**VOLUME 1; CHAPTER 12 - THE PREACHING OF G. CAMPBELL MORGAN**

**THE SPIRIT'S TESTIMONY TO THE WORLD by G. CAMPBELL MORGAN**

*Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send Him unto you. And He, when He is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on Me; of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye behold Me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world bath been judged.*

*John 16:7-11*

WITH THE AWAKENING OF THE SPIRITUAL SIDE OF A MAN'S nature there ever comes to him a threefold consciousness: a consciousness of sin, a consciousness of righteousness, a consciousness of judgment. All this is, after all, but one: it is the consciousness of God, with the things resulting therefrom. Though it may not be formulated, tabulated, expressed, the awakening of the spiritual in a man is always, first, the consciousness of God: and the consciousness of God in the soul of a man is always the consciousness of righteousness, and the consciousness of righteousness in the abstract is forevermore the consciousness of sin as a fact, and the consciousness of sin carries with it the consciousness of judgment. In this passage we have something which touches us very closely and very intimately in this matter of spiritual consciousness. Such an awakening may occur in very varied circumstances in the life of a human being; indeed, it may occur again and yet again without producing any very definite result. The awakening of spiritual consciousness does not necessarily mean the regeneration of the spirit of the beginning of a new life. By the awakening of the spiritual consciousness I mean the sense of the fact of the spiritual. Very often it comes to the most godless men in circumstances of peril and danger. A ship at sea is suddenly in peril of sinking, and it becomes a house of prayer. Men are suddenly overwhelmed in some great calamity, such as the earthquake in San Francisco, and they think of God. It is idle to speak of such seeking after God in times of peril as cowardice. It is not cowardice. It is rather that the essential within the man wakes and realizes itself. It may be a passing emotion, but is a very real one. I have sometimes attempted to illustrate what I mean out of my own experience, an experience very much on the material basis it would seem, and apparently for the moment quite apart from the line we are pursuing. The first time I became profoundly conscious in my own life that I am a spirit and not a body - I had believed it long and had attempted to live in the power of the fact, and had known much of the joy which comes from the conviction - was in an hour of peril. It was in New York, in the Murray Hill Hotel, within five minutes of a fearful explosion which occurred there a few years ago, when the whole building was shaken. In a room on the third floor of that building was my wife. I was attempting to reach that floor, and felt that my spirit was hindered by my body. I became positively conscious that this body was a clog, a hindrance. In that moment I understood what people sing about in higher realms, "This robe of flesh I'll drop," and I wished I could. I knew in the moment of peril, and of desire, that I was a spirit. These moments of awakening come to men in different circumstances and in different places. They have come to some of you in this house in the singing of a hymn, in the reading of the Word, in some message delivered, in some holy silence when the material has faded, and you have been conscious of the spirituality of your own personality. A man never comes to that consciousness and attends to it, listens to it, thinks of it, but that these things pass through his mind in quick succession - sin, righteousness, and judgment, and if this be dwelt upon and faced honestly, squarely, it becomes in each case a double consciousness - of sin as an actual fact present in the life, and as a paralysis which man cannot overcome; of righteousness as a true ideal, something which can be admired in spite of his uttermost degradation, and yet an impossibility, something he cannot realize; of judgment as a verdict found, not by a jury of his fellow men, not merely by an assembly, or the consensus of universal opinion, but in his own soul, a verdict of guilty, not only a verdict of guilty, but a sentence impending, that of the disaster and death which must overtake sin. This consciousness of the spiritual with its sense of sin, or righteousness and of judgment, is not peculiar to Christianity. When Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would "convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment," He did not mean that the Spirit would give men to know the fact of sin and the fact of righteousness and the fact of judgment. They knew these things while He was still among them. They had known them long ere His advent in time. Today, where the presence and power of the Spirit through the Church have never yet come, all these things are known.

What, then, is the testimony which the Spirit bears concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment?

First, the Spirit sets this threefold consciousness in relation to Jesus Christ. The Spirit "will convict the world ... of sin, because they believe not on Me; of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye behold Me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world hath been judged." While there are notes of severity and searching in this testimony of the Spirit concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment, it is the one great evangel of hope.

He came to convict the world in respect of sin. What is it that He has to say to us about sin? First of all, He reveals the fact that in this Gospel age sin has a new centre and a new responsibility. "Of sin, because they believe not on Me." The Spirit, instead of dealing with men about their own specific sins, the varied and thousand forms all manifesting the one central malady, reveals the very heart and root of sin, not as it is where Jesus is not known, but as it is when a man has heard the evangel, has seen Christ, has had his opportunity of believing and being saved. "Of sin, because they believe not on Me." The Spirit creates a new centre for sin. When the Spirit has exercised His ministry in the life of a man, sin is a new and different thing, yet the reasonableness of it will be seen if we follow for a moment this simple line of thought. What is sin essentially? Sin is rebellion against the government of God. You may speak of your particular sin, your impure nature, your passion, lust, your tendency to lie, to cheat, to embezzle. What are all these things but the results of a cause, but branches springing out of one essential root? What is the root from which all these things spring? Rebellion against the government of God. Sin in the life of a man is high treason against heaven. Sin in the life of a man is not an inheritance to be pitied, not an infirmity to be excused. It is the lifting of the hand in an attempt to smite God Almighty in the face. It is the turning of the back of man upon God.

Jesus Christ lived a life which was directly opposed to that. He bound Himself by bonds of perpetual dedication to the throne of God. He did only the things that His Father willed. The story is an old one. We will not stay to refer to the great words which fell from His lips, proving this to be true. We know it and accept it. He lived in unceasing and undeviating loyalty to the throne of God: perfect amid imperfection, sinless amid sinners, pure amid impurity, loyal amid treason. Such was the life of the Son of God. There are a hundred ways in which you may speak of His death. Let me follow the line of my argument and say that in that death He accepted - I know how impossible it is to state it all, yet hear this one-sided statement very reverently - He accepted the responsibility and consequences of the sin of the race and made them His own. When He walked unknown among the crowd on the banks of the Jordan the last prophet of the Hebrew line pointed Him out and uttered words concerning Him which ought to be carefully pondered. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" It was then a prophecy of hope which has now become a fact of history. He took the responsibility of sin, and because He did that He has provided an absolution which is justification, infinitely more than pardon, and he has provided a purity for man which cleanses his nature and energizes him for new life. I have sinned the sin of rebellion against God and the poison and virus of it have entered into my life, and when I "would do good, evil is present." I see righteousness and admire it, but in my nature is the poison and paralysis of sin. What am I to do? Jesus Christ stands confronting me, and says to me, "All the guilt of the past I have put away. All the weakness of the present I am waiting to energize." If I refuse Him, that is sin. There is no other sin left. He has put it all away. There is no sin in my past life that He has not dealt with in the mystery of His passion. There is no sin in my present life that He cannot deal with in the might of His Holy Spirit. He waits, and plenteous redemption is at my disposal. If I turn my back on that I remain the slave of the sins which bind me. I remain guilty of all the sins which are against me. The central sin, the one holding all these within its grasp, and binding them upon me, is my sin of rejecting Him. "Of sin, because they believe not on me." You tell me, my brother, that your sin consists in some particular failing. That is not your sin. Your sin is that you believe not on Him. If you would believe on Him, if you would believe on Him with abandonment of the life, all the guilt would be put away, all the power of the sin would be broken. If you refuse the remedy that is your sin. The illustration which is simplest is best. Here is a man lying sick of a fell disease. I bring him the one absolutely sure remedy for his disease. He puts it away and dies. You tell me he died of his disease? In some senses you are right; but he died because he declined the remedy. That is the story of sin in the light of the mission of Jesus and the ministry of the Spirit. Whatever sin you are in the grip of, that sin must loosen its hold in the moment when you believe on Him and He commits to you the efficacy of His cross and the dynamic of His resurrection.

You say, "My besetting sin is my temper, my love of drink, some form of impurity." Nothing of the kind. You have not named your besetting sin. Your besetting sin is your persistent unbelief in Jesus. Sin is unbelief. If you would believe on Him your evil temper would be changed, the very fire and force of your love of alcohol would die out, quenched by the power of the Spirit. If you would but believe on Him the feverish fire of your impurity would be dealt with. Some of you go mourning all the days, with mourning which insults heaven and grieves the Spirit, over some besetting sin which you cannot cure. If you would but believe on Him! The Spirit comes to give sin its relation to Jesus Christ, to reveal to men the perfect Saviour in order that they may understand that if any suffer the penalty of in it is because they have refused God's one great all-sufficient remedy for sin.

Following that is the testimony of God's Spirit to righteousness. He "will convict the world in respect ... of righteousness, because I go to the Father." The Spirit's testimony concerning righteousness reveals Jesus in two ways: first as a perfect pattern, and secondly as an all-sufficient power - a perfect pattern.

When Jesus said, "I go to the Father," so far as He personally is concerned He meant, "I came forth from the Father. I have walked the earth and the ways of men in the light of the Father. I am going back to the Father. There is nothing to keep me out. There is no barrier shutting me out of God's heaven. I go to the Father. I challenge heaven's light because of the purity of my life. I challenge the very holiness of God because I have never sinned. I am at home with the Father." That is Holiness challenging holiness and defying God's light to exclude Him. "I go to the Father, for I love the Father and my home is with the Father. The place of all my affinities is with the Father." Thus there emerges a new ideal of righteousness. We have said righteousness is for a man to pay his debts, and never to do his neighbour any harm, imagining that it consists in all that morality which is conditioned by the policeman. Jesus Christ says that righteousness consists in such relationships with heaven as make relationships with earth high and holy and noble. Righteousness consists not merely in the keeping of the laws written upon tables of stone, but in life which finds its centre in the heart of God, and finds its home in the home of God. The Spirit reveals to us the true meaning of righteousness, and delivers us from false conceptions. The Spirit says to you righteousness is rightness, and rightness is right, and right is the proper relationship to the will of God, so that a man finds himself at home only when he finds himself with God. There are a great many men who are boasting of their righteousness who are not at all at home if you talk about God. There is a difference between the boasted morality of the sinner and the righteousness of Jesus Christ. If you are going to measure things by the standard of the street and the police court I respect your respectability; but here in the sanctuary where His Name is proclaimed your respectability is as far below God's righteousness as hell is beneath heaven. "I go to the Father." That is human speech. It is the language of a man who has walked here amid earthly things, amid the flowers and birds, and children, and in the dusty highways, yet forever more homed in the bosom of the Father. This is righteousness. "Of righteousness, because I go to the Father."

That is not all. If that were all I would be afraid, more afraid than ever before. Let me speak for my own heart. If I had nothing other than this revelation of righteousness I would be hopeless, desperately hopeless. I pity with all my heart the man who tells me that Jesus is his ideal and nothing more. Either he is so blind as never to have seen Jesus' glory, or else if he has seen, and is honest, the comprehension of the distance is in itself the consciousness of perdition. When Jesus said, "I go to the Father," He was not speaking personally merely. He meant more than that. He meant, "I go to the Father for you." In stately language, in the second chapter of the Acts, Peter traces the way and issue of His going. "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs which God did by Him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know; Him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay: whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death: because it was not possible that He should be holden of it. ... Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear." When He sent to the Father, and there in high heaven challenged holiness by the purity of His life, and found Himself at home with love ineffable, He came there not merely as the perfect Man. He came there wounded, with scars in His hands, and feet, and side. I see this Man of Nazareth coming back to heaven's high court, and I hear the song of heaven as it tells of His victory, and I am afraid, for I am left here amid my sin. Yet as He comes I hear Him say, "I am He that liveth." I understand that. Purity always lives. Holiness cannot die. "And was dead." Why did He die? I give you the answer in the first person singular. You must make it your own. "He loved me and gave Himself up for me." When the Man of purity came back to heaven, when the Man of right challenged heaven's light and was as unsullied as it, in His hands and feet and side were the arguments which told of the passion by which He had made it possible for the impure to come home, for the lost to be found, for the ruined to be redeemed. Now the Spirit has come to "convict the world in respect ... of righteousness, because I go to the Father." Conviction by the Spirit is not only the revelation of a new pattern of righteousness, it is the declaration of a new power whereby men can themselves become righteous, and can themselves become holy. I think we must see that or we miss the very heart of the evangel. What is man's salvation? If by God's grace I stand in the light by and by - and by God's grace I shall - how shall I stand there? Not merely because He pardons sin. That is so or I never could stand there. How, then, shall I stand there? First, because He pardons sin; and, secondly, because He makes me perfect. No one will misunderstand me. I speak not as though "I have already obtained, or am already made perfect." The work is not yet done. My patient, tender Lord has much to do, but He will do it. He "will perfect that which concerneth me." Jesus Christ is not proposing to lead into the courts of heaven an army of crippled men and women. He is not proposing to bring back to God's dwelling place vast companies of in-competent spiritual beings. What, then, is He going to do? Let inspiration tell us. He will "set you before the presence of His glory without blemish in exceeding joy." This is what the Spirit says to a weary world about righteousness. Have the true pattern and see it in Jesus. Have the power, and have it in Him.

Once again, note what the Spirit says to the world concerning judgment. "Of judgment, because the prince of this world hath been judged." This is a new emphasis upon judgment. It is a new warning from a somewhat strange angle of thought, and yet a very true one. It is, first of all, a new emphasis. In His victory over sin borne, and in His ascension and enthronement, God's final judgment is pronounced against sin. It surely has occurred to you that whereas the gospel of the resurrection is a gospel of hope, it is the severest gospel of condemnation which men have ever listened to. When on that Easter morning long ago God Almighty raised Jesus from the dead, selecting Him from among others, choosing Him and making Him the approach to Himself, what was He doing? He was saying in the sight of all the race, "This is the Man, the anointed Man. This is the Man I accept." What more, then, was He saying? "All men unlike Him I reject." The resurrection of Jesus was the evidence in human history of the type, the pattern, which God accepts. The resurrection of Jesus was the proclamation to men everywhere that it is only as men are like Him that they can hope to rise as He rose, and ascend as He ascended, and come into the light and glory as He came into the light and glory, so that the fact of the cross and resurrection of Jesus is God's verdict against sin. "The prince of this world hath been judged." The verdict was found, and the sentence passed in the morning of resurrection. By the acceptance of this One, all unlike Him are rejected and judgment is pronounced against the prince of this world. Mark the emphasis. We can-not afford to miss anything that Jesus says. Who is it that is judged? The prince of this world. The master of worldliness. Worldliness is a great deal more and other than some of us think it is. Some people think that worldliness consists in playing cards and going to theatres and balls. There may be a great deal of worldliness that never plays cards and never goes to theatres or balls. Worldliness is that which never stretches out into the spiritual. Christ judges the world, pronounces it a failure, and condemns it to its own death in dust. By that material cross on which cruel and bloody men have nailed God's ideal "the prince of this world hath been judged."

Where are you living, my brother? Are you living here in London as though London were the last thing? Are you living on this one little planet amid the spaces as though it were all? Whether you play cards, or go to the theatre or not, is nothing for the moment. Where do you live? How far does your horizon stretch out? How much do you know of the eternal? Your heart is capable of being full of God. What is it full of? If it is full of anything less than God, do not forget that "the prince of this world bath been judged."

Thank God, it means more than that. It means that the prince of this world hath been judged, and therefore his captives are free. "He came to break oppression and set the captives free." You have been mastered by the foe. He masters the foe, and if you will, you can go out; your prison door is open, the prince is judged. He bruised the heel of the Lion of the tribe of Judah; but the Lion of the tribe of Judah put His foot upon the neck of the roaring lion. The prince of this world plunged his venomous dart into the side of the Prince of glory; but the Prince of glory quenched its venom in blood, and you are free if you will be so. The Spirit is not here to convince you of judgment to come, unless that is your choice. He is here to convince you that judgment is accomplished. The monster is dead. His power is broken. The foe that held you has been despoiled in the mystery of the cross, and you and I may be free. If you choose to abide in slavery, if you choose to make this world the beginning and the end and the all of your life, then you must share the hell of the prince of this world. But it is your own choice. It is not God's choice for you. If you make it your own you must abide by it.

The Spirit's testimony is the most solemn and searching declaration that men can ever receive concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment. Yet my heart bids me declare to you that if it be solemn and searching, it is the one evangel of hope that is worth having. It does not seem to me that to preach Jesus as an ideal is an evangel at all. It does not seem to me that if He told me He was willing to forgive my sin without any reference to myself or my state it would be enough. When I learn by the ministry and witness and testimony of the Spirit that if I will believe on Him the sins that bound me shall bind me no more, the fierce fires of passion that burned shall be quenched. When I hear that if I will believe on Him Who went to the Father, Who bends out of His high heaven, and says, "I will that ye also shall be with Me where I am, though I know the worst of you - that you will deny me on the way - let not your heart be troubled, you believe in God, trust Me and I will bring you home," then I have an evangel! When I hear that He Who calls me to follow Him is not asking me to escape and run away from a foe that may dodge my footsteps and may overtake me, but is asking me to follow Him, has met the foe, and has broken his power, and has delivered me, then I hear the evangel.

What shall we do with the evangel? If you reject Him tonight that is your sin. Will you believe on Him tonight? That is your righteousness as pattern and power. Will you reject the Christ of Whom the Spirit speaks? Then you choose the judgment which follows upon the prince of this world. Will you crown the Christ of Whom the Spirit speaks? Then you share His victory over the prince of this world, and instead of being vanquished you shall be victor. Do not give this away in generalities. Shut yourself up to yourself in these last minutes. Forget me, and forget your neighbour, whoever that may be, friend, husband, wife, brother, sister, child. Be alone one moment with God. Now confronting you stands the Christ. What will you do with Him? May God help you to decide.