**VOLUME 5; CHAPTER 19 - THE PREACHING OF G. CAMPBELL MORGAN**

**THE KINGDOM: THE KING by G. CAMPBELL MORGAN**

*He hath on His garment and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.*

*Revelation 19:16*

THIS IS A VIEW OF CHRIST IN HIS GLORY, A POETIC AND prophetic description of a glory upon which the eye of man has not yet rested in actual history.

John, as he wrote an account of the vision granted to him, was careful in the center of the descriptive paragraph to name the glorious One the Word, in the mystic language which he had used in writing the story of His mission in the world. In the loneliness of Patmos there were granted to the Seer such visions of his Lord as he had never seen before. In the presence of the unveiling of the glory of this Person, John became as one dead; and yet, he was conscious of the touch of a gentle, tender hand, thrilling with all human affection, and of the sound of a voice full of sweet tenderness, and ringing with all authority, saying: "Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the Living One; and I was dead, and, behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades." The One Who passes before our vision in this paragraph is the self-same One upon Whose bosom John had laid his head in the years that now seemed so far away, the one of Whom he declared: "We beheld Him and we handled Him." Now he sees Him, in the figurative language of this paragraph, riding from the opened heavens, a King, followed by armies; and on His vesture and on His thigh a name was written, "King of kings, and Lord of lords." I repeat that the eyes of the men of the world have never yet so seen Him; nevertheless, Jesus is today God's anointed and appointed King.

One of the great themes of the Bible is that of the Kingship of God. I am sometimes inclined to think, as I study and attempt to teach it, that whatever word, descriptive of Deity, one may be thinking of at a given moment, that word contains within itself the suggestiveness of every other word. A little while ago, in a careful and devout treatise on the Atonement, the author declared that in the word Father all essential truth concerning God is contained; for the Father is a King having authority, and the Father is a Saviour, forever seeking the realization of the highest life of His children. Would it not be equally true to say that when one speaks of Kingship all other thoughts are included therein? Would it not be equally true to affirm that if one speaks of God as Saviour, authority and tenderness and tears are all suggested by the word? From the beginning to the end of the Bible, the revelation of God is that of His Kingship, not declared in so many words in the stories with which the record opens, but as clearly revealed there as anywhere else. Take the ancient story, and see the placing of man in the garden; mark the spacious liberty, the glorious opportunity in the midst of which he found himself, in order that he might have dominion; but, as you gaze upon that spacious liberty and that wonderful opportunity, mark well the tree that indicated the limit of liberty and the condition for the fulfilment of opportunity: "Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it." That tree was the sacramental symbol of the limit of liberty, and therefore a revelation to man of the throne higher than the one upon which man himself sat, and to which he must bow in allegiance if he would reign in power over everything that lies beneath him. As I pass on and on through the library I find the same story of God as King, God governing, God lifted up and enthroned, and when the seers of the ancient economy came to the highest visions of God they were always visions of God enthroned. With the coming of the New Testament, there came the fulfilment of the things suggested in the Old concerning this very fact of the Divine Kingship and government. In the language of the far distance there had been indications of the fact that at last into human history there should come a manifestation of the Kingship of God - the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. It was a prophecy of the authority which should overcome the forces that were against humanity. The great promises made to the father of the race all indicated the coming of manifest Kingship, and to the great tribe of Judah the promise was definitely made that out of it should come a governor. The psalms are full of a King yet to come. The prophets during the delivery of their messages among the failing thrones of time, and in the presence of all the break-down of earthly royalty, looked on and on, and waited and hoped that this essential fact of government and authority would come into clear manifestation.

In the New Testament there is the fulfilment of the hope, the answer to the expectation, the aspiration, the desire, the longing, the passionate waiting of the long centuries. From the beginning to the end of the story of Jesus' public ministry, there is the note of Kingship and unquestioned authority in His teaching. When he ascended the Mount, and delivered to His disciples His ethic, there was no note of apology, no question of counsel taken with any other. Nay, rather, there was the note that set aside the old economy, because it was now superseded by the new ethic, "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time ... but I say unto you!" I listen to Him in all His teaching, and I watch Him in all His ways; and I see ever One Who is sole and absolute Monarch, calling no man into His counsels. I trace Him through all His life, and I see Kingliness manifest not only in His teaching and in His general attitude toward men, but also, and perhaps supremely, in His attitude toward God. Christ never used the same word to describe His own praying which He used to describe the praying of other men. The word He used when describing the praying of the disciples, and when He charged them to pray, was a word which indicates coming into the presence of God with empty hands, as a pauper asking for the bestowment of a gift, of a bounty. Jesus never used that word about His own praying. Martha once used that word of His praying, but that was her mistake. The word Christ used of His own praying was a word which indicated partnership, fellowship with the God to Whom He spoke, "I will inquire of the Father." It is equally significant that you never find Him praying with His disciples. He prayed alone. They watched their Lord at His prayer, and as they watched Him and listened to Him, they came to Him upon one occasion and said, "Lord, teach us to pray." The very petition they presented to Him, asking that they might be taught to pray, is demonstration of the loneliness of His praying. Jesus prayed on another level, on another plane. His fellowship with God was other than the fellowship of the men by whom He was surrounded. Whether I watch His attitude toward men, or His attitude toward God, this perpetual note of authority is to be discovered.

As the shadows of the Cross were falling upon His spirit, the shadows of the dark hours to which Jesus was coming, and to which He had so often made reference in the company of the disciples, and as they trembled in the presence of the Cross out of their very love for Him, it is perfectly evident that the effect it produced upon Him was not that of trembling. There was no tremor in the presence of men and what they could do; the trembling was reserved for the loneliness of Gethsemane, when He faced the infinite mystery of the passion, and men were excluded. In the presence of the Cross itself Christ said: "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Myself."

That authority was manifested with equal clearness in the hour of the Cross. If we watch Him carefully we cannot fail to see that Jesus compelled the hour of His own death. In the earlier days of His ministry He said: "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." Watch Him at the last. Read carefully Matthew's story, and you will find two statements close together, though we have sometimes read them and never recognized their relationship. The high priests, plotting for His arrest, warned Judas that it was not to be effected at the Feast. Directly after, I see Him with His disciples, and Judas sat at the board; and Christ said to him, "What thou doest, do quickly." And He was arrested at the Feast, in spite of the priests. This was not a man driven by circumstances; He was a Man compelling circumstances. This was not a prisoner arrested at last, having been hunted to death by His enemies, who had now overcome Him. He held in His hand every foe that was against Him, and compelled the whole of them to co-operate in the fulfilment of His own purpose. He stood in the presence of the representative of Roman power, Pilate; and when he asked Him, "Whence art Thou?" Jesus gave him no answer. When Pilate said, "Knowest Thou not that I have power to release Thee, and have power to crucify Thee?" Christ replied, "Thou wouldst have no power against Me, except it were given thee from above."

Man of Nazareth, did you call Him? Verily yes, man of my manhood, bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh, humanity of my human nature, but a King. This is He of Whom all the prophets spoke, and Whose coming they anticipated. This is He of Whom all the psalmists sang, their expectation becoming the inspiration of their psalmody. This is He for Whom long ages have been waiting. This is the King, God's one and only King. In the great Kingdom of God Christ is King, an expression to men of the meaning of God's Kingship, and for the accomplishment in the midst of human history of all the purposes of God.

Now for one moment look beyond this hour in which we are assembled. Lift your eyes! It is not easy to look on into the mystic future; but look, I pray you, look on to the Advent. Place it where you will; I care nothing for the sake of the present argument and illustration as to your view concerning the relation to each other of the various aspects of that Advent; I am desirous only of drawing attention to this tremendous declaration: -

Then cometh the end, when He shall deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He hath put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be abolished is death. For He put all things in subjection under His feet. But when He saith, All things are put in subjection, it is evident that He is excepted Who did subject all things unto Him. And when all things have been subjected unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subjected unto Him that did subject all things unto Him, that God may be all in all.

The underlying truth of that declaration is that of the Kingship of God. Jesus is seen as the manifestation in human history of that Kingship. Jesus came for the demonstration thereof in the midst of the long failure. He came into human sight, into human consciousness, to destroy the works of the devil, to restore again that part of the Kingdom which was lost and in rebellion. The fisherman of Galilee who leaned upon the human bosom of Christ - and I sometimes think felt the very beating of His dear heart - John, in the isle of Patmos, with the waters washing in-shores, and desolation in his heart because of absent friends, looked, and the heaven was opened, and that Man of Nazareth was seen, and "upon His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

Let us, therefore, consider this Kingliness of Jesus, for it is a manifestation in time, and for us, of the real meaning of the Kingship of God. I shall ask you to consider three things: first, the Kingly character as revealed in Jesus; secondly, the Kingly qualifications as manifested in Him; and, finally, the Kingly position which He occupies even now, and which will be manifested before the eyes of men in the accomplishment of the purpose of God.

The Kingly character. Upon this depends the Kingly position. That is a revolutionary thing to say, by which I mean that it is saying something that the world has never yet come to understand. True kingliness must be based upon character. A sentence like that is quite naturally applied to kinghood among men; but, in order that the truth in that application should be emphasized more powerfully, I affirm that the Kingship of God is founded upon the character of God. That is a tremendous truth, and if we can but grasp it, what will be the confidence, the assurance it will bring to us in the midst of battle and strife? That truth had its unveiling in Jesus Christ. Kings have become kings in human history by force of arms. Said this King, "Put up again thy sword into its place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." Nationality that begins with military power, that is built upon military power, ends by military power. Not by force of arms, not by policy and intrigue, not by succession does this King reign.

Let me but remind you of that great passage in the Philippian letter, in which Paul described the humiliation and consequent exaltation of Christ. Let us begin in the middle: "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 should 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," How that thrills with the music of the march to imperial power - every knee to bow and every tongue to confess! This paragraph commences with the word "Wherefore," and now I take that word and use it interrogatively. Wherefore? Why has God lifted Him high, and put Him on the throne? I go back to that which precedes: "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." Can you explain to me that patient, persistent, awful descent to the uttermost depth of the Cross? There is only one answer, The answer is in the word which never occurs in the passage, but which bathes the passage with infinite light. The answer is given in the word Love. "God so loved the world."

Love brought Him down, my poor soul to redeem;

Yes, it was love made Him die on the tree.

That is the character upon which the Kingship of Jesus is based. That is the character upon which the government of God is based. The Kingly character is love. Love is not a weak, sickly, anemic sentiment, which has in it no discipline, no strength, no anger, no fierceness. Love has holiness at its heart. Wherever we find true love we find the capacity for anger. Love is always angry with anything and everything, and with anyone and everyone, that harms, hurts and spoils that which is loved. Jesus once brought the prince of darkness into the light, and described him as a murderer, a liar. Love will judge the murderer, and fling the liar out. If love permit the murderer house room, and forgive the liar in his lie, it ceases to be love. Love can be stern, severe and hard, but always in the interest of redemption and renewal, and remaking. "The King of love my Shepherd is." In that great word there is laid bare so much as man may see of the Kingly character of Jesus, and the character of God upon which His government is based.

Then consider the kingly qualifications. "The King of love my Shepherd is." All the great kingly characters in the Bible were shepherds. Moses, uncrowned, but a king, learned the art of kingship not at the court of Pharaoh, but in the desert. David, the king after God's own heart, served his apprenticeship to human kingship while he was a shepherd boy. Jesus said the sweetest and profoundest thing about Himself, in some senses, when He said "I am the good Shepherd," and other writers described Him as the great Shepherd and the chief Shepherd. The work of the shepherd is to watch over the flock, to feed the flock, to protect them, to heal their wounds, to lead them to pasture, to restore the wanderers, to fight the wolves even though he die in the conflict. That is kingship. The true king is always a shepherd, living not for himself but for his flock, thinking for the flock, caring for them, putting all the thought of his life and the service of his being into the interests of the flock. Such was this great Shepherd. Because of the perfection of the shepherd character of Jesus, there was perfect qualification for government. I know how difficult that is to understand, how revolutionary it seems, when thinking of the kings of earth even until this hour. God's king is a shepherd, because God is a Shepherd. I take you back to the ancient word, "Jehovah is my Shepherd, I shall not want." So sang David the king, who also was a shepherd. He saw on the throne of majesty and government the Shepherd who leads and loves and restores.

A further qualification is that He is a prophet also. When I use the word "prophet" thus, I do not use it in the imperfect sense of foreteller, but in the larger sense of forth-teller, law giver, one who interprets the perfect will to people who need such interpretation, one who is able to enunciate an ethic, which if obeyed, life will be fulfilled at its highest and best. How is it that other kings have so constantly failed in human history? Because they have had to be dependent on others to make laws. I believe in absolute monarchy, provided we find the true monarch, He has never been seen in human history, except once; and this is the once. All other kings have either consulted their parliaments, or made laws despotic and devilish.

Here is a King Who went to the mountain and enunciated an ethic of which the whole can be written in two or three pages, and yet the proportion in which the world has found its way into light and liberty is the proportion in which it has obeyed that ethic. It is a perfect law, perfectly adjusted to human need. Who is there today who is not prepared to admit that if this nation could be remodeled and governed according to the ethic of the Sermon on the Mount, all our problems would be solved? Men outside the Church know that to be true. Men who charge us with being other-worldly learned the ethic which they admire from the lips of One Who was the supreme other-worldly Man. From His lips there fell the perfect and final law for the government of humanity.

This King has as qualification not merely the Shepherd character and the prophetic gift; He was also a Priest, and He is a Priest in very deed and truth. A priest is one who becomes a representative of others, one who stands for all the rest, one who takes the blame of failure, one who stands in the gap. "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah?" What is the answer of the ancient prophet? "I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save … I have trodden the winepress alone." Figurative and wonderful language, foretelling the fact that finally the King takes into His own Person all the sins of the people. That is atonement. That is the mystery of the Cross. That is the infinite, incomprehensible, wonderful, eternal love that was manifested upon the green hill. This is my King, for He is my Shepherd. This is my King, for He is my Lawgiver. This is my King, for He is my Priest. The qualifications of His kingship are that He is Shepherd, Prophet, Priest.

One final word. I pray you mark the authority of Jesus, His Kingly position. He stood at the end of His days upon earth on the Mount of Olivet, with a little group of men surrounding Him, and He said, "All authority hath been given unto Me in heaven and on earth." That was human speech in order to reveal to men the fact, and to fix their attention upon it, that in that Manifestation of the eternal principle of Divine government, all authority is forevermore vested in the Man Jesus. He utters the final word of life or death concerning every individual soul. There can be no approach to God save through Him."No man cometh unto the Father but by Me." Forevermore He pronounces the word "Blessed" or "Cursed" upon men, according to whether they bend the knee to Him, or reject Him. No man or woman can disobey His ethic without being lost. He is not a capricious King, commanding that men shall be destroyed, or that men shall be saved, to please His own fancy. He is the embodiment of eternal law. He brings men to the judgment bar of His high ideal; accept it, fall before it, worship it, and He will make you; reject it, and turn back to the base, the ignoble, the mean, the dastardly, the devilish and impure, and He will blast and blight you by the fires of infinite and eternal law.

We need have no anxiety about the Kingship of Jesus. We need not imagine for a single moment, in all the fussy feverishness of this neurotic age, that the Christian religion is going to fail. Christ cannot fail. All authority has been given unto Him. The thing He says is true. Nineteen centuries have passed away, and His word is living and abiding - searching, tender, gentle, healing even yet. He is God's King. All power is His as well as all authority. Read carefully the stupendous description of Christ in Paul's Colossian letter, and see how true it is. He can stay the progress of life, arrest the planet, and gather the souls of men about Him when and how He will. He is King.

He is King executing judgment in the world. What is judgment? Judgment is that which the world needs more than anything else. Judgment is absolute rectitude, the holding of the balances, the readjustment of things that are wrong. Judgment! Great word, gracious word, beautiful word, tender word! But you say, "I tremble when you say judgment." That is because there is sin in your life, permitted and retained. I am afraid of judgment, you say, That is because you are oppressing. The men who are oppressed thank God for judgment. Judgment is heaven's love at work, correcting all the things that are wrong. "He shall establish judgment in the earth,"

Remember finally that His Kingly position is not merely that of authority, power and judgment; it is that of infinite patience. How often have we said - if you have not said it, be patient with those who have, and I stand with them - How slow are the goings of God. We stand in the presence of wrong and oppression, we look out over the city scarred and seared with wounds, we listen in moments of high spiritual inspiration, and we hear the sob and sigh of broken humanity, and we say, "How long, O Lord, how long?" Then the answer comes back, the longsuffering of God is His patience. Supposing we go back a little way. Had God moved to a swift issue twenty-five years ago, where would some of us have been who today, by His grace and patience, have seen the light and walk in it, and are hoping towards it, and looking for it? There is a process by which all evil might be crushed; but it could not be crushed without crushing all the possibilities of good. Let the wheat and the tares grow together until the harvest. When the wheat and the tares have grown to their final development and manifestation, then the thunderstorm.

Thank God for the patience of the King, and part of His patience is this service. Shall we not find our way to the King, and, submitting to Him, bring our lives into harmony with the eternal and abiding things? Thank God for Him, on Whose garment and on Whose thigh is "a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." Oh, soul of mine, bend to His sceptre, kiss His sceptre, put thy neck beneath His yoke, and find thy life and find thy liberty.