**VOLUME 4; CHAPTER 18 - THE PREACHING OF G. CAMPBELL MORGAN**

**THE MIND OF CHRIST by G. CAMPBELL MORGAN**

*Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.*

*Philippians 2:5*

THE LETTER TO THE PHILIPPIANS IS PRE-EMINENTLY THE letter of Christian experience. It is most difficult to analyze, because it is so largely personal, and almost exclusively a love-letter, the letter of Paul the prisoner to his children in the faith.

Among the most remarkable facts concerning it is that of the omission of certain words with which we are very familiar in our study of the writings of Paul. The word sin never occurs. The flesh is mentioned only to be dismissed. There are no disputes referred to, except, perhaps, a friendly rivalry between Euodia and Syntyche. The dominant words are "mind"; and "joy" or its equivalents.

This is the more remarkable when we remember that this letter was written from prison, from the midst of circumstances the most depressing that it is possible to imagine. It is, nevertheless, a letter which triumphs gloriously over all opposing circumstances, and sings its perpetual song of victory.

Just as surely as that, the life of Paul may be summed up in one brief sentence from this letter, that, namely, "To me to live is Christ," so the whole purpose of the teaching of Paul, so far as Christian people are concerned, is contained in the brief injunction of this text, "Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

It is indeed a great injunction. It declares the philosophy of the Christian life. If we can understand the mind of Christ, then we shall come to see what is the ultimate purpose of God for His children. "Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

In another of his letters the apostle says, "We have the mind of Christ," but the two words must not be confused. They are not the same in the actual text. When, in writing to the Corinthian Christians, he said, "We have the mind of Christ," he used a word which might be translated, the intellect of Christ, the knowledge of Christ. By that he meant to say that all the wealth of Christ's knowledge is at our disposal. A writer of the ancient economy had declared:

Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not,

And which entered not into the heart of man,

Whatsoever things God prepared for them that love Him.

This Paul quoted, and then continued: "But unto us God revealed them through the Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God"; and he ended by declaring, "We have the mind of Christ" - that is, His knowledge is at our disposal.

The word here used for mind is one that indicates activity, or, rather, that out of which activity grows. It is a word which might be translated: "Have this disposition in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

Wherever it be possible in human life to obey that injunction, Christianity passes from the theoretical to the practical, becomes an experience against which no argument, advanced by those who are in opposition to the dogmas or doctrines of Christianity, can prevail. The final argument for Christianity is the mind of Christ reproduced in His people. "Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

The force of the text can only be felt by a study of the context, in which the apostle immediately proceeded to unveil for us the mind of Christ by that which is, perhaps, the sublimest statement found in the word of God upon this subject.

"Who, being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross."

Let us, then, attempt to discover the meaning of the injunction in the light of the context.

First, the revelation of the essence of the mind of Christ. Second, the revelation of the master principle of the mind of Christ. Third, the revelation of the activity of the mind of Christ. Finally, the revelation of the issue of the mind of Christ.

In essence it is love. Its master principle is that of infinite, unerring wisdom. Its activity is that of absolute and prevailing strength. Its issue is that of the throne of empire, and ultimate triumph.

The essence of the mind here revealed is that of love. "As a man thinketh in himself, so is he." If that be true, it is also true that when you know what the man is thinking you know what the man is. The true thought of a man always finds expression in the activity of his life. As one gets a general view of life, the thing that lies at the back of it, which is the reason of it, the inspiration of it, the driving force of it, becomes apparent.

What is true of every man is also true of the one Lord and Master of us all. The profoundest truth concerning Him is revealed in this passage. What is the explanation of that marvelous story which Paul tells? Is there any explanation of it possible other than that of love? Think, so far as the human mind is able to think, of the vast, the stupendous stoop indicated in this wonderful word, "Who, being in the form of God ... emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant." Remember, in your contemplation of this passage, that the thought must be kept, from beginning to end, upon one Person, "Who, being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be snatched at for personal enrichment this equality with God, but emptied Himself." The Person remained the same. He did not empty Himself of His essential personality, Whomsoever He may be. He emptied Himself, and took the form of a servant, but the Person remained the same. I state this as simply as I know how, because it has been affirmed that the doctrine of Paul here is that in the mystery of the Triune Deity the second Person emptied Himself of Deity. There is no such declaration made. He remained the same Person. He emptied Himself of one form of manifestation, the form of manifestation fitted to the eternities and to the abiding spiritual realities; and He took a form of manifestation suited to the mind of finite man. He took the form of a servant. I do not attempt to measure the amazing stoop. I stand in the presence of it, overwhelmed by the marvelous mystery, and I watch the processes of the passing of this Person from the height of the throne of all creation and all power to the depth of the position of a servant and of submission.

Then the process comes more within the possibility of our observation. He was made man, passing by the ranks of the angels, made a little lower than the angels; He took the very form of humanity.

"Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself." The whole story of His life must come back to you to illustrate that; the humility, the loneliness, the meekness, the inspiration of all which is expressed in His own wonderful words, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." The Son of man came not to be served, but to serve; not to receive, but to give. All the story of the life of Jesus, as we have it in the gospels, is true to that note of music.

"He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross."

What explanation can there be of such action? There can be no explanation other than this: All the facts which Paul here groups in remarkable language demonstrate the profounder fact that behind all is the infinite, eternal, unfathomable love of God. Perhaps the great proof of love in this passage is that love is never mentioned. The word does not occur. "Love vaunteth not itself." Yet the thought is present. Every word is smitten through and through with its light and glory, The mind of Christ in essence is the mind of love, and the love is the love of God; disinterested love, self-sacrificing love; love stronger than death, mightier than the grave; love that can stay at nothing in order to express itself and to accomplish its purpose. The mind of Christ in essence is a mind of love.

Think once again of the passage, and mark the principle as revealed, the supremacy of the Divine wisdom. I am quite conscious that in saying that, I am saying something which does not at first appear, something that might be immediately challenged. It may be said that there is no mention of wisdom, no evidence of wisdom. It may be said, indeed, that the story is a story of unutterable foolishness, for the cross of Christ was indeed foolishness to the Greek, and the wisdom of the world, until this moment, has never agreed to the wisdom of the cross. The supremacy of wisdom is here manifest because the activity of love compasses human well-being. The wisdom of love is demonstrated by the result which is produced. If love be the inspiration, light is the law of the activity, and the mind of Christ was a mind in perfect harmony with the will of God. How men sought to prove the folly of His proposition when He mentioned the cross. When, in the language of time, speaking to men of eternal things, He declared that the Son of man "must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed," men sought to persuade Him of the unutterable folly of hoping to accomplish any great purpose by the way of death. He knew the wisdom of God. He Himself was the very wisdom of God. The mind of Christ as to its master principle was a mind in harmony with that wisdom.

All the things of humiliation and suffering and death, in order to gain victory, are things of unutterable foolishness according to human philosophy. No philosophy of man has ever been able to accept the evangel of Jesus Christ. The moment you attempt to arrange your theology within the compass of human philosophy, either one or the other must break down. Paul, writing to the Corinthians upon another occasion, said: "We speak wisdom among the perfect: yet a wisdom not of this world, nor of the rulers of this world, which are coming to nought; but we speak God's wisdom"; and he said also: "Christ Jesus, Who was made unto us wisdom from God, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." As I watch this process of the self-emptying of the Son of God, the descent from the height to the depth, stage by stage, until I see Him a spectacle for men and angels in the brutal agony of the cross; I see that, which remains even until this century to the Greek unutterable folly, but I see Him in that which is the very wisdom of God. The demonstration of the wisdom is discovered in the victories which that cross has won in the reconstruction of human character and the remaking of human lives. The master principle of the mind of Christ, then, is that of co-operation with the wisdom of God, in spite of all human misunderstanding and human inability to comprehend.

Once again. We ask what is the activity of this mind of Christ? It is that of strength. It is that of strength created by the fact that persistently the mind of Christ compelled Christ to co-operation with the will of God. In the things which are referred to in this great passage, Christ was not passive; He was active. By that I mean active as against opposition. There was perpetual response in the whole ministry of Jesus to the will of God, but it was response as against opposition. The mind of Christ was not a mind resigned to the will of God. It was a mind acquiescing in the will of God. But it was a mind proceeding through opposition of all kinds and from all sources. There is one brief word in the Gospel of Luke, which we may read quite carelessly, but which reveals the strength of the mind of Christ: "He steadfastly set His face to go unto Jerusalem." Listen again to the declaration in the conversation on the mount of transfiguration with Moses and Elijah. What was the subject? They "spake of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem." Whenever I read that, I am reminded of two things. First of all, they did not speak of His death as though it were something from which there could be no escape; they spoke of it rather as of a decessus, an exodos, a going out, a triumph. Second, they spoke of that going out in triumph as of something which had to be accomplished. The most infinite mystery of the strength of Christ is suggested in His words: "I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one taketh it away from Me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." It was an accomplished decessus, an accomplished exodos; something wrought by persistent activity as against opposition. He proceeded forevermore against the question of personal rights, against the suggestion of ease or pleasantness. The cross was the supreme expression of the campaign in which the active mind of Christ co-operated with the will of God against all forces which were opposed to the will of God. The enemy suggested to Him, in the temptation in the wilderness, that He should reach the kingdoms of the world by a short and easy method; and He declined, and accepted His Father's way of the cross. His own disciples at Caesarea Philippi protested against His declaration that the cross was necessary: "Spare Thyself that!" In stern rebuke He denounced the false conception, "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." So against the opposition of foes, against the mistaken views of friends, the mind of Christ moved with unwavering strength, submitting itself forevermore, in spite of all the forces that were opposed, to the will of God.

Of that mind, the essence was love; its master principle was conviction of the wisdom of God; its activity was that of strength that perpetually yielded itself to the good and perfect and acceptable will of God.

We come, finally, to the last thought, the issue of the mind of Christ. "Wherefore" - that includes everything that has preceded it, from that first incomprehensible step from the form of God in the mystic far-flung splendors of eternity to the form of a servant in fashion as a man; and thence humbling Himself in human life, even to the death on the cross. Because of these things, "Wherefore also God highly exalted Him, and gave unto Him the name which is above every name: that in the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." The crowning is the issue. The triumph of God is the result. The glory of God is the ultimate of the mind of Christ. The all-conquering royalty is that of love, which acts in conviction of the wisdom of God, and with unfailing persistence bows to the will of God. That mind surely and absolutely ascends the throne, and comes to the place of universal power. All other purple fades. All other gold tarnishes. It is love that, through battle and smoke, through torture and martyrdom, climbs to the throne.

That is the picture of the mind of Christ. Love, its inspiration; acceptance of the wisdom of God as the only wisdom, its master principle; persistent and unyielding abandonment to the will of God, its strength; the throne of empire and the crowning, its issue.

Now let us hear the injunction. We must hear it in solemnity. We must hear it for our own rebuke. We may hear it, and God grant it may be so, for our inspiration and correction and encouragement. "Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

Love is to be the master of our life. To have the mind of Christ is to have love as the ultimate reason for everything said, and everything done, and everything desired. The master-principle of the mind is belief in and acceptation of the wisdom of God. Perhaps that is the point where one is inclined to lay the principal emphasis, not wholly, but for the sake of the hour in which we live. I pray you be very suspicious of your own doubt about the wisdom of the cross as the method of salvation. Be very suspicious of anything in your thinking which constrains you to imagine that the evangel of the cross of Christ is a mistake, or that the necessity for your own dying and suffering does not exist. We must accept the wisdom of God, which is foolishness according to the thinking of man. Unless that be the master-principle, we have not the mind of Christ. The mind of Christ was one that set the cross as the goal of His ministry. It is not for me to stay to prove it, but I make this affirmation, that not in the last few weeks alone, but from the very beginning of His public ministry, He most certainly saw the cross and moved toward it. He knew full well that the cross was the ultimate of His ministry. The wisdom of God, that infinite wisdom which apprehended the whole fact of human sin, and did not treat it as though it were a slight surface wound; that wisdom which understood that human sin can only be dealt with by that which is symbolized in the awfulness of blood-shedding; that infinite wisdom which knew full well that the deep wound of humanity could only be healed by the mystery of sacrifice, and suffering, and death; the wisdom of God, still foolishness with men; until we accept that as the master principle of our living and of all our service, we lack the mind of Christ.

Then the activity of our mind must be that of persistent yielding, in spite of opposition, to the call of love and to the wisdom which declares the cross to be necessary. We need not accept merely the doctrine of the love of God, not accept merely the doctrine of the cross of Christ, but to give ourselves to such identification with that cross as is the only sufficient expression of our identification with the love of God. We may sing of the mystery of love in the sweet and wonderful words of Whittier, or in the words of Faber, or of any of the great singers who have sung it most perfectly, and yet never come into fellowship with it; for to enter into fellowship with love is to come into fellowship with the cross, to make up that which is behind in the sufferings of Christ, to have an actual share in the suffering by which the world is to be won. We can only enter into such fellowship by a mind set to obedience against all opposition, the opposition of foe and the opposition of friend; the opposition of foe, that suggests there are easier methods for victory and the healing of humanity's need; the opposition of the friend, who declares that we should take care of ourselves and spare ourselves. The most subtle opposition that Christ set Himself against was the opposition of His own mother, who took a journey from Nazareth to Capernaum to persuade Him, out of very love for Him, to spare Himself, to return home to rest. In the hour of that subtle opposition, well-intentioned but utterly mistaken, He said, in the hearing of men: "Who is My mother and My brethren? … Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother."

The mind of Christ, if in essence a mind of love, in its master principle a mind that accepts the wisdom of God as against all the opinions of humanity, is also a mind resolutely, definitely persisting in obedience as against every form of opposition.

Do not let us, however, forget that the way of darkness that seemed to culminate with the cross did not culminate in the cross. Beyond the cross is Easter morning; the resurrection life and the reign of power; the force of victory and the triumph of the throne. "Wherefore also God highly exalted Him." All those of us who, desiring to have this in mind, are yielding ourselves to His love, accepting His estimate of necessity as the height of wisdom, persistently compelling ourselves to obedience; are treading the way of sorrow, but we are treading the way to triumph. It is only out of such yielding to the mind of Christ that we can ever come to His triumph. It is a great prophecy, this word spoken concerning Jesus, of the issue that awaits all those who obey the injunction and have His mind.

So the last word becomes a personal word. Would I share His coming triumph? Then I must have His mind. Now let us observe the force of the apostolic injunction. I like the Authorized Version in this connection. It is quite as accurate, and to me at least a little more forceful. "Let this mind be in you." It is exactly the same thought, "Have this mind in you." The suggestiveness of the other translation is that it shows that if we name the name of Christ and lack His mind, we are in some way hindering what would be a natural process. To whom were these words spoken? Not to the promiscuous crowd of the men of the world. This was a letter written to saints in Christ Jesus. These are words spoken not to men in the world who have never yet submitted themselves to Christ for their own personal salvation. They are words written to those already in Him, who have given themselves to Him; who name His name, bear His sign, wear His livery, and profess to be His disciples. Thus, the great word has its signification. If we are in Christ Jesus, all the resources of His grace are at our disposal, and if instead of attempting to imitate the mind of Christ, we will let the mind of Christ have its way in us, we shall share it; not by our own effort, but by the effort of Christ. Not by imitation and struggling shall we ever come to this mind of Christ, but by yielding ourselves to the Indweller, by allowing Christ, Who is in us and in Whom we are, if we are His, to have His own way.

Do we lack the mind, the essential love? It is because we have closed some part of our being against Christ, have never yielded ourselves to the love impulse, have checked it, hindered it, quenched it. Is not this practically, absolutely true in the case of all of us? Find me a boy or girl, youth or maiden, man or woman yielding to Christ, and immediately, without any exception, in any country or in any age, the first consciousness of the yielded life is the consciousness of love - love going out after someone else. The first movement of the life of God in the soul of a man is a missionary movement. If in this evening hour, in this church, some man yields himself to Christ before he leaves his pew, he will feel in his heart a desire that wife or child, brother or sister, may come to this same Christ. It is the life of God which is moving within him. We check and we thwart it, because this love struggling within us calls us to the cross, to sacrifice, to service. We check it, hinder it, quench it, because it beckons us along a path of sacrifice.

Mark the emphasis of my text. "Let this mind be in you." Do not quench it; let it burn. Do not thwart it; follow it. If in this hour, the life of God in your soul inspires love for child such as you have never known, love that desires your child shall always be Christ's, speak to your child. Take out of the way of your child the things that hinder, even though the taking of them away make you poor in this world's goods. "Let this mind be in you." It is in you if you are Christ's. In the moment in which you yield yourself to Him, His life within you is the love life, and it speaks of life in the terms of love, and suggests the sacrifice of love. "Let this mind be in you." We sing in the assembly of the saints: "Where is the blessedness I knew When first I found the Lord?" What was the blessedness? It was that of love springing up, running over, prompting to sacrifice, driving us out to a path of sacrifice in order to help other people.

Take the man who wrote this letter as an illustration of the great truth. When the love of God was shed abroad in his heart, he never quenched it, he never thwarted it. He let it drive him. If you want to know what it cost him, read his own second Corinthian letter; read the perils through which he passed, the sufferings which he endured, the buffetings which came to him, scourgings, shipwrecks, perils, scoffing, shame. Hear him as He says, "l bear in my body the stigmata of Christ." What does it mean? That he let the mind of Christ dwell in Him.

This is the trouble with all of us. I have spoken - how imperfectly no man knows more than myself, because the vision appalls me - of the mind of Christ. We have heard it theoretically. We say, How can it be? Let the mind of Christ dwell in you. Answer its call. Have done with your prudent calculations. Be ashamed of the advice of Peter at Caesarea Philippi. Abandon yourself to the call of the mind of Christ.

There let us leave it. In our leisure and in quietness let us take the passage again, and try to see the mind behind the mystery of the condescending, sacrificial Servant.

Then let us understand that if we are His, He has given us His life, and as we yield ourselves thereto His mind shall be ours and His victory shall be ours.