**WESTMINSTER PULPIT SERIES 11 (UNPUBLISHED, PREACHED IN 1907) - THE PREACHING OF G. CAMPBELL MORGAN**

**04. CHRIST AND PHILIP by G. CAMPBELL MORGAN**

*"On the morrow He was minded to go forth into Galilee, and He findeth Philip; and Jesus saith unto him, Follow Me."*

John 1:43

IT IS a significant fact that all we know of Philip is recorded by John. Matthew, Mark, and Luke place him in the list of the apostles and mention him nowhere else in their Gospel records. Luke again places him amongst the apostles in his account of the Pentecostal day and the outpouring. I am perfectly well aware that the argument from silence needs to be used with care; yet I suggest it to you (recognising, as we do, that these are human documents, even though there is another quality and quantity, that of Divine inspiration) that Philip did not impress Matthew, Mark, or Luke.

John had wonderful eyes for his Lord, and saw that his Lord was wonderfully interested in Philip. Though Matthew, Mark and Luke were not impressed by Philip, Jesus was. He thought it worthwhile to do a great deal for him.

Now all I have been saying indicates one of the first things about Philip that we should notice. He was not an impressive man. Let us pass in review the incidents recorded about him. First we have the account of how Jesus found him and called him. We are not told that he followed. He certainly did, for out of a full heart he said to Nathanael, "Him of Whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, we have found."

The next time we see Philip is in the mountain with Jesus, when the multitudes were gathered about Him. Christ looking upon them was moved with compassion for them, and determined to feed them. Suddenly He looked at Philip and said, "Whence are we to buy bread, that these may eat?" Philip did not answer Him. He made a reply but he did not answer Him. Jesus said "Whence are we to buy bread?" Philip replied in effect, it is no use discussing whence for we have not the wherewithal.

We next see him in Jerusalem in the closing days. Certain Greeks desired to see Jesus. They were on the outskirts of the crowd, and finding Philip they told him so. He found Andrew, and together they told Jesus. In response Christ declared that "The hour is come, that the Son of Man shall be glorified," and then went on to describe the hour. He did not mean for a moment that the fact of the coming of the Greeks created the hour of glorification. The hour of His glorification was the hour of His approaching Cross. "Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit."

We see him again in the upper room when Christ was delivering those wonderful paschal discourses to His disciples. He was one of the interrupters. Peter was the first, then Thomas, then Philip, and presently Jude. They all disturbed Jesus, and yet none of them disturbed Him. By that I mean that if you watch the process of the discourse it is never broken in upon. He never rebuked inquiry or interruption, but catching up the thought of the questioners continued His teaching. He had declared to them that they had seen the Father, when Philip broke in and said, "Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us." It was the language of incredulity and of desire. Christ answered him by rebuke, explanation, and appeal.

There are certain things which are perfectly evident as we follow the story. First, Philip was a devout man. When he had obeyed the call of Jesus he went to find his friend Nathanael, and that in itself is a revelation of the man. Show me your friend and I will tell you a good deal about yourself. Concerning Nathanael, Jesus said, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." Philip was his friend. Philip looked into the face of Jesus and said, "Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us," there was revealed the deepest thing in his life, "Shew us the Father." It may have meant, as some have held, that he was asking for some spectacular unveiling, such as had been granted to the men of the past. I care not whether he asked for a spectacular or a spiritual unveiling, what he wanted was to find God and to find Him to demonstration. The emphasis is on the word "Shew." Not that he, did not believe in the Father; but that he would see Him, he would have proved to demonstration the fact of the Father. "Shew us the Father," unveil Him, "and it sufficeth." That tells the story of desire, of hunger, of restlessness, Philip was a devout man, His friendship proves it. His acquaintance with the religious literature of his people demonstrates it. The passionate cry of his heart makes it absolutely certain.

Yes, but Philip was a practical man. It is evident from his reply to Nathanael. Nathanael asked, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip replied, "Come and see." Nothing could be more practical than that. It was a fine answer. Test your theory by the actual facts of experience. You have a theory, Nathanael, that no good thing can come out of Nazareth. I have no time to waste debating theories, "Come and see." It is the invitation of an intensely practical man. So is his reply to our Lord's inquiry concerning the bread. Its limitation and imperfection I am not now considering. A great multitude of people were gathered together. Christ, with no visible means of supplying their need, said to Philip, "Whence are we to buy bread?" In a moment the mathematician was manifest. He had worked it all out. I am inclined to think from the immediateness of the response that he had been calculating before the question was asked. "Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one may take a little." Nothing else. No answer to the question, Where can we buy. It is as though Philip had said, Why waste time asking where, when if the where were near we could not purchase. We lack the means. Again when the Greeks came, he was not sure how Jesus would receive them. He did not know whether He was open to this particular interview. He consulted with Andrew. In that consultation the same thing is manifest, he was practical.

We have not yet seen the simplest thing, and that which is more observable in our study of this character than anything else. This is it. Philip was a slow man. Christ had to find him. He was not abreast of the movements of his own time. Andrew, unobtrusive, was nevertheless the intimate friend of the prophet. Philip had to be found.

When he said to Nathanael, "Come and see," there is not only evidence of the practical man, but also of the slow man who could not argue. His slowness is seen, moreover, in the way our Lord dealt with him. His answer about money reveals the fact that he had not yet seen the power of his Lord. Andrew almost immediately after made a venture of faith, not a very great one, but one that went further than Philip, "There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two fishes; but what are these among so many?" His faith was halting, but it was more venturesome than Philip's. He was slow to see his Lord, slow to know His power, to catch the meaning of His question. There are some people who, if you ask them a question indirectly, arrive in a moment at a conclusion. 'Philip,' said Jesus, 'where shall we find bread for these people?' They were far away from any place where bread could be bought, and to many a man there would have been in the question of Christ a suggestion which would have enabled him to see that Christ had some intention concerning these people; but this slow man takes it practically, sums up the cost of providing each with a little and declares the result. He is slow to observe. This was supremely manifest when he said to Jesus, "Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us." "Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know Me, Philip?" He had lived and walked with Jesus without apprehending the meaning of His teaching, or comprehending the marvel of His personality. Now you are not surprised that Matthew, Mark, and Luke were not impressed, and that there is no story of him in either of their gospels. He would not have impressed me. He is here tonight, in this house, and I am quite content to preach to him and him alone if there be only one such. I expect there are many slow men, men whom apostles even think it not worthwhile to think of or care for, lacking brilliance, lacking insight; very practical, awkwardly practical; devout, but with no enthusiasm, quiet, slow, humdrum, commonplace men. They never impress anybody but the One Who has eyes to see the loveliness which other eyes can never see. Such was Philip.

Now consider the Master's method with this man. First, He finds him. "He was minded to go forth into Galilee, and He findeth Philip." He was the first disciple of whom we are told in the gospel that Jesus deliberately set about finding him. The story does not suggest an incidental haphazard meeting with a man. He knew him. To Nathanael Jesus said, "When thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee." That was true also of Philip. Christ knew him, knew where he was, knew that he was too slow a man to be in that inner circle of John's disciples. He went after him. "He findeth Philip" of set purpose, of intimate knowledge, and of definite intention.

Notice the next step. He called him. This is the first occasion on which Christ used, so far as the records reveal, that all-inclusive formula which was so often afterwards upon His lips, "Follow Me." It was a call to surrender and a call to obedience. He found this slow man, and He laid upon him the word that indicated the necessity for his surrender and the necessity for his obedience. What is the next thing in order? Jesus sent him out as an apostle, this slow man! On what errand? To represent Him, to carry His message to his own people. When the twelve were first sent out they were forbidden to go to Samaria, or outside the borders of their own national life. Philip was one of those sent out under that first commission, He was sent again under the great commission which overstepped the boundaries of Israel's national life and included Samaria and the uttermost part of the earth. Dwell carefully upon Christ's method with him as revealed upon the mountain. Christ arrested him by asking him, "Whence are we to buy bread?" He challenged him so as to reveal his mind and its working. Then what? There was no other word spoken. Put the work by the side of the word and see what Christ was doing for Philip. I am not saying that the whole miracle was worked for Philip, but it had a peculiar value for him. There had never entered into his slow imagination the idea that Jesus Christ could possibly feed five thousand people with anything less than two hundred pennyworth of bread. Christ did not argue with him. He asked His question. He gained a reply, and then wrought before his awakening and astonished eyes that wonderful miracle of His power. He showed His ability to do without the two hundred pennyworth of bread that Philip thought necessary to give the crowd a little, and taking five loaves and two fishes he broke and fed the crowd, not with Philip's little out of Philip's two hundred pennyworth of bread, but with sufficiency out of the boy's five loaves and two fishes. Think how that manifestation of power led Philip a little further, the slow soul - and remember in passing, that the slow man never loses the thing he really knows. When the vision breaks it abides for all time. He is very slow in arriving, but when, patiently led and instructed, he comes to vision he never loses it. The quicker man will forget, but the slower man having learned will retain. That day Philip came a little further in his understanding of the Christ.

Look once again at Philip in that hour when he introduced the Greeks to Jesus. I know there are differing interpretations of that story. I must leave you to study it for yourselves. I believe personally that Jesus never gave Himself to those Greeks. I read at the end of the story that "He departed and hid Himself from them," and I believe that all the things He said between were said to those who were already gathered. I do not say that the Greeks did not hear Him, but I do not believe He granted them a personal interview. See how strange his answer was. "Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit. He that loveth his life loseth it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow Me." Did you ever hear stranger things said in answer to such a request? Two disciples came to their Lord and said, Here are Greeks desiring to see Thee, and He said, "Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die." If a man wants to see Me he must come the way I am going. I am going by the way of death into larger life. The ultimate meaning of My presence and mission is that life must be last in order to be won. "Now is My soul troubled." I have come to the hour of My glorification, but I have come to the hour of the sacrificial death which precedes my glorification. He said, in effect, to the astonishment of this slow man, The Greeks cannot see Me. No man can see Me who stands outside My human personality and asks Me questions. I am going through death into life. If the Greeks would see Me they must come My way, as you, Philip, must come My way. I am not interested now, interesting as the subject is, in the reply as it affected the Greeks. I am thinking of this man Philip. He had seen his Master's power as He fed a multitude out of comparatively nothing. Now he saw his Master's power to die in order to live.

Once again, Jesus was talking to His own and said, "If ye had known Me ye would have known My Father; from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him. Now mark very carefully what Philip had seen. He had found the Messiah and had followed Him. He had been sent on His errands with Nathanael. He had seen Him work a wonder in the midst of the multitude and had learned His power. He had seen Him consenting to the death that troubled His soul, and yet triumphing in the midst of the consenting. Now in the upper room, when the walls of circumstance are closing about Him, when it is perfectly evident that the death to which He has consented is upon Him, Philip heard Him say, "If ye had known Me ye would have known the Father from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him." The slow man breaks out into protest, and declares at last the profoundest thing in him, "Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us." For once the slow man was compelled to an outburst. What did Christ do? He had been working for that, revealing Himself step by step, line upon line, precept upon precept. At last He had drawn from the man a protest of sincere desire and honest unbelief. Immediately He looked at him and said, "Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." It was the superlative and final claim. "How sayest thou, Shew us the Father?" It was the great appeal of Jesus to this slow man. "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I say unto you I speak not from Myself; but the Father abiding in Me doeth His works. Believe Me." That is the great appeal to Philip and to all men, "Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me." Take My word for it Philip, take My word, "Believe Me ... or else believe: Me for the very works' sake." This is a revelation of Christ's patience with the slowest of slow men. Philip said never a word, but I think the slow man saw God that day. I think He was satisfied. There is a man here who if he give himself to Christ will blaze it abroad tomorrow. Thank God for that man. There is another man who will not, but the great revelation and the great regeneration will change him and transform him, and by and bye we shall see it all in his life. Philip was a slow man who never went into ecstasies, but he saw God that day and found rest.

What was the last thing Christ did for this man? In the upper room on the day of Pentecost He poured out the Spirit upon him also, and so equipped him for all the work that lay before him, in identification with Himself, and in union with his fellow believers. These are the initial things from beginning to end, mark the stages of them well. He found him, called him, sent him, proved him, revealed to him His wonder-working power, instructed him, and led him into the realm of His Cross, rebuked him, revealed God to him, and equipped him by baptising him with the Spirit. He went out of His way to find the slow man who never impressed Matthew, Mark or Luke, and in infinite patience He wrought in him perfectly, until he also was adorned with the tongue of fire, driven by the afflatus of the Holy Ghost.

What else? What were the issues of Christ's method with this man? First, he was obedient. Christ said, "Follow Me," and he went. Immediately - and never forget this, because it is always so in the New Testament story - he found Nathanael. New Testament discipleship is not merely sitting at the feet and learning. It also and always includes going and telling. The moment a soul is brought into living union with the Christ the message is passed on, it may not be in public proclamation, God does not call all men to preach in that sense of the word, but someone is told. It may not be with the thrill and excitement of great passion and rapture, but in some quiet hour in communion with a friend, the man will say, Nathanael, we have found Him of Whom we have often spoken, of Whom Moses and the prophets wrote. Obedience, then testimony.

What was the ultimate issue? A great silence. Never a word about him. I take up the Acts of the Apostles and read, and find his name in the company of the twelve but never again. Do not confuse him with Philip the evangelist. He is quite a different person. We have been very apt to do that, but the apostle is never mentioned again. A great silence as to words and as to works. Do I never find him again in the Bible? Yes, I find him again. I pass on through the stories and through the instructive letters and I come to the vision of the man who has told us so much about Philip, and I read, "The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb," and Philip's name is one, flashing upon the glory of the foundations of the city of God. But he did not preach on the day of Pentecost. There are no tabulated statistics of his converts. He did not even write an epistle so short as Jude's. No, he passed out of sight. He had seen the Father and it had sufficed him. He did his work. What was it? I do not know.

He is among the majority and not the minority. It is only the minority who have their work announced. They are to be pitied, believe me. There is no deadlier peril than publicity. But on the other hand there is nothing more heroic than commonplace and hidden service. That is what Philip went to. No crowd listened to his preaching so far as we know. Paul never withstood him to the face because he was to be blamed. He was a different type of man to Peter. No great letter, magnificent in argument, stately in doctrine, beautiful in vision. What became of him? Never mind the details! Observe the city of God. He did his work, he was faithful to his King, and his name flashes upon the glory of the foundations.

My message tonight is to the slow man. You need not be anxious. This is a very fitting subject for a night when there is no after meeting. You are not in the inner circle of the prophet's friends. Even Andrew has not found you. I am here tonight to tell you that Christ is minded to come your way. If you will but listen you will hear a voice in your inner heart, saying, "Follow Me." He thinks you are worthwhile. If you will obey Him, you will always be slow, and He will always be patient. Your biography will never be written, but your name can be written on some part of the city if you are a workman true to your opportunity. "Follow," that is the word. Oh, you say, I did not think these things were for me. I am sure Peter needed this. I am quite sure Andrew was worth looking after, but I do not think it is for me. Yes, "He was minded to go forth into Galilee, and he findeth Philip." Is that you? Will you follow Him? Philip did not stay wondering, he went. He was slow, but he was sure. Be sure, slow man. Follow, and He will never, never give you up, until He has revealed all the truth to you, and set you in your place in the eternal habitation.