toward clear and open ground for Women in the work of God.

Then as regards my own position, it makes it very difficult. In my contact with the Convention attenders at Keswick I have always checked, and combatted every word of criticism over any action of the Trustees, and invariably endeavoured to present the right light on the difficulties of those in authority, so that any who have spoken to me have left me with a contented spirit. I say this simply to emphasize that any course of action on my part, which appears in the least degree to be contrary to the attitude of my colleagues, is very painful to me; yet I have to face the fact that after all these years of open meetings on the Sundays at Keswick, I am bound to enter any opening presented to me, where I can give those who cannot attend the Ladies' Meetings, the message laid upon me.

As regards the forthcoming Convention I have been asked to take the services in one of the Chapels, and I have had no alternative but to accept the invitation, but I can also see that very much difficulty would be avoided if the Pavilion open meetings were continued, for then there would be no unrest, and no comment. The people have now accepted them as meeting their wishes, and the large number of brethren, from other lands, whom I personally know, would fall in to the arrangements without questioning the attitude of the Authorities.

I do not know whether you have weighed the matter from all these points of view, but I feel I ought to frankly put them before you. I can honestly say that it is the welfare of Keswick, I have at heart; with a real desire that we should present to the world an united attitude. How much I have been urged from many quarters to courses of action that would have broken this public attitude of unity, I cannot tell you, but if it is possible to keep in line, without the sacrifice of principle and disobedience to God. I desire at any personal cost to maintain unity.

I have said nothing of the seal of God upon these open meetings, for you will understand that it is difficult for me to do so, and yet I see that under special circumstances the Apostle Paul was compelled to speak of the way that God had sealed his message. I therefore will tell you that recently I was speaking at a Workers' Conference, with a Vicar presiding whom I had never met before, and it was with great astonishment I heard him tell the audience in his introductory words, that, as a C.M.S. Deputation, he had moved about considerably in Great Britain, and he had found large numbers of Church of England clergy acknowledge to him great blessing through the messages God had given me at Keswick.

Again one of our Keswick Speakers recently told me that he had been amazed to find at last "Keswick" what large numbers of people had gone up to Keswick especially to get the message which God had given me! I am perfectly aware it is the message - and not the messenger - which is sought after, but these two simple statements, out of many others, show that the grave importance of the decision concerning the continuance of these open meetings in the Pavilion, is not personal, but is of very widespread importance both to Keswick, and to the Church of God, for the reasons I have already mentioned.

The easy path for me would be not to write this letter, but just to go forward agreeing to any other arrangements proposed to me for the Sundays, but loyalty to my Keswick colleagues in foreseeing the comment and restlessness which any alteration in the past arrangements will occasion among the people, makes it clear that it is my duty to put before you some points of view which may not have occurred to you.

Yours faithfully,

Hopkins' reply ignores her reasoned objections to gender-bias. He simply asks her to overlook the accolades from others (albeit praise from men who were grateful for her ministry). He suggests that the Keswick schedule will continue as planned. She may speak where invited, though clearly she was not invited to speak in the main Pavilion.¹⁵⁹⁰

"In answer to your letter of yesterday let me say un-officially that all the various points you refer to - we as Trustees have carefully and prayerfully considered.

It is a comfort to know that we are all of one mind in our decision as to arrangements for the next Keswick Convention and are perfectly restful since God leads us, that we need not be troubled about consequences. This is the way we must look at it. Don't trouble about what people may say. If our eye is single every obstacle and difficulty will be overcome, and God's blessing will be on the Convention as on former years.

Personally I can't see any possible objection to your accepting invitations to speak in any building on the Sunday afternoons. You see it is not like having meetings whilst the Convention itself is going on. You certainly will not be acting contrary to the spirit of the Convention by so doing."

¹⁵⁹⁰ Mr. Brynmor Pierce Jones, of Wales, provided copies of this correspondence between Penn-Lewis and Hopkins.

The Life of Faith published an account of Penn-Lewis's ability to influence men in countries like Russia and India.¹⁵⁹¹

August 22, 1906.

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Twelve New Centres Alight in India.

BY MRS. PENN-Lewis.

ed concerning the progress of civilisation, the development of literature, and the theories of religion; and, having worked their theories, they proceed to rearrange the Bible according to their notion of how it ought to have been. It is a bold attempt to strip the Scriptures of every trace of the supernatural. The system was cradled in France, and is largely the work of universalists. In Great Britain the higher criticism are little more than second-hand re-echoes of Continental scepticism. Most of the defenders of revealed religion, and some instances critical views co-exist with spiritualism and evangelical ideals; but not be denied that, historically it was rationalistic workshops mainly that the theory was elaborated, and that from circumstance a certain rationalistic impression was stamped upon it from the first. The more advanced it is rationalistic in its and in every fibre of its construction, and not merely a question, therefore, of method and authority, but of supernatural origin. Is the Bible an inspired and authoritative record of God's revelation to man, or is it a record of man's changing erring thoughts about God? Is Christianity a natural development from crude superstition and idolatry, or is it of supernatural origin? The so-called critical says with emphasis there is no revelation but a natural process of evolution."

Having settled this fundamental theory, record must be rearranged accordingly. Unfortunately, history is against the theory, that is no barrier to these men of science falsely so-called. It is a sore trial to see history made subservient to theory, and conjecture substituted for the name of criticism, but Dr. Orr's temper. He takes seriously the duty of proving that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and Moses were creatures of imagination; that the tabernacle was a Levitical priesthood an invention of the priestly order of late date. Then quietly suggests that it would be more wise to let theory be governed by fact than to make criticism work to a system which turns the Scriptures into a farrago of myth, legend, and fraud. Quiet persistence he puts their superficial findings to a searching test. He is nothing. Such strongholds as the Pentateuch, Deuteronomy, and the Levitical are dealt with at length. Then the historical and prophetic books are taken, and in every case the inquiry substantially establishes the orthodox and traditional view. It is most amusing to see how archaeology erecting the vagaries of rationalistic criticism and turning to foolishness the wisdom of the wise. What will the critics have to say to Dr. Orr? Will they follow the plea of Wellhausen, who dropped with a word of explanation his chapter on the foundations had been proved to be false?

It is wish it were possible to persuade men to avoid the parade of critical theories in the pulpit. For the most part they are without authority, and simply retail notions they cannot verify. It is intellectual dishonesty, and is scarcely honest. The Church does not set them apart to pull down pieces, but to preach the Word. The people who come to worship are misled by crude attacks on the Scriptures and cheap jokes about myths and legends. It is a betrayal of a sacred trust to advantage of privilege to ridicule what careers hold sacred. To give stones to angry is had enough, but to give them a for bread is worse."

A CABLE from India sends the glad news "Great victories, twelve stations since Sunday, Inform Circles." This means that the Spirit of God has been poured out in awakening power in twelve new centres within the last week! Much must have happened in the spiritual realm during these last days after the mighty working of God at Keswick and Llandrindod, but I must reserve much concerning these Conventions for a later paper, and only at present encourage the Lord's intercessors to pray and not faint, and add now just a few extracts from letters concerning the working of the Lord in other places to show how He is stirring up His people in prayer.

Russia is in the throes of her new birth, and a new move of the Spirit is now visible as the following extracts from letters will show:—"The men cried when I spoke of England's immediate hearty response (to the appeal for prayer). They acknowledged their indifference, coldness in this matter of intercessory prayer:—'Our senses, our feelings have got blunted,' they said with tears of contrition. 'We do not realise, we do not enter into the horrors of all that takes place; we mind our own concerns, and are careless about the rest, and we do nothing, nor do we pray as we should.' A poor working man suddenly cried out: 'Why not have an all-night of prayer as they have in England?' There was a murmur of approbation all round."

Again. "The brethren have been much exercised about the prayer question since I told them of the response from England, and they discussed it with me, and they want me to write a Russian appeal to Christians to be sent out to various known centres in the South and all over the country—fixing August 19, and after that 8 p.m. every night (6 o'clock in England) until the answer comes. It is hoped that one place will get hooked on to another (I mean one group of Christians to another), and they then will be a chain of prayer all over Russia."

"The men here were very touching; really stirred and humble. One of them said: 'Forgive our lack of wisdom and of comprehension,' and he prayed in that strain."

"In Keswick they kept repeating that the believers must be awakened before any results can be expected. Perhaps it is the same here, and we must not lose time about it, for 'the days are evil indeed.'"

From New Zealand a worker writes:—"How wonderfully God is working throughout the earth, including our little corner, though only with individuals so far. But these are being prepared in secret for future service. Others, again, are talking their bearings, and are awaking to spiritual realities; but for the most part it seems that those in the latter class are seeking to strengthen their various systems by more strenuous human efforts—lectures, concerts, &c. So terrible are the increasing manifestations of the Evil One all around us, as

well as his fierce prolonged attacks upon us personally, that we are compelled to shelter in Christ as never before. We are seeing with clearer spiritual vision Christ crucified is indeed the power of God and the wisdom of God, and that as He spoiled principalities and powers, so in Him they are spoiled for us by virtue of our vital union with Him. We pray for God's dear children in the forefront of the battle, and therefore subject to, though not necessarily subjected to, the power of the enemy."

From Sweden an evangelist writes:—"There is a time of harvest now everywhere, in our blessed country too. Hundreds and again hundreds have yielded during the last six months. The summer time does not stop the work. In the capital they, especially in one church, have had meetings every night, and souls have got saved and sanctified. In every meeting we until this day have had, we in the same way have felt the power of the Spirit. The cross is boldly lifted up, and the promise is fulfilled: 'When I am lifted up, I will draw all to Me.'"

Reverting to India, a missionary writes:—"I think I said in my last letter that we were hearing of new places of Revival power every week. The thought came to me that perhaps I was exaggerating, and then immediately on the top of that thought, as if to reprove my limiting of the Holy One, came the news of another fresh place (Nellore). And mark these dates. On July 9 Miss Darmstadt wrote me sending request for prayer for prayer circular, praying for Revival in the girls' boarding school, Nellore. On July 16 she wrote: 'The Revival began last night. The girls of the boarding school deeply moved, and in great agony for sin, some of them prostrated, nearly all the school affected.' 'Before they call, &c.' Since then she writes that it is spreading to the congregation, the same humbling."

"I wrote to you about Bombay. I hear that in the C.M.S. Girls' School at Girgauna (Bombay) there is reason to believe that all the girls are converted—and this, too, is spreading—a marvellous change in the temperature of the missionaries' prayer meetings."

"From Bombay also comes the news that all over India in the branches of the Y.W.C.A. the month of August is to be devoted (evening meetings, Bible-readings, &c.) to prayer for Revival."

"Here is a lovely thing. Three missionaries returned from the Coimbatore Conference with such shining faces that a young woman who saw them in a meeting went home and shut herself up in her room, seeking the secret of what she had beheld."

"Here, again, is what Miss Abrams wrote from Mukti: 'Twenty-six girls, one teacher, and a matron from the A— High School, all fine young women who know English, are here seeking blessing (this is the fulfilment of Isa. li. a), and other companies are coming to Mukti for the same object. They have nearly all come into the experience of

¹⁵⁹¹ The Donald Gee Center, Doncaster, provided August 22, 1906 issue of *The Life of Faith* copies of pp. 765-766.

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awakened, perhaps all, and a few of them have received the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire. A big Revival is going on where the Aurangabad boys went, and more they have gone to another place, and are having blessing there. The Lord healed a man at the point of death in one hour in answer to their prayers, and she went to the meeting and went all about praying. At the second place, a man who could not speak because of some defect, had a spirit of prayer come on him, and prayed in good, clear language. He went to another village and prayed, and there got blessing. (This is a sample of the power of Pentecost that is coming.)

"Note the language Miss Darmstad of Nellore uses in giving a second account. 'The Revival still going on much as has been described by others who have written about Revivals.' Meaning the common mark, the hall mark of the Master of the Mill."

Concerning the work in the Khosia Hills, a worker writes that the heathen are being moved, and remarks that the following account of the work in its present stage is the most striking of all:—

"Many even of God's people were under the impression, when the Revival commenced in the Khosia Hills, that it was mere excitement, and that the feeling would soon pass away. This is how one good man wrote:— 'I am afraid the effect will not be very lasting; these emotional waves leave but little traces behind them.' Not even the most devoted Christian on the Hills ever thought but such wonderful and lasting results would follow. It is now nearly eighteen months since the Revival began; for some weeks previous to that the feeling was very intense, but for nearly a year and a-half there have been powerful manifestations of the Spirit.

"We often have news of this kind from some of the churches:—The services here are quiet, but are very good, and are still held every night.' 'The services are more enjoyable than ever now that some of the extravaganzas have ceased.' 'Last week we had the most powerful services we ever had.' One missionary writes that in some of his churches there is a mysterious power working which no one can explain from a worldly standpoint—ungodly men are suddenly seized with terrible quaking, sometimes even at night, and they go to the nearest Christian house to ask the people to pray for them; and they find peace, they give up their heathen practices, and join God's people. How in account for all this? It must be the Spirit of God working according to the promises in the Bible. Even small incidents often show the reality of the change. We hear that in one village where the people cannot afford to give much money for the Revival Thank-offering Fund, some of them have set apart a portion of their ground to be cultivated for the Lord, and the money received for the produce will all be given to the fund. Others have set apart some of their fields for this purpose, and all the profits will be devoted to this fund.

"The following letter by a missionary's wife will show very clearly how God is working in the most backward parts of the Hills,

right away in the jungles, far away from the Missionary Station:—

"The fact that I have not written to you lately does not imply that there has been nothing to write about. Rather the reverse. For such wonderful things are taking place all around us—things that everybody should know, too, but were they all written down why the world itself would not contain the things that would be written. Let me, then, tell you one or two things that our own eyes have seen and our ears heard.

"What would you think of a big market or bazaar deserted at the busiest hour of the day, all buying and selling at a standstill, whilst the people flocked to hear the preaching of the Gospel at an open-air service near by? And the power that brought them there, kept them listening spell-bound, as they learned the way of salvation from the lips of a simple village teacher, until from many hearts in that crowd the cry went up, 'What must we do to be saved?' Women were there who were liquor-sellers; they returned to their stalls in the market, only to pour out their liquor on the ground, and then hastened away to their homes in order to destroy all trace of its manufacture there, although this was their only means of livelihood. After cleansing their houses, they came at night to the meeting in the little school-house, and offered themselves and their families to the Lord. This happened only the other day in one of our villages, far away in an almost uncivilised district, where there are scores of villages in which the people have been living in darkness, physically, morally, and spiritually; for they live in the midst of the jungle, scarcely seeing the light of the sun; they are steeped in drunkenness and immorality, and know nothing of the Light of the Sun of Righteousness. But, thank God—and we do thank Him, too—this description of them will soon be 'past tense'; the present is brightening already, and what their future will be only eternity will tell.

"We commenced work in a village there six years ago, and sent a teacher to live there, but oh! it was hopeless work; not a Christian in the whole place for a long time, and only a few little children coming for instruction. It seemed to be time, strength, and money wasted, no signs of a blessing. But the time—God's time—had not come. Now it has. One Sunday morning, at day-break, the teacher was awakened by the sound of singing in the schoolroom, and on going in found it as full as it would hold of men, women, and children all singing heartily one of the hymns he had been labouring to teach them for months. Now they were singing with all their hearts—hearts in which the Holy Spirit was working mightily. Soon there was a great outburst of prayer, cries for pardon, and praise for sins forgiven. The meeting continued all that day and all the following night, and I do not know whether it is finished yet or not; but this we know, that not only in that village, but in all the villages around, the Lord is adding to the Church daily such as shall be saved.

"And this is a wonderful feature in the Revival, that in those places where the work seemed hardest and the ground driest, the

Spirit is working in all His might, and in His own way—a way often which cannot understand. He seems to say to us, 'You have tried, I know, but stand now and see the salvation of God; do what you failed to do.'

"A boy from one of our distant villages was here this week, and in talking about the work we asked him: 'How many services do you have on Sunday?' 'Only one,' he said, 'because that lasts all day.' And it is all through the district at this time, men and women calling upon the Lord day and night without ceasing. What wonder that they bring the blessing down.

"Thus we have the joy of seeing sinners saved—emancipated in the real old-fashioned way. 'Soundly converted,' as our people used to say; men are being convicted of sin, and led to cry aloud for pardon. We have one old man here who has been living at the gates of the Temple, as it were, for days, almost, but not quite persuaded to enter in. Now the Holy Spirit has persuaded him, and the poor old man seems to be trying in this last hour to make up for the loss of a life-time. He almost lives in the house of God, and quakes most violently when any word is said or hymn sung touching upon the death of Christ. 'Oh, I love Him, I do love Him,' he keeps saying over and over again. 'Did He suffer for me?'

"Another old man, a devoted drunkard, now comes to the meetings and rejoices in sins forgiven. We had quite given him up as hopeless, thinking that nothing earthly could change him, and nothing earth did it. Jesus Himself had pardoned him, but it needed the Holy Spirit to show him his need of that pardon, and that is just what the Revival means to do. It is the Spirit working in the hearts of men—showing them their need of a Saviour, and leading them to Jesus, the Saviour of the whole wide world.

"A man from India? That time is coming, let us wait and pray for it."

May God lead many of His children from time into the Throned-life of power in glory, so that the Church of God may speedily be raised from the dust to her place in the heavenly sphere. Amen and amen.

FOR THE JEWS.

To the Editor of THE LIFE OF FAITH.
DEAR SIR,—No doubt the appeal from Marcus Bergmann in THE LIFE OF FAITH met the eyes of many of your readers. We are earnestly desirous to circulate copies of the Epistle to the Hebrews in Yiddish, on September 22, the Day of Atonement, as observed by the Jews. Many of our readers have met of late in Keswick in the sale upon, and to marvel at the interest of our perfect salvation through the Jews of Nazareth, Jesus Christ, our Saviour, who have received blessing at His Hands, and lifted up our voices in praise to Him. There is a practical way open to us of showing our gratitude, by giving liberally to the Jews of the Word of Life among the dear people of the Jews. May God grant that this letter may be the means of moving many to send their offerings for this purpose to Marcus Bergmann, Esq., 22, Bedford Road, New London E.C.—I am, dear sir, yours faithfully, W. A. D.

August 4, 1930.

Appendix C: Penn-Lewis & Early Keswick Publications

Appendix C is a near-exhaustive compilation of books, articles, journals, pamphlets, and leaflets edited or written by Jessie Penn-Lewis. This Appendix also includes biographical works on Mrs. Penn-Lewis, as well as publications by prominent Keswick authors. Titles marked by an asterisk indicate that though the title was cited in the Keswick literature, I have thus far not been able to locate the piece. The authors associated with the early Keswick and affiliate conventions have also been included in this appendix.

Articles, Books, Pamphlets and Leaflets

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| Penn-Lewis, J. | <i>Abandonment to the Spirit: Notes on the Book of Ezekiel.</i> London: Marshall Brothers, 1897, 1899, 1901, 1923, London: The Overcomer Book Room, 1925, Bournemouth: The Overcomer Book Room, 1945. |
| Penn-Lewis, J. | <i>All Things New.</i> London: Morgan & Scott, 1917, Dorset: The Overcomer Literature Trust, 1917. |
| Penn-Lewis, J. | "Assurance of Answered Prayer," The <i>Inner Life</i> series, no.15, Leicester: The Overcomer Book Room, [1900?] |
| Penn-Lewis, J. | "The Atoning Work of Christ." Leicester: The Overcomer Book Room, [1900?] <i>Via Crucis</i> series, no. 4 |
| Penn-Lewis, J. | <i>The Awakening in Wales, 1904-1905.</i> London: Marshall Brothers, 1905, Leicester: The Overcomer Book Room, 1922. |
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The <i>Inner Life</i> series, no. 13 |
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| Penn-Lewis, J. | <i>Bible Readings on the Inner Life.</i> London: Marshall Brothers, 1901 |

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- Penn-Lewis, J. *The Centrality of the Cross*. Bournemouth: The Overcomer Book Room, published between 1920 – 1925, Fort Washington: Christian Literature Crusade, 1993, 1996
- Penn-Lewis, J. "Change Your Attitude." Bournemouth: The Overcomer Book Room, 1915, *Words to Workers*, no. 4, *The Inner Life* series, no. 12.
- Penn-Lewis, J. *The Church Militant*. Warfare Series, no. 1 Bournemouth: The Overcomer Book Room, 1900?
- Penn-Lewis, J. *The Climax of the Risen Life*. Bournemouth: The Overcomer Book Room, originally published in 1909, 1946
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- Penn-Lewis, J. *The "Conflict in the Heavens."* London: Marshall Brothers, 1900, first published in 1897 *
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- Penn-Lewis, J. "Co-Praying with the Spirit of God," London: Overcomer Book Room, 1900?, *The Inner Life* series, no. 10*
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- Penn-Lewis, J. "The Cross and the Blotting Out of Sin." *Via Crucis* series, no. 5. Leicester: The Overcomer Book Room, no date. Copied with permission from Mattersey Hall, Doncaster, England.
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- Penn-Lewis, J. "The Cross and the Sinner." A leaflet entitled, *The Cross is Good News*. Located at the Wheaton College Archives, Wheaton, IL., no date.
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The articles listed below were written by Penn-Lewis and published in *The Christian*, *The Life of Faith*, or *The Young Women's Christian League*.¹⁵⁹²

¹⁵⁹² Copied with Permission from the Donald Gee Center for Pentecostal Studies, Doncaster, England.

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Foreign Language Books and Booklets

The Donald Gee Center in Doncaster holds the largest collection of Penn-Lewis books in foreign translation. While we know her work was translated in to many other languages, the Donald Gee Center offers the following titles, in 7 different foreign languages, as listed below.

German

Awakening in Wales
Abandonment
Deliverance
Face to Face
Glorious Secret
Much Fruit
New Life Series
Pathway

Swedish

Conflict in the Heavenlies
Glorious Secret
Loneliness
The Message of the Cross
Power in Prayer
Pathway
Self-Life

Danish

Deliverance

Dutch

Deliverance

Russian

Glorious Secret
Self-Life

French

The Cross of Calvary
Soul and Spirit

Welsh

Communion
Glorious Secret

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- Metcalf, J.C. *In The Mould of the Cross.* Dorset: Overcomer Publications, no date
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- Metcalf, J.C. *The Bible and the Human Mind*. Fort Washington: Christian Literature Crusade, no date
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- Metcalf, J.C. *The Christian Warfare*. Dorset: Overcomer Publications, no date
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- Metcalfe, J.C. *The Inwardness of Prayer*. Dorset: The Overcomer Literature Trust, no date
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- Metcalfe, J.C. *Learning to Serve*. Dorset: Overcomer Publications, no date
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Journals

Published quarterly, *The Overcomer* journal was edited by Penn-Lewis served and printed during the years: 1909, 1910, 1911, 1913, 1914, 1920, 1921, 1922, 1923, 1924, 1925, 1926, 1927. Penn-Lewis suspended publication of *The Overcomer* between 1915-1919, due to World War One. *The Overcomer* journal is available through The Overcomer Literature Trust, at <http://www.freedomsing.com/overcomer/>

Penn-Lewis also contributed to other journals such as, *Christian Press*, *The Christian*, and *Our Onward Way*.

Keswick and Holiness Journals

A full account of the Keswick Convention sessions was initially published in 1882, by *The Keswick Convention*, which was renamed *The Keswick Convention Week*, and eventually became *The Keswick Week*.

In 1874, a monthly account of Robert Pearsall Smith and Hannah Whitall Smith's ministry was published under the title: *The Christian Pathway of Power*. Robert Pearsall Smith edited the journal. In 1879 *The Christian Pathway of Power* was renamed *The Life of Faith* and was published weekly. *The Life of Faith* was the main publication of the Keswick Convention, and remained in print for over one century. Penn-Lewis regularly contributed to *Life of Faith*, particularly during the years of the Welsh revival (1904-1908).

The American, Methodist Martin Wells Knapp established *The Revivalist*, an American Holiness publication, in 1899. Wells Knapp served as editor, though the publication was renamed *God's Revivalist* in 1901. Founder of the International Holiness Union and Prayer League, Wells Knapp used the proceeds from *The Revivalist* to build God's Bible School and Missionary Training Home in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1900.

The Keswick Convention lectures are available through the British Library and are listed below as they appear in the online catalog.

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