**VOLUME 10; CHAPTER 17 - THE PREACHING OF G. CAMPBELL MORGAN**

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

*We have the mind of Christ.*

*1 Corinthians 2:16*

THIS IS ONE OF THE SUPERLATIVE APOSTOLIC CLAIMS FOR THE Church of God. It has nothing to say of organization, of polity, or of methods of service. It is concerned with its philosophy, or wisdom, with that whole of truth which is to express itself through the organization to be the criterion of its polity, and to govern the method of its service.

These words were written to "the Church of God which is at Corinth ... them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called … saints, with all that call upon the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, their Lord and ours." Such were those of whom Paul thought when he wrote the words: "We have the mind of Christ." At the time, Corinth was one of the wealthiest of the Greek cities; it was also a center of learning, a haunt of the schoolmen. Its abounding wealth made it a seething center of corruption, while the professed leaders of thought were engaged in disputes over terms, and thus were contributing nothing of moral value to the civic life. This letter of the apostle shows that the Church had passed under the baneful influence of this false wisdom, and to correct this the letter was written. Paul declared that his preaching to them had nothing in common with these things. The wisdom of those scribes, those disputers, was a wisdom of the world, and its rulers were coming to naught.

Moreover, there was no need for the Christian Church to be thus influenced. It possessed its own wisdom. There was a Christian philosophy which was a mystery, which had been hidden in the past, but now was revealed through the Spirit.

Now, the whole truth as to the fact of this wisdom and its possession by the Church is contained in our text: "We have the mind of Christ." This is as true today as at the time when Paul wrote the words. Leaving, then, all the apostolic application to the then existing conditions, let us consider the statement in itself, that we may apply it to our own conditions.

And this we shall do by giving attention to three matters suggested by the text: first, the Mind of Christ as the sum total of Wisdom; second, the Church of Christ as the depository of that Mind; and, third, the consequent Responsibility of the Church.

We begin, then, with this phrase of Paul: "The mind of Christ." In writing to the Philippians, Paul charged them: "Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Now, the word of that Philippian letter and the word of this Corinthian letter are not the same. They have connections: there are vital relationships between the words both translated "mind"; but for the purpose of our present consideration we must keep them separate and not confuse the thoughts. The word in the Philippian letter which appears today as an abstract noun in our translation is, as many of you know full well, a verb. "Have this mind in you" might be rendered, Be thus minded, which means, Let your habit of mental activity be that of the Christ. The word there refers to an exercise of mind, an emotional exercise, and, consequently, an inspirational exercise, creating an activity: the mind of Christ, that emotional activity which was the inspiration of His self-emptying, His descent to the human level, and His final ascent to the throne of universal empire.

The word in our text is not this word. I say again that the underlying conceptions have close connection, but the word "mind" in our text refers to the understanding, the intelligence, and that not as capacity, but as consciousness. The mind of Christ here is not that instrument which enabled Him to apprehend, but the apprehension which resulted from the exercise of that instrument. The mind of Christ here refers to the whole knowledge of Christ as it produced emotion or feeling in Christ and resulted in definite choice of the will, not only the capacity for thinking, but the thought; not only the capacity for feeling, but the feeling resulting from the thought; not only the capacity for volition, but the definite choice made on the basis of emotion proceeding out of perfect knowledge. To summarize, the declaration here is that we have the knowledge of Christ, His consequent feeling, and His resultant will.

Passing, then, from that which is thus most technical, and yet most important, we will endeavor to understand the conception which is suggested by this pregnant phrase: "The mind of Christ." Here we must first remind ourselves of the limitation of our consideration and of its unlimited inclusiveness.

First, its limitation. The conception is limited, and it was the limitation which caused the Greek philosopher to call the Christian philosophy "foolishness." That view of the Christian philosophy grew out of the fact that in all the presentation of that philosophy by apostles, evangelists, and prophets there was a clearly marked limitation. The limit of consideration is human failure. The knowledge of Christ, His emotion, His will, are seen only in relation to human failure; wisdom is conceived of only as it affects human failure. Consequently, the supreme sign and symbol of the Christian wisdom is the Cross of Jesus Christ. This is our limitation. When we quietly consider this phrase, and begin to think what the conception is, what is connoted by this wonderful bringing together of simple words, "The mind of Christ," we are compelled to remember that we can think only within this limited sphere of human failure.

Yet, finally, it is unlimited, for this central fact affects and includes all things, and the whole concept of Christian wisdom concerning human failure has at its heart a great belief that failure may be set right, and emerging out of that belief, we see the possibility of the full realization of the divine ideal, and so, at last, we discover that the Christian philosophy affects all the facts of the universe. Was it not that profound conviction which moved the apostle when he wrote to the Colossians words which I venture to say to this day are full of glorious mystery, suffused with suggestions we hardly dare believe - when he said that Christ is to reconcile all things to Himself, not only things on the earth, but things in the heavens?

What, then, was the mind of Christ as finally revealed by the Cross? If the consideration is limited in the way I have suggested, it is yet so vast that there is the greatest difficulty in speaking of it, as there is initial difficulty in thinking of it. I shall attempt to speak only from the standpoint of personal apprehension and realization, for there must inevitably be infinitely more in the suggestion of the phrase than I have yet understood.

As I think of the mind of Christ, I find three supreme facts therein. First, there was the unfailing and undying sense of the beauty of holiness; second, there was the forever undisturbed conviction of the possibilities of all lost things, and, finally, there was the supreme and always victorious conviction of the glory of the work of realizing lost things, even at infinite cost, in order to establish the beauty which is the outcome of holiness.

In the mind of Christ - His outlook on things, what He thought of things, His conception of them - I find, first, the fact of His consciousness - and I borrow the phrase from the old Hebrew Scriptures because of its exquisite delicacy - of "the beauty of holiness." First of all, Christ knew God, had perfect knowledge of Him. It was out of that knowledge that there came His tremendous word on one occasion: "This is life eternal, to know Thee, the only true God." He had that knowledge, and, consequently, all things were viewed in their relationship to God. He never thought of man as separate. He saw the whole universe related to God. He knew God, and He saw everything in its relation to God. Therefore, He knew that the secret of beauty in flower and bird and man was holiness, and that the issue of holiness is always beauty. In Himself, wherever He has been understood and yielded to, He has proved Himself to be the fountainhead and inspiration of everything that is truly beautiful, and that because He lived in perpetual relationship to the God of Whom a prophet in a high ecstatic moment of vision said, "How great is His goodness, how great is His beauty!" He realized through all His thinking, never forgetting it, always declaring it, that only holiness is beautiful, that beauty is always holy, that at the heart and center of everything fair and beautiful in the universe is God. From the grasses that deck the field with beauty to the souls of men that worship in the high and holy place the reason of beauty is holiness, adjustment to the Divine will, articulation with the Divine thought, correspondence with the Divine character. The mind of Christ was, first of all, the perfect understanding of the relation of beauty to holiness. That was evidenced in all His living, in all His teaching, but supremely in the Cross.

Everything of refinement today in human hearts and lives has come from that Cross, that Cross in which He first, amid its shame and vulgarity, did vindicate the holiness of God, and, consequently, that Cross through which He was able to give to men a life that permeates their thinking and their acting, and that through every succeeding age will blossom into beauty, the beauty of holiness.

All this may be described merely as Christ's high idealism, His acceptation of all the things that are highest and best; but when He came into the world, what did He find? Beauty everywhere spoiled, because everywhere holiness was violated. Now, I inquire, how will this Man of such high and wonderful ideals look on such a world as this? The answer is that of the New Testament. He looked on the world, believing always in the possibility of restoring, renewing, regenerating, re-creating everything on which His eyes rested. As I said concerning His vision of the beauty of Holiness, that He knew God, so now I say concerning His conviction of the possibility of lost things, that He knew men. In a moment of rare insight John the Evangelist and apostle, the lover of the Lord, wrote these words concerning our Lord: He needed not that any should tell Him what was in man, for He knew man. A great generic declaration, not merely that He knew individual men, though that also was true, but that He knew humanity. In all our Lord's relationship with men He treated man as supreme in the universe; according to the conception of our Lord and Master, everything was beneath man in the scale of being. He believed that man, in spite of all that He saw in man of failure and ugliness and depravity and ruin, was capable of being redeemed, was yet worth dying for. From that standpoint if from no other, the Cross of Jesus Christ forevermore flings the light of hope across all human darkness, and writes hope on the face of the most brutalized countenance that my eyes have ever seen. For such a man also Christ died, and His dying was the outcome of His conception of the possibility of lost things.

In which is involved what I state separately. The final thing here in this wonderful mind of Christ was that He not only knew the beauty of holiness and forever acted on it, not only believed in the salvability of humanity and the possible restoration of all lost things; but that He considered that a self-emptying, which involved in it the unutterable and unfathomable darkness of the Cross and Death, was, nevertheless, the highest glory that could be granted unto Him and unto all who will come into association with Him. The glory of reclaiming lost things was the master inspiration of His mind in all His pathway through this world of ours. He emptied Himself! Inevitably, the words must be quoted here. Why? It was an action of mind growing out of a mind which ever conceived the connection between beauty and holiness, which believed in the salvability of the lost, which considered no suffering too great that results in such saving. The master passion of His heart, then, was to glorify God in saving man, to realize the beauty that is conditioned by holiness, in the desert, in the barren soil, where the briars and weeds are, to realize the glory of the rose and the myrtle tree. In order to do this He counted it all glory to suffer. He was crowned with glory and honor, says the inspired apostolic writer, that He might taste death for every man. The crown of glory and honor was not that of His sinlessness, nor of His ideals; it was the high and holy authority which He received from His Father to lay down His life, that He might take it again on behalf of the lost.

Reverently we turn from that principal thought to the declaration of the text. The Church of God is the depository of the mind of Christ. "We have the mind of Christ." The statement gives us pause. We are a little afraid, and we begin to look around and wonder. I ask you to postpone all such halting and all such inquiry - perfectly right and proper and necessary presently - and to consider the declaration in itself. The Church of God has the mind of Christ; she thinks with Christ; the measure in which she does so is the measure in which she also feels with Christ; and the measure in which she is true to her thinking with Christ, and her feeling with Christ, is the measure in which she chooses with Christ. The Church of God has the capacity to see with Christ, to feel with Christ, to choose with Christ. This is true, not only as to capacity, but as to consciousness. The Church of God knows what Christ knows: the beauty of holiness. She feels what Christ feels: the possibility of the lost. She wills with Christ: to suffer in order to save.

The Church knows the beauty of holiness. Alas, and shame on us, that we do not always do the things we know. We know the beauty of holiness. The Church also feels the possibility of lost things. In spite of its theology, the whole Church knows and feels the possibility of lost things. And, again, the Church chooses, in the measure in which she really is true to her Lord, the glory of the Cross to rescue man, not His Cross only - His Cross supremely - but her own cross, in fellowship with His sufferings, in making up that which is behindhand in His suffering. The Church expresses the mind of Christ not when she asserts, I am rich and increased in goods and have need of nothing, but when she is out in the wilderness, seeking the lost, pouring out her life blood in the business of bringing the wounded and the bruised and the spiritually halt to spiritual life.

I am perfectly well aware that it may be objected today that all this is so ideally, but not actually. I reply it is actually so, if not actively; and it is actively so whenever the Church is truly loyal to her deepest life.

Disloyalty to these truths presently destroys the capacity for them, and there is such a thing as cutting out the fruitless branch that it may be burned with fire because it is fruitless. If we come from the catholic outlook to the individual, the question is, Have I the mind of Christ? Do I see the beauty of holiness as He saw it? Do I believe, as He believed, in the possibility of saving the lost? Am I ready, as He was ready, to pour out my life in sacrifice, that the great work may be done? That is the test of Church membership, and there is none other. It is the final one for the true Church, the mystic Church, the Church whose membership is known to God.

If this be a fact how are we to account for it? The Church shares the life of Christ. Now, what are the elements in the Christ life? Light first, love also, liberty consequently. The Life of Christ being Light, His thought is of the beauty of holiness; His Life being Love, His feeling is of the possibility of lost things; His Life being Liberty, His choice is being bound on the Cross by love, that He may be the Saviour. The Church shares that life. This is the condition of entrance to the Church. A man becomes a church member, not by being baptized either in infancy or in adult years, not by the vote of a church meeting, not by writing his name on a roll. He becomes a member of the Church by being born again, by receiving the new life, the very Life of Christ. Consequently, if I am a member of the Church, then in me is this Life: light, which reveals the beauty of holiness; love, that brings conviction of the possibility of lost things; liberty, in which I am free from bondage, that I may be bound with Christ to the altar of sacrifice on behalf of others.

This is so, moreover, because the Church, thus sharing the Life of Christ, is ever taught by the Spirit, by Whom her members are born into her most holy communion, by Whom she is always indwelt, and Whose one mission is to reveal and realize the things of Christ. So we have the mind of Christ.

Finally, I will indicate lines of consideration, rather than follow them, on the subject of the consequent responsibilities of the Church. These are threefold, and result from the facts we have been attempting to consider. The Church is responsible, first of all, for continuing to proclaim by her doctrine and her conduct Christ's ideal, the ideal of the beauty of holiness. The Church is responsible for continuing consistently to announce His confidence, and to act in accordance therewith in the salvability of lost things. The Church is responsible, finally, for being His instrument to express through her activity His activity, the activity of sacrificial service.

I say the Church is responsible, first, for proclaiming His ideal of truth as the foundation of all order, of justice as the law of life, of righteousness as the one strength of peace. The Church cannot neglect these fundamental matters. The Church can never consent that in the interest of freedom from suffering, in the interest of the cessation of conflict, these things should be denied. In proportion as she is true to the mind of her Lord, the Church of God stands for truth and justice and righteousness.

But the Church is also called on to announce our Lord's confidence in the salvability of the lost. She must declare the possibility of the emergence of a new order whenever humanity is plunged in such a cataclysm as that in which we are today involved. In the midst of an hour when it seems as if ideals were gone, hopes were lost, and all the progress of centuries was being destroyed in blood and fire and vapor of smoke, what is the Church to do? She is to declare that these very things, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke, are the signs of the day of the Lord. She is to declare that out of chaos cosmos must come. By her sacred and solemn ministry she is called on to lift her anthem in the day of defeat to declare

That cannot end worst which began best,

Though a wide compass first be fetched.

She is called on to

Argue not

Against Heaven's hand or will, nor bate a jot

Of heart or hope; but still bear up and steer

Right onward. That is the Christian message.

The Christian Church is to declare anew the hopefulness of Christ, that out of the worst must come at last the realization of the highest and the best.

The Church is called on to express our Lord's activity. That activity is self-emptying, ceaseless service forevermore made intense and powerful by the element of sacrifice. The Lord was concerned not only about the salvation of a man's soul, He was also concerned about opening blind eyes, and giving steadiness to palsied limbs, and comforting broken hearts. The Church of God is called on supremely to fulfill that function. I thank God for the measure in which the Church is doing that work today, and for the measure in which the whole nation, as beyond the Church, is learning the lesson of the Church and is doing that work. For some of us just now the mind of Christ is revealed in bandages, and in visiting the fatherless and orphans. Oh, dear Christian woman, do not undervalue your service as, with smiling face and cheery words, you pass from bed to bed in a hospital. That is Christian service.

In conclusion, the supreme matter of the moment for those who have the mind of Christ is that they shall bear testimony to holiness as right relation to God, and of holiness as the one and only condition of beauty. Not by the victory won by the sword will beauty be re-established. That is for the moment necessary with a ghastly necessity; but unless spiritual idealism shall go beyond it, and men everywhere shall see that not by victories won over each other, not by policies arranged as between each other, but by restored relation to God, there can be no beauty. The new internationalism may be as ghastly as the old, unless it is the outcome of relating men to God. The work of the Church is to insist on that, and on the possibility of realization in spite of the darkest outlook. Therefore, the Church is to say that nothing which is salvable is to be destroyed, nothing that can be saved must be destroyed.

The Christian Church has also to teach men the glory of working toward the end of saving the things that may be saved. And because we want to see the saving of things that may be saved, peace must be on the basis of righteousness, and in its making the element of sacrifice must be included. Finally, mark this word, this apostolic word - mark it well and consider it in all planning and arranging. The rulers of this world who know not this wisdom will come to nought; but the rulers of the world who learn this wisdom, this mind of Christ, will come to victory, and the victory shall be that of the beauty of holiness.