**VOLUME 6; CHAPTER 15 - THE PREACHING OF G. CAMPBELL MORGAN**

**THE EXALTED CHRIST by G. CAMPBELL MORGAN**

*Wherefore God also highly exalted Him, and gave unto Him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

*Philippians 2:9-11*

*He raised Him from the dead and made Him to sit at His right hand in the heavenlies, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in that which is to come, and He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him to be Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all.*

*Ephesians 1:20-23*

THE WORD WITH WHICH THE PASSAGE OF SCRIPTURE from the Philippian letter commences is the word "wherefore." Necessarily our minds are thereby turned back to the preceding statements. The subject we now propose to consider is that of the exaltation of Christ, and His investiture with a name to which every knee is to bow and every tongue confess. But as we approach our subject, the word "wherefore" forces us back. Ere we consider the fact of His exaltation we ask, Why was He so exalted? We ask that because the writer of these words based the fact of exaltation on certain reasons which he had already declared.

The declaration of those reasons is contained in a passage than which there is no more wonderful in all Holy Scripture in its revelation, in language at once simple and sublime, of the pathway by which God moved to the redemption of men. It is an incidental passage - I do not say accidental. The Apostle was urging the Philippian Christians to be of one mind and of one heart, was calling them to certain disposition, to certain tone and temper: "Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus," he wrote. What, then, was the mind in Christ? In order to reveal it he gave the story of the Christ.

The story begins in a great mystery of light, out of which light there appears One, Who descends until we see Him in the awful and tragic agony of the brutal and bloody Cross. And the end of the story is that same One's return to the highest throne in the universe of God, leaving behind Him a highway along which multitudes will follow Him to share His glory.

"Wherefore" lies at the middle of that descriptive paragraph. Let us look first, then, at the things that precede, in order that we see the relation between this ascent and descent of the Son of God.

The first words are: "Who, being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God." That is the blinding light of the past. It is

… light too bright

For the feebleness of a sinner's sight.

We have looked into it, we have attempted to understand it. We have sometimes, perhaps foolishly, attempted an explanation of it. Let us at once confess that it says something about the Christ who transcends all human explanation. No translator has yet been satisfied with his rendering of the passage. All kinds of attempts have been made, and none of them is perfectly satisfactory or successful. "Being in the form of God," He "counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God." Mark your margin, and see another suggestion, "counted it not a thing to be grasped to be on an equality with God," counted it something to be kept, I am growingly thankful when I find a passage I cannot translate, and no one else can. When my attempts at exposition and exegesis are alike baffled, then I worship.

But emerging from that dazzling light, that strange mystery of illumination, emerging from it I read: "but emptied Himself." I do not understand it. He "emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men." I understand that. Here is a Man. I can see that, I can handle that, I can listen to that. John will write for me what I feel now: "That which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we have beheld, and our hands handled" - the Word of life, the intangible, imponderable mystery of life. But we saw it, we touched it, we handled it, we felt it. It is a Man. And there is no more gracious word in all the Book of God than this, "The Word was made flesh." I wanted, I needed it. The word eluded me. The mystery of Divine self-existence and revelation was beyond me. It was a whisper, a thunder, a gleam, and a glory. None of them came near me. But it became flesh, a Man. We cannot fathom these distances; we cannot measure them. Out of the mystery of an infinite light, into the simplicity of a human life. Oh, in the name of God Almighty, I charge you, do not think the Christ began to be in that life of Jesus. We must have the mystery behind, this unfathomable wonder, this Being Who thought it not something to be snatched at to be on an equality with God. It is He that is clothed in the warm flesh of humanity. Now I can follow Him, or I think I can. Presently I shall find I cannot. I will begin. "Being found in fashion as a Man," He humbled Himself here, "and became obedient unto death," yea, the death of the Cross. Forgive my halting; I cannot speak of this agony. More and more it crushes me and overwhelms me. This Cross, this rough, and rugged, bloody and brutal Cross, hateful Cross, is as great a mystery as that light behind. "He became obedient unto death, yea, the death of the Cross." You ask me if I will not explain atonement. I cannot do it, dear heart. You ask me to measure the Infinite Light; when I can do that I can plumb the infinite darkness; both elude me. But we have at least seen this Person, immeasurable within our measurement, going to that Cross of pain and sorrow and suffering.

Now I come to "wherefore." On the basis of that mystery of humiliation and pain, and because of the mind that brought the Person out of mysterious light into mysterious darkness to work redemption, "wherefore also God highly exalted Him, and gave unto Him the name which is above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow."

Again the glory breaks with new light, and in meaning still defying my analysis, still shining with such radiant splendor that all attempts to paint it are of no avail, all attempts to describe it are utterly futile. We had better confine ourselves to a consideration of that which God gave to aid us, the Man Himself. As we were able to look at Him for a little on the pathway of His obedience, humbling Himself, and as we were able even to get some brief glances of Him in His dying in the tragic, awful, and inspiring mystery of His pain, what shall we do now? Has He ceased to be as Man? Has the personality that made it possible for me to apprehend Him passed away? Nay, verily, if so, I have lost all my power of comprehending God. God exalted Him. Who? The Man Who died. If we would know the measurement of the exaltation, we must take also the passage from Ephesians. God "made Him to sit on His right hand, in the heavenlies, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come."

Let us endeavor to come face to face with that exalted Person. We cannot exhaust Him in the human Person even in the glory. He is more than a Person that can be seen. That Person is the Revelation of the Infinite Mystery; that Person is coming again to gather His people to Himself, and to be the localized King and Judge of humanity, but the infinite and the eternal and the immeasurable quantities will abide there and here. All the localization is for our frailty, and our understanding, the method by which we touch that which could not be touched, and see the unseen, and hear the unutterable. That is the essence of my creed, the foundation of my faith, that the same Jesus whom John saw and handled and heard is at the center of the universe of God, highly exalted, and that same One is to come again. With the story of His coming I am not now dealing, but only with the fact of His exaltation.

Mark the statement: "God highly exalted Him." In writing to the Philippians, Paul said, "God highly exalted Him." In writing to the Ephesians, he said, "He made Him to sit at His right hand." That is a figure of speech, and yet so simple that there can be no misunderstanding of its meaning. He exalted the Man of Nazareth by resurrection and ascension to His own right hand. That is the place of infinite and unfading glory, the right hand of God; the place of rest, where weariness never comes; the place of power, where weakness is never known; the place of glory, where there is no shadow cast by turning, and no darkness - and all these also are figurative expressions. As a matter of fact, we cannot express the true position of the Man in any language at our command today. We shall need the heavenly speech, the heavenly language, the heavenly method of expression to explain it. But there, placed at the point in the universe of God, which is the central point of Divine manifestation, is this Man of Nazareth, highly exalted to the right hand of God. He was weary here. He is beyond weariness now, knowing still my weariness, perfectly acquainted with it there, but never wearied by my weariness. In all my affliction He is not afflicted. It is a great passage of Scripture that tells me that in "all their affliction He was afflicted." Many of you have heard, doubtless, that it is a great question whether it was ever so written. It is far more likely that it was written, "He was not afflicted," which does not mean to say He was not acquainted with the sorrow and did not share the affliction, but which does mean that He came into the midst of it, and affliction never mastered Him, never tired Him, never wearied Him beyond the power of renewal and regaining of strength. Whether that be true as to the past I will not argue, but it is true now.

In every pang that rends the heart,

The Man of Sorrows hath His part.

But He is strong,

He is in the place of rest.

He is, moreover, in the place of unlimited power, and to my weakness, which He knows, from His place of rest there comes the power that is His. He is in the place of glory, exalted to the right hand of God. Think of it, figure it forth in what language you like. This at least is true, that the Man of Nazareth, because of the suffering and victory of the Cross, has been crowned by God King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and is at the center of the whole universe of God, its glorious Master and King.

If God indeed has highly exalted the Man of Nazareth we may argue therefrom one or two matters of importance concerning Him, and of value for ourselves.

First of all, this exaltation of the Man of Nazareth by God implies the absolute perfection of His life, as revealing to me a pattern. I go back to some of the Messianic Psalms (Psalms, 22, 23, 24). Listen to some of the words of the last, which speak of His triumph:

Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?

And who shall stand in His holy place?

And the question is answered:

He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart;

Who hath not lifted up his soul into vanity,

And hath not sworn deceitfully.

Mark the fourfold description. First, "clean hands," right action. Behind that "a pure heart," purity of thought and of motive. "Not lifting up the soul to vanity," reality in all his dealings. "That hath not sworn deceitfully," truth in the inward parts and in the outward expression. They are pregnant phrases which describe the man of absolute integrity, in the moral fiber of whose personality exists no taint of evil. Who fulfils that ideal?

The Man who ascends into the hill of the Lord and stands in His holy place. Who is it that is exalted to the hill of the Lord? Who is it that stands in His holy place? None in the right of his purity, save this Man of Nazareth. He it is whom God highly exalted, placed Him on His right hand, on the holy hill of Zion, in the midst of the light of the infinite and unsullied purity. And from the exaltation of this Man I argue the absolute perfection of His life. That life is the pattern life for humanity. If you want the one ideal that is perfect, you must take the ideal Man that God has lifted out of the centuries, and put at His right hand, because of the perfection of the pattern. He exalted Him, the Man of clean hands, the man of the pure heart, the Man Who never lifted up His soul to vanity, the Man who dwelt in realities, the Man who never swore deceitfully, the Man in whom there was no cunning, no double-dealing. Straightness in speech and action. That is true greatness. That is the character which ascends the throne, and sits at the center of the universe of God, the one perfect pattern of human life.

There is more than this, for notice that the "wherefore" with which my text opens leans back, not merely on the obedient Servant, but on the obedient Servant Who suffered to death, even the death of the Cross. When I lift my eyes by faith, and look toward those distant hills, to that high and holy place, I see the Man Jesus perfect, but I see Him as a "Lamb having been slain." There are wounds. There are the marks of this very dying which the Apostle has described with a great reserve of description. "Yea, the death of the Cross." It is not merely the exaltation of a perfect pattern, it is the exaltation of a perfect pattern which has been wounded, bruised, afflicted, and has passed to death.

And now I ask again, what does this exaltation mean? Why was He wounded? Why was He bruised? Why was He afflicted? "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him." He went to the Cross, intending to bear the sin of the world. Did He succeed? Oh, behold the exalted Man! And as I see that wounded One lifted up out of death by resurrection, lifted back to Heaven by ascension, placed by God at the heart and center of all the universe, I know that He succeeded, that He bore my sin, that He made it not to be in the mystery of His dying. The exalted Christ is not merely the revelation of a perfect pattern. He is the assurance of a perfect salvation.

And yet one other thing, This exaltation does more than argue the perfection of His ideal and demonstrate the success of His work. The fact that God has taken this Man and set him there at His own right hand is to me the word that speaks of my security; for seeing God has set Him there, I know that none can ever dethrone Him. To do that has been the attempt of all the centuries since he lived. The work of evil, the work of His enemies has been to dethrone Him. Devils and demons, fallen principalities and powers, through one organized and persistent effort have attempted to dethrone Him. Blessed be God, they have never succeeded. The perpetual attempt of man in his opposition to Christianity has been to dethrone Christ. Say anything of Him you like, only dethrone Him, says evil through man. Say He is not there, that He has ceased to be. Say, if you will, He was a good Man, hoping to do well, but He died. Admire the fair example of His life if you will, but do not let Him be enthroned.

Let us go back to the Psalms again:

Why do the nations rage,

And the peoples imagine a vain thing?

The kings of the earth set themselves,

And the rulers take counsel together,

Against the Lord, and against His anointed, saying,

Let us break their bands asunder,

And cast away their cords from us.

He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh,

The Lord shall have them in derision.

Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath,

And vex them in His sore displeasure.

Yet have I set my King

Upon my holy hill of Zion.

I will tell of the decree:

The Lord said unto Me, Thou art My Son;

This day have I begotten Thee.

Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the nations for Thine inheritance,

And the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession.

Let us catch the message of it. God has exalted Him. The rulers take counsel together, but the Lord has them in derision. They may attempt to break the bands and cast away the cords, but it is useless. He is the crowned Lord of all, and Jesus seated at the right hand of God - to use the exquisite figurative language of these New Testament writers - is at once the revelation of perfection, the demonstration of salvation, and the assurance of ultimate victory. So God highly exalted Him.

Then the Apostle passes on, and writes a thing full of tenderness and beauty. "And gave unto Him the name which is above every name." What name is this? He had many names here. They were all beautiful. They called Him Messiah. Prophets spoke of Him as Immanuel, the Branch, ShiIoh, Dayspring, Daysman, Daystar, King, Prophet, Priest, Shepherd, names and titles all full of beauty. What name is it that He has as He sits there on the throne of God's universe? Is it some new name I must wait for until I reach the land of light? I think not, My own conviction is that the Apostle intends that we shall understand that he explains his own statement in the words that follow. He says, "God …. gave unto Him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow." I am quite aware that there are great diversities of opinion concerning this passage. So eminent a scholar and so correct an exegete as the Bishop of Durham holds that it does not refer to the name of Jesus, rather that God invested Him with His own great name forevermore. And I bow very largely to Dr. Moule's exegesis and interpretation. But, with all humility, I do not at all agree at this point. I believe that what the Apostle wrote admits of no interpretation except this: that God gave Him when He exalted Him the name which is above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow. Not that He then gave Him the name, but that he gave Him, in the moment of His exaltation, the right that every knee should bow in that name. So He did give Him then the name of Jesus in a sense in which He had never done.

The name of Jesus was given before. When He was to come into the world, an angel messenger said, "Thou shalt call His name JESUS; for it is He that shall save His people from their sins." It was then a prophetic name. The mother was to utter it as expressing the hope of her own heart and all the human race which she represented. "Thou shalt call His name Jesus." It marked a purpose. It uttered a prophecy. It sang of a hope, as Mary first, with the Babe on her bosom, bending over Him in sweet maternal love, in obedience to the angel command, called Him Joshua, Jesus.

He went His way, and lived His life; and He went His way and died His death; and He went His way and brake the bars of death asunder; and He went His shining way back to the everlasting spaces; and then He was invested forevermore with the same sweet name that His mother had uttered in obedience to the angelic message as a prophecy. Now the prophecy of the name is fulfilled. Let Heaven recognize it, Let earth know it. Let hell tremble at it. Joshua, Jesus, human Saviour, is the Divine Lord of all life forever and forevermore! God gave Him the same sweet name to make the infinite music of all the coming ages when He exalted Him to His right hand. And do you wonder that Paul said that it is above every name?

Jesus, the name above every name, above every name in preciousness. No name so dear to the ear of God as the name of the One Who did His will, accomplished His purpose, wrought out His infinite plan of salvation. No name so dear to man as that. There are other names very dear to us, and names that become dear according to the persons for whom they stand. I could name human names that some of you find no music in that thrill with music for me. But bring me the sweetest of them all, and the dearest, and utter it, and then say this one word, Jesus, and all the earthly music becomes dim, and dies away, and the earthly glow is cold.

Jesus, Thou joy of loving hearts,

Thou Fount of life, Thou Light of men,

From the best bliss that earth imparts,

We turn unfilled to Thee again.

Oh, men and women, there is no name in all the world so sweet as this to the world. Away on the lonely sea tonight some soul will sing it, and it will be a haven of refuge. In the midst of the awful loneliness of the crowded city some tired heart will utter it, and it will be a pillow of rest. Out yonder, on the veldt in Africa, some young man, tempted and tried, will hear it and will win. There is no name like it. You know it, you do not want me to argue it. It is above every name in preciousness to God and man, and it is above every name because it is the name that stands for manifestation of such love as men have never dreamed of. Stronger His love than death or hell. Love that reaches to the lowest, love that lifts to the highest, love that lasts forever. Shakespeare sang of earthly loves, and said:

Love is not love

That alters when it alteration finds.

Did you ever find any earthly love that quite rose to that level? If you want me to find you a love that alters not when it alteration finds, I bring you back to Jesus. He loved me. He loved me - I cannot tell why, but He loved me. And in my heart of hearts I know it, and, in spite of all that I have been, He loves me still. There is no one else like this in love - "above every name."

And what is the purpose of God? I have touched the fringe only. You will follow it out. That is a part of the sermon that never could be finished. You will finish it when you are tempted tomorrow. You will finish it when you are in sorrow the next day. You will finish it when you are in perplexity the day after. You will finish it all the way through the week, and if you will only trust Him you will find there is no name like it in Heaven above or in earth beneath.

By now, finally, God exalted Him, and gave Him this name for a purpose. What is it? That every knee should bow, that every tongue should confess that He is Lord. I am not now going to discuss the principle and deal with the general purpose of God, I am going, rather, to ask you what relation exists between you and this crowned Man at God's right hand. Have you bowed the knee? Have you confessed Him Lord? Oh, if I could shut you up to this question! Have I bowed the knee to Him? Have I crowned Him? Have I confessed Him Lord? A great many will have to say, if they ask this question honestly, No, I have done none of these things. I have admired Him, read about Him, loved to listen to anybody who talked about Him. I have faced my Lord, but I have never bent the knee, I have never cast my crown, the crown of my manhood, my womanhood, at His feet. Then, so far, you have violated the purpose of God concerning this Man. There must be the bending in His presence. There must be at last the confession that He is Lord. Today that confession brings salvation. I do not know how long it will. I find no warrant in my Bible for telling you that if you confess Him Lord in the age to come you will thereby be saved. Here and now confess Him Lord. Crown Him resolutely, submit to the Man at the center of God's universe, accept His pattern as the ideal of your life, the mystery of His passion as your way of salvation, the assurance of His presence as the guarantee of your victory. Trust Him and you shall be saved. "If thou shalt believe in thy heart that God raised Him from the dead" - that is, that He has been exalted and crowned - "thou shalt be saved; for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Now I pray you, in the name of my Master, and for the sake of your own soul's eternal welfare, ask that question, Have I confessed my Lord, and, if not, Shall I? May God in His mercy bring you to the one only true choice.