**VOLUME 4; CHAPTER 22 - THE PREACHING OF G. CAMPBELL MORGAN**

**THE STRENGTH OF THE NAME by G. CAMPBELL MORGAN**

*The name of Jehovah is a strong tower: The righteous runneth into it, and is safe.*

*Proverbs 18:10*

LIFE IS FULL OF STRAIN AND STRESS. SOONER OR LATER WE ALL come to the consciousness of this fact. The illustrative figures of the inspired Scriptures all remind us of this fact.

Life is described as a race, for the running of which it is necessary that we should lay aside all weights, and forgetting the things we pass, as soon as they are passed, with eyes earnestly fixed upon the goal, so run that we may obtain.

Or life is described as a voyage, and the suggestion is that of the need the mariner has for skill and constant watchfulness, that he may escape the perils of rocks and sand-banks and shoals.

Or life is described as a battle in which the warrior must be fully panoplied and prepared to stand, and to withstand, in order that, having done all, he may stand.

Or life is considered as a great problem, full of perplexity, in which every day brings its new amazement, and all the way is a way in which the pilgrim passes through mystery and into mystery.

All these figures suggest the strain and stress of life.

There come to every one of us, sooner or later, days when strength is weakened. These are the days of disaster or victory in human life, the days in which we find that of ourselves and in ourselves we are unequal to navigating the vessel, to prosecuting the battle to finality, to discovering the way along which we should walk, and to continuing therein in spite of difficulty. The day when we have to say we cannot is a day of disaster or a day of victory, and whether it be disaster or victory depends entirely upon whether or not we believe our text of the morning, and have entered into the full meaning of its profound and comforting suggestiveness. "The name of Jehovah is a strong tower: The righteous runneth into it, and is set on high."

Shall we first remind ourselves of the forces that are against us, in order that we may then consider what this text suggests as to the place of safety, in order that we may finally consider the proofs of safety.

Of the forces that have been and still are against us, the first are mystic and strange, and not perfectly understood; they are spiritual antagonisms. We have been conscious in the midst of life of the sudden assaults of evil. We deny absolutely that they came from within. They were not part of ourselves. We do not believe that they came from God, but we are quite sure of the assaults. Over and over again we are made conscious, whatever our philosophy may be, that there are spiritual forces, insidious and subtle, which suggest evil; and we are appalled by the overwhelming strength of these spiritual antagonisms.

Or, to speak of these things as they are personified according to Scripture, we have to take our way through life perpetually antagonized by one who has been described as "seeking whom he may devour," one who finds his way, if Scripture be true, into the immediate presence of God, there to slander and to ask permission to test us that he may sift us as wheat. The revelation of the antagonism of this evil spirit flames into supreme revelation in the Book of Job, and especially in one very remarkable sentence in that Book, where it is said that God inquires of him, "Hast thou considered My servant Job?" "Hast thou considered?" The question reveals an enemy who is patiently watching - watching for the weakest place in the chain, that there he may attempt to break it; watching for the least guarded door in the citadel of man-soul, that there he may force an entrance.

But there are other forces against us. The age in which we live is full of things that hinder us in our attempt to live the godly life. Let me name one or two of theme First, there is the fact that men are so eminently successful without God. That may sound a strange thing to say. The preacher is always denying it, and there is a sense in which we shall still continue to deny it. But it is impossible for the man of business, who is attempting to be a godly man, to look out upon his age without seeing how marvelously well men seem to get on without God.

Or, there is the problem of the long continued victory of evil in the world, the fact that time after time, when it seems as though morning were breaking, it suddenly darkens into midnight.

Then there is the problem of universal pain, the problem that floods me with letters, which I am always in amazed difficulty as to how to answer.

These are among the things that make life strenuous, and create the sense of strain, and demand some place of quietness and some place of peace.

Or, again, we have to do with the persistence of the self-life. I often feel that the enemy I dread most is not the devil, not the problems by which I am surrounded, but myself. The reappearance of the self-life is perpetual. Immediately a man thinks he has gained a victory over it, mastered it, it garbs itself in other vestments, and appears anew.

And then, there are the sorrows of life, the bereavements that come to us, the empty places in the home, the hope deferred that makes the heart sick, the disappointments that crush the spirit in personal friendships, the hour in which a man has to say:

Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat my bread,

Hath lifted up his heel against me.

These are some of the forces against us. Individually they defeat us; united they destroy us.

Now what are we to do? It is in the midst of a Book that is full of the revelation of these contrary forces, a Book that recognizes the spiritual antagonisms, that this wonderful verse flames out. It seems to be very much alone in this chapter of Proverbs. Yet, there is a wonderful fitness that this verse is put down into the midst of words that seem to have no connection with it. Into the chaos it comes with its suggestion of cosmos, into the darkness with its flaming light, into a sob and a sigh with its song. "The name of Jehovah is a strong tower: The righteous runneth into it, and is safe."

Let us attempt to interpret the meaning of this text by the Book, because the name of Jehovah is related to the whole of the old economy. I pray you remember the use these Hebrew people made of that name, the fact that they never pronounced it as we pronounce it, the fact that they never wrote it in fulness, so that they have created for us unto this hour a difficulty as to what the full name really was. On all the pages of their ancient Scriptures this particular name, to which the preacher now refers, stands revealed by four consonants, with no vowels, indicating a reverent reticence in the pronunciation of a name so full of rich suggestiveness. And remember, moreover, that as you study these Old Testament Scriptures, you never find this name linked with any qualifying or distinguishing adjective. You "never read, the Jehovah, or my Jehovah, or the living Jehovah. The Adonahy, the Lord; my Elohim, my God; the living Elohim, the living God; but never the, my, or the living Jehovah. It always stands alone as the tetragrammaton, four consonants from which the light seems to break. There was a singular reverence and reticence in the use of the name, and yet, it was the very center of the Hebrew religion, and the measure in which these people rose to any height of religious life was the measure in which they saw the light of that name, and took their refuge in its signification, and were made strong by all it said to them.

I know the difficulty of interpretation, but I do not hesitate to adopt the interpretation that it means the Becoming One - that is, the One Who becomes to His people all they need. It suggests the adaptation of Infinite Being to finite being, in order to bring about the strengthening of finite being with all the strength of Infinite Being. If it is difficult to follow that line, and to discover the mystery of the tetragrammaton, then let us turn to the name as it is illustrated for us in the Old Testament, in five pictures.

The first is that of Abraham on a mountain with Isaac. The second is of Moses on a mountain. In the valley are the hosts that he has led from Egypt's slavery engaged in deadly conflict with Amalek. Moses' hands are lifted in prayer, and while they are so lifted Israel prevails, and when they faint and droop Amalek prevails. The third is the picture of Gideon, the peaceful farmer, suddenly called to national service, commanded to gather an army and to strike a blow that shall break the power of Midian. The fourth is a picture of a prophet in prison - Jeremiah, exercising a ministry in which there is no gleam of hope as to immediate result; knowing this from the commencement, and becoming more profoundly conscious of it as he continues, until at last he is in prison, and in the prison house he is singing a song of hope. And the last is the picture of yet another prophet, an exile from his own land, by the River Chebar - Ezekiel, looking through all the clouds and the darkness by which he is surrounded, ever through and through until there breaks upon his astonished vision the ultimate realization of all for which he has long hoped.

We know the pictures: Abraham on Moriah; Moses on the mountain, with hands uplifted while Amalek fights Israel; Gideon acting to set his people free from Midianitish oppression; Jeremiah in the midst of utter failure, the prophet of failure; and Ezekiel in exile by the river banks.

Now all these men knew the meaning of my text, and knew it in one particular way in each case. In connection with these five pictures I find the name illustrated. Abraham on Moriah said, "Jehovah-Jireh." Moses on the mountain said, "Jehovah-Nissi." Gideon facing the conflict said, "Jehovah-Shalom." Jeremiah in the dungeon heard the word, "Jehovah-Tsidkenu." And Ezekiel by the river said as the last thing in his prophecy, "Jehovah-Shammah."

Jehovah-Jireh, the Lord will see and provide. Jehovah-Nissi, the Lord our banner. Jehovah-Shalom, the Lord our peace. Jehovah-Tsidkenu, the Lord our righteousness. Je-hovah-Shammah, the Lord is there.

In these pictures, I find an interpretation of the meaning of my text which is full of value. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe."

In the case of Abraham, we have an illustration of the obedience of faith in extremity. And by extremity I mean that he had come to the last test of his faith. Faith had been tried and tested and proved through all the years, but this was the final test. "Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest, even Isaac." All the promises of God were to be fulfilled in and through Isaac, and there was no other way in sight. Nevertheless, this man, in the hour of faith's stern and awful and overwhelming extremity, found the tower of refuge a place of strength, a high rock pinnacle where he was set above the stress and strain. "Jehovah-Jireh" means, quite literally, the Lord will see; but inferentially, and by intention, the Lord will provide. There is not a great distance between seeing and providing, vision and provision. Provision is the outcome of vision; and this man, when the command was given, and the altar was prepared, and he was at the end of everything upon which he had been leaning, did not say, "I cannot see"; but he said, "God can see"; and thus he ran into the tower of refuge. The Divine vision and provision was the place of strength to a man when his faith was obedient to the very last extremity of its testing.

Again, the picture of Moses upon the mountain is that of the conflict of faith. The hour had come when the men of faith, who had been redeemed because of their belief in him who had endured having seen Him Who is invisible, were gathered in conflict; and in the conflict Moses knew that everything depended not upon the strength of their fighting, but upon the presence and the power of God. In that hour he uttered these great words, "Jehovah-Nissi," the Lord our banner. I like to imagine the picture from Moses' standpoint. There in the valley are the hosts of Amalek - cruel, overwhelming hosts. And there also is this little company of fighting Israelites. But what did Moses say that day when, conscious of the stress of the conflict, he ran into the name of the Lord? Like a banner floating and fluttering in the breeze he saw that name, and knew that victory depended upon God's presence with them. The name of the Lord to him was a strong tower, to which he ran and was set on high.

Or Gideon yonder is seen shrinking from service; and I have no criticism for him. I have already said that he was a farmer, a man of simple tastes, unused to the things of war. This man was apprehended, and appointed in the midst of his toil to be the deliverer of the people from long and brutal and cruel oppression. Oh, how he shrank, afraid even of the vision of the angel that had come to him for his commissioning. He said, I have seen the angel of the Lord, and I shall die. It was then that the great word came, "Jehovah-Shalom," the Lord send peace. And he went into the name of God, and was set on high above his own fears, above his own anxieties; and in that moment he became the intrepid leader who presently was content to fight with three hundred rather than thirty-two thousand, because such was the revealed will and method and purpose of God.

Or, I go once more to that dungeon, and see Jeremiah therein - a man who is the witness of faith in the midst of the most hopeless circumstances, and what is his hope? He says, "Jehovah-Tsidkenu," the Lord our righteousness. He knows perfectly well that there can be no civic strength that is not based on righteousness, no national restoration and uplifting that is not founded upon righteousness. And where is righteousness? Absent from the counsels of kings, absent from the policies of the men who were ruling, absent from the national leaders at that moment. Then he entered into the name of the Lord, "Jehovah-Tsidkenu," and was certain that because He was righteous the victory must be won; and he sang the song of the certainty thereof.

And, finally, Ezekiel by the Chebar, seeing his visions of God, was a man of faith in the hour of exile, when all upon which human hope had been set was broken to a thousand pieces; and he saw through the mists and through the clouds, and as he looked to the ultimate, that on which he finally dwelt was not the glory of a temple or the prosperity of a people, but the presence of God. Ezekiel saw Jehovah present in the process, and consequently, present finally in the fulfilment of purpose. "The name of Jehovah is a strong tower."

I leave those illustrations, and I ask you for a moment to think with me of the proofs of safety. My brethren, all these I have referred to are in themselves proofs of how safe men are when they enter into this name. Abraham, Moses, Gideon, Jeremiah and Ezekiel; you notice that the illustrations coincide with the history of the nation. The whole history of Israel is in these illustrations. Abraham, the father and founder; Moses, the law-giver and leader; Gideon, the leader at a particular time of peril; Jeremiah, the prophet of failure; Ezekiel amid the failure. All these men were able to sing the song of victory, and to achieve a present victory, and pass its power on to coming days because they knew the strength of this great name. In every case these men were set on high above the tumult and the stress, entering into the place of peace even in the midst of conflict.

The Bible abounds with illustrations. Daniel knew conflict; he was persecuted, and they took him and put him in the den of lions. But if you tell me that Daniel was in the den of lions you have discovered only the most superficial truth. Where then was Daniel? In the name of Jehovah, in the den of lions; and when the king in the morning said, "O, Daniel, servant of the Living God, is thy God, Whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?" Daniel answered, "O, king, live forever. My God hath sent His angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths." He went into the tower, and was set on high.

Or Job, who came to the fulfilment of his own life when he found his way through the flaming glory of the Theophany into the secret place of the name, and rested therein.

Or David, if indeed the psalm we read this morning was David's psalm. Did you notice the growth of experience and the growth of the sense of safety? At the beginning of the psalm he said, "I shall not be greatly moved," but before the song was done he said, '"I shall not be moved." And how did he climb from trembling confidence to matchless assurance? Read the psalm again, and it will be seen that it is the psalm of God and the song of the name of the Lord - the song of a soul gathering courage and heroism in the secret place.

We need not confine ourselves to Biblical illustration. "Saints, apostles, prophets, martyrs," who passed through conflicts as severe, if not severer, than we can ever know, put their trust in this name, and found it safe. Or may I not appeal to some of you who are in the midst of conflict to prove the assertion of the text by the memory of things you have known in the lives of your loved ones? Will you let me help you by an illustration? I remember, seven and thirty years ago, when God took from my side - the side of an only boy - his one playmate, his sister. Do not ever indulge in the heresy that a child is incapable of sorrow. I remember coming back one morning - only a lad as I then was - from the grave where I had sat in loneliness, and I found in the house my father and mother. And, boy as I was, I crept up to where they were sitting together, and, if you like the heathenism of the word, it happened - there is a better word than that - my father's hand was resting on his Bible, and I looked at where his finger rested, and saw these words: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord." And, boy as I was, I knew there was a connection between that verse and the light I saw on the faces of father and mother; and I never lost the impression of it. And, twenty-four years after, when my own first girlie was taken out of my own home, I got the Bible and turned up the same verse, and laid my hand where my father had laid his hand. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower: The righteous runneth into it, and is set on high."

The proof is scattered through the experience of the saints in all the ages, and is as near to you as father and mother's trust in God. Nay, verily, brethren, have you not yourselves proved it?

Of the supreme onslaught and victory, we have the story in the New Testament, Jesus knew the conflict of life as none other has ever known it. He knew the forces of spiritual antagonism. He lived in the midst of the problems that vex us. And the subtle forms of temptation with which we are familiar, He knew them and entered deeply and profoundly into them. He knew the sorrows of bereavement and difficulty; He Was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And how did He overcome them? To Him the name of the Lord was a strong tower into which He passed and was set on high. The supreme secret of all His victory over sin and sorrow is contained in His own confession, "I and My Father are one." In fellowship with Him He overcame. But there is a deeper signification in that story of Jesus. The name Jesus in itself is composed of the ancient name Jehovah, and yet another word that speaks of salvation. The name Jesus essentially means Jehovah is salvation. The name Jesus is Joshua. Now let my young friends take their Bibles and find out when the name was made. The Son of Nun did not bear it first. It was given to him. The significance is that of Jehovah and salvation interwoven, making the name Joshua, which is our name Jesus; and into that name finally we may run and be set on high.

Jesus, name of sweetness,

Jesus, sound of love,

Cheering exiles onward

To their rest above.

My brethren, what is the conflict to you this morning? Are you at the extremity of faith? Are you asked to walk a pathway that seems as though it must end in disaster? Are you sure it is God's will? Then, in comradeship with this Christ, Who walked the via dolorosa, and walked the way to victory, take your way along that pathway. Are you in conflict with foes in the valley that are against faith and against God? Let your hands be uplifted, and in that name Jesus there is a banner of Jehovah, and victory must come as you follow Him. Are you commissioned to some work from which you shrink, as did Gideon of old? In Jesus is the fulfilment of the great word "Jehovah-Shalom," for He is our peace; and we may enter into all service in perfect peace in Him. Are you feeling, rightly or wrongly, that you are strangely in company with Jeremiah, that all the foundations are breaking down around you, and that the national outlook is of the darkest? I pray you, in your dungeon, look higher and see "Jehovah-Tsidkenu." Or, if you would translate it into modern language, sing this: "Jesus shall reign where'er the sun doth his successive journeys run." And if today the thickening battle and the darkening gloom overwhelm you, stay a little by the river, and look far enough and earnestly enough, and beyond all the mystery of the hour you will see the glory of God's victory; and its chief word is this, "Jehovah-Shammah," the Lord is there. The crowned Christ, having won the kingdoms of the world, will make them His own to the glory of God.