**VOLUME 4; CHAPTER 01 - THE PREACHING OF G. CAMPBELL MORGAN**

**THOU SHALT REMEMBER by G. CAMPBELL MORGAN**

*And thou shalt remember all the way which Jehovah thy God hath led thee.*

*Deuteronomy 8:2*

WHEN THESE WORDS WERE UTTERED, ISRAEL WAS AT THE parting of the ways. A change was imminent, both of leaders and of circumstances. Moses well knew that very soon he would lay down the burden which he had borne so long and so bravely, and that another would be commissioned to lead the people. He knew also that they would very soon change the circumstances of the wilderness for those of the land flowing with milk and honey.

In this book of Deuteronomy we have his final charges to the people, charges resulting from experience and expectation. Standing among the people whom he loved so well; with whom he had so patiently borne; with whom he had been so righteously angry; he looked back over the years, and on into all that he knew lay before them, because God "made known His ways unto Moses"; and spoke to them out of the fullness of his heart.

In reading these closing messages of the great leader, one of the most impressive notes is that of his anxiety that the people should remember. He recognized the influence of memory. He knew perfectly well that, properly stored, it is a perpetual inspiration to present endeavour; and consequently one of the great forces that makes the future. He also recognized the subservience of memory to will. He knew that it can be trained in certain directions, and to the retention of certain definite facts. Consequently, he was careful to charge his people with that which they were to remember.

Evidently, there is not only the historic setting, and the philosophic basis, but the religious purpose of this text. Moses was desirous of directing the memory of the people to supreme matters, urging them to look back, but to look back from the right standpoint, and to see things in the right relationship; to see, moreover, the real things, and the abiding things; the things therefore worth remembering.

The word here translated "remember" means quite literally to mark. "Thou shalt mark all the way which the Lord thy God hath led thee." The pictorial suggestiveness of it is that of the chart, the map, or the way, on which certain facts were to be marked, and thus fixed upon the memory.

The true backward look is that which sets the past in relation to God; that which lays to heart the lessons God has intended to teach by the experiences of the past; and is that which always has the future in mind. Let us attempt thus to remember all the way along which the Lord our God has led us.

First, then, let us remember the past in its relation to God.

When Moses did this, he was careful to note three things about it. They were: to remember God's deliverance, that He brought them out of Egypt; God's leading, that He led them through the great and terrible wilderness; God's resources, which were placed at their disposal.

These people had been brought out of Egypt and its bondage to God, and to that freedom which was perfectly conditioned within government and within law. This was fundamental, and this they were charged never to forget. Take the Old Testament and read right through it, listening to its teachings; and whether you are reading its devotional literature, or that which is distinctly prophetic in the sense of the forthtelling of the Divine will, you will discover how constantly these prophets, seers, and psalmists, took the people back to Egypt, and the fact of their deliverance therefrom. That was absolutely fundamental.

The history of this people began when they were brought out of Egypt.

And so Moses, charging them to remember, put that as the first fact, "the Lord thy God ... brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." They were a special people on the ground of deliverance, and they were to place all the past, the immediate past, the past forty years, in relation to that beginning of deliverance when God broke the power of the oppressor, and led them out into the place where it was possible for them to live the life of faith, the life of direct and immediate obedience to Himself.

In all our backward looking, we are to remember that the life of faith begins in that hour in which He looses us from our sins, and makes it possible for us to obey His Kingship and His government. When we look back, we must put everything in relation to that initial deliverance by which God freed us from sin and its bondage, and brought us into relationship with Himself. That is what we fail to do very often. We look at the incidents of our life, and the happenings of the days, and we fail to set them in relation to that fundamental fact of our redemption by blood, and our relationship to Christ upon the basis of sin forgiven and peace with heaven.

If the Old Testament writers constantly referred the people to their coming out from Egypt, the New Testament writers as constantly refer us to redemption, and to our oneness with Christ by the mystery of His Cross. I can only quote the old and familiar illustrations, and surely no other are needed. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church." "Exhort servants to be in subjection to their own masters … that they may adorn the doctrine of God, our Saviour"; that they may in the obedience of their everyday life show that fundamental fact of their relationship to Jesus Christ.

So we are to remember back far enough, and by so doing, begin to realize the fact that all the details of life are related in the purpose and economy of God to that first deliverance by which He brought us to Himself by putting away our sins.

How often we forget that first thing. God never forgets it; and no day dawns but that the affairs of home, and the affairs of the office, and the affairs of business are, in His economy, being overruled to the working out into perfection that fundamental relationship to Himself that commenced in the hour when He loosed us from our sins, and brought us into relationship with Himself.

Second, he charged them to remember all the way along which God had led them. There is nothing more beautiful in the book of Deuteronomy than the different passages in which Moses insisted upon that guidance of God. "God … went before you in the way, to seek you out a place to pitch your tents in." I can never read that without feeling how wonderful a declaration it is. I see that moving camp in the wilderness, for forty years hither and thither, backward and forward; and the movement seems such a haphazard business. It was not so. God always went before them, and chose the place of their camping; and when the sun went westering, and the cloud halted, and they paused and erected their tents, it was always on ground which God had chosen. Moreover, He accompanied them upon the march. They came to no rough and rugged desert but that He was there too. They came to no long stretch of level country which wearied them, but that He was with them. They came to no hour of difficulty and perplexity but that He was there; and He granted them the shining of the fiery pillar at night, and the mysterious mist of the cloud by day, as signs and symbols of His abiding presence.

Through all the way, there was movement toward the purpose that He might "do thee good at thy latter end." They had come forty years before to the same margin of the land, and the book of Numbers is the story of retrogression, and backward marches. Yes, but that is not all the story. God led them back that they might go forward. He led them circuitously that they might go straight. He led them through the terrible wilderness that they might come to the ultimate triumph.

Let us look back. Think of any day you please, the darkest or the brightest, the saddest or the gladdest, and whether it be shadow or sunshine, the rough or the smooth pathway, these same things are true. First, in every day we walked in works which He had before ordained that we should walk. And we found grace to help in every time of need. All things have been working together for good to those who love Him. Delay has been in order to speed. Denial has often been His choicest gift. Or, to borrow that quaint and yet true statement with which you are all familiar, the disappointment over and over again has proved to be His appointment. Look back over the way, and see if these things be not so. If for the moment there may be some who are in the midst of darkness and difficulty, and cannot see the ultimate, then hear the testimony of those who have passed through long and weary marches, and they will tell you that they would not have missed Marah with its bitterness for all they possessed; that they would not have missed if they could the darkest day, because they have now come to see how God led them that way, and that it was a way of purpose which was beneficent, and out of the darkness has come the light.

Look once again. Moses reminded these people that they had been supplied with necessities. I like the fine discrimination of his method. What are the things he told them that God had given them? Raiment, and bread, and water. They had received a great deal more than these. But what he laid upon their memory was the fact that things absolutely necessary for life God had been providing for them. For forty years, in spite of all their murmuring and unbelief, and diffculty and suffering, there had never been a day when they had lacked necessary things.

May we not look back and say the same. What good things have we lacked? A great many things we have desired that we have not had; but did we need them? There may have been hours in which we felt sure that the supply would fail; but did it fail? There may have been days when we felt perfectly sure that the cause was lost and hopeless, and there could come no succour, not even the bare necessities of the occasion, but did things turn out so? If this congregation could but become vocal with its own experiences, what tales we should hear of wonderful deliverances, of hours out of which we have been brought, in which, as we entered them, it seemed as though we must die; of days when it seemed as though the last prop had been knocked from under us, and all chance of our accomplishing the desire of our heart had gone for very lack of strength. But we are here this morning, remembering the way along which the Lord our God has led us.

And yet there is, I think, a deeper note in the text and in the injunction. Moses attempted to teach these people the necessity for learning the lessons God had to teach them. And these lessons are threefold. Three things he distinctly tells us lay in the purpose of God, as He delivered and led His people, and supplied their need.

The first is this, "That He might humble thee"; and the second is, "That He might ... prove thee, to know what was in thine heart"; and the third is, "That He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by everything that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live."

That He should humble us. How we shrink from that word. Answer my inquiry in your own heart, quite honestly. Do you ever read the passage without feeling some little resentment at the word? "The Lord thy God hath led thee these forty years in the wilderness, that He might humble thee." Do we not feel a little at war with the idea that the purpose of God is to humble us? And yet, my brethren, if we do, it is because we are interpreting the meaning of the word and suggestion by what we know of man's method for humbling other men. Let us interpret the word by the whole economy of God. I ask you to remember this fact, that pride is the most ghastly of all human failures. It demonstrates ignorance. It is not necessary that I stay to illustrate it. You know perfectly well that among your own acquaintances the proud man is an ignorant man, and pride foreshadows ruin. The old Book is still true,

Pride goeth before destruction,

And a haughty spirit before a fall.

Pride is hated alike by God and man. Then, let us read once again. "He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna." God's purpose is to produce the character which is the opposite of pride. All God's methods tend toward humbling. His deliverance only comes to a man in extremis. It is when the strong and self-contained swimmer is about to sink for the third time that the mightier swimmer has the chance to save him. God only begins His great deliverance when a man says, I can do nothing of myself. "He humbled thee." God's leading of His people is always leading through the pathless wilderness. God's supplies for His people always come out of the unknown. We say that today this is not so. Think again. That story of water out of a flint, and manna raining upon people is of yesterday. Today we know where we get our supplies from. Are we quite sure? Oh this age that thinks upon the surface of things. Get back behind your loaf of bread, and back behind your flour, and you have golden harvest. Where did that come from? Oh, we ploughed and sowed. And then what happened? There is always the touch of God if you will wait long enough to feel it. God is forevermore bringing to His people supplies out of the unknown. If a man is to be delivered, he will be delivered when he feels he cannot help himself. If a man is to be led, he must be flung into the wilderness where there is neither map nor guide post. If a man is to depend on God, and lose his arrogance and his pride, he must receive his supplies from One Who brings them from the unknown resources.

Then remember the beauty of humility. Humility always veils its face and worships. Humility makes friendship. Oh, you can have acquaintances who are not characterized by humility, but that thing in your nearest and dearest friend that makes him or her your friend is humility. Humility serves forevermore. God has been leading you through the wilderness to humble you; not to break your spirit; not to make slaves of you; but to free your character from all the things that He hates, at the root of which is pride; and to make you meek and humble and lovable. That is the first lesson, and God is still doing that same thing; and if we can only see these things in their larger outlook, we shall look back and thank Him for every day when we were at the end of self and compelled to depend upon Him.

The second lesson is that God delivers, and leads, and supplies in order that he may prove. This does not at all mean that God needs to find out what is in us; but that He wants us to find out what we are in ourselves. Therein is revealed a perpetual method of God. God brings us into circumstances which will reveal the hidden facts of our nature to ourselves. Those who know most of the Divine government, will know what I am trying to say. There are incipient forces of evil in our lives. We do not know that they are there, but God knows that they are there. Rebellion lurks in the nature even while I sing the song of loyalty on a sunshiny day. God will put me into a day with no sunshine, and bring the rebellion out, that I may know it. Blasphemy may lie in the depths of my nature, even while I offer praise. Then God will lead me by some pathway where that inner thing shall come out to the light. Cowardice may be in my heart even while I sing, "Stand up, stand up for Jesus, Ye soldiers of the Cross." Then, before many days have gone, I shall be in a place where that cowardice will be manifested. Hatred may be in my spirit while I preach on "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God." Then He will place me in some circumstance that will manifest it. Dishonesty, impurity, greed; all these may be hidden beneath the surface. Then He will lead me into places where they will be revealed.

If that were all I had to say, it would be too awful a thing to say. But, there is something else to say, and I hasten to it.

The third lesson is that we may "know that man doth not live by bread only, but by everything that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live." "That" is a great word quoted by Jesus in the wilderness, a word constantly spoiled by imperfect interpretation. Do not be alarmed if I say that it does not refer to the Bible only. It includes the Bible, but it is something greater, profounder than the Bible. Let us take the illustration. These people were in the wilderness where there was no bread. How was He going to feed them? They knew how to get bread. They had seen the process in Egypt. They had gone out and flung their corn upon the land when the Nile had left its rich deposit. So they had gotten their bread. But there was no Nile running through the wilderness. They could not fling seed corn there. Or, if these men knew something of the methods of the land to which they were going; there was no yoke and no plough in the desert. God wanted them to know that they never got bread from the Nile, and as the result of their own toil. They obtained it from Him. "By every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Let a man live in the Divine ordinance, in the Divine government, in the Divine will, and the desert will blossom as the rose, and out of the nothing will come the everything, and out of the is not will come the is.

Thus, He not only put His people into circumstances to develop their own inner evil and bring it to the light, but into circumstances to bring these men into such knowledge of Himself as would drive them to Him, that He might correct the evil, and put it away, and redeem them, and perfect them.

We have often said that man's extremity is God's opportunity. But I would like to put that in another way, for the purpose of this meditation, a more striking way. Man's extremity is man's opportunity for finding himself, and finding his God, and so finding life. I charge you remember, and if you will do so solemnly, you will come, I am perfectly sure, to agreement with me when I say that the richest hours of past were the hours of extremity, and the hours of darkness, the hours when we were at the end of ourselves; the hours when we discovered something in us that appalled us, because these were the hours when God came into visibility. No bread, but it rained from heaven. No water, but out of flinty rock it gushed. No way in the dreary wilderness, but He chose the places where we pitched our tents.

Then God help me, I will put my head on the pillow, and go to sleep. He is always appearing in the hour of man's extremity. I remember the day of desolation, darkness, despair; I was done, I was beaten, I was at the end of everything; and then there came a light, and a glory, and a supply, and a deliverance, and God. Those are the great days in life. It is by these things that men live, not by rose gardens, and not by the hills and valleys to which they are going. There is danger in them, and that is what Moses is going to tell them.

Let us come briefly to the last of these things. The true backward look is the look that looks on. The forward look to these people was one of hope. Better times were coming, better circumstances were coming. They were coming to a garden, and Moses is a poet of no mean order, as he describes the wonderful garden, "a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths, springing forth into valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley, and vines and fig trees and pomegranates; a land of oil olives and honey; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness." A good time coming? No. "Beware lest thou forget the Lord thy God." Oh there is great suggestiveness in this, heart of mine, listen to it. There is graver peril in prosperity than in adversity. The peril of self-satisfaction, "My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth." The peril of self-righteousness. Lest you shall say in the land, "God has put us into the land because we are such good people." No! Neither by the might of your hand, neither by the goodness of your heart are you the people of privilege.

"Beware." It is when the sun shines that most souls are shipwrecked. In the day of storm we are driven to God and find Him. In the day of calm we trust in ourselves, and lose God. Therefore, remember, if the future has rosy tints upon it, beware. Now do not let anyone misunderstand me. If we remember God we may go into the sunshine, and succeed; and get out of the sunshine its honey and its sweetness and its strength. But, because of the grave peril of prosperity, it is well to remember, and so to remember as to put all the immediate past into relation with the fundamental deliverance; to remember in such a way as to discover the goings of God in all the past, leading, and guiding, and choosing, and directing, and making us hungry as well as making us full; and to remember the past with the eye upon the future.

So, to remember is first of all to repent. I, this day, do remember my sins. Well, do not shirk the business. Look at the devilish thing, look it in the face. Do not let the devil persuade you it did not matter very much. Oh, it was damnable, it hurt God, it harmed your brother! Look your sin in the face until your heart is broken! It is out of such remembrance that deliverance comes.

But to remember is not only to repent, it is to believe.

His love in time past

Forbids me to think

He'll leave me at last

In trouble to sink.

And I sing the song of deliverance for today and tomorrow whenever I remember.

Therefore, so to remember is to praise, to hope, and to dare.

So let the backward look be one that in its final value is onward look. Then God will lead us into the land, and He is able to keep us there as well as in the wilderness.