

2.6.1 Albert Benjamin (A. B.) Simpson (1843-1919) and the Fourfold Gospel

Darrel R. Reid details, “Albert Benjamin Simpson was born on 15 December 1843, the fourth child of James and Janet Simpson, in Bayview, Prince Edward Island, where his father was in charge of the timbering and shipbuilding component in a network of family enterprises. . . . His parents were devout United (Secessionist) Presbyterians . . . Simpson was also exposed to the broader manifestations of evangelical culture sweeping the transatlantic world, the most significant of which was the impulse to foreign missions” (Reid 1997:271-2).

The formulation of Simpson’s Fourfold Gospel of Jesus as Savior, Sanctifier, Healer, and Coming King mirrored the life faith experiences of his spiritual journey. Simpson experienced Jesus as Savior as a result of his Reformed and Puritan roots, coupled with the reading of Walter Marshall’s *Gospel Mystery of Salvation* (1692) in 1858. He then began his involvement with the “sanctified, Spirit-filled, higher and deeper” life in 1874 upon reading William E. Boardman’s *The Higher Christian Life* (1858). Next in 1881, Simpson continued his spiritual journey by being “miraculously” healed of a chronic heart disorder during a vacation at Old Orchard Beach, Maine. He was subsequently baptized by immersion in February 1882 in a Baptist Church in New York City. Then, he organized and opened an interdenominational Gospel Tabernacle Church in New York. In 1891, Simpson (1891:298) wrote an article “How I was Led to Believe in Premillenarianism,” where he told of his departure from his a/post-millennial roots in the late 1870’s and conversion to premillennialism (Nienkirchen 1992:3-4, 7, 13, 20).

Simpson (1916:107) “saw Christ’s premillennial coming as the great hope of the church and the goal of all its Christian work” (Reid 1997:276); “saw the history of the church after two millennia as ending where it began—with the proclamation of the ‘full gospel’ known to Christ and the apostles” (Nienkirchen 1992:24-5); and saw “the ‘end’ was connected to the Great

Commission by the Lord Jesus Christ, ‘And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come (Matt 24:14, KJV)’ ”

(Foster 2002:68). Simpson also believed “the premillennial coming again of Jesus to set up His kingdom was the preparatory message Jesus preached: ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near’” (Stoesz 2002:48). Simpson (1912:7-18) then wrote, “There is a *double thread running through the warp and woof of ancient prophecy*. There is a *crimson line of the cross, but there is the golden thread of the coming glory*. . . . It was *necessary that He should fulfill the vision of the cross and it is just as necessary that He shall fulfill the vision of the King* [emphasis added]” (Van Hoogen 2002:116). This then completed the Fourfold Gospel as experienced in the life and faith walk of A. B. Simpson.

According to Darrel R. Reid, “In 1883 Simpson’s congregation founded the Missionary Union for the Evangelization of the World and . . . the Missionary Training Institute . . . Four years later in 1887 . . . Simpson oversaw the birth of two new organizations: the Christian Alliance (CA) . . . and the Evangelical Missionary Alliance (EMA) . . . In 1897 the two fellowships were merged to become the Christian and Missionary Alliance” (Reid 1997:276-7). The Christian and Missionary Alliance was expanded to Canada through the efforts of Rev. John Salmon (1831-1918), who met and was healed of a disease of the kidneys through Simpson’s ministry at a healing convention in Buffalo in 1885. In 1887, “Salmon was elected a founding vice-president of the Christian Alliance. . . . In 1889 the Dominion Auxiliary of the Christian Alliance was formed . . . which was responsible . . . for the dispersion of Canadian funds and resources . . . In 1897 the Dominion Auxiliary was absorbed into the new organization . . . of the Christian and Missionary Alliance” (Reid 1997:278, 80-2).

The Fourfold Gospel as stated by A. B. Simpson himself in his book by the same title (published in 1925) is as follows: 1) Christ is Salvation, using Revelation 7:10 as the key verse and speaking of the believer's justification in Christ as part of the Gospel; 2) Christ is Sanctifier, using John 17:19 as the key verse and speaking of the believer's sanctification in Christ as part of the Gospel; 3) Christ is Healer, using Matthew 18:17 and Hebrews 13:8 as key verses and speaking of the believer's restored/healed/whole relationship in Christ as part of the Gospel; and 4) Christ is Coming Lord/King, using Revelation 2:28 as the key verse and speaking of Christ's Second Advent as the culmination of the Gospel (as declared by Paul at the beginning of 1 Corinthians 15 and ending with the Second Advent at the conclusion of 1 Corinthians 15). This can best be put into words by Simpson himself as an encouragement for believers of all time; "live under the power of the GOSPEL OF THE FUTURE and the blessed and purifying hope of Christ's glorious coming" (Simpson 1925:7, 27, 46, 68, and 70). Quoting Paul L. King's book *Genuine Gold: The Cautiously Charismatic Story of the Early Christian and Missionary Alliance* (2006:16), and speaking of the Fourfold Gospel, "George Müller later 'told Dr. Simpson that his arrangement of truth was most evidently of the Lord' and suggested that he never change its mold" (Walter Turnbull and C. H. Chrisman, "The Message of the Christian and Missionary Alliance," 1927, accessed online at http://online.cbccts.sk.ca/alliancestudies/ahtreadings/ahttr_s6.html). Samuel J. Stoesz continues, "The Fourfold Gospel represented a scope, a configuration and an integrated focus involving the whole twentieth-century evangelical church" (2002:54).

From this firm foundation of the Fourfold Gospel came the rise of the American Pentecostal Movement in the early twentieth century. Charles W. Nienkirchen's research shows that many Pentecostal historians and leaders (e.g., British Pentecostal leader Donald Gee, in 1930 and 1941; ORU Professor Steve Durasoff in 1972; Assembly of God historian Carl

Brumback in 1977; Pentecostal Holiness Church Historian Vinson Synan, in 1984; and author Edith L. Blumhofer, in her 1989 history of the Assemblies of God) credit A. B. Simpson and his Fourfold Gospel with the doctrinal environment from which the Pentecostal Movement was born (1992:27-8). Specifically, the following also owe their beginnings to A. B. Simpson and the Fourfold Gospel of the CMA: Charles Parham (1873-1929), “Pentecostal patriarch and founder of the Apostolic Faith movement,” who in turn gave rise to William Seymour and the Azusa Street Revival (1906-13); the Assemblies of God, formed in 1914 in Hot Springs, Arkansas, and later moved to Springfield, Missouri; Aimee Semple McPherson, another native Canadian, (1890-1944) and her Angelus Temple in Los Angeles, California in 1923, which later became the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel; and even the little-known George Jeffreys (1889-1962) and his Elim Foursquare Gospel Alliance established in Britain in 1926 (Nienkirchen 1992:26, 29-31, and 37-51). Additionally, Simpson’s Fourfold Gospel was called “the heart and spine of Pentecostalism” and of the British Pentecostal Missionary Theology by Cecil Polhill, founder and president of the Pentecostal Missionary Union (PMU) in 1890. Polhill, in addition to A. J. Gordon and Andrew Murray, applied Simpson’s Fourfold Gospel by looking for a “pneumatic millennialism” that brought worldwide revival of faith in Jesus as Savior through the preaching of “Spirit-baptized” missionaries, confirmed by “signs of healing” before the “return of the King,” as stated in the PMU’s *Flames of Fire* of December 1913 (Kay 1999:89, 92).