

# The G. Campbell Morgan Archive

---

[www.gcampbellmorgan.com](http://www.gcampbellmorgan.com)

## XII. The Disciple in Glory

How little we know, comparatively, of the hereafter. "Life and incorruption have been brought to light" in the Gospel of Jesus, and death has been transformed from a foe to a friend, but the Revelation is characterized by its silence with regard to the future rather than by its declarations. It is as though God would not draw men toward righteousness either by threatened punishment, or promised reward. Enough, however, has been said to give us to understand the terrors of being lost, and the blessedness of being saved.

Of the occupation of the disciple of Jesus in that life that lies beyond, more has been said than appears on the surface. There is one passage of Scripture which is constantly being half-quoted, or quoted from the Old Testament, when surely we should quote it with Paul's expository word. Let us examine this. (Is. lxiv. 4). "For since the beginning of the world, men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside Thee, what He hath prepared for him that waiteth for Him." Now to whatever that may refer, Paul writing to the Corinthians (I. ii. 9, 10) distinctly goes on to say that these hidden things are revealed to us by the Spirit, and yet this quotation is used almost invariably to prove that we can know nothing of the future of the blessed. Again, let closer attention be given to these passages and the correct and much more beautiful rendering of the Revised Version be accepted, and it will at once be discovered that there is no reference whatever either by Isaiah, or by Paul's use of Isaiah's words to the future life. Both are referring to the wonders of the wonder-working God in the progress of events which men could not perceive or hear, save by the spirit of God, who revealed them in due time to those who waited for Him. That men did not see the working of God in history, witness the attitude of the disciples of Jesus, until the Holy Spirit came and illuminated that history. This is the broad principle of the teaching of the passages, and it may be applied to the case now under consideration. To the casual, unenlightened reader the Scripture says very little of the future. To the Spirit-taught it says far more than we can comprehend, and the purpose of this chapter is to indicate the lines of that teaching rather than to attempt to exhaust the great theme. In our first ten divisions we have dealt with the disciple in his probationary life. That is by far, and of necessity, the smaller part of his existence. Probation is of the greatest importance, but it ever presupposes something far more important stretching out beyond, and the great fact of discipleship is, that it is a process of preparation of one who is not a citizen of the earth, of one whose home and place of service lie out beyond the shadows that seem to bound the vision today. In our last chapter we have seen him meeting the Master at the end of probation. May we now close this study by very reverently looking within the veil, so far as it has been lifted, at the occupation and final destiny of those, who through all this gracious discipline have been so patiently trained by the greatest of all, nay, the only Teacher of humanity.

The abolishing of death makes it perfectly certain that there can be no unconscious gap in the existence of the believer. What we have too constantly spoken of as death, by virtue of its being the meeting of the disciple and his Lord — without the limitations of material trammels, which are always in some sense a clog to the development of the Spirit life — in that state where faith is lost in sight, and hope in full fruition dies, becomes clearer, fuller consciousness. The phrases of the New Testament which describe that state give us most suggestive and valuable teaching concerning it. Let us take two of these, both from the writings of Paul.

I. II. Cor. v. 8. "Absent from the body .... at home with the Lord." The use of the phrase "at home," instead of the word "present" as in the authorized version, is necessary to ensure consistency of translation for the whole passage, as it is the same word translated "at home" in verse 6. What a perfect and beautiful thought of the first consciousness of the disciple in that larger life. "At home." The word analyzed conveys the idea of being among one's own people, and that is the true thought. We move in that gracious transition into the condition of being perfectly at rest in the Lord's presence. In all the high spiritual aspects of our life, we have been strangers here. There we shall be "at home." Here our relationships have been those of sojourners in tents, strangers, and our sense of the Lord's presence, blessed as it has been, compared to what it will be then, has been partial, limited. There we shall fit in to all the conditions toward which He has led us and for which He has trained us, and so there we shall first fully comprehend the meaning of much of the training of today. Oh the luxury of it. Only those who have been away from their earthly homes for awhile know how intensely sweet is the sense of being "at home" again. The one atmosphere in which there is freedom from the sense of disquietude and unrest. And yet more marvellous is the grace of it. The "at home" just beyond the shadows is "with the Lord." That I, who feared and shunned, and alas, slighted and contemned Him, am at last to be "at home" with Him passes all telling in its evidence of His great grace.

II. Phil. i. 23. "To depart, and be with Christ." This word to depart is undoubtedly used here in the sense of loosing a ship from its moorings, and so Tennyson repeated the Pauline conception when he wrote,

"And let there be no moaning of the bar  
When I put out to sea,  
And may there be no sadness of  
farewell When I embark."

What then is this embarking and unloosing? Do I drift into unconsciousness for a season? No, I am with Christ.

**1.** I hope to see my Pilot face to face When I have crossed the bar."

Note the immediateness of it. Dr. Moule says, "Not a space, but a mathematical line, divides the state of faith this side death from the state of sight that side." So then the first consciousness of the disciple in the New Life is that of the Master in clear and unclouded vision.

**2.** What then is the present condition and occupation of those who have departed? Between the time of their leaving this scene, and the morning of the Resurrection there is an interval. It is an interval of incompleteness, for as yet they have not received their Resurrection bodies. We have already seen that this interval is spent in a closer connection with, and clearer vision of Christ. The nature of the occupation is the subject of our consideration now. In the closing words of Hebrews xi. (verses 39, 40), a great principle is declared with regard to those who have gone before. Its application by the writer of this Epistle is to that great company of the heroes and heroines of faith of whom he has been speaking. It may also safely be applied to all those who in this Christian Era have fallen on sleep or will do so. "That apart from us they should not be made perfect." In this application of the passage we are to understand that the perfecting of the disciples will only be when the Lord gathers to Himself the whole company of them. The occupation therefore of those who thus wait, in blessedness, for the end of the age, and the gathering into the glory of the whole Church of Christ may be gathered by a line of reasoning to the correctness of which Scripture itself bears testimony.

They are closer to Christ, and therefore their understanding of His work and service must be much clearer. This better knowledge must necessarily produce a deeper sympathy. The first propulsion of the Christ-life in the soul of the regenerate on earth was a movement of compassion toward the souls for whom He died, and an act of service on their behalf in some definite form or other. Now that their possession by Christ is so much more complete, it surely follows that their love for those whom He so wondrously loves, is far more intense. Can we possibly think of them as having this deeper love and yet being inactive ? Assuredly not. The things that interest and occupy Him, must interest and occupy them supremely ; and so we can only think of them as raised into a region of higher service within the same great redemptive circle in which they moved while still on the earth. I give it as my firm conviction that all our loved ones gone before, are serving the cause of the work and purpose of God among men in a better way than they ever did while sojourners here below. Does not this view light up for us many dark events in our own lives ? Those, whom God has wondrously blessed here, and then suddenly called away just when we were feeling they could not be spared, have not ceased their work as we thought, but have been promoted to some higher place and work. To this view of the occupation of the departed that word of (Rev. xiv. 13) agrees. " That they may rest from their labors ; for their works follow with them." The immediate application is to the number of the saints who will suffer martyrdom in a subsequent era, but the truth has a present application as well, and the inner teaching may perhaps best be gathered by a paraphrase, the result of a careful analysis of the words actually used: " They rest from that toil which is painful and reduces the strength, but their works, their activities, accompany them." That is to say their activity does not cease, but only that form of it which brings weariness and suffering, and so we think of beloved servants of God, singers, teachers, preachers, suddenly, and to all human seeming prematurely removed from earth, no longer as beyond the province of redemptive service, but as more than ever fully occupied in clearer light and fuller opportunity.

**3.** This condition of incompleteness, for them and for us, will end when "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, and the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first : then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air : and so shall we ever be with the Lord " (I. Thess. iv. 16, 17). It is there that the Church will be gathered into one complete and conscious whole,

"Some from earth, from glory some,  
Severed only Till He Come."

And so He will "present the Church to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing" (Eph. v. 27).

That will be an event of the utmost importance as we shall now see in its bearing on the future.

4. That surely is finality. No, everything lies beyond that in the vocation of the Church. All to that point in the history of individual disciples and of the whole Church has been preparatory. It is then that the Church is ready to begin her great mission in the purpose and counsel of God. The letter to the Ephesians is specially occupied in dealing with this great and stupendous fact. The first three chapters deal with the vocation in itself, and the remainder make application of the fact of that calling to all the detailed life of the believer in view thereof, while yet in this place of preparation and discipline. Let us then in concluding this study on Discipleship, very reverently read the words in the first three chapters of that Epistle which light up for us the great future. (Eph. i. 18). In this verse occurs a phrase full of suggestiveness, and leading to the statements which follow. "The riches of the glory of His inheritance in the Saints." That our inheritance is in Him, it is easy for us to understand, but we are at once arrested by the statement that He has an inheritance in us. And yet that is the fact. God has an inheritance in His people, and Paul's prayer is that these Ephesian Christians may have "the eyes of their heart enlightened, that they may know what is the hope of His calling, what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the Saints, and what the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe." The "calling" of God is the vocation of the Church. As the Church fulfils that vocation, God will enter into His inheritance in her. This will be realized by the power "which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead." In the paragraphs which follow, Paul proceeds to deal with the final purpose of God, and with the process by which this will be achieved. We are now interested only in that final purpose, in the fulfilling of which God will Himself possess His inheritance in His people, and so we take the three verses which declare it.

(Eph. ii. 7). "That in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." The phrase "in the ages to come" has reference to the ages of the Eternal future. What future dispensations there may be, and what the movement of the ages none can tell but God Himself. Whatever these may be, the Church is to be the medium of shewing forth therein "the riches of His grace." "When those ages are to learn the love of God's heart they are to do so by the testimony borne by the ransomed Church to His" kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." Our vocation then contains within it the mission of shewing to the ages yet unborn that love of God which He has exhibited to us in Jesus.

(Eph. iii. 10.) " . . . Now unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places might be made known through the Church the manifold wisdom of God."

This reveals another phase of vocation. The Church is to reveal to the unfallen intelligences, the principalities and powers of the heavenlies the manifold wisdom of God. These shining ones whose glories so far exceed anything of which we have dreamed, whose powers of comprehension are so wondrous, will only know through the revelation of the Church, in all its fulness the manifold wisdom of God. (Eph. iii. 21.) "Unto Him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations forever and ever." Briefly stated then, the vocation of the Church, beyond all the preparation of this life, beyond that intermediate state in which some now are, in that time when the Church shall be completed and complete, is to reveal the grace and wisdom of God to the beings of other dwelling places, the high and alien ones of the heavenlies, and that not to one age only, but to the ages of the ages as they are known only to the mind of God. In all eternity that great "Now" of God embracing our "past" and "future," there has been no such proof of the grace of His heart and the wisdom of His workings as that of the ransoming and uplifting in spotless purity of fallen man, and those so ransomed and uplifted are to be the witnesses to the great future of intelligence concerning wondrous and overwhelming truths. What an enormous range of possibility does this view of the Church's future open up before our vision. Our finite surroundings make it impossible for us to comprehend all the infinite spaces that appear only to us as blue sky, or darkling night. What worlds are there, what high forms of pure spirits, what spaces still beyond, and what yet deeper spheres of habitable places. Thought is bewildered at the daring of its own flight. Then what changes and movements among all these in the procession of the ages. Remember that to these worlds and these beings and these ages we are to be the messengers of the grace and wisdom and glory of God. In that view the future loses its sense of dread, and one looks on to the new opportunities for art, and music, and poetry, and above all perchance of preaching, that are coming to the ransomed ones when the discipline of time is merged into the fitness of eternity, with reverent and holy desire.

Some one may say that is pure imagining. Well it certainly is imagination well within the limit of the possibilities of these words of the apostle, who had been caught up into the third heaven and had seen things unutterable. Mark how he closes this section.

(Eph. iii. 20,21.) "Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him, be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations forever and ever."

So that the wildest flights of thought are far short of the possibilities of what God is able "to do."

This is but a faint glimpse then of the glory of which Paul said "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed to usward" (Rom. viii. 18), but it is enough to turn the heart of the disciple with fuller purpose of consecration to that Beloved One who with a perfect knowledge of that future, too splendid yet for our comprehension, is teaching and training us ever with that in view.

How better can we close this contemplation of discipleship, in its beginning, progress and consummation, than in the words of Paul to these Ephesians (iv. 1). "I therefore .... beseech you to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye were called."