**VOLUME 3; CHAPTER 16 - THE PREACHING OF G. CAMPBELL MORGAN**

**THE PROBLEMS OF THE RELIGIOUS LIFE: THE OPPOSING FORCES OF THE RELIGIOUS LIFE - THE DEVIL by G. CAMPBELL MORGAN**

IN THIS STUDY, AS IN THE PREVIOUS ONES, OUR APPEAL IS MADE wholly to the Scriptures of truth. It is impossible to make such appeal and at the same time to deny the personality of Satan.

To deny the personality of Satan as revealed in the Scriptures is to have to believe that all the evil things with which we are familiar today, and all the dark and dastardly crimes of the centuries, have come out of human nature. This the Bible does not teach. There are two chapters at the commencement of the Bible and two at the end in which we have glimpses of this world unaffected by the devil. In the two first chapters he is not seen. In the last two chapters he is banished. Through the rest he is recognized and referred to as an actual personality of evil, and that to me is a most hopeful doctrine. If humanity is a part of God, then all murders and lies are part of the activity of God, and that is impossible of belief. I know it is not quite fashionable to talk about the devil today.

Men don't believe in a devil now,

As their fathers used to do;

They reject one creed because it's old

For another because it's new.

There's not a print of his cloven foot,

Nor a fiery dart from his bow,

To be found in the earth or air today!

At least - they declare it is so!

But who is it mixes the fatal draught

That palsies heart and brain

And loads the bier of each passing year

With its hundred thousand slain?

But who blights the bloom of the land today

With the fiery breath of hell?

If it isn't the devil that does the work,

Who does? Won't somebody tell?

Who dogs the steps of the toiling saint?

Who spreads the net for his feet?

Who sows the tares in the world's broad field

Where the Saviour sows His wheat?

If the devil is voted not to be,

Is the verdict therefore true?

Someone is surely doing the work

The devil was thought to do,

They may say the devil has never lived,

They may say the devil is gone;

But simple people would like to know

Who carries the business on.

I shall follow exactly the same method as I have followed in the previous two lectures, speaking first of the devil as he is revealed to us in Scripture; second, of the devil as opposed to religion; third, of the relation between the world, the flesh, and the devil; and, last, of the way of victory over the devil.

The personality of Satan is revealed as distinctly in the New Testament as is the personality of Jesus Christ. To deny the one is to deny the other. In casting out demons Christ perpetually addressed Himself to them as to definite personalities, possessing men, and all through that New Testament story it is quite evident that the personality of the devil was believed in.

But now what does the Bible teach concerning this personality? First of all, the Bible never suggests that Satan is self-existent; and if not self-existent, therefore created; and if created, created by God. God creates everything good, and is nothing evil. "Do not I, the Lord, create evil?" is a distinct declaration of Scripture, but read the context, and it is at once seen that the word "evil" there means calamity, judgment on a guilty city. Therefore it is perfectly evident that, according to Bible teaching, Satan being not self-existent, but created, and that by God, was therefore created good. And if today he is evil, he has fallen from his original estate.

There was a time when the disciples came back to Jesus, and said, "Even the devils are subject to us," and there fell from the lips of the Master these very remarkable words, "I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven." There a whole history is condensed into a flash; and a great unveiling of truth comes almost with a blinding glare. The disciples said, Even the demons are subject to us, and Christ's answer in effect was this, You need not be surprised that demons are subject unto you in My name. Satan, himself, the prince of the hosts of wickedness, the lord of the whole empire of sin, is not enthroned, he is fallen from heaven. It is testimony borne by the lips of Christ to a primal fall; to the fact that Satan is one of the principalities, one of the powers, an angel, but an angel fallen as lightning from heaven.

There is very little doubt that Peter heard that word of Jesus, and when I turn to his epistles I find in the course of an argument he declared, "God spared not angels when they sinned, but cast them down to hell, and committed them to pits of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment." That is an inspired declaration of the fact that God spared not angels when they sinned, but cast them down, committed them to pits of darkness. Jude, in his brief epistle, gives us a still more detailed and remarkable account of the primal fall of angels. Hear these words, "Angels which kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation." The Authorized Version reads "their first estate." Which is the better translation I cannot tell. I should be inclined to change them both and read, "Angels which kept not true to first principles, left their proper habitation or residence, or sphere, or orbit, He hath kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." There is nothing detailed in all this, but there is quite sufficient to reveal all that it is necessary for us to know. It is the story of a fall of angels led by one. Jesus named the one in the forefront, the leader, "I beheld Satan as lightning fallen from heaven." Peter writes in the plural, "God spared not angels when they sinned, but cast them down to hell, and committed them to pits of darkness." Jude went a little more carefully into the matter and declared that they "kept not their own principality." They were not true to the principle of their own life, they left their proper orbit, habitation, residence, sphere, but they did not escape from Divine government when they so fell. He kept them "in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day."

What was the sin? Who shall dare to say? In Milton's "Paradise Lost" we have splendid speculation as to what the sin was; and in all probability more than speculation.

Satan is never spoken of as having any independent existence. He is never spoken of as having sovereign dominion. The Bible never suggests that he has successfully cast off the government of God: He is in rebellion against it, but still held by it. That is the meaning of the petition in the Lord's prayer, "Bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil." It is a recognition of the fact that the very forces of evil in the spiritual realm are still under the government of God. To imagine that the Bible teaches that Satan is a personality in the universe in rebellion against God successfully, is to contradict entirely what the Bible perpetually teaches.

Now notice what this means. The devil is not omnipotent. The devil is not omniscient. The devil is not omnipresent. Let me begin with the last first. The Bible never suggests the omnipresence of the devil. Someone says, The devil is here. How do you know? You have no proof of it. It is impossible for the devil to be in London and in New York at the same moment. To admit the creation of angels is to admit limitation and location. Whether you think of angels fallen or unfallen, I pray you remember none of them are omnipresent. They come, they go. They guard and watch the saints, for "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation." So also with Satan and all the fallen angels, none of them are omnipresent. The number of them is so great that in every assembly, and over every man, some of them watch in order to destroy. But Satan himself, marshalling, guiding, commanding the hosts of spiritual wickedness, can never be in two places at once. Swifter than the lightning's flash, quicker than the thought of man can travel, he may encircle the globe, but he is not omnipresent. He is personal only in the measure in which any angel is personal. He is personal only in the measure in which man is personal.

Neither is he omniscient, knowing everything, seeing the end from the beginning, as God is able to do. Far more subtle in his wisdom, far more keen in his intuitions, far cleverer than man has ever been, but certainly not seeing all the ultimate issue from the commencement.

And assuredly he is not omnipotent, not having all power. Go to the book of Job, and put all that wonderful story into brief words in this respect. The devil, full of subtlety, and malice, and determination to spoil the work of God in a human soul, could nevertheless not touch a single hair upon the back of a single camel belonging to Job until he had asked God's leave.

The protest against dualism is out of place when you are thinking of the devil, according to Scripture teaching. The protest may be a very excellent one according to much misinterpretation of Scripture teaching which has possessed or obsessed the minds of men. If you once deny the existence of the devil in the universe because God is all and in all, that is to postulate a doctrine of the universe which is unscriptural. That doctrine must equally deny the existence of man. Is man a personality? If you admit that he is, then you may also admit the possibility of a personality in the universe other than God, created by God, who in some way is out of harmony with God, is indeed in antagonism against God, and yet who is not coequal with God in power, or in knowledge, or in presence.

Now, for a moment take the other side of this matter, and think of his power as revealed in the scriptures of truth. Do not forget that he is spiritual in essence. All the angels are spirits, flames of fire, and Satan, one of the hierarchy of heaven, fallen, is a spirit. If it be true, as Tennyson says, that "Spirit with spirit can meet," referring to man's possibility of approaching God, it is equally true that the devil as spirit and man as spirit can meet, and in that fact lies the tremendous power of Satan, and of all those hosts that he commands, the army of fallen angels that are spiritual in essence.

Then also he is subtle in method. "Subtle" seems a weak word to use in connection with the devil. Paul describes the devil as an "angel of light." Peter describes the devil as a "roaring lion." Jesus refers to him as the "prince of this world." Each description suggests a different method, adopted according to the occasion, and according to the purpose - transforming himself into an angel of light to deceive if it be possible the very elect, appearing in awful ferocity and fierceness as a roaring lion to overwhelm the timid and afraid; the prince of the world offering to man all the kingdoms for a moment's homage, coming to men according to the method necessary to entrap them and spoil them, and harm them. This is awful subtlety.

Then, again, he is revealed in Scripture as being strenuous in enterprise and stupendous in execution. He is the leader of vast hosts. "Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places." That is a graphic description of this army of spiritual forces fighting against everything that is in harmony with the will of God. Those of us who accept the teaching of Scripture as final, recognize the place of angels fallen and unfallen. At the head of fallen angels, marshalling all, is the great head and centre, the mightiest of them, the wisest of them, the most wonderful of them, his might, his wisdom, and his wonder prostituted in the universe of God to the purpose of fighting against God and yet forevermore held in check and never allowed to pass the limit of the government of God.

Now consider what is taught in Scripture concerning the devil as opposed to religion. All I have attempted to say concerning him tonight as revealed in Scripture makes it patent that he must be and is the enemy of religion. Let us again appeal to Scripture for his character in relation to man. Jesus said concerning him, "He was a murderer from the beginning, and stood not in the truth because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof." A lie is essential evil. Jesus said, "I am the Truth," that is, essential good. A lie is the direct opposite. The original lie in human history was a denial of the creature's relation to God, and a suggestion in the heart of man that God was hard, unkind, capricious, prompting man to rebellion against Him. If I come to the writings of the Apostle John I read that he thus describes Satan, "The evil one." That is a term that describes him absolutely. He is the very embodiment of sin. Let me take you to three other descriptive words in order that we may see how he is opposed to religion. He is described as "the god of this world," as "the prince of the world," as "the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience." Put these three descriptions together and you will see that in this wonderful personality of evil, mastering the hosts of evil, there is the exact anthithesis of all we know of God - One, "God the Father"; the other, "the god of this world"; one, "God the Son"; the other, "the prince of the world"; one, "God the Holy Ghost"; the other, "the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience." Thus in this personality there reside all the things that are opposed to the things in God. In God the Father there is essential government, in "the god of this world" there is disorder, evil. In God the Son there is grace, and in the devil there is everything opposed to grace. In God the Holy Spirit there is guidance for the sons of men and for the world: the devil is forevermore leading men away from the true path out into the desert and out into darkness. He is not coequal with God, but in the measure of his personality he is antagonistic to God, to His government, to His grace, to His guidance, forevermore trying to lead men astray.

"The god of this world." The world is devil-governed until this hour. Go to the homes of darkness in the far distant places of the world, and you will see that the fact is awfully patent. Is London governed by our God? Is love the master principle of human life? If not, then what? This. It is each for himself, and the devil take the hindmost. Men are under the government of Satan. Through all that great and remarkable antithesis the devil is seen, not coequal with God, not omnipotent, omniscient, or omnipresent, but a fallen seraph, far more wondrous in wisdom than any son of man, with more subtle and marvellous power than man has ever yet possessed, marshalling the great hosts of fallen angels, and fighting against all the things that are in the will of God.

It becomes evident that he is the active and awful enemy of any man who begins to live the religious life in the true sense of the word. God loves man, and therefore the devil hates man because the devil is against God. God loves Christ in man, and therefore the devil hates Christ in man, and will prevent, if he can, the outworking of the Christ life in human character. Christ's mission was "to destroy the works of the devil." The devil's mission is to prevent that, and to destroy the works of Christ. If I am beginning to live the life that is obedient to God's rule, the life of loyalty to Christ, the life in which the purposes of Christ and the plans of Christ and the power of Christ are present, then immediately I become one against whom the devil, either in actual person or through those who serve under him, is at war. The young Christian asks, How is it I am being tempted as I was never tempted before? There is the answer. Because the moment in which you turned your life back again toward God you became one against whom the devil is at war. That is the declared fact in the passage to which I have made so many references, "Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers." This is the terrible fact, and the man who does not face the fact is a fool. Our enemy patiently waits for the moment of weakness and is utterly merciless. It was a terrific word written in the book of Job, "Hast thou considered My servant Job?" There is a whole revelation of the devil's method in that word "considered" - watching for the opportunity of weakness and the place where to break in. The chain is only as strong as its weakest link, and the castle is only as strong as its least guarded door, and the devil is watching for the weak link, and for the least guarded door. There are men he will never tempt with a glass of wine, because a glass of wine is no temptation to them. Your least guarded door, your weakest link, pride, or passion, or lust, the intellectual, the emotional, the volitional, he is watching, mark the awfulness of the figure, watching. "Hast thou considered My servant Job."

It is against this enemy that we have to fight. That leads me to a brief word on the devil in relation to the world and the flesh. These are the media through which he acts, and in which he hides. You can find only one great occasion in all human history when the devil came out into the open. That was when in the wilderness he met Jesus Christ. He was not in the open in the Garden of Eden. He did not for a moment suggest that man should fall down and worship him there. What he said was, Please yourself! He suggested that man should leave the first principles of his life as the devil had left his, and depart from his proper habitation as the devil had departed from his. Is not that the primal sin? Is not that the sin of Lucifer, the son of the morning? Is not that the heart and centre of all evil, self-pleasing? The devil hid himself. So he does today. In the middle ages the devil was portrayed by artists as with horns and hoofs. If you paint him so today no one will know him. Marie Corelli, in her Sorrows of Satan, gives her last picture of the devil going into the House of Commons. If he ever makes any appearance in London that is far nearer the truth than the horns and hoofs. That is part of his strategy, part of his subtlety. He is hiding today in half our theology and in half our new-fangled philosophies. We are told today that man has to fight against the beast in him, that there are angel and beast in him, and that if the angel in him will fight hard enough he will trample the beast under his feet. There is an element of truth in all that. But what has turned man into a beast? Lurking behind the flesh, making it the medium of his suggestion, is the devil. Once I say he was dragged into the open, and advisedly I, say dragged. If the devil could have escaped that ordeal he would have. Jesus was driven of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, led of the Spirit in the wilderness while being tempted of the devil. God dragged the devil out into the open. It is an appalling picture of the subtlety and power of the devil, but it also reveals the fact that all the artifice and subtlety of the devil is helpless when a man stands square on the will of God, and makes it the master passion of his life. Take that story of the temptation and consider it carefully, and you will see the limitation of the devil. He has only three avenues along which he can ever approach the citadel of man's soul, and they are all revealed there. The real enemy that we have to fight is not the beast in us, but the devil behind the beast. It is not the flesh and the world but the devil's misrepresentation of the world: "The god of this world hath blinded their eyes." The arch enemy, the master enemy, the one real foe of their religious life, is the devil and all the hosts that he commands.

Are we to be defeated by this foe? The apostle in the passage I read to you recognizes the conflict, "our wrestling." It is very definite conflict. We are to put on the whole panoply of God, we are to stand, to withstand, and having done all to stand, So that victory is possible according to the apostle's outlook. If you ask me the way of victory I take you back again to a passage which puts the whole truth into simplest form. James said, "Submit to God; resist the devil, and he will flee from you." Submit! There is deep reason for this. It gets down to the root of the whole matter. The devil's sin was rebellion, and his method with man is to propose rebellion, and the moment a man submits to God he crosses the devil's plan and purpose. The idea is that of a soldier. Submission is the first law of success in warfare. There can be no ultimate victory save under discipline and submission.

What next, "Resist." After you have submitted to God there will be conflict, but the conflict will be under orders, under the command of One Who knows every method of the enemy, Who holds in His own hand the reins of ultimate government. So that the conflict will no longer be in unexpected places. We sang about the devil being ambushed, but God knows where he is ambushed. The man who is really submitted to God starts out to real difficult conflict, strenuous fight, but he is under the command of One Who is never caught unawares, Who knows the whole field, the whole plan of the foe, Who never lost a battle, and Who never will, Whose soldier never will, so long as he obeys, and so long as he follows. Mark James's confident assertion, "Submit to God; resist the devil, and he will flee from you." That is the way of victory. I cannot add anything to it. Indeed, I am inclined to think that in any attempt to add I am in great danger of subtracting from the force and power of the simple statement. Submit and resist. Some man says, but I fail and fall. I hear the voice and I yield, I sin; why do I sin? Because you have not obeyed this method, Submit, and resist. I have known men who have submitted seriously, earnestly, sincerely, but they have fallen. Why? They did not add to submission resistance. I have known other men who have resisted, who are resisting, and they say, How is it I am beaten? I have put up this fight against the devil, and I am down again, You did not begin your resistance by submitting. If a man submits and never fights, God will not, cannot, lead him to victory. If a man fights without having submitted, he has not put himself under discipline, under orders, and he will be beaten. Or you submitted but never fought. The word of the writer of the letter to the Hebrews is very striking, "You have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin." You submitted but there was no resistance, you did not burn your bridges behind you. You locked the whisky up in a cupboard in case you should need it someday, and you were drunk in a month. There was no fight. You kept the impure picture in your own private cupboard and you were back in your devilish licentiousness within a week. You have got to put up a fight. Put yourself under control, act under the Captain's orders. Submit now, and resist the moment the devil meets you. That way lies victory. The old quaint hymn which we never sing now is nevertheless true if it be rightly interpreted:

Satan trembles when he sees

The weakest saint upon his knees.

I said, when it is rightly interpreted. If you get on your knees and do not fight, Satan is not at all afraid of you. If you know what it is to get to your knees and gather strength, and then fight, all the forces of the fallen intelligences are not wise enough, and all their might is not strong enough, to overcome you. Submit, resist. Let the two words abide with us as we part.