**VOLUME 6; CHAPTER 22 - THE PREACHING OF G. CAMPBELL MORGAN**

**THE KING'S THOUGHT OF MAN by G. CAMPBELL MORGAN**

*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*

*Matthew 4:4*

THE STORY OF THE TEMPTATION OF OUR LORD APPEALS TO men irresistibly by reason of its essential naturalness. In all its central values it is true to our common human experience. As we read it, far removed as we feel ourselves to be from the Eastern conditions, and puzzled intellectually as we sometimes may be, by some of the methods which are described, we nevertheless are conscious of very close and intimate fellowship with the Man Who is being tempted. Those familiar with the New Testament can hardly read the story without other passages from the apostolic writings coming back to their minds: "One that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin"; "In that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted."

There are certain arresting facts in the story to which I shall make brief and passing reference by way of introduction. You will observe that the devil is introduced without any explanation, and that God is admitted without any argument. We stand in the presence of a Man Who is most evidently of our nature; all the elemental forces of our manhood are discoverable as we observe Him: intellect, emotion, volition, the physical, the spiritual, the vocational; everything which is essentially human is seen in the Man Whom we watch in that strange hour of temptation.

The particular text which I have chosen from the story consists of the answer of Jesus to the first temptation. Its first application was that of reply to the suggestion that life is dependent on the material. The first attack of the foe was in the realm of the physical - bread. In that connection our text was the affirmation of the fact that while the material is necessary it is not sufficient for the sustenance of life. It is well that we should observe that our Lord did not speak disrespectfully of bread, did not even declare it to be in any sense or in any circumstances unnecessary to the maintenance of life. "Man shall not live by bread alone." Do not omit that word "alone" in your thinking. Christ did not say, "Man shall not live by bread." Man does live by bread; but "man shall not live by bread alone." While the material is necessary it is not sufficient. Such was the force of the answer to the attack of the first temptation.

But the statement has a much wider application. Every subsequent answer of Jesus was a deduction from the first. When in answer to the next temptation He said, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God," He was not telling Satan that he was not to tempt God, but that man was not to tempt God. So in His third answer, when for the third time He quoted the words of ancient Scripture, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." He was not telling Satan what he was to do, but was declaring man must worship his God and serve Him alone. The "Thou" in the second answer, "Thou shall not tempt," and the "Thou" of the third answer, "Thou shalt worship," is the "Man" of the first answer, "Man shall not live by bread alone." Therefore in this first answer we have a central declaration giving us the key to the true significance of the whole story.

I am not so much occupied now with the story of the temptation as with that central and first word that passed the lips of our Lord in the hour of darkness, which revealed His conception of humanity and the secrets of life, a conception which constituted the reason for His attitude under temptation and the secret of His victory over temptation.

Two of the words in the text apprehend us; they are perhaps the simplest, "man" and "live." Of these two elemental words, the supreme word is "live"; the limiting, distinguishing word is "man."

The supreme word is "live." It brings us into the realm of the infinite and abiding mystery of life. We are, however, immediately limited by the earlier word "man."

In order that we may pass to the distinguishing, discriminating word "man" we will pause for a few moments with the second word and with the suggestions which it makes. "Man shall not live." It is life with which our Master was dealing. His own life was being attacked. It was His own life of which He was holding the stronghold, as He repulsed the attacks. I go back, then, to the supreme thought for a moment or two, the thought of life. Life is an interesting word. It is a word that you cannot define because you cannot define that for which it stands. There are some words which we have attached to ideas which exactly represent those ideas. We can grope our way through the processes by which they came into existence, or feel our way down to the roots, until we see how exactly the word fits the idea. When we begin that process with this word "life" we are immediately introduced into the realm of mystery. Philologists feeling their way back tell us that this word "life" came from the Gothic word liban, simply meaning, to be left, from the same root as the word "leave." Immediately we are face to face with mystery and a sense of indefiniteness. What do you mean by being left? Then the philologists employ another word to explain what is meant by being left: to survive. I find now I have a Latin word and I must translate it, and I do so, to live on; but I am back to my original word "live," and so I am working in a circle and there is no definition, save the idea that to live is to be left: life is the negation of death. Death carries away, life is that which is not carried away. That is all. That is mysterious, nebulous, insufficient. We turn back to the philologist and ask him to tell us what the word means. I quote from one alone: "that state in which the organs are capable of performing their functions." Can there be anything more gloriously indefinite? That state in which organs continue their functions. What is the secret, mystic, mighty force which makes for continuity, and what happens when it ceases? We are in the presence of the mystery of all mysteries. The mystery of life is indeed a mystery. It is in the flower, in the glowworm at eventide, in the bee passing from flower to flower and fulfilling a great mission in the world of flowers; in the bird, in the beast; and it is in man, a common quantity or quality, a mystery.

What is life? There is no answer; and the nearest we can get to definition is by declaration of what this mystic, mysterious force does. It does exactly the same thing in flower, glowworm, bee, bird, beast, and man. Let every scientist here remember that I am not a scientist, and I am not a poet. I am a plain, blunt man who speaks the things that I do know, not of life, for that I have never seen, but of the operation of life, which I can observe. Life is that which appropriates, assimilates, and ultimately gives back to the whole from which it takes. These are the three functions of life: appropriation, assimilation, giving. That is common to every realm.

I will tell you in one brief statement from the Old Testament all the story about it: "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but the things that are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law." The secret of life God holds in His own knowledge and His own power, and He has never unveiled it to the sons of men.

Passing from that word to the word which I have ventured to describe as the distinguishing, discriminating word of my text, "man," we immediately leave the flowers and the glowworm; the bee, the bird, and the beast; and we look at life in man. Jesus uttered the essential truth concerning human life in the words, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Man must, if he would live, appropriate more than the material, and assimilate other than bread, in order that out of the mystery of his being he may give larger things than material things. That is our theme.

We turn to this story of the temptation because there we have such a wonderful setting and such a wonderful surrounding enabling us to understand the profoundest truths concerning human life. In this story we have a revelation of the elemental facts of human life, a picture of a common experience of human life, that of struggle and of conflict; and a revelation of the secret whereby a man may live in the full sense of the word, and come to the ultimate realization of the meaning of his manhood.

In the first place, in this story we have a revelation of the fundamental facts of human life. I ask you to observe this Man in the wilderness facing the tempter, and let your eyes rest on Him rather than on the enemy. As you do so you will see that in human life there is a threefold demand, to which threefold demand the enemy makes appeal.

There is, first, the demand for the material, hunger for bread. There is, second, the demand for the spiritual, the craving for an actual spiritual grasp on God. There is, finally, the demand made on self, the passion for a kingdom. Man of the material needs the material; the hunger is the evidence. Man of the spiritual craves the spiritual, to which craving the enemy made his appeal when he said, "If Thou art the Son of God cast Thyself down." Man of the regnant faculty - for man is king in the economy of God, as the psalmist saw and sang so long ago - demands a kingdom over which he can reign. Thus I see the Man in the wilderness and discover the threefold demand of his life by observing the method of the tempter; and I have discovered the elemental facts of human life.

There is, first, the demand on the material. Man of the material needs the material. Life must appropriate, assimilate, the material. Man is not a spirit without a body any more than man is a body without a spirit. It is not for us to reason why; we deal with man as he is, as we know him, as God has made him; and we assert that life demands that we should appropriate the material and assimilate it and recognize our relation to the very earth in which for a while we live. It is absolutely necessary that every human being must have of the earth in order to live. Hunger is a sign of health, it is a sign of strong manhood. It is the man who lacks hunger that you become anxious about, not the man who is hungry. God has made man on one side of his individuality of the earth, and of the earth he must have. This Man in the wilderness, forty days fasting, by the health of His perfect manhood, by the splendor of His perfect physical being, was hungry; and that is one side of human nature that we must recognize and reckon with. In this Bible story everything is resolved in this simplest formula, bread. Bread is but an emblem of things material and physical. Man is of the earth the ultimate glory and the ultimate crown, and nothing lies beneath him in all the mysterious scale of uprising life to which he is not related. Consequently, there is demand in every man's life for that which shall feed the material side of his nature as it is represented in everything that lies beneath him. The healthy man loves a dog and demands a dog. The healthy man loves flowers and demands them. The flowers lie within his own material nature. He must have colors, sounds, beauty. When you find a man who turns his back on music and flowers in the name of saint-ship, understand he is no saint; he does not understand his own humanity, in his own thinking of it he will degrade that which God has made, and I will not trust him out of my sight. Bread is the simple formula of the whole material order, which is not inherently evil, which is a Divine creation, which finds its ultimate glory in man; and man in health hungers for everything that lies beneath him.

Then as to the next revelation, the demand on God. Man is of the spiritual and he needs the spiritual. In the elemental man, that is, in the man who is nearest to that which is natural to humanity, that demand for the spiritual will inevitably make itself heard and known. It may be that the man who feels the hunger for the spiritual will not understand the hunger. It may be that he will not be able to express in correct words the true deep meaning of this hunger. It may take curious methods of expression; but not merely for bread does man hunger, but for space, vision, for something beyond the near, the immediate, the dust; for some demonstration of spirituality that is independent of the near, the immediate, the dust. Get back to the wilderness and listen to the subtle voice of the tempter, "If Thou art the Son of God, cast Thyself down," cut thyself off from all the ordinary laws of physical being and find out whether there is any reality in this spiritual relationship; make a venture on the spiritual in order to find out. Have you never felt that temptation come to you? Remember, the very temptation is directed toward a perfectly right attitude of the soul. In every man there is the possibility of the realization of the spiritual. A man may affirm that he does not believe in the spiritual, yet within his soul there is a crying out after God; it may be mere speculation, it may be some adventure, it may be that which man will designate, in what he is pleased to call his sober moments, fanaticism; but, thank God, humanity cannot get away from this fanaticism, the passion for some consciousness and grasp of some larger thing that cannot be cabined and confined within the tabernacle of this flesh. That is why men climb mountains and travel. That is why men venture forth on great enterprises. It is a sign of health.

I come at last to that which is the ultimate thing in all human life. According to this revelation, not the demand on the material of which every man is conscious, not this demand on the spiritual and on God which every man feels, though he may not understand, but the demand on self is final. Man is regnant in his very being. He needs a kingdom; he asks some territory over which he can reign, having captured it, having mastered it, that he may administer it. Every man is asking for that; every healthy man, every elemental man, every man who approximates in any degree toward the original Divine intention, asks a kingdom. That is the secret impulse of all production, of all commerce, of all healing ministries, of all art, and - forgive me - ultimately, of all true preaching. It is the passion for a kingdom. A man does not ask a kingdom that he inherits from his father. Man asks a garden of Eden, not an Italian garden, but one in which he can walk and touch mother earth brimming with potentialities, and which he can smite and make beautiful with flowers and golden with harvest. That is elemental manhood. You say you have never felt that? That is the sign of your sin. Sin paralyzes the passion for a kingdom, and a man is content to say, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." That is the language of a false humanity. Man in the economy of God asks a kingdom that he can win, master, administer, and over which in the allied forces of his material and spiritual being he can reign in life.

In the wilderness I not only have this revelation of elemental humanity, I have also the revelation of that which is common to man, the experience of struggle. Of course this is the central value of this particular story, and again I ask you to observe there is no explanation of it here, no vindication of it. It is a story that accepts facts and reveals the forces.

I pray you also to remember that this is the picture of human life. I wonder whether this fact of struggle obtains through all the universe of God. I cannot say, I do not know. I know only man and something of the angels through the revelation of Scripture, and something of all that life on this earth that lies beneath man in the great creation scale; and, so far as I am able to observe, I find the same principle everywhere. I do not know the history of the angels. It is not perfectly revealed in Holy Scripture. There are gleams in the revelation, and I read, among other things, of angels who left their first estate, and kept not their proper habitation. I cannot read a sentence like that without discovering that behind that event in which angels left their first estate and wandered from their true orbit there was struggle. There was in the mystery of the angelic world some kind of temptation, and the victory over it was the keeping of a first estate, of abiding in an orbit, the ensuring of eternity, and the yielding to it was the loss of estate, absence from the true orbit.

I turn from that imperfect vision, for the revelation is not perfect, and I look at all the life below man. I would rather speak of the life below man in the language of one whose understanding of God and Christ was far beyond mine, who lived in closer relationship with his Lord and through whom the Spirit of God could write things for our profit, "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain."

I leave these regions and return to man, and here in Matthew I have a picture not of a sinful man. If He were a sinful man, then everything breaks down, there is no meaning in this story; it has no revealing value; it is merely a record. But this is a sinless Man, and into clear light for my eyes emerge the facts of struggle, of the force that creates it, and of the way of victory over it. The first thing that I notice in the story is that according to this story the struggle is caused by a personality who is named the devil. Remember, this is Biblical. We do not hear much today about the devil; modern views fail to see him - I think that is the kindest way to put it.

I hear to-day about the angel and the beast in man. I am told that there is in every man an angel and a beast. What I object to in that description is that it is rude alike to the angel and to the beast. l am told that in every man the angel is in process of struggling through, and that the beast is being sloughed off. That is a doctrine of original sin far more terrible than the doctrine of the theologians, because it makes sin more original than man, and suggests that man is emerging out of that which is vulgar and low. That is not the Bible doctrine. The Bible doctrine says Satan, the devil, is the beast and that the temptations which come to man come by suggestion from without.

This story also reveals the process. Let me attempt to put that whole process as I see it into one brief sentence. This story reveals the fact that the enemy of mankind approaches man through what man is. He appeals to the things which are essential in human life, he appeals to elemental things, proper things, God-made things. He appeals to material hunger, he appeals to that which asks for spiritual realization, he appeals to that passion for a kingdom, that passion that demands a territory.

Wherein then lies the temptation in every case? In the suggestion that man shall fulfil the elemental demands of his nature on the basis of anarchy or lawlessness, that he shall cease to obey any law in the realm of the material, that he shall cease to realize that there is a law that governs in the spiritual realm, that he shall cease to recognize that there is a law that governs in the vocational realm.

I look at the story again, and I see not merely the personality and the process, I discover also the pain, the agony, the travail. "He Himself hath suffered being tempted." There is always suffering in temptation, and when suffering ceases temptation ceases. If solicitation toward evil causes you no pain, then it is no temptation, and you are in the grip of the evil thing; spiritual mortification has set in, and God help you, for none other can! Watch temptation at work and mark this: the pain of temptation is felt in proportion to the perfection of the person who is tempted.

I begin with the child. When temptation is first presented to a child, when a child is first conscious of temptation to do wrong, that child suffers. Oh, but you say, that is only a qualm of conscience. Only a qualm of conscience! Hell is a qualm of conscience intensified, prolonged, incurable! What more would you have? The little child suffers. It may be that you will offer it false advantages, and deceive it, until it will forget its suffering and yield to the sin. The child, who is nearer the heart of God than any other, save those who are brought back to childhood by grace, suffers in the hour of temptation.

Or take any seeker after the high and holy, that young man who listens to the preacher tonight who has not yielded himself to this Christ but who has seen the vision and who is aspiring after God, who is desiring to climb the heights - he yielded to temptation yesterday, but, ah, me, the agony of it when it first gripped him. He yielded, and in the sin for the moment was a damnable opiate that killed the pain; but the opiate will pass and remorse will be the return of pain. That is hopeful; but, oh, if the day shall come when there is no remorse, when there is no agony in the presence of temptation! That will be demonstration of the most unutterable ruin possible. Temptation coming to the seeker means pain.

Temptation means pain to the saint - I use the word in its true sense, not of those who are already perfected but of those pressing toward the goal. When temptation assails the saint there is agony in it. There may be yielding, there may be sin; but there is agony in it. Let there be no yielding, there is nevertheless an increasing consciousness of pain whenever temptation assails the soul. It is the experience of struggle.

Finally, I have in this story, and this is the supreme thing, the secret of victory over temptation and of the realization of humanity. If life be a mystery what is the supreme necessity? If life judged by its operations is that mystic force that appropriates, assimilates, gives, and yet cannot be truly and perfectly known, what is the supreme necessity for life? A law. Government in appropriation, that life may know what to appropriate. Government in assimilation, that life may fling out the poison and keep only that which shall nourish. Government in giving. This is a sequence, for if there be true appropriation and assimilation the giving will be true. What life needs is government. Flowers need governing, that they may appropriate and assimilate the right things, and so give the right things. That law must be formulated by someone who knows the mystery. I cannot formulate any law for the cultivation of flowers; no horticulturist is able to formulate the law. He discovers the law and by recognizing it is able to make the chrysanthemum infinitely beautiful which but two generations ago was but the homeliest of garden flowers. What is true of the flower, is equally true of the bee, the bird, the beast, and of man.

I am now face to face again with my text, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Man must live within the law of God, who knows the mystery of his being. Man must live by obedience to commands coming directly, immediately, to him for the government of his life. Those commands have been given to us in the Scriptures of Truth; those commands have been given to us in the Son Who is the Logos, the Word incarnate; those commands are being given to us every day if we will listen; only the commands of today must be tested by the commands of the oracles, and all spiritual illumination must be tested by the Son of His love, the ultimate, final speech of Deity.

What, then, is man's responsibility? I should be inclined to say to my own soul, as the result of this meditation, Man, thy first responsibility is that of recognition of the mystery of thy life. The last word of Greek philosophy was, Man, know thyself, a great word because it brought man face to face with himself. When a man recognizes the mystery of his own life, then the second responsibility is that he consent to the government of Him to Whom his life is no mystery.

O Lord, Thou hast searched me, and known me,

Thou knowest my downsitting and my uprising,

Thou understandest my thought afar off.

So begins the psalm. How does it end?

Search me, O God, and knew my heart:

Try me, and know my thoughts:

And see if there be any way of wickedness in me,

And lead me in the way everlasting.

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Recognize that. Make it the first, supreme, essential business of thy life to acquaint thyself with Him, and so be at peace.