**VOLUME 4; CHAPTER 11 - THE PREACHING OF G. CAMPBELL MORGAN**

**HOW TO SUCEED IN LIFE by G. CAMPBELL MORGAN**

*In all thy ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct thy paths.*

*Proverbs 3:6*

THIS TEXT HAS A PECULIAR PLACE IN MY HEART. IT HAS been with me day by day for three-and-thirty years. It was on the morning when I was first leaving home for school that my father said to me as his last word, I want to give you a text for school and for life; and this was the text. He gave it to me without note or comment, save the note and comment of his own godly life. "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct thy paths."

I have not always been obedient to the injunction, I have often forgotten Him, often failed in the acknowledgment commanded, but so far as I have been obedient, I have proved the promise true. He has directed my paths.

In order that we may understand the message of the text, let us first consider one or two simple facts. Within the consciousness of man there exists a dual sense; that of possibility, and that of limitation. Every man is conscious that he is able to do. Every man is conscious of limitation in that ability. Every youth and every maiden, in that golden age when the light is forever flashing upon the eastern sky, comes to this twofold consciousness. In youth, this dual consciousness causes perpetual delight. The limitation is opportunity. The possibility is equipment. In old age, when the life has been wasted, the dual consciousness abides, but it is that of despair. The limitation becomes everything, and the possibility is gone. Dreadful indeed is such old age. There is, however, an old age of the youthful heart, in which expectation is still busy painting pictures of coming victories. When life has been well and truly lived the dual consciousness abides, but the proportion is very different. The limitation is growing less with every passing hour, and the possibility is growing more.

I sat yesterday by the side of an old man whose years have reached four-score and five, and he said two things to me which profoundly impressed me. He said first: "As I lie here and think, and listen, that of the world which most profoundly impresses me is its sin." Then, with a new light in his eye, he said: "l want to be away, to be with Christ in God."

My brothers and sisters with the flush of youth upon your faces, and the light of hope in your eyes, I tell you his dreams were more wonderful than your visions; his expectations more wonderful than your hopes. The life well and truly lived has come to age, but the light that never was on land or sea is resting upon his brow. Limitation is growing less, and the consciousness of the possibilities of his own being is growing more.

It is out of my strong desire that your present hopefulness may never grow less, but burn more brightly when the long day's journey is done; and that when the sun goes westering and the shadows are flung across the landscape, new light may break upon you; thus I bring you the message of my text.

It is certainly a Divine arrangement that the young should see visions; that they should build their castles in the air; that they should aspire after success.

Let no embittered and disappointed man check the enthusiasm of youth, and that for two reasons.

First, because my brother, embittered and disappointed though you be, I question whether you have any right so to be. I feel almost as though I would like to stay and preach to the old man for a moment. You tell me, looking back, that you dreamed your dreams, and built your castles in the air, and have failed. I ask you, How do you know you have failed? If according to your light, and in the measure of the opportunity which has come to you, you have been true to God, then just beyond the limit where the infinite sky kisses the finite earth, you will discover that the commonplaces of your life are transfigured into part of God's great whole of perfect work. I would hearten you, rather than that you should discourage others.

Also, because it is within the Divine intention for youth that it should dream dreams, and build castles, and see visions, and be ambitious to succeed, I say to you, never dishearten, never check, or attempt to kill the enthusiasm of youth.

How beautiful is youth! how bright it gleams,

With its illusions, aspirations, dreams!

Book of beginnings, story without end,

Each maid a heroine, and each man a friend!

Aladdin's lamp, and Fortunatus' purse,

That holds the treasures of the universe!

All possibilities are in its hands,

No danger daunts it, and no foe withstands;

In its sublime audacity of faith,

"Be thou removed," it to the mountain saith,

And with ambitious feet, secure and proud,

Ascends the ladder, leaning on the cloud.

Youth is forever looking to the distant. The vision is always of things ahead. The boy who stands by his mother, and tells her what he is going to be, is the symbol of all that of which I speak.

Sometimes the height is never reached, success is never achieved. The gleaming glory seen afar fades and passes, and there is nought but darkness and disappointment. The reason is that while the glory was true in possibility, the true path to the mountain heights has not been discovered. There in the distance is the alpine height, but if we do not know the way, the end will be in the valley, in the place of disaster, in the place of defeat. "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct thy paths."

That within us which makes us desire victory, the passion for perfection, the determination to achieve, is all of God; and if we can but discover His way, His plan, His thought, and follow His direction, then we shall come to fulfilment even though it be through battle and through strife, through conflict and through tears, through apparent disaster and defeat.

My appeal is made to those who have the goal in sight, and it declares the abiding condition upon which the pathways. which lead to the goal may be discovered. "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct thy paths." The whole text conditions life in the present, and so conditions it for progress to consummation.

Let us then take the text in these two parts; first, the injunction, "In all thy ways acknowledge Him," And secondly, the promise, "And He shall direct thy paths."

"In all thy ways acknowledge Him," are comprehensive words, recalling us at every point of our lives from atheism. I have used the word atheism quite carefully, in order that I may arrest your thought, that I may even startle you into consciousness of the insidious peril which threatens us every day and everywhere. There is a very practical and widespread atheism which would very much resent the term. There are a great many atheists who would be very angry if we called them such. What is an atheist? One who is without God. Atheism is not merely intellectual. There is a volitional atheism, which may recite the creed and imagine it believes it, while through all the busy days it violates and denies it. The Apostle Paul connects atheism with the death of that principle which is the supreme charm and value of youth. "Atheists and without hope." These two things are forever closely associated. The proportion in which a man is without God is the proportion in which light is fading from the sky, shadows are settling upon his way, darkness is overtaking him. Godlessness, I repeat, is infinitely more than intellectual disquietude, questioning, and unbelief. Godlessness is life lived without reference to God. That is the peril against which this text warns us. That is the danger from which it seeks to deliver us.

The first idea of the word "acknowledge" is that of vision. It is as though the Preacher had said, In all thy ways see God. It calls us to recognition of the fact of the presence of God at every point of our lives, It reminds us that in all our ways, God is. It denies the heresy that God is in the sanctuary, and not in the market place. It denies the heresy that God is interested in the central spiritual fact of human life, and has no relationship with the mental and the physical. See God everywhere. The word thus calls us to a recognition of His existence, which must produce fear, not slavish fear but that solemn awe of the soul which holds life in balance and proportion. That awe which the age lacks disastrously. It is absent largely from the life of today. Man is standing altogether too erect in the presence of high heaven; challenging the wisdom of God, or laughing at the ancient conceptions of His majesty; abandoning the figures of speech by which the prophets, seers, and psalmists of bygone generations attempted to bring men into subjection, and with the abandonment of the figures, forgetting the facts.

I am not pleading for a solemn and awful dread which will banish all brightness. I do desire to recall youth to that awe in the presence of the ever-present God which delivers from the flippancy and frivolity which curse, and spoil, and mar life.

Such recognition of His existence will issue in acceptance of His claim, and produce obedience.

Such obedience will strengthen belief in His interest, and issue in prayer.

Yet, I think there is another meaning in this word "acknowledge." To acknowledge Him, is to use His gifts in the sphere of His will, recognizing that they are His gifts, and that we are responsible to Him for them.

There are some words of Jesus which I think we often interpret altogether too narrowly, if not with absolute inaccuracy. In the Sermon on the Mount, that great Manifesto of the King, Christ said to His disciples, "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God doth so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" And again, "Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye of much more value than they?"

Our Lord did not for a single moment mean that as the lilies are clothed, without toiling and without spinning, we are to expect to be clothed without toiling. Neither did He mean, that if He provides for the birds of the air without their forethought, we are to neglect forethought. He meant rather that if the lilies of the field and the birds of the air, unable to plan and arrange, are cared for, how much more will God provide for those to whom He has given reason, and ability to plan.

Let no man think that he can come to the fulfilment of his life by prayer alone. Let him understand in this respect also that "faith without works is dead." We have another figure of Christ, that of the mountain removed by faith. We say mountains are never removed by faith today. Yet is this true? At this hour in different parts of the world, mountains are being removed and cast into the seas. We say, "That is a great engineering triumph." What lies behind the work of the engineer? The faith of the engineer. No mountain has ever been leveled or tunneled, and no highway has ever been flung up by humanity, save by works preceded by faith. There is first the vision of the possibility, and then the action which realizes the vision.

"In all thy ways acknowledge Him," does not merely mean see Him, believe Him, pray to Him, fear Him; it means also, take the forces which He has placed in your personality and use them under His government. Do not expect that He will ever bring you to the mountain height unless you climb. Do not imagine that you will ever come to fulfilment of your own life unless you toil. Do not for a moment think that to acknowledge God means that if you are a member of the Christian Church He will make your life full and beautiful and rich if you are lazy in the matter of your daily avocation.

I want to save young life in this age from the idea that godliness consists wholly in singing hymns and going to prayer-meetings. What is the capacity within you? Is it mechanical? Then you are not merely to pray, you are to work out to perfection the forces which God has placed within you. You are to neglect no single side of your nature which He has created. When you have discovered what your calling in life is to be, you are to remember that you can only come to fulfilment thereof by consecrated toil under the government of God.

"In all thy ways acknowledge Him." Let us take one or two illustrative applications of the principle.

In your home life. In the home in which for a while you sojourn, the home of your childhood which as yet it may be, you have not left. "In all thy ways acknowledge Him." Recognize His goodness, recognize the authority over you as representing His authority. Jesus went down and was subject unto his parents. He had first said, "l must be about My Father's business."

In your thinking about the homes which you will presently make for yourselves, in that whole sacred and wonderful matter of the birth of love within your nature, acknowledge Him. I may be allowed to say from this Christian pulpit, and as a Christian minister, that I am weary to death of a great deal of flippant, foolish joking on the subject of love between youth and maiden. Sacred, high, holy, and beautiful, is all such love when heaven born; but it tends to hell when it is not tested in the light of the love of God. I have seen the daughters of the King, the fairest and most beautiful, full of promise, robbed of their beauty by alliance with men who lack recognition of God. I have seen young manhood, enthusiastic for the Kingdom, full of force, paralyzed by alliance with those who have no such vision. "In all thy ways acknowledge Him." I pray you remember, that unless you can test your love by the light of heaven's pure love, it is going to be the most unutterable curse that ever came into your life.

Take another application at which I have already hinted, that of your business. What are you going to be in the world? Someone said to me but today, Are you going to make all your boys preachers? I said, God forbid. What did I mean? As God is my witness, nothing would gladden my heart more than to see all of them preachers, but I cannot make them preachers, and I have no intention of suggesting to one of them that such should be the work of his life. I take that illustration simply to lead me to say this, You have no right to choose what you will be. Seek Divine guidance. Pray about it, but do not end with praying. For remember this, in every human life there is some power which God needs, not merely for the supply of all that is necessary to the life possessing it, but for the commonwealth. It is for every man to discover in God's presence, and in fellowship with Him, what that power is; and then to take hold of it and develop, and use it, as in the will of God.

I would say to those of you who have already discovered the line of your life in this world; master it in every detail, be restless until you are able to do the thing you have set out to do, so that when done you can hold it up to God, and say, Here is this piece of work.

Very reverently I pause to illustrate that, from the wonderful carpenter's shop. Jesus Christ, as a carpenter, made yokes in which the oxen ploughed the plains of Bethshan. Jesus Christ as a carpenter constructed those single-share ploughs with which the farmer drove the furrow through his field. I affirm, without one moment's hesitation, that when Jesus Christ made a yoke it was one that heaven itself would have accepted. When He had finished the plough it was true to the measurement of eternity. Presently, He left the carpenter's shop and came to His preaching, and He borrowed the things of His toil to illustrate His preaching. "My yoke is easy." He knew what He was talking about. He had made yokes, and so made them that they never galled the neck of the oxen that wore them. "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom." Note the masterly assumption. He did not suggest that the furrow could be crooked because the plough was wrong. It is the man who must be wrong, when He has made the plough.

Put your godliness into your business. Let all your religion be seen in the letter you have to write for your employer, in the piece of work you have to do for him. "In all thy ways acknowledge Him."

In your recreations also, let this be true. What does that mean? That you can have no recreation which dulls your perception of God. However harmless it may be to you, if to me it raises a mist through which I cannot see clearly the face of my Father, then I must have none of it. However harmless it may be to me, if you, seeking recreation in the same way, lose your keenness of scent in the fear of the Lord, then you are to have no such recreation. That is the test.

I am told that today the question of amusements is a very difficult one. By no means. It is a very simple one. That is its test. "In all thy ways acknowledge Him." You say, I am very doubtful about - . That settles it forever! If you are doubtful, you dare not. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." "In all thy ways acknowledge Him." Remember, God is God not only of your life, but of your brother's life, and you cannot seek recreation in that which ministers harm to other people. I leave you to apply the principle. Any recreation, though it may not be harmful to me, which can only be gained by harming the man who provides it, I cannot, if I acknowledge God, indulge in.

Forgive the illustrations. I think sometimes illustrations do but minimize the value of the whole. Listen to the whole word of the preacher. "In all thy ways acknowledge Him." Not the ways of Sunday only, but of Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday. Not the days of the Lenten season only, but the three hundred and twenty-five days remaining after Lent is over. Not the ways that are public to the gaze of others, but the inner secret ways of which men can know nothing. Acknowledge Him, see Him, in the dark as well as in the light; in the shop as well as in the sanctuary; in the valley as well as on the mountain height; at play as well as at work. "In all thy ways acknowledge Him."

In a brief, concluding word hear the promise. "He shall direct thy paths." That promise calls for the exercise of faith. Our one responsibility is that of obedience to the condition of which I have been trying to speak. Yet let me say this, the truth of the promise is discoverable in all retrospection. Perhaps that is the most difficult thing for youth. It is so hard to look back. There is so little to look back at. Hear then the testimony of those who look back after long pilgrimages and arduous days. The testimony of the whole of them is that as they have acknowledged Him in all their ways, He has directed the paths.

He has many ways of directing. He directs by obstacles placed across the way which I cannot overcome, and which drive me into a new way. He directs by clearing obstacles away, which I thought could not be moved. He directs by delay, keeping me waiting long after I have heard His call to service. He directs by immediateness, flinging me out into a new position, wherein I must seek His guidance. He directs by opposition; the Spirit hindered Paul. He directs by encouragement, by whispers in the soul, which make a man dare, when all men tell him his daring is of no avail. He directs by disappointing, or by realizing our dreams. I state these contradictory things in order to throw you back upon this profound conviction; not from me nor from any man, must you take your rule of His direction. You must discover the rule for yourself in immediate relationship with Him. I say this now out of profound conviction, God help to say it as it ought to be said. No youth or maiden has ever yet bared their soul to God, desiring to be led of Him and determined to follow, but that He has led, He has directed.

I love the personality suggested by the pronoun in the text: "He shall direct thy paths." Behind the "He" of the ancient preacher is the God of the Bible. Because that is so, the "He" trembles with the tenderness of the Father's love. No evil can baffle if He direct the path. No enemy can prevent the final realization of His purpose. No obstacles can hinder if He lead. No opposition can overcome if He direct. No exigencies can overwhelm the wisdom of God, no surprises prevent Him. Oh, the safety of being in the will of God. "He shall direct thy paths."

Not always in easy or pleasant paths, but always in right paths. Not always in those I would have chosen, but always in paths which lead to success. There may be the vastest difference between success and fame.

"He shall direct thy paths." The paths that He directs lead always, through mist and mystery, through battle and through bruising, to the fulfilment of the meaning of life.

How much that is called success is dire and disastrous failure. I believe that these conditions may put limitations upon material success. It may be you could make a far larger fortune if you forgot God. But that is a very material thing to say. I have used the word fortune in its debased sense. I have used it as though it only applied to those material things which you can grasp and state in figures. The man who would lay up treasure for eternity cannot forget God. The man who would make to himself friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness must acknowledge God in all his ways.

The final test of life is beyond the things of time and sense. It will be a test of fire; only that which cannot be destroyed will remain. In the light of that final test if we would make our lives successful we must begin right. What is the first step. Surrender. What the plan of life, the pathway to the end? Obedience. Confronting everyone of us tonight, God in Christ asks for our lives.

I pray for you that you may realize your ambitions, and fulfil your dreamings. In order that when the eternal morning flushes the eastern sky, you may come to fulfilment. "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths."