

***Let Go and Let God? A Survey & Analysis of Keswick Theology.* By Andrew D. Naselli.
Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2010, 459 pp., \$24.99.**

Reviewed by Brian G. Najapfour

Reading Andrew D. Naselli's *Let Go and Let God?* reminds me of my early Christian pilgrimage. In the environment in which I grew up, it was common to hear preachers who, at the end of their sermons, would give an altar call to plead to unbelievers to accept Jesus Christ as their Savior, and then challenge believers to surrender their lives to the Lord. In the mind of these preachers, such believers are those who have already received Jesus as their Saviour, but not yet as their Lord. These preachers, perhaps unconsciously, indicate that there are two kinds of Christians: (1) saved but not dedicated (carnal), and (2) saved and dedicated (spiritual). At first glance, this carnal-spiritual classification seems to be not problematic. After all, is it not true that believers are not equally mature? However, this classification allows implicitly the notion that one can be saved but not committed to Christ—that one can receive Jesus as Savior but not as Lord. Until I read this volume, I did not realize that this thinking has its roots in Keswick theology, which is the subject of Naselli's book.

Throughout his book, Naselli uses the term *Keswick theology* (sometimes called second-blessing theology) to refer to the view of sanctification of the supporters of the early Keswick movement (1875-1920). (Keswick is a name of a market town in Cumbria, England where the movement became well-known.) In chapter 2 the author provides about a 100-page historical survey of the predecessors, proponents, and successors of this theology. Well-known predecessors comprise John Wesley (Wesleyan perfectionism) and Charles Finney (the holiness movement), and well-known successors comprise D. L. Moody (Moody Bible Institute) and Lewis S. Chafer, John F. Walvoord, Charles C. Ryrie (Dallas Theological Seminary).

At the heart of the movement's teaching is a belief that there are two distinct classes of Christians—carnal and spiritual (see chapter 3). According to Naselli, this belief is a result of a chronological separation of justification and *progressive* sanctification. With this separation one can have Christ as a justifier without having Him as a sanctifier. After a thorough examination of this teaching in chapter 4, Naselli concludes that this unscriptural dichotomy of Christians into two categories is the fundamental mistake of Keswick theology. He adds, "Although it is not heresy in the sense of extreme theological error, its errors are serious, extending across the disciplines of historical, exegetical, biblical, systematic, and practical theology" (295).

Exegetically, Keswick theology misinterprets Romans 6, which is "indisputably the key text on sanctification for Keswick proponents" (187). Naselli argues that this passage clearly shows that God does not only deliver believers from sin's penalty (justification), but from sin's power as well (sanctification). He continues, "'A major flaw' with Keswick theology's interpretation of Romans 6 is that 'Paul is not telling believers *how* a justified person can lead a holy life, but *why he must* lead a holy life'" (230). I agree with Naselli's understanding of Romans 6, although I wish he had devoted more pages to analyzing this passage, since it is central to the Keswick view of sanctification.

Near the end of the book, Naselli gives a list of recommended works on sanctification from the Reformed viewpoint. I think he should have included *The Path of True Godliness* by Willem Teellinck—a major work on sanctification by the father of the Dutch Further Reformation. Over all though, *Let Go and Let God?*, in my opinion, remains a definitive defense of the Reformed view of sanctification against the second-blessing theology. I especially commend the book for its fair critique of this theology. It both exposes the negative and positive features of the Keswick teaching. It was well-written by a careful scholar who has a shepherd's heart and special ability to write with simplicity. I highly recommend it!