

GREAT RESOLUTIONS

Program Ten

Simpson's Fourfold Gospel

On to New York City

After a few years in Louisville, Simpson once again felt a growing burden towards a larger field of service. By this time his field of concern had widened to include the uttermost parts of the earth. Aware of the great need with regard to foreign missions, he wanted to launch a new magazine that would give believers fresh information about what was happening on mission fields abroad. To do this in Louisville would be difficult; he knew such a venture should be located near a hub of missionary operations. His way became clear when he received an invitation to work with a congregation in New York City.

Simpson labored tirelessly in his new assignment as he had before in Hamilton and Louisville. Some in his congregation were revived, and many new converts were added through his gospel service.

Healed

Simpson struggled, however, with the well-to-do New York congregation. He endeavored to bring them out of their exclusivity and to open their hearts to the needs of the masses around them. He was by and large unsuccessful at this. He continued to labor intensely, but the labor took its toll. He had always been in poor health, but after a little more than a year in New York, his health completely broke down, and he was forced to take a leave of absence. One prominent physician told him frankly that his days were numbered. When Simpson heard this, he fell into depression.

Simpson went away for a period of rest. During this time he visited an old-fashioned service where he listened to a simple Negro spiritual. His heart was "strangely lifted up." He felt some partial restoration and returned to his duties in New York City. However, he was still not well and walked around as a



A Scene from New York City
in those days.

tired old man, though he was only 37.

At this time in Simpson's life, many Christian movements were gaining prominence in North America. Undoubtedly, these influenced Simpson. There was a move in the gospel spearheaded with evangelists such as Finney and Moody. There was the holiness movement, the Pentecostal movement and the modern missionary movement. Street meetings and rescue missions were also springing up in several cities.

Another notable movement of the time was that of divine healing. A prominent figure in that movement was Dr. Charles Cullis, who sought to bring his patients back to health through the prayer of faith alone. Simpson visited one of his meetings and was impressed with the doctor and his teaching. After searching through the Bible, Simpson became convinced that healing was indeed a part of the accomplished work of Christ on the cross and that it should be a part of the gospel for a sinful and suffering world. Characteristic of Simpson, he was not satisfied with the doctrine alone; he wanted

the experience. After some time of prayer, the Lord visited Simpson in his sick condition, healing his body and saving him from an early grave. He expressed his experience as follows:

There is a great Physician still
Whose hand has all its ancient skill;
At His command our pains will flee –
“I am the Lord that healeth thee.”

Simpson’s healing changed the direction of his ministry, and he became an influential proponent of divine healing. With revived health, he continued to serve with vigor for the next 35 years. For the rest of his life he preached divine healing, but always subordinated it to what he considered the greater truths of salvation and fullness of the Christian life.

Though Simpson never used any remedies after he was healed, he was not dogmatic about this. He advised others that if they did not have faith for their healing, they should get the best physician they could afford.

Although Simpson was for the manifestation of all the gifts of the Holy Spirit, he did not agree with the Pentecostal teaching that tongue speaking is the unique proof of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Concerning the Pentecostal movement he said, “I am not able to approve the movement, though I am willing to concede that there is probably something of God in it somewhere.”

A New Beginning

Simpson’s experience of divine healing was greeted with skepticism and suspicion by many. Some flatly rejected his “questionable teaching.” Simpson further ruffled religious feathers when he was baptized by immersion. In addition, Simpson was feeling increasingly frustrated by his inability to open the hearts of his congregation to the recent immigrants that were coming to salvation on the streets of New York City. Eventually Simpson was led to leave his pastoral position with its security and prestige.



Many religious groups cared for both the practical and spiritual needs of the new immigrants.

Simpson launched out on his own to do the work of evangelizing the multitudes in New York City. Now he was trusting God not only for his health, but also for his daily bread. This was a perplexing trial for his wife, who already was having difficulty following her husband in all his “impractical” pursuits.

He and a small group of seven began to pray for the evangelizing of New York City. The group grew. He initiated midweek meetings at his home and eventually Sunday meetings at a rented hall. This band of brothers and sisters had one burden – to bring the lost to the Savior. They learned by trial and error, the Lord blessed their labor, and their number increased.

Among them was a range of people from those of low degree to the well-to-do. Simpson was free from the traditions that had hindered his progress in the past. He and those with him began to build up a meeting life characterized by deep spirituality and mighty flowing power.

Eventually a work center was needed and built, which became a hub from which busy workers radiated. Simpson was burdened for the functioning of many members. He prayed for and motivated others. Through Simpson’s consecration and faith, others were raised up to serve; everyone was trained to help. They held street meetings, established rescue missions,

visited hospitals and jails with the gospel message, conducted special meetings for sailors, and opened an orphanage and a free clinic for the poor. They worked with children, young people and different immigrant groups. Simpson published the first illustrated missionary magazine in North America, *The Gospel in All Lands*. He was invited to speak to large groups at Keswick conventions and other deeper Christian life conferences. He ministered concerning the fullness of life, divine healing and the work of the gospel at home and on the mission field.

The Christian and Missionary Alliance

Still criticized by some Christians, Simpson continued to labor with his “full gospel” message. In 1887 he and a group of like-minded Christians the world over formed the Christian Alliance for the pursuing of the deeper Christian life. Two years later, The Evangelical Missionary Alliance was started for the rapid evangelization of the most neglected foreign mission fields. In 1897 these two alliances were joined to become The Christian and Missionary Alliance. This was not meant to be a denomination, but a fellowship, or bond, of united believers who had the same hunger for the deeper things of God and for the gospel. Of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, Simpson said, “We are an alliance of Christians for world-wide missionary work. It is to hold up Jesus in fullness, ‘the same yesterday, today, and forever!’ It is to lead God’s hungry children to know their full inheritance of privilege and blessing for spirit, soul, and body. It is to encourage and incite the people of God to do the neglected work of our age and time among the unchurched classes at home and the perishing heathen abroad.”

Simpson intended the Alliance to provide fellowship only, and he looked with suspicion upon anything institutional. As their numbers grew, however, new believers among them were looking for a spiritual home, and needs developed for such things as baptism and the breaking of bread. Simpson remained

committed for the Alliance not to become a denomination, but he did take steps to provide local “superintendents,” or shepherds, to meet the needs among groups of believers in different cities.

A Laborer to the End

Simpson’s workload increased, and he traveled frequently. His life text was, “Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts” (Zech. 4:6).

In his labor, he was determined to imitate Paul in presenting the gospel without charge. He refused to accept any salary. He conducted his own businesses and kept himself free of covetousness or fraud. He refused an honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity, saying he did not want any honor “that would exalt him in any measure above the lowliest of his brethren.”

Serving in Prayer

Though intensely busy, Simpson always set aside time to be with the Lord in prayer and study of the word. Simpson said, “We cannot go

through life strong and fresh on express trains, with ten minutes for lunch.

We must

have quiet hours, secret places of the Most High, times of waiting upon the Lord, when we renew our strength and learn to mount up on wings as eagles, and then come back, to run and not be weary, and to walk and not faint.”

Concerning prayer, Simpson encouraged believers to consider the Lord’s answer to the disciples’ question of how to pray. The Lord simply replied, “Pray.” Simpson commented, “This is the only way we can ever learn to pray—by just beginning to do it. Prayer will teach us how to pray, and the more we pray, the more we will learn the mysteries of the

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heights and depths of prayer.”

Perfecting Others to Serve

Simpson was gifted in his ability to bring others into service alongside himself. Many of Simpson’s co-workers came from those who had been converted through his efforts in the gospel. Concerning service, Simpson said, “There is no place for idlers and drones, and there is no excuse for the fruitless Christian. God has power and work for all who will yield themselves to Him for His service and glory.”

Simpson and the Alliance endeavored to keep their focus on the one job of winning people to God. They held that the return of Christ depended upon a worldwide proclamation of the gospel. In order to help bring this about, they established a Bible and missionary training school in Nyack, New York, for special training of those going abroad as missionaries, as well as for those who would learn to serve at home. Simpson served as an overseer, continually prayed for those who were sent out and helped guide their service in the field.

Loving Christ, the Word, and People

Simpson treasured the Bible as a portrait of Christ. He said, “I once saw a copy of the Constitution of the United States, very skillfully engraved in copper plate, so that when you looked at it closely it was nothing more than a piece of writing, but when you looked at it from a distance, it was the face of George Washington. The face shone out in the shading of the letters at a little distance, and I saw the person, not the words, nor the ideas. I thought, that is the way to look at the Scriptures and understand the thoughts of God; to see in them the face of love, shining through and through; not ideas, nor doctrines, but Jesus Himself as the Life and Source and sustaining Presence of all our life.”

He had an utter love for the person of Jesus and was able to reach hearts for the Savior. Moody said of Simpson, “No man gets at my heart like that man.” He enjoyed the presence of the indwelling Christ and was

known to live what he preached. Tozer said that Simpson would make theology sing: “In his mouth doctrine became warm and living.”

Publishing

Simpson established a publishing house, edited a weekly magazine for more than 40 years, published a missionary journal, and wrote over 70 books plus many tracts and booklets.

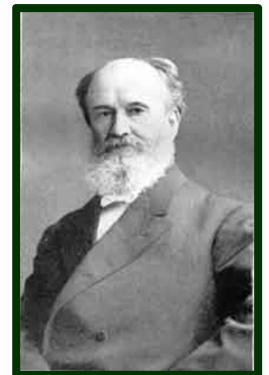
Hymn Writing

Simpson was also a prolific hymn writer. He wrote dozens of hymns and gospel songs. His hymns exalt the Lord’s name, teach of the abiding life, minister the gospel and stir hearts for gospel service. Through his hymns he was able to lead others into the deeper life. The hymns “O Lord, Breathe Thy Spirit on Me” and “Speak to the Rock, Bid the Waters Flow” are two examples. He also wrote hymns on dealing with the self and on living a crucified life. His hymns called thirsty ones to come to the fountain of life. He also wrote on the subject of spiritual warfare and of Christ as the glorious, coming King. Many hymnals include a selection of his hymns. Over 30 of Simpson’s hymns are included in *Hymns*, published by Living Stream Ministry.

Simpson loved to close his messages with a stanza or two of song, which would sum up his burden. With few exceptions, his songs were simply sermons in verse. He was a master at coming up with Bible slogans. He would take a Bible phrase or one adapted from the Bible, such as “Jesus Only,” and set it as a watchword for multitudes to sing.

Resting from His Work

In his last years much of Simpson’s work shifted from his shoulders to those of younger, stronger brothers. In the spring of 1919 he suffered a slight stroke from which he recovered. On October 28, 1919, he fell into a



coma after a time of prayer for all his missionaries. Simpson never rallied from this, and the next morning he finally rested from all his labors.

The Fourfold Gospel

Based on Simpson's experience of Christ and apprehension of the truth, four points were summarized and publicly conveyed as the distinctive teaching and convictions of his movement. These four points were Christ as Savior, Sanctifier, Healer, and coming King.

Christ as Savior

Of Simpson's four-fold gospel, knowing Christ as his Savior was the first pillar. The salvation of others became the life-long burden of his heart, as expressed in one of his hymns:

Saving and serving
our watch-word shall be;
Living for others
and living for Thee;
Help us, dear Lord,
to be true to our trust,
Serving the Master
and saving the lost.

Concerning Christ as the Savior, Simpson emphasized the experience of regeneration through the simple way of faith along with the joyful assurance of the forgiveness of sins. Following salvation, believers were encouraged to live a life of commitment to evangelism either at home or abroad.

Christ as Sanctifier

This second emphasis was initiated out of dissatisfaction with the spiritual condition of many at the time. Simpson and others entered into the mystery, "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

Simpson said, "Regeneration is like building a house and having the work done well. Sanctification is having the owner come and dwell in the house and fill it with gladness and life and beauty." Simpson's

teaching on sanctification helped many believers who had been bound by traditional religious doctrines to experience the joy and freedom of a Spirit-filled life.

He repudiated the teaching of perfectionism, prevalent at the time, and emphasized that sanctification was not the absence of sin, not morality or good character or other virtues in themselves. Simpson said, "Holiness is not personal character slowly attained, but union with the Lord Jesus Christ, so perfectly intimate that He Himself has described it under the figure of the vine and the branches." Sanctification, he said, was a separation from sin, a dedication and surrender to God, and conformity to the likeness and will of God. True sanctification, according to Simpson, would result in a supreme love to God and all mankind.

Simpson taught that sanctification could not be worked for. "We do not have to climb by slow and painful ascent the heights of holiness, but rather to receive the Holy One Himself." The sufficiency of Christ as both Savior and Sanctifier was taught, and Simpson declared, "We must come to see Jesus as our Sanctifier." Simpson said, "As we are possessed by the Holy Spirit, we are made partakers of the divine nature. It is a sacred thing for any man or woman to enter into this relation with God. It places the humblest and most unattractive creature upon the throne with Him."

Simpson enjoyed the writings of the mystics like Madame Guyon and Fenelon, as well as being drawn to Quietist literature. He appreciated the discipline of listening prayer, a practice of opening to the Lord's speaking while reading the word. Some felt that the knowledge of the Sanctifier was the turning point to the experience of the Sabbath rest of the soul.

Simpson saw sanctification issuing from both a thorough dealing in crisis and an ongoing daily experience. He said, "I had to learn to take from Him my spiritual life every second; to breathe Himself in as I breathed, and breathe myself out. So, moment by

moment for the spirit, and moment by moment for the body, we must receive.”

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Christ as Healer

Simpson embraced the doctrine that physical healing could be received by faith as a benefit of salvation. He said, “Deliverance from sickness is provided for in the atonement and is the privilege of all believers based on Isaiah 53:4-5; Matthew 8:16-17; and James 5:14-16.”

This was the one point that alienated the more conservative evangelicals from Simpson. Some accused him of devaluing the importance of the future redemption of the body. Some further accused him of leading young believers to neglect the proper care of their body and indoctrinating them with anti-medicine beliefs. Nevertheless Simpson maintained his convictions regarding divine healing, though he always considered it subordinate to his foremost concerns of evangelizing lost souls and promoting a Spirit-filled life.

Christ as Coming King

The fourth aspect of the fourfold gospel was that of knowing Christ as the coming King. Simpson and his followers believed that, according to Matthew 24:14, the greatest unfulfilled prophecy and condition for the Lord’s return was the evangelization of the world. Simpson declared, “Everyone must have the opportunity of salvation, and the Bride of Christ must be gathered in from all nations, tribes, and tongues, the fullness of the Gentiles brought in, and the way fully prepared for the Lord’s return.” This belief was the impetus for the expansive gospel work carried out by The Christian and Missionary Alliance both at home and abroad.

Marty Robert and Bill Lawson

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