**VOLUME 4; CHAPTER 09 - THE PREACHING OF G. CAMPBELL MORGAN**

**THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST; THE SUPREME TEST 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*

TWO WEEKS AGO, WE CONFINED OUR ATTENTION EXCLUSIVELY to the first part of this text, "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you." This evening we consider the sequel to that subject by taking the second part of the verse, "If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His."

Glancing at the verse in its entirety, we at once discover a significant and suggestive change in its expressions; "the Spirit of God," "the Spirit of Christ." Each of these phrases refers to the One of Whom we speak as the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit. This fact makes the change in the method of expression the more arresting. The second phrase has sometimes been treated as though it referred to the tone, the temper, the disposition of Christ only; so that one might read, "If any man hath not the disposition of Christ, he is none of His." While I hold that such interpretation is not final, nevertheless, I believe that to be the significance of the change of expression. Whereas the reference is undoubtedly to the Holy Spirit in the second part of the verse, as it is in the first part, the writer brings us in the second half, face to face with the fact that the indwelling of the Spirit of God does produce the mind of Christ. Speaking of the Spirit as the dynamic force of life, he uses the phrase "the Spirit of God." When desiring to deal with the result manifest in character, he uses the phrase "the Spirit of Christ." The first reminds us of the unseen and hidden secret, the indwelling Spirit of God. The second reminds us of the seen and manifest result, the Spirit of Christ.

The great secret of the beauty and glory of the life of Jesus of Nazareth was that He lived in fellowship with the Spirit of God. Born of the Spirit, sustained by the Spirit, led by the Spirit into the wilderness, He returned in the power of the Spirit to do His work, until He, "through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish unto God." He acted in constant co-operation with the indwelling Spirit of God, never resisting, never grieving, never quenching.

What then was the result of such living? The Spirit of God became manifest in the Spirit of Jesus. While the phrase does refer to the actual Person of the Holy Spirit, it refers, nevertheless, to that Person in the manifestation of character wrought out in the mind of Christ; in the tone, temper, and disposition of Christ. Therefore, these two phrases bring us to the consideration of the seen and unseen in the Christian life and character.

May we then, reverently and carefully, attempt to consider this second half of the verse as the test of our Christianity; bringing ourselves to its suggested measurements, yielding our lives to its proposed balances, in order that we may so discover whether or not we have the Spirit of God. The absence of the Spirit of Christ demonstrates the absence of the Spirit of God. The presence of the Spirit of Christ proves the presence of the Spirit of God. Therefore, this part of the text which seems so simple in statement, flames with light and is one of the most searching tests to be found in all the apostolic writings.

I want to say one or two preliminary words on the subject of the importance and nature of character. The character of a man is expressed through his spirit, through his tone, temper, disposition. You cannot express character by the utterance of words. You do not express character finally in any particular deed. The character of a man cannot be decided by the thing he says, neither can it be discovered by the occasional thing he does. The meanest man in London may give the largest gifts to philanthropic purposes. The most generous man may have nothing to give. The saint may be discovered over and over again in some unworthy fashion of speech. The most vulgar man may drop into the language of sainthood. A man's character is always revealed in his disposition. Character is what a man is. Doing, saying, and having, possess no beatitudes. Being is crowned with the seven-fold garland of the Sermon on the Mount. Therefore, let it be perfectly understood that the final truth about a man's character is known only to God. No man can know finally the truth about the character of his brother man. The searching I suggest for my own soul and for yours in the presence of this text is not an inquisition, or an investigation of my soul by another, or of your soul by the preacher. We come together into the presence of this declaration in order that in loneliness, as between ourselves and God, we may find out whether we belong to Christ or not.

Let us then, reverently inquire what was the Spirit of Jesus.

We want to discover the mind of Christ, the tone, temper, disposition of Christ; the quality of the Spirit of God as revealed through Christ; and in order to do this we must consider the spirit of the Man of Nazareth. Forgetting for the moment the supreme fact that the spirit He manifested was the Spirit of God, for in Him Deity was unveiled, we come to the human level and inquire, what was the mind of Jesus, what were its notes, its qualities?

You realize at once that the preacher has asked a question that is very difficult to answer, for how is it possible to express with anything like brevity or accuracy the truth about the Spirit of Christ? Ask me concerning His words, and I could give you some account of them, materially at least, realizing more and more their intense spiritual values and my inability to fathom their profoundest deeps. Ask me about His deeds, and I can follow Him from place to place, and tell you of the deeds done, and the wonders wrought, but to see the Spirit of Christ is more difficult.

I am impressed first by the fact that the Spirit of Christ was characterized by simplicity rather than by complexity. I am impressed secondly by the fact that the Spirit of Christ was characterized by serenity rather than by feverishness. I impressed finally by the fact that the Spirit of Christ was characterized by sensitiveness rather than by callousness.

Simplicity. Allow me to attempt to illustrate what I mean by simplicity. Nothing impresses me more as I read the story of Jesus than the fact that He never seemed to need to prepare for any occasion. He was always the same, transparent, natural, simple. Complexity may be defined by another term, hypocrisy. The Spirit of Jesus was absolutely devoid of this in any form. His was the simple life, the life in which there was no twist, no iniquity. With an artlessness that arrests, He spoke the things of His inner life in the presence of men. He said things which from the lips of other men would have sounded of the very essence of egotism. Yet, in His own age, the things He said did not surprise. Standing one day in the midst of a critical, hostile crowd, Jesus said, "I do always the things that are pleasing to Him." Imagine any other man saying that, and let the man of your imagination be the man you think most of as a spiritual leader; what would be the result produced in your mind? From that moment you would begin to question his sincerity. Yet, in the Gospel of John the statement which follows that declaration is this, "As He spake these things, many believed on Him." That was the result of the transparent simplicity and honesty of Jesus. We may put the whole matter in quite another way, expressing it in fuller language in His own words, "I am the Truth." Not that I preach it, teach it, expound it, not even that I hold it, but that "l am the Truth." There was perfect harmony between every side of His nature. He had no hidden chamber, nothing secret, As I watch Him through all the story of His life, I am growingly impressed with the simplicity of His Spirit. I need not pause to say that simplicity does not mean superficiality, but transparency. If you think of a great pool upon the rocks, it is simple when you can see through the limpid waters all the things that lie upon the rock foundation. The Spirit of Jesus, the disposition of Jesus, was that of absolute, transparent simplicity.

Serenity. I am impressed increasingly by the serenity of Jesus, by the fact that in hours when all others seemed to be swept by storms, or moved by excitement, He alone was quiet, calm, and full of dignity. If ever the great word of Scripture was fulfilled in human life, "He that believeth shall not make haste," it was in Jesus' life. One pauses as the illustrative pictures pass through the mind. Let me take one of the last. If ever there was an hour in His life when one would have expected to see Him moved as by tempest, it was that hour in which He approached the Cross. Yet the one calm, dignified, unruffled man was Jesus. The Roman Procurator, used to scenes of the kind, able with an iron hand to quell rebellion, was strangely perturbed. The priests were roused to white heat in their anger. The populace, fickle as it always is, was clamoring for blood. The one silent, calm, serene Spirit was that of the Christ.

Sensitiveness. Jesus came into the presence of no natural emotion which He did not share. In the presence of joy, He was joyful. In the presence of sorrow, He was filled with sorrow. If He came into the presence of the brokenhearted, widowed mother, as she followed her only son to burial, all the sorrow of her heart entered into His. If He came to the house of the marriage feast, all the gladness and joy was in His Own heart. He was keenly sensitive.

These are ultimately truths about the Spirit of God, truths about God Himself. "In Him there is no darkness at all." The whole nature and method of God is that of profoundest and almost overwhelming simplicity. God is not forever changing as man is. He abides unchanged through all the processes of human change. He is forevermore a fire, either destroying or purifying, according to the nature of that which comes within its sweep. He is forevermore the sun of life, either producing fruit or burning to destruction, according to whether it touches a tree planted by rivers of water or stubble.

I need not remain to argue the serenity of God. The fact is that in the day of clash and catastrophe He is still unmoved, unafraid. "He shall not fail nor be discouraged till He have set judgment in the earth," till He have established His law in the affairs of men. We are discouraged, we are full of feverish excitement, we must demonstrate in order to make people believe. The serenity of Jesus was the serenity of the Spirit of God, which is the serenity of God.

Moreover, the sensitiveness of Jesus was the sensitiveness of the Spirit of God, and the very sensitiveness of God Himself. Faber sang truly when he sang that earth's sorrows are most keenly felt in heaven. I venture to add the declaration on that earth's joys delight the heart of God.

This was the Spirit of Christ. Simplicity, serenity, and sensitiveness, have we these? If we lack them we lack the Spirit of Christ. If we have not the Spirit of Christ it is because we have not the Spirit of God, for He ever produces these very manifestations. "If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His."

Where shall we apply the test? Let us understand that the examinations of God are never special, are never fore-announced. All the method of human examination is utterly different to the method of Divine examination. The tests of the spirit come not at the announced hour for which we may specially prepare, but in the ordinary pathway of human life, or perchance in some unexpected crisis. If the crisis be expected it ceases to be a day of testing. It is along the line of the commonplace that I am to discover what spirit mine is. I am to find out, not tonight in this sanctuary, whether I have the Spirit of Christ; it is impossible to do it here; it must be done tomorrow, in my home, in my office. The spirit of a man is tested in adversity or prosperity, in the place of obscurity, or the place of popularity, in time of defeat or the time of victory, and most often, amid the thousand and one trifles of the busy hours.

Let us observe in general terms how spirits are tested in such circumstances. It is the hour of adversity, storms are sweeping, so that we are inclined to say with Jacob of old, All these things are against me. That is the hour in which the spirit is tested. One man in such an hour gives way to despair, gives up the struggle. Another is characterized by his patience, by his quiet endurance. The one is fretful, quarrelsome, complaining. The other is quiet and peaceful. What is the difference? It is the difference of spirit. It is the difference of tone, temper, disposition. One man is living in the flesh. The other man is living in the spirit.

Or it is the hour of prosperity when everything is succeeding. Everything touched turns to gold, success attends every effort. That is the place to try the spirit. In that hour, one man becomes noted for his arrogance, his overbearing disposition, his contempt for the man who fails. But another man in that hour is characterized by beneficence and a desire to hold out a helping hand to the man who is struggling. One man makes his prosperity the throne from which he grinds his fellow beneath him. The other makes prosperity the hearth to which he invites his neighbour to share his hospitality. What is the difference? It is the difference of disposition. I am prepared to say that in a sense neither man can help what he does. He is doing what he is. The profoundest fact concerning him and his character is being manifested.

Or again. Here are two men, both in the place of obscurity; suddenly removed, it may be - let me speak in the realm of my own calling, my own work, and leave you to make the application to yours - suddenly removed from the place of conspicuous service to some place of obscurity, like Philip taken from the rush and glory of a great revival in Samaria to the desert loneliness, to talk to one man riding in his chariot. One manifests bitterness, complains that the fates against him, that men do not appreciate him, and spends all his days murmuring against the hardness of his lot. The other faces the desert and there sheds the fragrance of a sweet and beautiful content. I do not say he wastes his sweetness on the desert air, never was there such a mistake made. Sweetness is never wasted, even on the desert air. If some bird in its flight shall drop a seed on some fertile soil and it comes to flower, if no human eye sees it, God gathers the fragrance, and it is sweet and beautiful to Him. What is the difference between these two men? It is the difference of spirit.

Or, on the other hand, a man is brought from obscurity to popularity, to use the word of the world, and immediately becomes proud and distant, forevermore rejoicing in the fact that he has become conspicuous. Another put into the same position comes and brings with him all simplicity, all humility. Humility never announces itself. The man who tells you that he is serving God in his humble way is the proudest man for five miles round. Humility, like love, "vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly." In the light of conspicuous success, or popularity, the man of the Christ Spirit is simple, sweet and full of everything that woos men, soothes their weariness, heals their wounds, and helps them upon the way.

Yet again, it is the hour of defeat. One man becomes a coward and the other man becomes a hero. A hero in defeat, you say. Yea, verily. It takes more heroism to suffer defeat than to win a victory. There is a fine air of dignity about some men in the hour of defeat. When men go to pity them, or condole with them, they can do neither, because of the heroism with which they suffer defeat.

Or it is the hour of victory. One man becomes a tyrant and the other manifests great gentleness.

Or most often, amid the thousand and one trifles of life, the spirit we are of will manifest itself in the midst of the commonplace trifles of our own home life far more than anywhere else. I think I had better leave you to make the applications. The late breakfast may prove whether or not you are a Christian, more than the song in the sanctuary. I do not say that to make anyone smile. If you are laughing at your own folly, repent of it. Come to an understanding of the fact that a man is revealed, not on the public platform, you cannot know him there, but is revealed in the little incidental things of his home life. There are men to whom the papers would give whole columns of notice, but if we could have the story of their wives, and we never can, for woman is far too heroic, we would know them as non-Christian, notwithstanding all the papers say. It is the spirit, the tone, the temper, the disposition that is supreme. If any man have not the creed, not the orthodox view; No, "If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His."

As I have already said, I am not bringing you to a judgment throne as though I were the judge. God forbid, I am a sinning man. I am not asking you to accept the opinion of friend or neighbour. I will not accept your opinion, I care nothing for it. I am absolutely independent of it. I have lost all fear of what you say or think concerning me. Nevertheless, in the inner secret shrine of my deepest life, I stand in the presence of His judgment bar, and I know that my relationship to Christ is tested by my spirit.

I do not think I would dare come to that text if it were not for the first part of it which we have already considered, "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you." I go back to it because there are those who are saying, Such a judgment seat as that condemns us! If our Christianity is to be tested not by our creed but by our spirit, then we are guilty. There are those who, saying that, are now inquiring, How can we have that Spirit of Christ? How can we become like Him? How can we be rid of the thousand and one hypocrisies that have blasted our lives, and find our way into the simplicity of absolute truth? How can we be freed from the dastardly conventionalities which make us lie in polite society, and find our way into the straight and enduring grandeur of simple truth? How can we find our way from the panic that so often seizes us, the feverishness that makes us impulsive, and makes us fail; into the quiet, dignified serenity of the Spirit of Christ? How can we escape the callousness that for long time has made us incapable of tears in the presence of sorrow, or of laughter in the presence of joy? How can we escape from the spirit which is the spirit of the self-centered, flesh-mastered life, and find the spirit which is the spirit of the God-centered life?

Now the inquiry is answered, "Ye are not in the flesh but in the spirit, if so be the Spirit of God dwelleth in you." Remember this; I say this especially to young men and women who are struggling toward the ideal, seeing it in its beauty; remember that you cannot create spirit by the government of externals. By saying I will never again speak an unkind word, you will not create the kind spirit. Sooner or later, the actual fact will flame out again. If your spirit is unkind, for a long time out of self-respect you may curb your tongue, and prevent the poisoned word, but the hour of provocation will come and it will break loose. Not by the government of externals is the spirit ever remade.

I go a step further than that. Not by admiration or imitation does reproduction ever result in matters of the spirit. There is the vision glorious, of the simple, serene, and sensitive Christ. I will admire it. I will imitate it. I will make Him my Exemplar. These things will never reproduce His likeness. There will be but bitter disappointment for the man who attempts imitation of Christ, apart from the necessary preliminary.

Then how can I have the Spirit of Christ? The Spirit of God is alone equal to producing the Spirit of Christ. "The fruit of the Spirit is love." Unless the Spirit of God is there, the Spirit of Christ will never be there. Unless the unseen Spirit is there, the manifest Spirit must necessarily be absent. So, therefore, that which we need in order that we may have the Spirit of Christ, is the Spirit of God Who clears the vision that we may see indeed the ideal, and Who does infinitely more, who supplies the virtue in order that we may imitate the ideal in strength. The indwelling Spirit of God transforms the spirit of man until it becomes in very deed the Spirit of Christ. Brethren, do you not know it is true? Have you not seen it so? Have you not seen the man fierce and unkind become gentle and patient by the indwelling of the Spirit of God?

Finally, let us remember that the matter of supreme importance is that of our spirit. What is your disposition? How many a man is blaming his father for his disposition. How many a man is saying, Everything is against me, I inherited this from my father. "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge." Absolutely untrue. That proverb became current in the days when Israel sat by the waters of Babylon and mourned over their fathers' sins; until Ezekiel and Jeremiah alike nailed the bad coin to the counter forever by saying, This is not true, "Ye shall not have occasion anymore to use this proverb in Israel." If your teeth are on edge, you have been at the sour grapes! I grant you your evil disposition, but remember this, it can be changed, or I have no gospel. In its place there can be the very Spirit of Christ. That is the supreme matter. Oh, it is important what a man believes, or disbelieves; but these things are important only as they manifest themselves in works. The creed that does not blossom into conduct and become gracious character is of no value whatever. It is the spirit that matters. If that be true, how many un-Christly things are done in the name of Christ. I have heard the orthodox faith so preached as to drive men and women away from Christ. It is the spirit that matters.

This also let us remember. We too often attempt to correct the center from the circumference. Let us rather correct the circumference from the center, by handing over all our lives to the Christ Himself and so receiving the Spirit of God. When that Spirit of God is enthroned, we live no longer in the flesh but in the spirit, and then, not all at once, for the full fruitage of Christian character does not come in a moment to perfection; first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear; but when the Spirit of God is in the life there will be the first promise of the Spirit of Christ, and we shall "grow up in all things into Him Who is the head." I urge that we all come to this judgment seat alone, when the service is over, when the preacher's voice is silent, when the associations of the sanctuary are gone; with our own New Testament let us go somewhere by ourselves, and let us inquire if we have the Spirit of Christ. If not, know that it is because we lack the Spirit of God; and knowing that, let us crown the Christ by trusting Him, and so receive His Spirit that we may become like Him.