

# GREAT RESOLUTIONS

## Program Nine

### Learning to Serve

#### First Steps in Service

Albert completed his education at the age of 21 and applied to be a minister. He was examined by a board as to his character, spiritual experience, soundness of faith and calling, and then licensed as a Presbyterian minister. His mother's petition, the missionary's prayer and his own heart's desire were finally fulfilled.

That Albert was a gifted speaker was apparent even when he was a young man. The young minister was receiving nods of approval by the Presbyterians, who carefully scrutinized both the message and the messenger. But Albert did not allow anyone to congratulate him on his eloquence or work. He endeavored from a young age to serve with humility. Later in life when another minister was about to commend him for inspiring his own ministry, Simpson interrupted and said, "That is all very well, but tell me something about what Christ has done for you."

The newly-licensed minister was offered two positions, one serving a small congregation and the other with a larger one. He describes his consideration and eventual conclusion to take the assignment with the larger congregation: "If I take the small church it will demand little, and I will give little. Result, stagnation; I will get soft and cease to grow. If I take the large church I will be compelled to rise to meet its heavier demands, and the very effort will develop the gifts of God that are in me. The small church may break me; the large church will certainly help to make me."



Albert and Maggie

He began the new pastorate in Hamilton, Ontario, with a new bride, Margaret Henry. His life's companion was loyal and loving, but not always understanding of or sympathetic to Albert's spiritual aspirations. Their family grew to include six children. Later in life Margaret became a real help to her husband in his ministry.

Simpson remained in Hamilton for eight years. His congregation grew; 750 members were added, and this without any special evangelistic meetings. He was faithful in visitation, raised up many prayer groups within the congregation, and led many into missionary giving. During those eight years Simpson himself grew through experiences and travels, and he began to be in demand as a speaker both in Canada and in the United States.

#### On to Louisville, Kentucky

Simpson began to sense a burden for a new field of labor. After prayer and consideration, he accepted a new position with a congregation in the larger city of Louisville, Kentucky.

He arrived in Louisville shortly after the Civil War. Though the war had ended, many deep and bitter feelings remained in this city, which had both northern and southern sympathizers. Ironically, it was the Christians who were least inclined to forgive and move forward, and many denominations still carried the label "north" or "south" as a prominent part of their names.

Simpson recognized the Lord's hand in sending him to Louisville. As a "neutral" Canadian, he seemed just the right prescription for bringing the Lord's healing to this divided people.

His first message to his new congregation was based on the verse, "They saw no man save Jesus only (Matt. 17:8)." He made a personal commitment by saying, "In coming among you, I am not ashamed to own this as

the aim of my ministry and to take these words as the motto and keynote of my future preaching – ‘Jesus only.’” This motto later became the inspiration for one of his well-known hymns:

Jesus only! Jesus ever!  
Jesus all in all we sing!  
Savior, Sanctifier, and Healer,  
Glorious Lord  
and coming King!

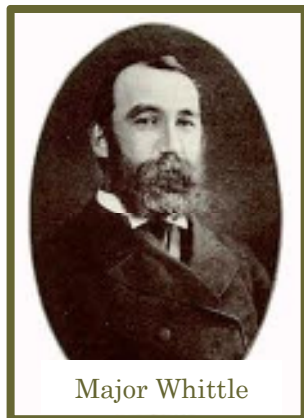
After becoming somewhat acquainted with the situation in Louisville, Simpson called all the pastors of the city together for reconciliation and to discuss a matter of “vital importance.” Tozer, in his biography of Simpson, describes that gathering: “Then, knowing that if they were permitted to start talking they would talk their bristles up and the meeting

down, he [Simpson] suggested that they now get on their knees and call upon God for revival.” It was said that “the fire grew

so hot that everyone was melted except one old die-hard who ground his teeth shut, scooped up his hat, and stalked out for keeps....The others had gotten such a spiritual uplift that they were ready to bring the Civil War to a close without further bloodshed and get down to the business of winning men to Christ.”

The pastors decided to hold a series of citywide revival meetings. Major Daniel W. Whittle, a gifted evangelist and associate of D. L. Moody, was invited to speak at these meetings. The people were hungry to hear the word, and

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Major Whittle

hundreds came to the Lord. These meetings, along with Simpson’s contact with Major Whittle, opened Simpson’s eyes to see the unbelieving sinners as objects of God’s love. He reconsidered his dignified church service and began to realize that people were more precious to God than all the church forms, activities, and rules and regulations of the Presbytery.

### Realizing Christ’s All-sufficiency

Now the cry of lost sheep was continually urging Simpson on to preach the gospel; he was becoming an evangelist in his own right. At the same time, Simpson was also realizing how proud and self-absorbed he was and how little of the power of Christ was exhibited in his life and service. He received spiritual help by his contact with Major Whittle and by reading *The Higher Christian Life*, by W. E. Boardman. One night, not long after the close of the Louisville revival meetings, Simpson had a thorough dealing with the Lord in prayer. That night he experienced in a personal way the Lord’s work of the cross upon his old man. He also saw a revelation of the all-

sufficiency of Christ. Simpson said, “From that moment a new secret [became] the charm, glory, and strength of my life and testimony.”

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Simpson later wrote:

Oh! it is so sweet  
to die with Christ,  
To the world, and self,  
and sin; Oh! it is so sweet  
to live with Christ,  
As He lives and reigns within.

The secret Simpson was learning was that what he and others needed was “not sanctification as a state, but Christ Himself as a living person.” He said, “I prayed a long time to get sanctified, and sometimes I thought I had it. On one occasion I felt something, and I held on with a desperate grip for fear I should lose it....Of course I lost it because I did not hold on to Him.” Through experiences such as these Simpson came to treasure Christ Himself as the secret of his sufficiency as he described in this stanza of a hymn which he authored:

Once it was the blessing,  
Now it is the Lord;  
Once it was the feeling,  
Now it is His Word;  
Once His gift I wanted,  
Now the Giver own;  
Once I sought for healing,  
Now Himself alone.

More burdened than ever to preach the gospel, Simpson still hoped to work with the other city pastors. He suggested they continue the work they had begun by conducting more gospel meetings to reach out to the lost in Louisville. This proposal fell on deaf ears, however, and Simpson encountered a wall of unwillingness. The pastors rejected his proposal, fearing interference with their own services. Simpson did not drop his burden, but began Sunday evening meetings with the help of some from his own congregation. These meetings included enjoyable gospel music and singing and were effective in bringing hundreds to salvation. This work of evangelism brought great joy to Simpson and his co-laborers.

In the following year, in an effort to secure a building large enough for the growing Sunday evening meetings, he rented a theater. This shocked many, and Simpson came under much criticism. He was learning that to follow the Lord in His burden for the lost would sometimes cause him to encounter misunderstanding and persecution, especially from religious camps.

In addition to preaching, Simpson also spent much time visiting. The Lord Himself

confirmed to him the importance of going to people. Simpson tells of how he decided to spend some time apart to wait upon God for a special filling. After a few weeks of prayer, he was yet unsatisfied. It was not until he received some speaking from the Lord to go forth to others that the great blessing he was seeking came to him. He declared, “I found Him when I took Him by faith and went forward to use Him and turn my blessing into a blessing for someone else.”

Marty Robert and Bill Lawson

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