**VOLUME 1; CHAPTER 26 - THE PREACHING OF G. CAMPBELL MORGAN**

**THE PURPOSE OF THE ADVENT: To Prepare for a Second Advent by G. CAMPBELL MORGAN**

*Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for Him, unto salvation.*

*Hebrews 9:28*

WE COME THIS EVENING TO CONSIDER THE LAST OF THE FOUR great values of the first Advent. We have spoken together of the fact that He was manifested that He might destroy the works of the Devil, that He was manifested to take away sins, that He was manifested to reveal the Father; and now we come finally to this great truth that He was manifested to prepare for another manifestation, that He came once in order that He might be able to come again. All the things of which we have spoken as constituting the values of the first Advent were necessary in order that there should be another Advent.

Our thoughts are turning with gladness to the first coming of Jesus. The light that shone o'er the plains is shining around us; the songs which the shepherds heard we also hear; and the new hope that filled the hearts of shepherds and Wise Men in that Eastern land at the Advent of Jesus is in our hearts at this time.

Yet we are all conscious that nothing is perfect, that the things which He came to do are not yet done, that the works of the devil are not yet finally destroyed, that sins are not yet experimentally taken away, that in the spiritual consciousness of the race God is not yet perfectly known. As the writer of this said in another connection, "Now we see not yet all things subjected to Him." The victory seems not to be won. There seems to be very, very much still to do. Or, if I may put this into another form, it is impossible to read the story of the first Advent and to believe in it, and to follow the history of the centuries that have followed upon that Advent, without feeling in one's deepest heart that something more is needed. The first Advent demands something else.

Therefore, we turn with relief to the declaration of the New Testament which formed the very hope and song of the Early Church, the declaration which states that He Who has come will come, that the first Advent was indeed preparatory, and that the consummation of its meaning can be brought about only by another coming, as personal, as definite, as positive, as real in human history as was the first.

Think of the fact stated in my text: "Christ ... shall appear a second time." There is no escape, other than by casuistry, from the simple meaning of these words. The first idea conveyed by them is that of an actual personal advent of Jesus yet to be. To spiritualize a statement like this and to attempt to make application of it in any other than the way in which a little child would understand it is to be driven, one is almost inclined to say, to dishonesty with the simplicity of the Scriptural declaration.

This statement is not peculiar to the letter from which it is taken. It is the teaching of the whole of the New Testament. To the man who has given up the New Testament as final, authoritative, and infallible, I have no appeal. We have no common ground. If you are attempting to erect a Christian structure upon your philosophizing I have no time to argue with you. I respect your conviction, I believe in your honesty, but I part company with you. To me the New Testament is the living, final, absolutely infallible Word of God.

I find a great many Christian people, however, who believe that as surely as I do, who yet seem not to be perfectly sure of a second personal Advent of the same Jesus. I repeat, and again I would say it carefully, with no desire to offend or hurt the convictions of any, that you cannot take your New Testament and read it simply and honestly without coming to the conclusion that the Christ Who came is still to come. There may be diversities of interpretations as to how He will come and when He will come. I am not discussing these tonight. We may part company as to whether He will come to usher in a millennium or to crown it. I think that is important, but I am not careful now to argue it. When the risen Christ had passed out of the sight of the men who waited upon the mountain side and in astonishment looked at the clouds which had received Him, angels appeared to them who said, "This Jesus, which was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld Him going into heaven." He is coming or the angels were wrong.

Paul in all his writings is conscious of this truth of the second Advent. In some of them he does not dwell upon it at such great length or with such clearness as in others, for the simple reason that it is not the specific subject with which he is dealing. In the Thessalonian letters you have most clearly set forth Paul's teaching concerning this matter. In the very center of the first letter we have a passage which declares in unmistakable language that "the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we that are alive, that are left, shall together be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord." "It was this hope which more than anything gave its colour to the primitive Christianity, its unworldliness, its moral intensity, its command of the future even in this life." The latter sentence is a quotation from the book of a man who does not hold the position I hold, who does not believe as I believe in the actual second personal Advent of Jesus, who, nevertheless, recognizes that this view gave the bloom to primitive Christianity and constituted the power of the early Christians to laugh in the face of death, and to overcome all forces which were against them.

That is not peculiarly Pauline. Writing to those who were in affliction, James said, "Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord is at hand."

With equal clearness, Peter said to the early disciples, "Be sober and set your hope perfectly on the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

John, who leaned upon his Master's bosom, and who wrote the most wonderful of all mystic words concerning Him, said, "We know that, if He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him even as He is. And everyone that hath this hope set on Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure."

Jude said to those to whom he wrote, "Ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

That is but a rapid passing over of the great field of New Testament teaching. To summarize yet more briefly the things to which I have already referred, I would declare that every New Testament writer presents this truth as a part of the common Christian faith. I believe there is nothing more needed in our day than a new declaration of this vital fact of Christian faith. Think what it would mean if the whole Church still lifted her face toward the East and waited for the morning, waited as the Lord would have her wait - not star-gazing and almanac examining, but, with loins girt for service and lamps burning, waiting as she serves. If the whole Christian Church were so waiting she would cast off her worldliness and infidelity and all other things which hinder her march to conquest. It is because we have lost the bloom of hope that our songs are so poor. If we may but hear again the promises of the New Testament, the assurances of the Word that He Who came is coming, then there will be strength in service and new fortitude for suffering, and new hope for all the world in its sin and its sorrow and its sighing.

Our text does more than affirm the fact of the second Advent. In a somewhat remarkable way, it declares the meaning thereof, "Christ ... shall appear a second time, apart from sin."

To understand this rightly we must look upon it as putting the second Advent into contrast with the first. That is what the writer most evidently means, for the context declares that Jesus was manifested in the consummation of the ages, to bear sins. That we have considered. He now says that "Christ ... shall appear a second time, apart from sin." Consequently, I repeat, to understand this rightly we must look upon it as putting the second Advent in contrast with the first. All the things of the first Advent were necessary to the second, but all the things of the second will be different from the things of the first. The whole of the first Advent was conditioned within the fact of sin. Jesus came to deal with sin. By His first Advent sin was revealed. Men never truly understood the meaning thereof until He came, and by the light of His presence in human history flung it into clear relief. From the slaughter of the innocents which accompanied His birth to His own death upon the cross His presence in the world flung hatred into view. The slaughter of the innocents was the action of a false king who feared a new king coming to snatch his sceptre, and hatred manifested itself in devilish cruelty to little children. Our Lord's own cross was the place where all the deep hatred of the human heart expressed itself most diabolically in view of heaven and earth and hell.

There was also revelation of darkness as contrary to light. "Men loved the darkness rather than the light," was the supreme wail of the heart of Jesus. His presence in the world was, moreover, revelation of spiritual death as contrary to life. In the perpetual attempt of men to materialize His work, the attempt of His own disciples as well as all the rest, and their absolute failure to appreciate the spiritual teaching He gave, we see what spiritual death really is.

In His first Advent He not only revealed sin but bore it. In the words, "Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many," the reference is not merely to the final movement of the cross. The word "offered" is used in reference to God's action in giving Him. It would be perfectly correct interpretation to supply the word "offered" by the word "gave," the word which you have in John's Gospel, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son." Let us put that word here, "Christ also, having been once given to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time." All through His life He bore sin. All through the long, long days, He was putting Himself underneath sin in order to take it away. He bore its limitations throughout the whole of His life. In poverty, in sorrow, in loneliness He lived, and all these things are limitations resulting from sin. All poverty is the issue of sin. It is well we should remember that. The problem of poverty has a deeper problem lying at its heart which is the problem of sin. I do not mean that the poor man is the sinner always. Far from it. It is very easy for people who live in comparative ease and comfort, or in affluence, to write about the blessings of poverty. There are no blessings of poverty save as God does overrule all the grinding and crushing of human life for some essential good. All poverty is the result of sin, either of the man who is poor or of some other who is robbing him. When Jesus Christ entered into flesh He entered into the limitations which follow upon sin and He bore sin in His own consciousness through all the years. Not poverty only, but sorrow in all forms. Sorrow is lack. The sorrow of bereavement is the lack of the friend. Every sorrow is a sense of lack, something wanting, something gone, and Jesus lived through all the years "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." And in His long loneliness He lived in the midst of limitations resulting from sin. Finally gathering all these things to a crisis, He reached the ultimate issue of sin, bearing it, carrying it, lifting it, placing Himself, very God as well as very man, underneath it until all its weight was upon Him - the weight of its poverty, for "though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor"; the weight of its sorrow, for all the sorrows of the human heart were upon His heart until He uttered that unspeakable cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Such was the story of the first Advent.

Now hear my text. Having finally dealt with sin and destroyed it at its very root in His first Advent, Jesus' next coming, His second Advent, is to be that of victory. He will come again, not to poverty but to wealth. He will come again, not to sorrow but with all joy. He will come again, not in loneliness, but to gather about Him all trusting souls who have looked and served and waited. We are celebrating the Advent when there was no room for Him in the inn. When He comes again the whole world and the universe will make haste to make room for Him. At the close of the first Advent we saw Him holding the reed of mockery, robed in the purple of contempt, crowned with thorns, surrounded by a mob. When He comes again He will hold the sceptre of the universe in His right hand; upon His brow there will be many diadems; He will be panoplied with all the splendor of God, and ten thousand times ten thousand angels will be the cohorts that accompany Him. All in His first Advent of sorrow and loneliness, of poverty and of sin, will be absent from the second. The first Advent was for atonement, the second will be for administration. He came, entering into human nature and taking hold of it, to deal with sin and put it away. He has taken sin away, and He will come again to set up that Kingdom, the foundations of which He laid in His first coming.

I pause for one moment to say I am not dealing with the different phases of the Advent, with the fact that He will first gather His Church to Himself and then establish the Kingdom on earth. I am viewing the whole in general outline, recognizing the different phases, but insisting now only upon the glorious and gracious fact that this One Who came is yet to come.

Let us go one step further, and we shall find that my text declares the purpose of the Advent. "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this cometh judgment; so Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for Him, unto salvation." A similarity is suggested. "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this cometh judgment." Over against that dual appointment stands "So Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for Him, unto salvation." As His first Advent was parallel to the appointment of death, His second Advent is parallel to the appointment of judgment. "It is appointed unto men once to die ... Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many." It is appointed that after death there shall be judgment - He "shall appear a second time, apart from sin ... " But the contrast seems to break down. The similarity is not carried out. There is a strange differentiation in the ending of the two declarations, and we must notice it. We expected that it would have been written to complete the comparison, thus, "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this cometh judgment; so Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, apart from sin, unto judgment." That would seem to be a balanced comparison, but the writer does not so write. Notice how this very difference unfolds the meaning of the first and second Advents. It is appointed to men to die - He was offered to bear the sins of many. After death judgment - He is coming again unto salvation. As the first Advent negatived the death appointed unto men, the second Advent will turn the judgment into salvation.

"It is appointed unto men once to die." It is often some-what carelessly affirmed that men must die. While admitting the truth of this statement, we inquire why must they die? Ask the scientist. Science can no more account for death than it can account for life. It has never been able to explain the mystery of the beginning of life. It has never yet been able to say why men die. How they die, yes; why they die, no! We are all reconstructed on the physical side every seven years. The essential personality is not reconstructed, but maintains its individuality through all the processes of reconstruction. I am the man I was seven years ago, and yet there is not a particle of this tabernacle, through the medium of which I speak to you tonight, that would have been here had I been here seven years ago. Waste of tissue and break-down of the physical is a constant process of remaking. The mental in man gains breadth and strength and beauty as years pass on. The man who has run out the allotted three score years and ten, or for whom God has lengthened the lease a few years, mentally and spiritually is greater than he has ever been before, but the reconstruction of the physical is not quite so perfect as it used to be, the elasticity is missing, the vision is becoming dim, the new-made temple is not quite so fibrous and tough as the old one. Why? I wait for scientific answer, but I wait in vain. No man without revelation has ever been able to tell me why the physical ceases at maturity to reconstruct itself with ever-increasing strength. I will tell you why. Death is the wage of sin. Science will admit that death comes by the breaking of certain laws. Science will use some other word than the word "sin." Sir Oliver Lodge tells us that sensible men do not use the word "sin." I am a little tired of the Church's worship of Sir Oliver Lodge. I am surprised at the way Christian ministers have welcomed his creed. I have every respect for him as an honest scientist, but he does not understand Christianity. His creed is not the Christian creed. If there is no place for "sin" and "blood," there is no room for Jesus Christ. "It is appointed unto men once to die" by the fiat of God Almighty because they are sinners, and no man can escape that fiat.

But Jesus Christ was offered by God to bear the sins of many - that was the answer of the first Advent to man's appointment to death.

Beyond death there is another appointment, that of judgment.

Who shall appeal against the absolute justice of that appointment? He "shall appear a second time, apart from sin ... unto salvation." To those who have heard the message of the first Advent and have believed it, and trusted in His great work, and have found shelter in the mystery of His manifestation and bearing of sin, to such, salvation takes the place of judgment. But to the man who will not shelter beneath that first Advent and its atoning value judgment abides. All the things begun by His first Advent will be consummated by the second.

At His second Advent there will be complete salvation for the individual - Righteousness, Sanctification, Redemption. We believed, and were saved. We believe, and are being saved. We believe, and we shall be saved. The last movement will come when Our Lord comes.

What of those who have fallen on sleep? They are safe with God and He will bring them with Him when He comes. They are not yet perfected, "God having provided some better thing concerning us, that apart from us they should not be perfected." They are at rest and consciously at rest. They are "absent from the body ... at home with the Lord," but they are not yet perfected, they are waiting. We are waiting in the midst of earth's struggle, they in heaven's light and joy, for the second Advent. Heaven is waiting for it. Earth is waiting for it. Hell is waiting for it. The universe is waiting for it.

That coming will be to those who wait for Him. Who are those who wait for Him? Let Scripture interpret this. In the Thessalonian Epistle I find Paul's description of the early Christians, "Ye turned unto God from idols, to serve a living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven." The first thing is the turning from idols. Have you done that? The second thing is serving the living God. Are you doing that? Then because you have turned from idols and are serving Him you are waiting. That is the waiting the New Testament enjoins, and to those who wait, His second Advent will mean salvation. There is waiting other than that, but we have no share in it. That is our waiting, because we have heard the Evangel of the first Advent and know it. The whole creation waiteth, "groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." I hear the sob of the waiting myriads in China and Africa and India. They are waiting. They have never yet heard of the first Advent. They are waiting. They know not for what. They cry as a child in the night, with no language but a cry. Oh the pathos and the tragedy of it!

"Christ shall appear." Glorious Gospel! He shall appear, to heal the wounds of all creation. "He comes to break oppression and set the captives free." He is coming to rule with a rod of iron, which means absolute and inflexible equity. Often times there is more love in justice than in mercy. When He Who came in meek mercy long ago comes again, He will come in majestic might, and also in love. He will come to gather out His trusting souls and then to establish His own rule and set up His own government. What a day of burning it will be for some! What terror will come to the hearts of those who have lived and fattened upon devilism!

He is coming! That is my hope and confidence. That is my hope and my song for the world this Christmastime. He came to commence, to initiate. He will come to complete. "Christ ... shall appear a second time, apart from sin ... unto salvation." Salvation means judgment wrought out in the impulse and power of love.

We stand tonight between the Advents. Our relation to the first creates our relation to the second. To receive Him as rejected is to be received by Him at His coronation. To accept His estimate of sin and share in the value of His atoning work is to enter into His coming administration of righteousness. To trust in the first is to wait for the second.

How stands it between my soul and the Advents, first and second? I am not trying to cast a cloud over the merriment of Christmastime. But have a reason for your merriment, and in God's name cease your merriment if the Child Who was born, and of Whom you sing, is excluded from your heart and hearth and home. The blasphemy of it! The tragedy of it! The shame of it! People who by persistent sin are crucifying this Christ afresh every day yet make merry this Christmastime. If you have admitted Him and found room for Him for Whom there was no room in the inn, if you have handed Him the kingdom of your life though the world still rejects Him as in the days of old, then make merry. Let your songs abound. Let your hearts be glad. Give the children a good time. But I warn you against all merriment if you have shut Him out, for He comes again, and if, in spite of the light of the first Advent you have rejected Him, He must, on the basis of eternal justice, reject you. He is coming. May we so trust Him as to the meaning and merit of His first Advent as not to be ashamed of Him when He comes again!