

THE
HOLY SPIRIT
AND
HIS WORK

An "Interview" with
A.B. Simpson



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LEONA CHOY

The Holy Spirit and His Work

An "Interview" with
A.B. Simpson

by
Leona Choy

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Foreword

The *Holy Spirit and His Work* is taken from *Powerlines: What Great Evangelicals Believed about the Holy Spirit, 1850–1930*.

Author Leona Choy researched the writings of 24 great men and women of faith and has made their views on the Holy Spirit accessible in one volume for today's readers.

Each leader was “interviewed,” answering the author's questions through the pages of their works.

We have chosen to publish the chapter entitled *The Ultimate Transformer* as a booklet because it so clearly—and powerfully—presents truths about the third Person of the Trinity.

If, after reading this booklet, you wish to read *Powerlines*, please contact your local Christian bookstore.

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Camp Hill, Pennsylvania

ISBN: 0-87509-476-7

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Printed in the United States of America.

CHRISTIAN PUBLICATIONS
Camp Hill, Pennsylvania 17011

The Holy Spirit and His Work

Born at Bay View, Prince Edward Island, Canada, Simpson was of Scottish ancestry. Known as a mischievous lad, he liked to sneak off to go hunting. At age 14, he felt God's call to the ministry.

Because he lacked financial help from his family, Simpson struggled to study on his own, and became overworked and ill. His conversion took place during that difficult period. He successfully worked his way through Knox College at the University of Toronto, winning several awards and scholarships.

After graduation he was ordained, accepted his first pastorate in Hamilton, Ontario, and was married the next day. Later pastorates took him to Louisville, Kentucky, and to New York City where he founded the Gospel Tabernacle in 1882.

Simpson published the *Alliance Life* magazine (then titled, *The Word, Work and World*, and later, *The Alliance Weekly*) and authored close to 100 books on

Christian doctrine and living. His extensive ministry involved conventions, camp meetings, evangelistic campaigns and missionary convocations. Out of his missionary labors came the Evangelical Missionary Alliance, which later became The Christian and Missionary Alliance.

Approximate Date: 1915

QUESTION: Dr. Simpson, what were you missing even in the midst of your outstanding success in public ministry?

A.B. Simpson: I had always felt a great lack of spiritual power for life and service. My personal life was the conflict of Romans chapter seven. It was by reading W.E. Boardman's book, *The Higher Christian Life*, that I was awakened to the truth of the filling of the Holy Spirit and led to seek it.

Looking back, I would say there were three experiences which mark great epochs in my life. The first, when I accepted Jesus as my Savior. Fifteen years later I believed in Jesus as my Sanctifier. Seven years after that Christ showed me it was His blessed will to be my complete Savior for my body as well as my soul.

Q: Isn't the filling of the Holy Spirit a part of the conversion experience?

Simpson: No, the coming of the Holy Spirit to a human heart is the second great

epoch of our spiritual life. It marks a crisis just as distinct as conversion itself.

Q: What is implied in the word "fill"?

Simpson: The emphatic word "filled" in both Ephesians 5:18, "be *filled* with the Spirit," and Colossians 2:10, "ye are *complete* in Him," is the Greek *pleroo*. It means to fill full, so full that there will be no room left empty.

It does not mean to have only a measure of the Holy Spirit, but to be wholly filled with and possessed by the Holy Ghost—to be utterly lost in the life and fullness of Jesus. It is the completeness of the filling which constitutes the essence of the sanctified life.

All is connected with a living Person. We are not filled with an influence; we are not filled with a sensation; we are not filled with a set of ideas and truths; we are not filled with a blessing—we are filled with a Person. Christianity centers in a living Person and its very essence is the indwelling life of Christ Himself. This Person is the true fullness of *every part* of our life.

Q: Is there a difference between having the Spirit and being filled with the Spirit?

Simpson: Yes, there is a difference. It is true that there is a measure of the Holy Spirit's life in every regenerate soul, that

He is given to all who accept the Lord Jesus. But the Holy Spirit is given to believers in very diverse measures. He is the agent in conversion and regeneration. But it is a very different thing when the converted soul voluntarily yields itself in surrender and dedication and invites the Holy Spirit to fill and control its life. Then the Holy Spirit becomes not only the builder of the house but the ever-present occupant. The abiding of John 15 has become a reality; we abide in Christ and He abides in us. He does not become the Abiding Guest of the heart until there is full surrender.

It is when every part of our being is filled with His love and possessed for His glory that we are wholly sanctified and we bring forth all the fruit of the Spirit and manifest His gifts.

Q: Could you illustrate the difference?

Simpson: We all easily understand the difference between the shallow stream and the overflowing river. In both cases there is water; in one case it is a weak current, while in the other it is an overflowing stream that drives the innumerable wheels of the factories along the shores. The power all comes from the fullness which causes the overflow.

Again, we can understand the difference between a boiler full of water and a boiler

full of boiling water. In one case it is only water which fills, but has no power; in the other it is the water converted into steam, driving the wheels of a mighty engine and carrying cars across the continent along the railroad track. That single degree of temperature makes all the difference in the world between power and impotence.

Paul explains it in Second Timothy 1:6 when he speaks of “stirring up the gift of God which is in thee.” The gift was already bestowed and fully recognized, but it was like an expiring flame—the embers of the fire were falling into ashes, and the flame was almost dead. The word used is *rekindle* the fire—be filled with the Spirit.

Q: Doesn't First Corinthians 12:13 indicate only the one experience of being baptized into one body at conversion?

Simpson: You are referring to “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.” Well, it is one thing to be baptized into the one body by the Spirit; it is another thing to drink of that one Spirit. The first is an act; the second is a habit. The first brings us into a relationship; the drinking of His fullness until we become filled is the habit of abiding in His fullness so that we are always filled.

Q: Why did Jesus say “from *within* you” shall flow rivers of living water? Isn’t the filling of the Spirit an action *upon* us?

Simpson: The secret of this is that the direction has been changed. We do not have to bring the Spirit down now because He is here. There is no need for excitement, noisy demonstration and incantations. Faith can calmly take what the Spirit is lovingly waiting to give. The rivers—note that it is not only one river but many outflowing streams—are flowing out, not in. The Spirit is already indwelling; the waters are there.

Numbers 21:16–18 illustrates this. The people were thirsty and there was no water in sight. They gathered in a circle on the sand and dug a well, accompanying the digging with a song of faith and invocation, “Spring up, O well, sing ye unto it.” The waters began to gush up from subterranean fountains and they drank in abundance. The waters were running as a river beneath their feet all the time; all they had to do was tap the river and drink to satisfy their thirst.

We may not always see the river of God’s fullness flowing in our lives, nor be distinctly conscious of the Spirit’s gracious presence. Often we shall be entirely without religious feeling or emotion. But the Holy Spirit is still there in the depths of our subconscious being. In the moment

of need we can, like them, dig a well of faith and prayer, best of all by song and praise, and lo, the fountains will gush forth. The living waters will flow and our happy hearts will sing, “There is a river whose streams make glad the city of our God.”

Q: Would you share more specifically what happened to you in your second crisis experience?

Simpson: One day my heart’s full consecration was made with unreserved surrender. I entered upon a consecrated, crucified and Christ-devoted life. I used to think that we were sanctified at the last moment before entering heaven. But the Lord Jesus Christ tells us that we are sanctified in order to serve Him here. Separation must come first, then consecration and the filling of the Spirit—the first two are our work, the third is His.

Q: Do you teach that we become perfected and sinless at the moment we are filled with the Holy Spirit?

Simpson: First, may I say emphatically that I believe this experience of Christ our Sanctifier marks a definite and distinct crisis in the history of a soul. We do not grow into it but we cross a definite line of demarcation as clear as when the hosts of Joshua crossed the Jordan over into the promised land. They set up a great heap of

stones so that they would never forget that crisis hour.

That being clear, I do not preach *perfection* but a *perfect Christ* abiding in the sanctified believer. Sanctification is *divine holiness*, not human self-improvement nor perfection. It is the inflow into man's being of the life and purity of God's own perfection and the working out of His own will. We remain as insignificant and insufficient as ever. It is the Person who dwells within us who possesses and exercises all the gifts and powers of our ministry. Only as we abide in Him and He works in us are we able to exercise this power.

Q: It is still somewhat of a gradual process, is it not?

Simpson: It is *complete* but not *completed*; it is *perfect* but not *perfected*. The true attitude of the consecrated heart is that of constant yielding and constant receiving. This view of sanctification gives boundless scope to our spiritual progress. It is here that the *gradual* phase of sanctification begins.

Commencing with a complete separation from evil and dedication to God, it now advances into all the fullness of Christ and grows up to the measure of the stature of perfect manhood in Him. Then every part of our being and every

part of our life is filled with God and becomes a channel to receive and a medium to reflect His grace and glory.

Q: When the Holy Spirit brings some new grace or gift into prominence in our life and work, is that another baptism?

Simpson: The possibilities of the indwelling Spirit are limitless and infinitely varied. He works in us at different times as may seem best to His sovereign will. But we are not, therefore, to say that our old experience is void and that we have received a new baptism of the Spirit. It is the same blessed wellspring flowing in new streams and springing up in new fullness.

Q: Is the baptism with fire different from the baptism with the Holy Spirit?

Simpson: It is not different but simply an expletive phrase qualifying and completing the thought expressed in the first phrase. The Holy Ghost is Himself a divine fire, and when He takes possession of a soul, His operations are similar to the effect of fire in the natural world.

The baptism with fire, however, suggests a stronger and more searching operation of the Spirit. He has a purifying, refining and consuming effect within us as does a fire. There are things in all of us that we are not able to eliminate ourselves and would give any price to have consumed.

God's fire burns out our inmost being. The Holy Ghost kindles the flame that melts our selfishness and pours out our being in tenderness, sacrifice and service.

The same fire of love is the fusing, uniting flame, which makes Christians one, even as the volcanic tide that rolls down the mountain fuses into one current everything in its course. Above all things, fire is the mightiest of forces. It drives our engines and propels our commerce. It is the only thing that can move the heart of man and the church of God. Oh, for the fire of the Holy Ghost!

Q: What are some of the evidences of the filling of the Holy Spirit?

Simpson: In the first place, to be filled with the Spirit will bring us the fullness of Jesus. The person and work of the Holy Ghost must never be recognized apart from the person of Christ—to do this is sure to lead us into spiritualism. The Holy Ghost never comes to us apart from Jesus because the blessed Spirit witnesses not of Himself but of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us be very careful of this. The more we are filled with the Holy Ghost, the more we recognize Christ, depend upon Christ, live upon Christ alone.

Therefore, this very word “filled” is used in connection with Christ in Colossians 2:9–10, “In him dwelleth all the fulness of

the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him.” Literally translated, it is “. . . and ye are filled with Him.” God fills Jesus; Jesus fills us. To be filled with the Spirit is to be filled with Christ and to so live that our constant experience and testimony will be, “I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.”

Q: What is the nature of the power we receive from the Holy Spirit?

Simpson: The right translation of Acts 1:8 is “. . . ye shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you. . . .” It is not your power, but His power. It is not abstract power under your control, but it is a Person whose presence with you is necessary to your possessing and retaining the power. He has the power and you have Him. So the power of the Holy Ghost is power from above, received from Him moment by moment.

Q: Is this power mainly for serving the Lord?

Simpson: It is *not* primarily power for service, but it is power to receive the life of Christ; power *to be*, rather than *to say* and *to do*. Our service and testimony will be the outcome of our life and experience.

Q: Are there more evidences of this filling?

Simpson: The fruit of the Holy Spirit

listed in Galatians chapter five springs spontaneously from the fullness; a life of holiness, righteousness and obedience develops. Our mind and understanding are filled with knowledge and light. He controls our thoughts with harmony, sweetness, strength and peace.

Q: Will our physical bodies be affected or are the evidences purely spiritual?

Simpson: Yes, our very bodies will feel the fullness. The Holy Ghost is a true tonic for physical energy and good health. The fullness of the Spirit is the elixir for body and brain and being. To be filled with His blessed life will make our feet spring, our nerves steady, our brain strong, our circulation regular and our whole being at its best for God and holy service.

Beside that, our very circumstances will keep time to the blessed fullness of the heart within. As the presence of God touches everything that comes into our life, we will find that all things work together for good to us if we love God and fulfill His purpose. Our circumstances will become adjusted to us, or we become adjusted to our circumstances. The whole of our life, "fitly framed together," will become full of vigor, full of power and blessing.

Q: Does the quickening power of the Spirit on our bodies referred to in

Romans 8:11 happen at the resurrection?

Simpson: I believe that verse is usually given the wrong exegesis. It is not the Spirit but Jesus' voice that shall raise the dead; the Spirit does not dwell in dead bodies; the bodies spoken of are "mortal." I believe it refers to our bodies *here and now*. It means the invigorating, vitalizing, stimulating of a body weak and failing. It precisely applies to the healing of disease by the touch of the Holy Spirit.

If He dwells in the house, He will repair it and take good care of it. We are thus introduced to God's great secret of true physical life. It is not nerve force, muscular force, the effect of food and air and constitution—although these have their place and none of them must be neglected or despised. But it is a direct infusion into our mortal frame and our vital centers of a supernatural and divine vitality through the Holy Ghost.

This is something not communicated by drugs or electrical applications, or even air and food; it is life from the primal source of life, the Creator Himself. It is another kind of life, a higher kind of life, an added life. That is the very life of which Paul writes in Second Corinthians 4:11, "The life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh."

Q: Does the filling of the Spirit also

affect our minds?

Simpson: Christ will fill all the needs of our intellectual life. Our mental capacities will never know their full wealth of power and spiritual effectiveness until they become simply the vessels of His quickening life. These brains of ours are to be laid at His feet simply as the censers which are to hold His holy fire. The fullness of the Holy Spirit will be within us a perpetual source of physical and mental energy, sufficient for every function and test of human life.

Q: Are the supernatural manifestations and gifts of the Spirit still for us today?

Simpson: They were never intended to be interrupted. But let us never make the mistake of regarding them as a goal, or allowing them to take the place of the higher truths that relate to our spiritual life. At the same time, let us not ignore them. The church is one through all the ages: “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever.” The Holy Spirit is unchanged, and the design of the church today is identical with First Corinthians 12 and the plan which God gave at Pentecost.

Q: Some teach that we should minimize the supernatural aspects of the Holy Spirit’s power and emphasize the greatest miracle of all—salvation through

the gospel.

Simpson: We cannot leave out any part of the gospel without weakening the rest. If there ever was an age when the world needed the witness of God’s supernatural working, it is in this day of unbelief and Satanic power.

Q: Do you think the supernatural aspects might even be accelerated today?

Simpson: We ought to expect yet more wonderful manifestations in these last days before the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. As the end approaches the Holy Ghost will work in the healing of sickness, in the casting out of demons, in remarkable answers to prayer, in special and wonderful providences and in such ways as may please His sovereign will.

Q: What will be the effect on the world?

Simpson: It will prove to an unbelieving world that the power of Jesus’ name is still unchanged and “all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him, Amen, forever.” Let us not fear to claim His power for our physical as well as our spiritual needs.

Q: What is your view on the gifts of the Spirit?

Simpson: Much attention is being given at this time to the supernatural gifts of the Spirit. No Bible Christian can for a

moment question the value and permanency of these gifts which the apostle describes so fully in the 12th chapter of First Corinthians. There is every reason to believe that all these gifts were meant to be in operation in the church of Christ until the end of the age. There is an apparent revival of them at the present time.

Q: To which gifts are you referring?

Simpson: The one most especially in evidence of late is the gift of tongues. Along with this we sometimes hear the teaching of the extreme view that this gift is *essential evidence* of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. That is most unscriptural.

Q: In what respect?

Simpson: In the first place, the erroneous teaching referred to is sure to lead people to seek for manifestations and peculiar experiences rather than for God Himself. That will decentralize and distract the heart from its supreme goal.

In the next place, such teaching is directly contrary to the emphatic statement of the apostle that the Holy Spirit exercises His sovereignty in bestowing these gifts on whomsoever He will. He knows the particular forms of divine endowment that are best suited for our different ministries and qualifications.

More important still, such a view would place undue emphasis on spectacular gifts rather than the spirit of love, and turn us aside from the practical and useful to the sensational.

Q: What is the scriptural balance toward the gifts of the Spirit?

Simpson: The true scriptural balance is to make the Lord Jesus Himself the central object of our thought and affection, to seek to be filled with His Spirit for His service and glory. We are to cultivate the disposition of love and the graces that tend to make us a blessing to others. Then we can trust Him to give to us and to others whatever special gifts He sees best suited to each of us.

Q: What safeguards does the Bible give for the use of the Spirit's gifts?

Simpson: Their exercise in Christian work and worship is carefully regulated by the apostle in the 14th chapter of First Corinthians. Certain principles are clearly laid down which should control the worship of the assembly. The first is edification. Nothing should be encouraged that does not tend to promote the spiritual good of the largest number. The second is order. All confusion, extravagance and exaggerated emotion should be avoided. The third is self control. "The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets."

Even the Holy Spirit does not take away our mental poise or expect us to surrender our common sense and will or yield ourselves to any hypnotic influence.

But above all else we are exhorted to seek for the grace of love. Not only is it the highest end to be pursued, but it is the surest means of accomplishing the very goal that many are pursuing—a deeper filling of the Spirit. The apostle says, “I show unto you a more excellent way,” and that is a better way for obtaining the blessing you seek. That way is to forget yourself in a spirit of love and aim to be a blessing to others.

Q: Many Bible teachers differ with you on the necessity of waiting to receive the filling of the Holy Spirit.

Simpson: The promises of God are for those who wait for Him. The spiritual life, in some respects instantaneous in its operations, is progressive in others. There is a moment when we definitely receive the Holy Ghost. But there is a preparation for His coming, and a waiting for His fullness for us.

Q: How can we wait for the Spirit’s coming since He has already come at Pentecost and is now dwelling in the believer?

Simpson: Doubtless there is a sense of waiting which people in the Old

Testament and the disciples before Pentecost experienced, which cannot be true of us. For them the Holy Ghost was not yet sent from heaven. After Pentecost, in that same sense, we cannot wait for the coming of the Comforter, for indeed He has come and He is here. But there is a preparation *on our part* just as necessary in these days.

Q: Please define the nature of our waiting.

Simpson: It is not waiting *for* the Lord, but it is waiting *on* the Lord. It is not looking forward to a distant blessing, but it is continuing in the attitude of receiving and claiming the blessing, giving time for the Holy Spirit to fill the waiting heart with all His fullness. It is more than expectation of a future blessing. It is rather accepting a present blessing, and yet a blessing so large and full that it cannot be taken by us in all its completeness in a moment of time. It requires the opening of every vessel of our being and the continuance of our heart in the attitude of receiving.

Q: Does waiting benefit us personally?

Simpson: God uses seasons of waiting to mark great transitions in our lives, epochs of spiritual new departure, when we are led to new planes and new advances. Sometimes it is very desirable that there

should be a complete break, to get us out of the old ruts, that we may become free to take a higher place, and make a bolder advance.

Another reason is the necessity to cease from ourselves. As with the disciples who had to wait before Pentecost, the greatest danger for them was not in what they might *fail* to do, but in what they might *try* to do. The greatest harm that we can do is the attempt to do anything at all when we are not prepared and when we do not understand our Master's will. They waited for days and learned to be silent. They formed the habit of suspension of their own activity and the dependence of their own will entirely upon the direction of the Holy Ghost.

There are times when the most masterly thing we can exercise is inactivity; there are times when the most mischievous thing we can do is to do anything at all.

Q: Does waiting contribute to the emptying of ourselves which you said was essential before filling?

Simpson: There is no wiser nor better thing to do on the eve of a season of blessing than to make an inventory—not of our riches, but of our poverty. We need a time to count up all the voids and vacuums and places of insufficiency. We need to make the valley full of ditches and

then to bring to God the depths of our need for Him to fill them. For that reason, too, God wants us to go apart and quietly wait upon Him, until He searches into the depths of our being and shows us our folly, our failures and our need.

There are some spiritual conditions that cannot be accomplished in a moment. The breaking up of the fallow ground takes time; the frosts of winter are as necessary as the rains of spring to prepare the soil for fertility. God has to break our hearts to pieces by the slow processes of His discipline and grind every particle to powder. Then He can mellow us and saturate us with His blessed Spirit until we are open for the blessing He has to give us.

Q: What makes waiting so essential?

Simpson: There is a cumulative power in waiting prayer to bring the answer and the blessing, breath by breath, and moment by moment. We must drink, and drink, and drink again, and yet again if we would know all the fullness of the river of His grace.

Sometimes our hearts are so dry that we need to wait upon the Lord for days and days before there is any impression. But all the while the dry ground is filling, and the thirsty soil is absorbing. After the waiting is completed, we shall know that it was not in vain.

We do not wait enough upon the Lord. We do not spend sufficient time at the Mercy Seat. We allow the rush and hurry of life to drive us off, and we lose time by our reckless haste instead of gain it.

Q: How did you personally come into the third crisis of your life concerning healing?

Simpson: I saw cases where God did definitely heal and I never doubted or questioned them. For myself, however, the truth had no really practical or effectual power, for I never could feel that I had any clear authority in a given case of need to trust myself to Him.

Q: Was your own physical condition so robust that healing was not a significant need?

Simpson: On the contrary, for more than 20 years I suffered from many physical infirmities and disabilities. When I was only 14 and preparing for college, I developed a nervous prostration from overwork in studying. The doctor did not even permit me to look at a book for months.

As an ambitious pastor at 21, I plunged headlong into my work and again broke down with heart trouble, necessitating months of rest.

Several times in my life it seemed as if I

would die. I recovered only in part with the aid of constant remedies and preventatives. I never went anywhere without ammonia in my pocket to revive me from my suffocating agonies. Two other collapses of long duration overtook me. Only a few months before I took Christ as my Healer, a prominent physician in New York told me that I did not have constitutional strength enough to last more than a few months.

Q: How did you begin to move toward faith in God's healing?

Simpson: Through the simple words of a song I happened to overhear while at a campground: "My Jesus is the Lord of lords; No man can work like Him." Such an ordinary thought—but it fascinated me, possessed my whole being and seemed like a voice from heaven. So I took Him also to be my Lord of lords, and to work *for me*.

Soon after, while resting at the seashore at Old Orchard, Maine, I heard a great number of people testify that they had been healed by simply trusting the Word of Christ, just as they would for salvation. It drove me to my Bible. I determined that I must settle this matter one way or the other. I am so glad I did not go to other people.

At His feet, alone, with my Bible open,

and with no one to help or guide me, I became convinced that this was part of Christ's glorious gospel for a sinful and suffering world, for all who would believe and receive His Word. That was enough. I could not believe this and then refuse to take it *for myself*. I felt that I dare not hold any truth in God's Word as a mere theory or teach to others what I had not personally proved.

Q: What did you do about it?

Simpson: That Friday afternoon at three o'clock I went out into the silent pine woods—I remember the very spot—and there I raised my right hand to heaven and made three great and eternal pledges, as if I had seen God before me face-to-face: I believed healing to be part of God's Word; I would henceforth take Jesus as Lord for all my physical life; and I solemnly promised *to use this blessing* for the glory of God and the good of others in speaking and ministry in the future.

Q: Did you immediately enjoy the restoration of perfect health?

Simpson: Physically I do not think I am even now any more robust than before. But I am intensely conscious with every breath that I am drawing my vitality from a directly supernatural source, and that it keeps pace with the calls and necessities of my work. I believe and am sure that it is

nothing else than the life of Christ manifested in my mortal flesh.

A few months after my healing God called me into a special pastoral, literary and missionary work which has since engaged my time and energy. It has involved much more labor than any previous period of my life.

I desire to record my testimony to the honor and glory of Christ that it has been a continual delight and much easier in every way than the far lighter tasks of former years. I am conscious, however, all the time, that I am not using my own natural strength but His.

Q: Once healed by the Lord, is a person thereafter immune from sickness?

Simpson: Not at all. I have felt myself to be wholly dependent upon a vital and continuous connection with the Lord for His life. There was a time when my physical strength, like a heap of ashes, was burned out. But lo! I found a vessel of oil, the blessed Holy Ghost. As God poured His fullness on my exhausted frame, a divine strength came, full of sweet exhilaration and unwearied buoyancy and energy. In that light and life of God I am working without exhaustion and trust still to work in His glorious all-sufficiency until my work is done.

Q: Faith healing became part of your

ministry after that?

Simpson: I, and my friends associated with me in this ministry, do not use that term “faith healing” nor “faith cure.” We always say “divine healing” because we believe that *faith* has no power intrinsically to cure anybody. The real power in every case of true healing must be a personal God and not a mere subjective state of mind in the person concerned or anybody else.

Q: Do you sponsor meetings where people might be healed?

Simpson: Friday afternoon meetings for healing began in my own home in 1883 and have been carried on uninterruptedly since then in various meeting places. Teaching on healing, testimonies of those healed, requests for prayer from those present and from all over the world are shared. The meeting always closes with an anointing service according to the instruction in the epistle of James.

Other “Homes for Physical Healing” have been carried on for many years in other places in New York and cities of the East and Midwest. People may come and stay or attend meetings for biblical instruction on healing and for healing itself.

Q: Under what circumstances do you believe in anointing with oil for healing?

Simpson: I believe the Bible teaches it and we practice it—but not indiscriminately. I am careful to instruct those receiving it to look to the Lord and not to the anointing or the anointer. It is very solemn ground and can never be made a professional business or a public parade. Its mightiest victories will always be silent and out of sight, and its power will keep pace with our humility and holiness.

We solemnly warn the people of God against caricatures and counterfeits of this solemn truth which they may expect on every side. We greatly deprecate the indiscriminate anointing of all who come forward, of which we hear in various quarters.

Q: Is it necessary to be anointed with oil in order to be healed?

Simpson: Every believer has the right to claim healing directly for himself. The Lord Jesus has purchased and provided for His believing children physical strength, life and healing as freely as the spiritual blessings of the gospel. We do not need the intervention of any man or woman as our priest. He alone is our Great High Priest, able to be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. It is still as true as ever, “As many as touched him were made perfectly whole.” Thousands who have no circle of believing prayer surrounding them can be encouraged to trust the Great

Physician.

Q: Please summarize your biblical basis and philosophy of healing.

Simpson: I believe there are three epochs in the revelation of Jesus Christ about divine healing: The first is when we see it in the Bible and believe it as a scriptural doctrine; the second is when we see it in His blood and receive it as part of our redemption rights; the third is when we see it in the risen life of Jesus Christ and take Him into vital union with all our being as the life of our life and the strength of our mortal frame. This then is the nature of divine healing. It is not the mere restoration of ordinary health, but it is the impartation of the strength of Christ through the Holy Ghost. It is often most marked alongside of the greatest physical weakness.

Q: What are the conditions necessary in the believer in order to be healed?

Simpson: There are three conditions of this great blessing. First, that we are wholly yielded to Him to use the life He gives for His glory and service. Second, that we believe without doubt the promise of His Word for our physical healing. Third, that we abide in Him for our physical life and draw our strength moment by moment through personal dependence upon Him.

The secret is that we do not possess this strength in ourselves; it is the strength of Another. We just appropriate it because Christ is our life. It is not self-contained strength, but strength derived each moment from One above us, beyond us, and yet within us.

Q: Dr. Simpson, why are some not healed despite much prayer and faith of all concerned?

Simpson: First, I would say that I do not know. And probably you do not know. And we will not know absolutely until we know even as we are known (1 Corinthians 13:12). One of the first lessons God wants us to learn is to *be still and know that He is God*.

Then I would say that undoubtedly some persons have not been healed because their life work was completed and their Lord was calling them to Himself. There comes such an hour in every accomplished life. Sometimes, however, this is not fully understood by the suffering one or the surrounding friends, and there is the natural struggle and the earnest prayer—and then deep disappointment when it seems unanswered.

But I believe that if we wait upon the Lord in a life of faith, obedience and communion, the heart will usually be able,

with quietness, to understand enough of His will to triumph even in death itself.

Sometimes, I believe, life is shortened by disobedience to God. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. Then sometimes there is a lack of real faith on the part of the sick even when the external conditions of faith have apparently been fulfilled and others may suppose there has been real faith in God for healing.

Q: What is the nature of this “real faith for healing”?

Simpson: Faith for divine healing is not mere abstinence from remedies, or an act of intellect or will, or a submission to the ordinance of anointing. It is the real, spiritual touch of Christ. It is much more rare than many suppose.

There is plenty of faith in the doctrine, plenty of readiness to give up remedies, plenty of faith in the prayers of others—especially if they are eminent saints—plenty of faith for healing in the future. But personal, real faith takes Christ now, and pressing through the crowd, touches His garment. This faith is not much oftener found now than in the days when only *one person*, struggling through the crowd that surrounded Jesus, *really touched Him*.

Q: What is the biblical perspective on

spiritual awakenings in the church through the ages—their meaning and function?

Simpson: I believe the key is in Isaiah 44:3, “I will pour water on him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground.” Two forms of the Spirit’s operations are here set forth—the ordinary and the extraordinary. Even the ordinary work of the Spirit is expressed by the strongest figure, “I will *pour water*.” But His extraordinary ministry is described by a more emphatic figure, I will “*pour floods upon the dry ground*.” These floods represent the occasional outpouring of the Spirit of God in seasons of great revival which the church is witnessing now in many places and which earnest Christian hearts are longing to see everywhere.

Q: What do such revivals demonstrate?

Simpson: Such seasons of mighty blessing are powerful witnesses for God, awakening the attention of a careless world and compelling even the most skeptical and indifferent to recognize the reality and power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Such seasons, for a time at least, lift up a standard against the enemy and check the prevalence and power of evil as no mere human words or authorities ever can. God becomes His own witness and the scoffer and the sinner are awed and humbled before the majesty of the Lord.

Q: What happens in the lives of individuals during revivals?

Simpson: Personal conversions take place spontaneously, sometimes irrespective of preaching, confession of identification of individuals with the Lord's people, consecration and higher spiritual blessings. In awakenings we should not be satisfied until people have been led to *all* the fullness of Christ. Every convert should know that it is his *privilege* to be baptized with the Holy Ghost, to be delivered from the power of self and sin, and to enter into a life of abiding victory, rest and power.

Q: Should we be praying and expecting an awakening today?

Simpson: Let us pray for such a mighty outpouring of the Holy Ghost in our day. We are warranted to expect such manifestations of divine power especially as the coming of our Lord draws nigh. These are to be the very signs that will herald His return: "I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh," He says, "and I will show signs and wonders before the coming of that great and notable day of the Lord."

Q: Do revivals have a direct connection with the return of our Lord?

Simpson: The Holy Ghost is preparing for Christ's return by the spiritual enrobing of

His children. There is a marked movement in all sections of the Christian church toward separation from the world and entire consecration to Christ, that we may receive the filling of the Holy Ghost and be transformed and conformed to Christ. This is the very sign that the Bridegroom is near at hand. When the Bride is found robed and ready, her Lord's coming will not be long.

Q: Is witness to others a biblical manifestation of this wonderful filling?

Simpson: Because the blessing is enough and to spare, it will overflow and bless the world. God cannot use us until we are running over. If we would be filled, we must learn to give out as well as to receive. We must empty our hearts that we may be refilled.

God is a great economist and loves to bless those who make the best use of their blessings and become in turn a source of blessing to others. The Holy Ghost is given for service; God cannot bless a selfish soul. In this blessed work of winning the lost and giving the gospel to the world, we shall find our own rich reward and "the fullness of the blessing of Christ."

Q: Does this filling of the Holy Spirit have anything to do with world missions?

Simpson: Most definitely! And this is also

a sign of His near coming. It is the Holy Ghost who is sending us forth to evangelize the world according to Acts 1:8. We are witnessing the mighty working of the Holy Ghost among the nations.

If we are truly filled with the Holy Ghost and longing for the coming of Christ, we shall be active witnesses and workers in preparing for Him. We will be soul winners at home, and if we cannot go abroad, we will help others go and give the gospel quickly to all the world. The Holy Ghost always puts the go in us and turns our blessing into the multiplied blessing of our fellowmen.

Writings by and about Simpson and

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ISBN 0-87509-476-7



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