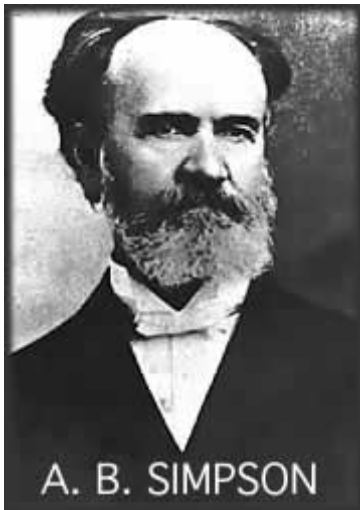


HIMSELF

by A. B. Simpson



Albert Benjamin Simpson (1843-1919) was one of the most important Christian workers of his day. He was an ardent soul-winner and was active in raising up new believers and in training Christian workers. He began his service as a Presbyterian minister, but later resigned after realizing the inherent frustrations in trying to serve the Lord within the denominational framework. He wrote over 70 books on the Bible and the Christian life. His many hymns and poems are full of inspiration and truth. He was the founder of the Christian and Missionary Alliance.

I wish to speak to you about Jesus, and Jesus only. I often hear people say, "I wish I could get hold of Divine Healing, but I cannot." Sometimes they say, "I have got it." If I ask them, "What have you got?" the answer is sometimes, "I have got the blessing", sometimes it is, "I have got the theory"; sometimes it is, "I have got the healing"; sometimes, "I have got the sanctification." But I thank God we have been taught that it is not the blessing, it is not the healing, it is not the sanctification, it is not the thing, it is not the it that you want, but it is something better. It is "the Christ"; it is Himself. How often that comes out in His Word - "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses", Himself "bare our sins in his own body on the tree"! It is the person of Jesus Christ we want. Plenty of people get the idea and do not get anything out of it. They get it into their head, and it into their conscience, and it into their will; but somehow they do not get Him into their life and spirit, because they have only that which is the outward expression and symbol of the spiritual reality. I once saw a picture 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 at 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; and 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."

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, and kept awake the whole night fearing it would go, and, of course, it went with the next sensation and the next mood. Of course, I lost it because I did not hold on to Him. I had been taking a little water from the reservoir, when I might have all the time received from Him fullness through the open channels. I went to meetings and heard people speak of joy. I even thought I had the joy, but I did not keep it because I had not Himself as my joy. At last He said to me - Oh so tenderly - "My child, just take Me, and let Me be in you the constant supply of all this, Myself." And when at last I got my eyes off my sanctification, and my experience of it, and just placed them on the Christ in me, I found, instead of an experience, the Christ larger than the moment's need, the Christ that had all that I should ever need who was given to me at once, and for ever! And when I thus saw Him, it was such rest; it was all right, and right for ever. For I had not only what I could hold that little hour, but also in Him, all that I should need the next and the next and so on, until sometimes I get a glimpse of what it will be a million years afterwards, when we shall "shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of our Father" (Matt. 13: 43), and have "all the fullness of God."

And so I thought the healing would be an it too, that the Lord would take me like the old run-down clock, wind me up, and set me going like a machine. It is not thus at all. I found it was Himself coming in instead and giving me what I needed at the moment. I wanted to have a great stock, so that I could feel rich; a great store laid up for many years, so that I would not be dependent upon Him the next day; but He never gave me such a store. I never had more holiness or healing at one time than I

needed for that hour. He said: "My child, you must come to Me for the next breath because I love you so dearly I want you to come all the time. If I gave you a great supply, you would do without Me and would not come to Me so often; now you have to come to Me every second, and lie on My breast every moment." He gave me a great fortune, placed thousands and millions at credit, but He gave a cheque-book with this one condition, "You never can draw more than you need at the time." Every time a cheque was wanted, however, there was the name of Jesus upon it, and so it brought more glory to Him, kept His name before the heavenly world and God was glorified in His Son.

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. You say, "Is not that a terrible bondage, to be always on the strain?" What, on the strain with one you love, your dearest Friend? Oh, no! It comes so naturally, so spontaneously, so like a fountain, without consciousness, without effort, for true life is always easy, and overflowing.

And now, thank God, I have Him, not only what I have room for, but that which I have not room for, but for which I shall have room, moment by moment, as I go on into the eternity before me. I am like the little bottle in the sea, as full as it will hold. The bottle is in the sea, and the sea is in the bottle; so I am in Christ, and Christ is in me. But, besides that bottleful in the sea, there is a whole ocean beyond; the difference is, that the bottle has to be filled over again, every day, evermore.

Now the question for each of us is not "What think you of Bethshan, and what think you of divine healing?" but "What think you of Christ?" There came a time when there was a little thing between me and Christ. I express it by a little conversation with a friend who said, "You were healed by faith." "Oh, no," I said, "I was healed by Christ." What is the difference? There is a great difference. There came a time when even faith seemed to come between me and Jesus. I thought I should have to work up the faith, so I labored to get the faith. At last I thought I had it; that if I put my whole weight upon it, it would hold. I said, when I thought I had got the faith, "Heal me." I was trusting in myself, in my own heart, in my own faith. I was asking the Lord to do something for me because of something in me, not because of something in Him. So the Lord allowed the devil to try my faith, and the devil devoured it like a roaring lion, and I found myself so broken down that I did not think I had any faith. God allowed it to be taken away until I felt I had none. And then God seemed to speak to me so sweetly, saying, "Never mind, my child, you have nothing. But I am perfect Power, I am perfect Love, I am Faith, I am your Life, I am the preparation for the blessing, and then I am the Blessing, too. I am all within and all without, and all for ever." It is just having "Faith in God" (Mark 11: 22). "And the life I now live in the flesh, I live," not by faith on the Son of God, but "by the faith of the Son of God" (Gal. 2 20). That is it. It is not your faith. You have no faith in you, any more than you have life or anything else in you. You have nothing but emptiness and vacuity, and you must be just openness and readiness to take Him to do all. You have to take His faith as well as His life and healing, and have simply to say, "I live by the faith of the Son of God." My faith is not worth anything. If I had to pray for anyone, I would not depend upon my faith at all. I would say, "Here, Lord, am I. If you want me to be the channel of blessing to this one just breathe into me all that I need." It is simply Christ, Christ alone.

Now, is your body yielded to Christ for Him thus to dwell and work in you? The Lord Jesus Christ has a body as well as you only it is perfect; it is the body, not of a man, but of the Son of man. Have you considered why He is called the Son of man? The Son of man means that Jesus Christ is the one typical, comprehensive, universal, all-inclusive Man. Jesus is the one man that contains in Himself all that man ought to be all that man needs to have. It is all in Christ. All the fullness of the Godhead and the fullness of a perfect manhood has been embodied in Christ, and He stands now as the summing-up of all that man needs. His spirit is all that your spirit needs, and He just gives us Himself. His body possesses all that your body needs. He has a heart beating with the strength that your heart needs. He has organs and functions redundant with life, not for Himself, but for humanity. He does not need strength for Himself. The energy which enabled Him to rise and ascend from the tomb, above all the forces of nature, was not for Himself. That marvellous body belongs to your body. You are a member of His body. Your heart has a right to draw from His heart all that it needs. Your physical life has a right

to draw from His physical life its support and strength, and so it is not you, but it is just the precious life of the Son of God. Will you take Him thus today, and then you will not be merely healed, but you will have a new life for all you need, a flood of life that will sweep disease away, and then remain a fountain of life for all your future need. Oh, take Him in His fullness.

It seems to me as if I might just bring you a little talisman today, as if God had given me a little secret for every one here and said to me, "Go and tell them, if they will take it, it will be a talisman of power wherever they go, and it will carry them through difficulty, danger, fear, life, death, eternity." If I could stand on this platform and say, "I have received from heaven a secret of wealth and success which God will give freely, through my hand, to everybody who will take it," I am sure you would need a larger hall for the people who would come. But, dear friends, I show you in His Word a truth which is more precious. The Apostle Paul tells us that there is a secret, a great secret which was hidden from ages and from generations (Col. 1: 26), which the world was seeking after in vain, which wise men from the East hoped they might find, and God says it "is now made manifest to his saints"; and Paul went through the world just to tell it to those that were able to receive it; and that simple secret is just this "Christ in you the hope of glory."

The word "mystery" means secret; this is the great secret. And I tell you today, nay, I can give you, if you will take it from Him, not from me-I can give you a secret which has been to me, oh, so wonderful! Years ago I came to Him burdened with guilt and fear; I tried that simple secret, and it took away all my fear and sin. Years passed on, and I found sin overcoming me and my temptations too strong for me. I came to Him a second time, and He whispered to me, "Christ in you," and I had victory, rest and blessing.

Then the body broke away in every sort of way. I had always worked hard, and from the age of fourteen I studied and labored and spared no strength. I took charge of a large congregation at the age of twenty-one; I broke down utterly half a dozen times and at my last constitution was worn out. Many times I feared I should drop dead in my pulpit. I could not ascend any height without a sense of suffocation, because of a broken-down heart and exhausted nervous system. I heard of the Lord's healing, but I struggled against it. I was afraid of it. I had been taught in theological seminaries that the age of the supernatural was past, and I could not go back from my early training. My head was in my way, but at last when I was brought to attend "the funeral of my dogmatics," as Mr. Schrenck says, "the Lord whispered to me the little secret, 'Christ in you'; and from that hour I received Him for my body as I had done for my soul. I was made so strong and well that work has been a perfect delight. For years I have spent my summer holiday in the hot city of New York, preaching and working amongst the masses, as I never did before; besides the work of our Home and College and an immense mass of library work and much besides. But the Lord did not merely remove my sufferings. It was more than simple healing. He so gave me Himself that I lost the painful consciousness of physical organs. That is the best of the health He gives. I thank the Lord that He keeps me from all morbid, physical consciousness and a body that is the object of anxious care, and gives a simple life that is a delight and a service for the Master, that is a rest and joy.

Then, again, I had a poor sort of a mind, heavy and cumbrous, that did not think or work quickly. I wanted to write and speak for Christ and to have a ready memory, so as to have the little knowledge I had gained always under command. I went to Christ about it, and asked if He had anything for me in this way. He replied, "Yes, my child, I am made unto you Wisdom." I was always making mistakes, which I regretted, and then thinking I would not make them again; but when He said that He would be my wisdom, that we may have the mind of Christ, that He could cast down imaginations and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ, that He could make the brain and head right, then I took Him for all that. And since then I have been kept free from this mental disability, and work has been rest. I used to write two sermons a week, and it took me three days to complete one. But now, in connection with my literary work, I have numberless pages of matter to write constantly besides the conduct of very many meetings a week, and all is delightfully easy to me. The Lord has helped me mentally, and I know He is the Saviour of our mind as well as our spirit.

Well, then, I had an irresolute will. I asked, ' Cannot you be a will to me?' He said, "Yes, my child, it is God who worketh in you to will and to do." Then He made me to learn how and when to be firm, and how and when to yield. Many people have a decided will, but they do not know how to hold on just at the proper moment. So, too, I came to Him for power for His work and all the resources for His service, and He has not failed me.

And so I would say, if this precious little secret of "Christ in you," will help you, you may have it. May you make better use of it than I! I feel I have only begun to learn how well it works. Take it and go on working it out, through time and eternity-Christ for all, grace for grace, from strength to strength, from glory to glory, from this time forth and even for evermore.

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

Once 'twas painful trying, Now 'tis perfect trust;
Once a half salvation, Now the uttermost.
Once 'twas ceaseless holding, Now He holds me fast;
Once 'twas constant drifting, Now my anchor's cast.

Once 'twas busy planning, Now 'tis trustful prayer;
Once 'twas anxious caring, Now He has the care.
Once 'twas what I wanted, Now what Jesus says;
Once 'twas constant asking, Now 'tis ceaseless praise.

Once it was my working, His it hence shall be;
Once I tried to use Him, Now He uses me.
Once the power I wanted, Now the Mighty One;
Once for self I labored, Now for Him alone.

Once I hoped in Jesus, Now I know He's mine;
Once my lamps were dying, Now they brightly shine.
Once for death I waited, Now His coming hail;
And my hopes are anchored, Safe within the veil.

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