

The Spirit in Relation to Unfallen Man

by G. Campbell Morgan

The sermon explores the relationship between the Spirit of God and man, highlighting the perfection and glory of man's original condition and the role of the Holy Spirit in ideal human life.

Scripture: Genesis 1:26

Topics: "The Role of the Holy Spirit", "Restoration of Humanity"

Description

G. Campbell Morgan explores the relationship between the Spirit of God and unfallen man, emphasizing that humanity's current state is a result of sin, which has obscured the original divine intention for man. He highlights that while Jesus Christ embodies the fulfillment of God's ideal for humanity, the full realization of this ideal awaits in the future. Morgan discusses the creation of man, his dominion, and the essential role of the Holy Spirit in bestowing life and consciousness, asserting that true understanding of humanity can only be found in Christ. He concludes that the Spirit's work is vital for restoring humanity to its intended glory, and that the ultimate goal is a regenerated humanity reflecting God's image.

Transcript

A TOO constant contemplation of man as he is, has resulted in failure to appreciate his original condition. Man to-day, even at his best, does not realize the full Divine intention. The whole race is suffering from the sin of the past; limitation is to be found everywhere; yet man has endeavoured to build up out of the broken fragments of the Divine ideal, an ideal for himself.

In the answer to the Psalmist's question, What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that Thou visitest him? the terms in which man is spoken of are not those of limitation, but those which reveal the perfection of the Divine ideal.

For Thou hast made him but little lower than God,

And crownest him with glory and honour.

Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands;

Thou hast put all things under his feet:

All sheep and oxen, Yea, and the beasts of the field;

The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea,

Whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.

That picture is not fulfilled in the experience of any human being in the present times. There is little about man to suggest that he is but little lower than God-- little of the crowning with glory and honour that the Psalmist speaks of; and man has in a large measure lost his dominion. The animal creation is tamed in part; but by far the greater part of it is outside the dominion and the authority of man. The writer of the Letter to the Hebrews claims a partial fulfilment of that ideal of man in the Person of Jesus Christ. He claims the ultimate fulfilment of the whole ideal in the Person and through the work of Christ; but he shows that the larger fulfilment waits for a while. After quoting the Psalm, he proceeds to say: But now we see not yet all things subjected to Him. But we behold Him Who hath been made a little lower than the angels, even Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour. He declares that in the Person of Christ, two of the notes of ideal manhood have been realized: first, made a little lower than the angels; secondly, crowned with glory and honour. But he has already said, We see not yet all things subjected to Him--much lies in the future for fulfilment; but this claiming of the fulfilment of the ideal of the Psalm in the Person of Christ suggests a line of consideration which it is profitable to follow. God's ideal Man and the relation the Spirit of God bears to that Man is discovered by a study of the Person of Christ.

The present enquiry, then, bears upon the ministry of the Spirit in the life of unfallen and ideal man. The consideration is necessarily limited to two examples --Adam and Jesus. The first is valuable in one respect only, as it reveals the essential glory of the creation of man. The life of Adam is not chronicled in detail; and there is therefore no certain knowledge of its character or duration. The relation existing between God's perfect man and the Holy Spirit can only be understood by a study of the life of Jesus.

There are two scriptures which lead into the very heart of the study.

Many persons Have a great difficulty about the second account of creation as given in the Book of Genesis. After the apparent completion of the story, at the close of the first chapter, there is a repetition in the second; and a casual observer may imagine that there is not merely repetition, but contradiction. As a matter of fact there is none. The second story is the complement of the first; it is the unfolding of a certain aspect of creation about which nothing was declared in the first. That reveals three facts:--

- i. That man was a result of counsel in the Godhead: Let us make man.
- ii. That he was created in the image of God.
- iii. That he was given dominion over a previous creation.

In the subsequent story there is an unfolding of his nature. Man is now shown as uniting in his own person the material with the spiritual, the earth with the heavens, the things that perish and pass with the things that abide for ever. God made man of the dust of the earth--a material basis--and breathed into him the breath of lives, thus creating a spiritual being. Through that inbreathing by God, the conscious side of man's nature was born, and he became a living soul!

The dust which was of the earth was devoid of self-consciousness. Man's power to enter into his new environment, his power to submit to the government under which he was placed, his power to enter into the new companionship, which completed the possibilities of his being--all these were the result of the inbreathing of the Breath of lives by God. Man is not man, apart from the direct ministry and sustaining

power of the Spirit of God. Everything that man is, in the essential facts of his being--everything which differentiates between a man and an animal--is due to this peculiar form of inbreathing, whereby man became a conscious soul.

In the illumination of the Breath of God man entered upon a perfect environment. The Garden had been planted by God; the earth had been created by God. Everything that surrounded man, in the moment of his generation, had been prepared by Divine wisdom and infinite tenderness. This being amid the Garden--looking upon the glory of its trees, its plants, its flowers, and all its varied life, comprehending and understanding the whole--is man; and in his powers of comprehension he is distinguished from all lower forms of being, and therein lies his chief glory. He entered thus into the beauty and the glory of his environment, by virtue of the fact that there had been breathed into him the Breath of lives. He was the offspring of God.

In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. The first meaning of this statement is that the living Word of God, the eternal Christ, is the Centre and Source of all life. But it also suggests that in man life was different from life anywhere else; in man life became light. There was life in the plant, and life in the lower animals; but when God inbreathed to man the Breath of lives, He bestowed a life in which lay the element of light. In man, creation first looked back into the face of God, and knew Him. No lower form of life knows God. In every flower which decks the sod, there is present the touch of God; but no flower knows it. In all life there are present the power and energy of God; all things live and move and have their being in Him; but apart from man, none are conscious of it. In man life became light, consciousness, knowingness. Man was created to look back into the face of God, and to know Him, to understand in some measure the mystery of His being. Man entered into the perfect environment of the Garden, knew it, appreciated it, and discovered God in it, because there had been inbreathed to him the Breath of lives.

Not only was this inbreathing of light upon his environment; it was, moreover, understanding for his occupation. He was to have dominion over the lower animals, to dress and to keep the Garden. He was able to do this through the inbreathing of the Spirit of life. The energy and the light for wise dominion were the energy and the light of God. The guidance necessary for the further development of the wonderful creation of the earth was provided by the inbreathing of that self-same Spirit.

Man entered not only upon perfect environment, with perfect and sufficient occupation, but he also came under perfect government. The Lord God commanded the man is the statement which marks the Divine sovereignty. Man understood and obeyed the law in the energy of that inbreathing of the Breath of life.

Not only did he enter into environment, occupation, and government, but also into companionship. God made woman to be his companion. He entered into that new relation which created and conditioned the whole social range of human life in the power of that same Breath of lives. When man is thus viewed from the standpoint of original intention as seen in the picture of Edenic beauty and power, it is evident that the natural is spiritual and the spiritual is natural, and that there is no single aspect of human life which is not under the government of the inspiring Spirit of God. Every part of man, the fact of his being, his power to touch his environment with appreciation, his power to follow a daily occupation, his power to submit to government, his power of social relationship and companionship)--all are made possible of highest realization by the great inbreathing of God, the work of the Spirit, whereby man becomes a living soul.

These are some of the suggestions of the glory of man, gathered from the creation story. They are no more than suggestions, because the story of sin follows quickly thereupon.

Passing over the intervening centuries, as contributing no perfect example of man, the daybreak of the race was reached in the advent of the second Man, Jesus. He was the final and perfect example of ideal human life. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. That is not only a declaration that life becomes light in men; it also claims that the life which is light in man had its most perfect outshining in the Person and character of Christ. It may be said of the Incarnate Word--In Him was life; and His life was the light of men. To know, what human life is. He must be known. To have seen Him as the disciples saw Him, was to have seen the perfection of human life in every one of its aspects. In His physical appearance, in His mental life, in His spiritual nature, He was a perfect unveiling of the glory of ideal Manhood.

The art of the great masters seems to have been dominated by a conception of the physical appearance of Jesus which was utterly false. He is represented as pale, thin, wan, emaciated. Perhaps Hoffmann alone has discovered the glory of the beautiful Christ, perfect in form and comeliness, perfect in beauty. Truly it is written of Him that His visage was so marred more than any man, but it was the marring of beauty, not of ugliness nor decrepitude. The marks of anguish were evident upon His face, and the lines of sorrow ploughed deeply into it; but when the young ruler met Him, fell before Him, and said Good Master,' the exclamation was most probably drawn from him by an overwhelming sense of the beauty and the majesty of the appearance of Christ. Before the surging sorrows of His public ministry rolled over His heart, there is very little room for doubt that He was the most perfectly lovely Man the world had ever gazed upon. Any other conception of Christ dishonours Him. In Him was life, and in Him the life was light; so that men might know, by looking at the Christ, all the beauty and all the glory of the Divine ideal.

This applies also to His mental culture. A sinless soul, living in communion with nature, would understand her to an extent which must be impossible for the sinful one, who attempted to grasp her inner teaching merely on the lines of ordinary study. The men of the synagogue said of Christ, when, after absence from Nazareth, He returned and talked with them: How knoweth this Man letters, having never learned? The emphasis of their question lay, not upon the spiritual teaching of Christ, but upon the illustrations He used, and upon His evident acquaintance with what was then spoken of as learning. It was not that they were overwhelmed by a sense of His spiritual insight; for, then as now, men knew that spiritual insight often belonged to those who had no learning. They were impressed by the beauty of His expression, the wealth of His illustration, and His evident familiarity with those things, to become acquainted with which, men gave themselves up to long courses of study. The mind of Christ was refined, cultured, and beautiful--not through the ordinary process by which limitation and sin endeavour to overcome their deficiencies, but by a pure response to a perfect ideal, and by the inspiring touch and revelation of the Spirit of God.

The relation which existed between this perfect Man of the Gospels and the Spirit, was of the closest. Christ's very existence as a Man was due to the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit. The whole of His perfect Being, spirit, soul, and body, was the creation of the Spirit of God. Therefore, every action of that body, every relation of the body to the mind, and of the mind to the spirit, all the inter-relations of His complex nature, were balanced within the spiritual Power that created them, and were conditioned for evermore by the suggestions, impulses, and energy of that Power.

As Christ passed through childhood and the earlier years of His life, and into those of His mature manhood, all were directed by the Spirit of God. Luke, writing of the time when He went down with His parents from the presentation in the Temple, declares that He advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men. Afterwards, in the course of His public ministry, Jesus said, Which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto his stature. Applying the philosophy of His teaching to His own growth, the fact is clear that His physical growth was the outcome of submission to Divine law, revealed by

the inspiration of the Spirit. It is also chronicled that He went down from the Temple with His parents, and was subject to them. That subjection being over, He came forth into public ministry, and with scathing, scorching denunciation testified against the men who excused themselves from caring for the needs of their parents, on the plea that their goods were Corban, or gifts devoted to God. He was angry with them because their action was contrary to Divine law. Subjection to His parents on His part had been a perpetual answer to a perpetual law, written in His heart by the finger of the Spirit of God, as He passed through His boyhood.

How perfectly He was devoted to the law of God as it had been given to His people! He studied it, meditated in it, and became so familiar with it, that when His public ministry began, He knew exactly what it had to teach. In obedience to that law He went up to His Jewish confirmation at the age of twelve, and took His place among the doctors, not, as it is so often represented, as a rude, precocious boy, trying to puzzle old men, but as a sweet boy-disciple, answering their questions with a lucidity which astonished them, and asking them, out of the working of His own pure mind, questions which were amazing, coming from One so youthful. When He returned to Nazareth, He took up the tools of His reputed father's craft, and mastered their use. Through long years He abode in that shop, working out the will of God, and revealing in every piece of carpentry the design and beauty and force of the inspiring Spirit, by Whom He was created and for evermore sustained.

As the week drew to a close, and the Sabbath came, He went as His custom was to the place of prayer, to worship God among His people, with His face toward Jerusalem.

All His life, in both its earlier years and maturer manhood, was conditioned in and by the Spirit, to Whose guidance and direction He never gave one single moment's slight.

Turning from these earlier years to the account of His public ministry, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John give the story of His anointing with the Spirit for the duties of that ministry. Immediately after the Anointing came the Temptation. Matthew, Mark, and Luke alike chronicle the fact that He was taken to that Temptation by the Spirit of God. When the Temptation was over, He entered upon the years spent for the most part before the gaze of the multitudes. Luke declares that He went to that ministry in the power of the Spirit. He wrought miracles during those three years; and in his sermon in the house of Cornelius, Peter declared that these also were performed through the presence with Him of the Holy Spirit: Jesus of Nazareth, how that God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power: Who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him.

When at last the years of public ministry were ended, and He went to the exodus of the Cross, He accomplished that in the same power, for He through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish unto God.

After the sojourn in the shades of darkness He rose again, as Peter declared, through the power and energy of the Spirit. Between His resurrection and ascension He sojourned for a while among His disciples; and during those days He taught them, organized them, gave them their definite instructions, and this He also did through the Holy Spirit, as Luke declared in the opening statements of his second treatise: The former treatise I made, O Theophilus, concerning all that Jesus began both to do and to teach, until the day in which He was received up, after that He had given commandment through the Holy Spirit unto the apostles whom He had chosen.

The story of the perfect Man of nineteen hundred years ago is the story of a human life, perpetually inspired and energized by the Holy Spirit of God. From birth, through growth, testing, and ministry, on to death and resurrection and the organizing of the apostolate, the whole is a perpetual and unbroken harmony-- a harmony created by the moving of the Wind, the Spirit of God, upon the instrument of a perfect human being.

From the glimpse of glory in the first creation, it was evident that creation was of the Spirit; and that the power by which man enters into a perfect environment and occupation, and submits to a perfect government, and continues in the joy of a perfect companionship, is the power of the Breath of lives. This is finally proved by the unfolding of the ideal in the life of Jesus of Nazareth. To know, then, what perfect humanity is, Christ must be known.

Every man's being, in all its complex wonders, exists by the creative energy of the Holy Spirit.

The expressions often used by Paul, the natural man and the spiritual man, were constantly placed in antithesis. He taught that the natural cannot comprehend the spiritual. A theologian's expressions must be understood in the sense in which he uses them, before his theology can be understood; and this is as true of Paul as of any other theologian. Whenever he spoke of the natural man, he intended to refer to man in the condition resulting from the sin of the race; and therefore, in the higher heights of vision, and in the larger, truer outlook upon humanity, he spoke on such occasions, not of the natural, but of the unnatural. Sin is not natural to man. Men are shapen in iniquity, and go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies; but the reason for this is that something unnatural has been introduced, which has poisoned every successive generation. The work of the natural Man Jesus is to restore unnatural things to the spiritual, which is the truly natural. No man has discovered the possibilities of his own being, no man understands the glory of his own life, until he has come to see that all he has within himself is of God, save the taint of sin, which has no right to be there, and for the putting away of which the perfect One went into the darkness of His Passion-baptism.

The full and proper use of all the powers of man is made in the energy of the Holy Spirit; and physical health lies within that realm. Here it is necessary to safeguard the position held, even at the cost of repetition. The subject of which this chapter treats is that of ideal man. Under the present order of disciplinary life, sickness is a veritable ministry of infinite love, not only for the sake of those who suffer, but of others, who through their suffering learn more of God; but the man who abides in the will of God, obeys the law of God, trusts himself wholly to the inspiration of the Spirit of God, that man will touch higher physical conditions than are possible to him apart from such living. That man cannot be compared with another man, because there are many different sets of laws to be considered in any such comparisons; but he may be compared with himself, and, doing this, it may assuredly be declared that, abiding within the realm of the Divine law, his life submitted to the law of the Divine Spirit, he will touch, by such submission and abiding, a higher realm of physical force and power than by any other law of life in which it is possible for him to live.

So also in the mental sphere. Everything that is pure and beautiful in poetry, art, music, and science is the direct outcome of the revealing Spirit of God. Men sometimes affirm that Shakespeare was inspired; and they are right,--by no means in the same sense in which the Bible is; but he was inspired nevertheless, and that by the Holy Spirit of God. All pure genius is inspired --not in the same degree as the Scriptures, because not for the same purpose, but by the same Person. All the heights of vision granted to the strong, pure poet, are created for his seeing. Wordsworth, for instance, because he was pure in heart, saw God.

All mental magnificence that is pure is an inspiration of the Spirit of God. There may be a prostitution of a Divine gift in this realm also; and a man upon whom God has bestowed the gift of vision, may abuse that gift, and debase it to the purposes of hell. The power to see, whether it be exercised in poetry, art, music, or research, is not born of evil, but is the child of heaven, the flaming, glorious proof of the touch of the Spirit of God upon the mind of man.

Given a man redeemed, regenerated, and wholly possessed by the Spirit, that man has the fullest entrance into all true life. The Divine ideal for man is that he should be spiritual, and that his spirituality should be realized by the surcharging of his whole being with the Spirit of God. That Spirit will turn all the forces of his life into the one direction of true worship. He will employ every power for that purpose for which it was created, and enable a man to worship in the beauty of holiness perpetually. In work and rest, through pathos and humour, by laughter and tears, will be shown, through the Spirit, the glories of creation; and thus God will be glorified in the full life of man.

How far even Christian people are as yet from the realization of this ideal I toward this the Spirit is working; and at the last there shall not be merely the two men out of all the years as examples of the ideal, but a regenerated humanity, brought into the presence of God by the work of the Saviour and of the Spirit, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing

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