**VOLUME 4; CHAPTER 08 - THE PREACHING OF G. CAMPBELL MORGAN**

**LIFE, IN FLESH, OR IN SPIRIT by G. CAMPBELL MORGAN**

*Ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. But if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.*

*Romans 8:9*

I PROPOSE THIS EVENING TO CONSIDER THE FIRST HALF OF THIS verse, postponing the consideration of the second half to our next Sunday evening.

Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. In that declaration is involved the truth, that He came to rescue man from the dominion of Satan, and to restore Him to the Kingdom of God. This involves another truth, that He does, moreover, restore man to the true balance and proportion of his own life.

The mission of Jesus Christ is not that of taking hold of human beings and changing their essential nature save as that nature has become polluted, spoiled, ruined by sin. Then He does completely change it, pardoning the sin, cleansing from pollution, remaking the ruin.

All these processes, of absolution, of cleansing, and of remaking, are in order to the restoration of man to the first Divine ideal. In this wonderful text, occurring in a supreme passage in the letter to the Romans, this truth of the restoration of man to the Divine original intention is brought before the mind, "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you."

The almost startling "if" in the midst of the text brings us face to face with the fact that it is possible to live a human life, in which the Spirit of God has no place; and yet the text, recognizing the Divine ideal for man, indicates the fact that in whosoever that Spirit dwells, there is restoration to the first Divine and original intention.

Let me draw your attention first of all to a very simple matter, which is nevertheless a most important one to our study. The Revised Version, when compared with the Authorized, has a certain difference which I hold to be all-important to the understanding of the real thought in the mind of the apostle when he wrote these words. The difference to which I refer is not a difference in phrasing. There are alterations and omissions, but none to which I desire to make any reference now. The difference is in spelling, and that in a very simple matter. In the Authorized Version the word spirit is spelled with a capital letter in the majority of instances. In the Revised Version it is spelled with a small letter in the majority of instances.

Let me confirm my examination of that fact to this text. "Spirit of God dwelleth in you. But if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." In the Authorized Version, in the three occasions where the word spirit is used in that verse, it is spelled with a capital letter. In the Revised Version the first occurrence is spelled with a small letter, and the second two with the capital letter. In the Authorized Version the thought of the verse is this. "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit," that is, the Spirit of God, "it so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. But if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." According to that spelling, in every case in that verse the apostle was referring to the Holy Spirit. The revisers have changed the spelling of the first word so that now the intention of the apostle as suggested is different, "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit," the reference being, not to the Holy Spirit, but to the spirit of man, "if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you."

Accepting, without any doubt, after long and careful consideration of this whole passage, the spelling of the Revised Version, believing that the new spelling gives the most accurate interpretation; I shall ask you first to consider the facts concerning man by nature recognized by this passage, and secondly, to consider the fact concerning man by grace declared by this text.

First, then, the facts concerning man by nature which recognized by this text. The, essential nature of man is revealed by the terms, flesh and spirit. Human nature is a combination of flesh and spirit. Paul, referring to the whole of human personality in the great prayer for the sanctification of the Thessalonian Christians said: "May your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Spirit, soul, body: that is a recognition of the threefold fact of human personality, physical, psychic, pneumatic. Consider that threefold division well, and see what it really means. Man is spirit and flesh; man has a mind, or consciousness. If the mind becomes blank, distorted; if a man shall lose his reason; he remains flesh and spirit; but by some failure of adjustment between the spiritual and the material the consciousness ceases, or is distorted. We call that madness. The essential fact in any human life is the spiritual fact, yet closely applied to that, and apart from it there is no humanity, there is the material fact. I lay that emphasis upon the fact that mind is a possession in order that we may recognize the fact that what a man's mind is, depends entirely upon whether he lives on the spiritual side, or on the fleshly side of his nature. Here are two men, put them side by side. They are both spiritual in nature; both have bodies; they live in the same street, in the same city, in the midst of the same surroundings, but their conceptions of everything are diametrically opposed. Their minds are entirely in opposition. One man looks at another man but he does not see what his friend sees. One man looks out upon the fields and the hills, but he cannot see what his friend sees. These two men are in this Church. They are sitting side by side, you and your friend, my brother. You are both spirit. You both have bodies. You both have minds.

That is the conception of humanity that lies at the back of this great statement of the apostle. The spirit is the essential. The body is the medium through which the spirit communicates with and receives communications from everything in the cosmos external to itself. The mind is the resulting consciousness.

Pass a step further. The apostle recognizes the fact that man can live in one of two spheres; either in the flesh, or in the spirit; on that side of his nature which is of the flesh, or on that side of his nature which is of the spirit. Mark the contrast between them. A man who lives in the flesh is a man who lives as though life were limited thereby. The man living in the flesh is near-sighted; according to Peter "seeing only the things that are near." He is deaf, he never hears the voices of eternity. He counts the man fanatical or deceived who declares that he does hear them. He is suffering from paralysis in the midst of life. Whatever path he treads he arrives presently at the place of darkness and disappointment. Notwithstanding every attempt to satisfy the clamant cry of his own life, he arrives presently at the place of thirst and hunger; he comes at last to the hour when the consuming consciousness of life is lust - I use the word most carefully, not in its application to one particular form of sin, but in its accurate description of the burning desire that has no satisfaction. The man who lives on that side of his nature, in flesh, limiting his outlook by flesh, comes presently to hardness of heart; to being without faith, without hope, without love either of God or of man. That is the flesh life. These are some things Paul tells us concerning it. To live in flesh is to mind the things of the flesh. May I attempt to illuminate that wonderful word by quotation from the words of Christ. At Caesarea Philippi le said to Peter in stern language, "Get thee behind Me, Satan: thou art a stumbling-block unto Me: for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men." Peter's protest was a protest of the flesh. It was the shrinking of the flesh in the presence of the pathway of sorrow. It was the protest of flesh against those spiritual conceptions that did not fear men who killed the body, but feared only such as could harm the soul. The man who lives in flesh, minds the things of the flesh.

I particularly desire that this should not be merely the discussion of a theory. Find out where you live. Take the week that has gone. I prefer to look back rather than on. By the grace of God next week may be better than last week, if we will have it so in His strength. For purposes of personal helpfulness let your eye range over the doings of the past days, and apply to them this very simple test, which though not entirely satisfactory, will be helpful for our present purpose. With what were you principally occupied during the days of las week. The test of the hours will help you. What shall we eat, and what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed? How shall we be able to possess more of this world's goods? How shall we minister to the comfort of these bodies of ours? How shall we enter into the pleasures of life which are wholly of the flesh? Were these the master questions of the days? Perhaps not expressed so badly as I have expressed them, but still there, absolutely dominating the life. That is life in the flesh. The man who lives there minds the things of the flesh. What else says the apostle concerning this? "The mind of the flesh is death." "The mind of the flesh is enmity against God." The mind of the flesh is not subject to the law of God. The mind of the flesh cannot please God. That is to live in the flesh, as though there were no God, as though there were no eternity, and as though life had nothing to do with any world but this, as though the last and ultimate limit were reached in the hour of death. The atheist declares that these things are so, and vast multitudes of men and women who never declare that they are so, yet live as though they were so. There are gradations of life in the flesh. There are manifestations of life in the flesh that to the common thinking of men are more vulgar than others, but in the sight of high heaven they are all on the same level. If a man lives a life of the flesh and gives himself up without reserve to all the vilest passions of his own debased nature, that is life in the flesh. Or if a man, for purely selfish purposes and selfish reasons, abstains from the vulgarities, but is without worship, has no upward look, no commerce with heaven, no recognition of a hereafter, no conception of any reality except the reality of today and the dust; he is living in the flesh as surely, and in the sight of high heaven with as pronounced vulgarity, as the man who gives rein to his lusts.

Here again I pray you do not misunderstand me. If there be no God, if there be no eternity, if there be nothing beyond the shadowy portal of the grave, well then we will make a great difference between these two men; and that is the human differentiation between respectability and vulgarity in sin. I am not here to make such differentiations. I am here viewing life in the light of this Book. I am here attempting to see humanity as it is seen from the heights and amplitudes of eternity. Life in the flesh. When you speak of your higher and your lower in that realm, you must find out how much higher or lower one is than the other, not by comparing the higher and lower in the flesh, but by comparing the whole flesh life with life in the spirit.

Turn then to the other side of the suggested picture, life the spirit. That is life in which man recognizes that the essential part of him is spiritual, that he is not ultimately, finally, fundamentally of the dust, but of Deity; that this life is but school time, and probation, and preparation; and that all he feels within himself of essential life will come to its fulfilment and intensity beyond; the life which answers not the call of the flesh, but the call of the spirit.

All this study is illuminated by the Genesis story. There is a side of me that has come up out of the mystic, marvellous, creation of the material. I can touch the material and know it has to do with the dust. But there was a moment in the process of creation when God enwrapped that material, which in itself was infinitely higher than anything beneath it in the scale of creation, in His own breath, breathed into it forces eternal and spiritual. Thus man became a living soul. The gap between that God-breathed man and the highest form of life beneath him is the gap between eternity and time, between Deity and dust, between spiritual and material. Therein was the essential and final creation of man. A man can live on that side of his nature and what does it mean? Vision. I cannot use that word in that connection without there coming back to me a passage full of beauty and meaning in that great chapter in Hebrews describing the heroes and heroines of faith. This wonderful thing is said about one man, it is an illuminative truth, and thank God it describes exactly thousands of men today; "He endured, as seeing Him Who is invisible." If you are living in the flesh you cannot understand that, and you may just as well say so at once. You smile at it, and you pity the man who as you say thinks he sees the invisible. I want to tell you in all tenderness and gentleness, he pities you far more than you can pity him. This is not a dream. How do I know he sees the invisible? By the way he endures. The demonstration of the far vision is courageous endurance. I am not talking of a bygone age. I made my quotation from the days of old only because it has a living application. Such men are right here in this building. There are men and women here as I speak tonight who see far beyond the preacher; it would be a sorry business if they did not; they see Him Who is invisible. When my voice is no longer heard, the voices from the eternal still sound in their ears.

Life in the spirit means acuteness of hearing; a sense of power; a thrilling emotion; ecstasy and rapture, through all things and forevermore; courage of heart enabling men to endure. Life in the spirit is life indeed.

In the context, Paul describes the mind of the spirit more briefly than the mind of the flesh, and yet more inclusively. The man who lives in the spirit minds the things of the spirit, and what of them? The mind of the spirit is life and peace. If we divide this congregation by the standards of men we have all sorts of divisions, learned and unlearned, rich and poor, high and low, noble and ignoble. I protest unto you, my masters, in the name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, that in the division of heaven we are in two classes, men and women who live in the flesh, and men and women who live in the spirit.

These are the facts recognized by my text. That a man can live in flesh with eyes shut to the eternities, with ears stopped to the voices of the infinite, and heart insensate to the nearness of God. A man can live on the spiritual side of his nature, seeing the invisible, hearing the unuttered, knowing the undiscoverable.

Now finally, I pray you notice what the text reveals concerning man by grace. That is the text. The other things have been inferences. This is declaration, revelation, affirmation. "Ye are not in the flesh but in the spirit, if -" I pause that "if" before I pronounce the final words. I would ask you to notice how these first words make their appeal. "Ye not in the flesh but in the spirit, if -" I speak to the men who are in the flesh, but who would fain escape the imprisonment of the flesh ere this service is over. I believe there are such here. You are in the flesh. You are saying, How can I escape this life, this prison, this bondage, this slavery to the flesh. Already my inner life is pining for something, and how I have tried to satisfy that burning thirst, that devouring hunger. Can I again cross over the line from flesh into spirit? "If so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you."

The mission of the Spirit of God is to restore man, first to a true relation to God, and so to the true balance and proportion of his own life. Are you living in flesh? Then hear me while I declare you are living an inverted life. The Spirit of God coming into the life of a man takes hold of that man and turns the whole life around, putting it back into harmony with the Divine ideal, putting it back into the essential meaning of its own being. Have you lived in the flesh? Then your life has been a disappointment. If some of you do not believe that yet, there are scores in this house who will bear witness to the truth of it, even though they have not yet yielded themselves to Christ.

The coming of the Spirit of God into the life of a man means that the spirit of man is taken out of the in the consciousness of the near, but in the consciousness of the far, not in slavery to the cry of the flesh, but in obedience to the call of the spirit. It is by entering into the life of the Spirit of God that the change is wrought.

Let us look at this generally as I close. The test of Christian profession is in this text. If I live in the flesh I am not a Christian. I may sing all the songs in the hymn-book, and recite all the prayers that were ever written by other men, or composed by myself, study the whole Bible until I know its literature from cover to cover; but if I live in the flesh I come under condemnation. All that is the burden of the second half of my text, I utter it and postpone it. Remember that this text is the test of life. If I am living in the flesh then I am not living according to the possibilities of my own nature. I am something less than man, something lower than man, something infinitely beneath the potentialities of my own personality. This is the truth I would fain bring to the attention especially of young men in this day. Over and over again young men tell me they imagine Christianity means the ending of life. Man, it means the beginning. I mean that quite literally. It means the beginning of this life. You cannot live human life at its fullest in London if you are living in the flesh. All the gaud and glitter of things temporal are the devil's methods for drowning thought. The one thing you dare not do if you are living in the flesh is stay to think. You must away to the glaring lights and the clashing music and the paint. God help you, man. That is not life. Life in the flesh is life in prison, and in corruption. Life deteriorating, degenerating, dying, doomed, and presently damned. I pray you deliver yourself in this hour from soft conceptions of what you are doing, and come to see the horror of the whole business. You were made to lift your face to God. God has put eternity in your heart, so said the ancient preacher, and it is true. You can never satisfy the surging eternity of your own being with the nonsense of fleeting time. You can never satisfy the clamant cry of your deepest life in the painted glitter of the place of sin. Life in the flesh is disaster because it is failure.

The declaration of deliverance is here. I am flesh bound, fIesh imprisoned, yes, but the I of me is not flesh. It is that which is bound, that which is imprisoned. It is myself, my spiritual nature, that which cannot die, that which presently, if I live in the flesh will pass out without a tenement into the eternities, naked, not clothed upon, having lost its way and home. That is the essential of me and that can in these very moments, while the preacher utters his last words, in the case of every man and woman, come back into its true place through the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God is waiting to enter into fellowship with the spirit of every man, and make that spirit dominant in the life of the man, so that from that moment the flesh serves instead of masters.

The way of full life is here. The spirit of man in fellowship with the Spirit of God; then what? Then the flesh of man is ennobled because the flesh of man is used only under the direction and inspiration of the Spirit of God, and becomes the true medium through which the spirit of man enters into communication with all God's earth, and God's humanity, and God's heaven, and God's eternity.

Is that life possible? Here is the last word. Is it possible, says some man in this house, for me to be done with the flesh life and enter into the life of the spirit? Quite possible. How? By the reception of the Holy Spirit. How may I receive the I Joly Spirit? In the Gospel of John is a wonderful story of how Jesus once stood in the midst of the thronging crowds at the feast of Tabernacles, on the last day, the eighth day, and He said, "If any man thirst let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his inner life shall flow rivers of living water." Oh, you say, what did He mean by that? The next verse tells you, "this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believed on Him were to receive: for the Spirit was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified." That declaration has a historic application and an immediate application; a personal application. Historically, it meant that until He was glorified by the way of the Cross and resurrection the Spirit could not come. The personal application, what is it? A man receives the Spirit in the hour in which he yields himself to Christ. Glorify Christ, trust Him, glorify Him with thy trust, glorify Him with thy submission, by yielding thy life to Him; then what? The answer to your faith in Christ is God's gift of the Holy Spirit. One Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ. One faith, faith in Christ, the faith of the man who, conscious of sin and weary of the flesh, yields to Him, One baptism, the baptism of the Spirit whereby that man receives the Holy Spirit. Mark the process. It is an old story.

You are once again confronted by the Christ of God, the Saviour of men. Will you trust Him? Will you believe in Him? Will you yield your life to Him? Do it now, right at this very moment. Take that life of yours, in the flesh though it be, and yield it to Him.

Nothing in my hand I bring;

Simply to Thy Cross I cling;

Naked, come to Thee for dress;

Helpless, look to Thee for grace;

Foul, I to the fountain fly;

Wash me, Saviour, or I die.

Will you so come? In the moment in which you do, He answers your coming by the gift of the Spirit. Though there be no tongue of fire, though there be no sound of a mighty rushing wind, God's Holy Spirit enters in, and His first work is to bring your spirit out of the dust and degradation of your fleshly life, and give it the consciousness of acceptance with God.

From that moment life is new, changed, different. You live then "as seeing Him Who is invisible," in the spirit instead of in the flesh, and under the discipline of His patient grace you will come at last to glorious fulfilment, in conformity to the life of the Son of God.