**SERIES 04 (PREACHED IN 1907) - THE PREACHING OF G. CAMPBELL MORGAN**

**03. THE CONDITIONS OF HOLINESS by G. CAMPBELL MORGAN**

NOW GRANTED the nature and possibility of holiness, yet there are thousands who would not be prepared to say that they are realizing in present character and experience His purpose. If that be true, then the sequence cannot be escaped: if I am not living the life of holiness which is God's will and which He has made possible, the blame is not God; it is me. I may very strongly desire to live the holy life, and may have striven after it and yet I may never have realized it in spite of all these resources that are mine in Christ Jesus.

It is to such especially that I would now speak. If the blame rests us for not living the life of holiness, the responsibility for living that life also rests on us. All the provision is made, but the appropriation of the provision depends upon our attitude of life, and it is with that attitude that I wish now to deal.

Look at this verse in 2 Corinthians 7:1, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord." In order that we may reach the goal and perfect holiness, we are to cleanse ourselves - a most remarkable appeal - from all defilement of flesh and spirit. But that appeal does not stand alone; it must never be disassociated from the basis on which it rests: "Having therefore these promises." What promises? "I will dwell in them. I will walk in them. I will be their God. I will receive you, and will be a father unto you. Ye shall be My sons and My daughters." Having therefore these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, and thus perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord.

All the promises of God are made upon very definite conditions. Notice what the conditions are which these promises are made. "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers: for what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity? or what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what hath a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement hath a temple of God with idols?" Hear again: "Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing." These are the conditions.

Now, mark the sweep of this argument. Conditions: "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers," "Come out from among them; be separate; touch not the unclean thing." Promises: "I will dwell in them; I will walk in them; I will be their God; I will receive them; I will be to them a father; they shall be to Me sons and daughters." Having these promises, let us cleanse ourselves. It is no use to attempt to cleanse ourselves from defilement of flesh and spirit save as we have the promises. It is no use a fulfilment of the promises unless we fulfill the conditions. Remember that all these things are spoken to men and women who are born again; you cannot begin to deliver messages to unregenerate men and women. That is the basis of appeal.

Now, in order to understand the nature of this preparation and responsibility let us consider the conditions which we may perfect holiness. If the believer is to enter into the personal experience of holiness of character, it will be on the fulfilment of a fourfold condition: There must be conviction; there must be renunciation; there must be surrender; and there must be faith.

The soul that fulfills these conditions passes immediately into the possession of holiness of character.

**1.** CONVICTION means conviction of sin; conviction of the desirability of holiness; and conviction of the sufficiency of God's provision. There may be all these and yet not holiness; but these are necessary to holiness. There must be a conviction of sin in the unenlightened condition of the intellect, of the unkindled emotion, of the unyielded will.

The first dawn of light the soul is from above. It is the understanding that he does not understand, that he is in darkness. This is true even in regard to believers. There are Christians who imagine they know all about Christianity, all about spirituality, but who have no understanding of the things of God. The very first step is that of a deep conviction that the intelligence is darkened. It is a hopeful sign when a man comes and says, "I do not find any delight in my Bible," because it shows that the mind is discovering its own darkness. The most difficult man to deal with is the man who imagines he knows all about the Bible, when he knows it only as literature. When a man begins to see that his life as a professing Christian is circumscribed and narrow because he has lost his true vision of God, then there is hope that presently he will pass into the place of vision.

Conviction of sin is also with regard to the unkindled emotion. Is it not strange that so many calling themselves Christians are capable of emotion, capable of intensity of feeling any subject save the things of the kingdom of God! I know men and women who are intense politicians, intense business men and women, but who the moment they touch the matters of God's kingdom become icily regular, perfectly null; there is no passion, no fire, no emotion. It is a hopeful sign when a man realizes that he does not really love God. Then there is the conviction of the unyielded will. When a man awakes to the fact that he has been singing "Thy will be done," and his one aim and object in life and in Christian service was to get his own way done; then it is a sign that he is getting ready to step into holiness of life. If renunciation is to be pure, and surrender complete, and faith operative there must be this conviction. No man, can convince you; but if we wait with honest sincerity for the voice of God, the brooding, patient, grieved Holy Spirit can bring deep conviction to the heart of the children of God of their lack of light, and of love, and of life.

**2.** After conviction the next is RENUNCIATION. I am responsible for dealing with the acts of sin; God must deal with the principle of sin that underlies them. What are sins? There are three simple definitions of sins in the New Testament. John's definition is "Sin is lawlessness" (1 John 3:4), disobedience to God's laws.

But James goes a little deeper, and says: "He that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17). John says sin is doing wrong; James says sin is neglecting to do right. If you know that you ought to do something, and put it off, refuse to do it, that is sin. For example, James says: "You say, Today or tomorrow we will go into the city and get gain. You ought to say, If the Lord will, we will go into the city; - and to him that knoweth to do the good and does not do it, that is sin." We have thought it mattered so little, that we have given up writing "D.V." our announcements and in our letters; we take it for granted. James says you have no business to take it for granted; you are to say it. The little failures to respond to the Spirit's teaching; these things are sins.

Paul's definition of sin brings still another class of actions into the realm of sin that we have not called sinful. He says, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Take the context and you have his own exposition. "He that doubteth is condemned, for whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Romans 14:23). To the child of God any action, based upon uncertainty, lack of conviction, doubt, is sinful. That principle settles nearly every doubtful question as to our habits. "I am not quite sure," someone says, "whether I ought to go to the theatre." That settles it, you cannot go; if you do, you sin. You are not sure? Then you are sure that you must not. Now I am not saying the theatre is wrong; I am not discussing that. I am not saying that cards are wrong; I am not going to decide those things for you. I know some of you, dear souls, would like me to say both those things are wrong; I cannot do it; and if you come and ask me at the close of this meeting, "Do you think I can go to the theatre?" I say to you, "You have no business to ask me that question." Go home; shut the door against all. Are you in doubt whether you ought to smoke, or play cards, or go to the theatre? Then go into your closet and settle the question between yourself and your Lord. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Then a young man comes and says, "I am inclined to think that I ought to go into the Christian ministry; but I am not sure." Then you ought not; that settles it. Do not enter it until you are sure; if you do you wrong the church and the world and yourself and Christ. There is nothing we need more than that the ranks of the ministry and of the missionaries should be kept clear of the men and women who are not quite sure whether they ought to go or not. I believe that man has no right in the Christian ministry who does not enter it saying as he "Woe is me if I preach not."

These then are the definitions of sins: doing wrong, neglecting to do right, doing doubtful things; and these sins are to be renounced. It may take time. It seems to me that before the first solemn act of renunciation there must quiet time in which the light of the divine will is sought upon all life and its relations. There needs to be time taken for searching and quiet waiting for God in which we shall see whether in any of these realms there is still willful disobedience, willful neglect, willful in doubtful actions. Wherever sin is discovered, it is to be put out of our life. No excuse is to be given, no compromise is to be attempted, no delay is to be made; we are to slay utterly and without pity every sin in our lives. We are to come out and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing.

Someone says, "But how can we decide?" Get alone with your Lord; listen to the solemn voice which says, "Awake, awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee." It is the light of His own presence. Seek that presence; call into review in that presence all your life in every part of it and in every department of it, and with unerring accuracy He will mark for you the sins that you are to renounce. It is strenuous business, but I am sure that if we want that holiness in order that there may be righteousness, we shall have to be willing to get down before God while He searches us; and as the light falls upon the wrong, we shall put it out.

**3.** The third condition is SURRENDER. In 1 Corinthians 6:19. 20, Paul says, "Know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have from God? and ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price; glorify God, therefore, in your body." How can we do that? Only as our spirit is dominant because in communion with the indwelling Spirit of God. Then in Romans 12:1 we read: "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship." (R. V. margin.) This body ought to be God's carbon upon which His light may shine. This body is to be the outward and visible sign of the inward and invisible spirit. Your surrender will become actual and real when the body is surrendered, but there will never be the surrender of the body until there is the surrender of the spirit.

This surrender is the actual, immediate, undivided cession of my body, which is the temple of the Spirit, to the Indweller. My eyes are to be the eyes through which He may look, and my ears are to be ears through which He may listen, and which He may guard for me that I will not listen to slander and scandal and impurity; my hands are to be hands through which the very touch of divine pity shall be communicated as I minister with them; my feet are to run His errands; my brain is to be His in order that through it the thoughts of God may possess me and be given to others; my heart is to beat for Him so that all my life blood may be impulsed by Him. All this is the work of the indwelling Spirit. My work is to bring all the keys and give them to Him, to say: "O blessed Indweller, every chamber of my being, every avenue of my life, every door of entrance is given over to Thee; guard the entrances, flood the temple, shine through with Thine own glory. I surrender!"

This surrender means death to self but it is infinitely easier than to make half a surrender, easier both in the act and in all that results from it. What endless trouble some children of God have because they want God to take only part of their lives and let them manage the remainder. May God deliver us all from that! He wants an absolute unconditional surrender, so that henceforth we have but one king. That makes it possible for Him to perfect and glorify what we surrender. Until we make such a surrender the Spirit is hindered, "grieved," because He is prevented from His work in us.

**FAITH A PRIME REQUISITE.**

**4.** Lastly there must be FAITH. Conviction, renunciation, surrender, faith. Is faith last only? No; it is first and second and third and last. Faith is preparatory, faith is the propelling power, and faith is the perfecting force. How is a man convinced that he is a sinner? When he believes the testimony borne to his heart by the Word and by the Holy Spirit. But if I have that gift of first faith, what then? Then if I obey by renunciation of sin and bring myself to surrender, what is the force impelling me? Confidence, faith. Then lastly, faith must act. What is faith to do? It will act by ceasing to act; it will become passive; it will "rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him." That is the perfecting faith. This leads me to believe that all God says He will do, He will do; that all He says I am to do, I can do; and all He says I can be, I may be now.

Oh, if one could take the individual experience and follow it through, what then? I am convinced of my unholiness, of my sin; I am convinced of the desirability and the delightfulness of holy character; I am convinced that God has made it possible. I do here and now, solemnly, so far as the light has fallen - and God never asks you to go beyond the measure of the light you have received I do here and now, so far as the light has fallen, put sin out of my life; I do here and now surrender my whole being to Him. He says, "Come out; be separate; touch not"; I do these things. He says, "I will receive you, and will be a father to you"; He does. Now I am to begin the life of righteousness, which is the conduct springing out of a character of holiness. I am to waste no more time attempting to examine myself, no time in morbid introspection. I have received no magnetic thrill through my being, but I do believe, and I will now begin to do the deeds of righteousness, depending upon Him for the fulfilment of His promise.

Beloved, the only question is one as to our fulfilment of conditions. The divine operation is assured to obedience. Fulfill conditions, and what happens? Renounced evil, God destroys; surrendered territory, God faith confiding, God honors.

There are no exceptions to these rules. Does evil lose its power because you renounce it? Nay, verily; you have done that a score of times, and it has simply gained force from the rest given it; but when you renounced an evil habit, not in the strength of your will but in faith in God, its life has been sapped away and the vile thing has become nerveless.

This is the law and this is the deliverance. Renounce the sins, and victory is gained over the sin; surrender the whole being honestly, and God possesses it; honor Him by, faith and He will not fail you. Awake, O paralyzed heart; renounce that sin; surrender thyself; believe; and the desert shall blossom as the rose, and in the dry and thirsty land there shall be rivers of living water! I preach no mere academic theory, but an experience the only one that I value in all my life.