**VOLUME 8; CHAPTER 02 - THE PREACHING OF G. CAMPBELL MORGAN**

**THE ONE OFFERING by G. CAMPBELL MORGAN**

*For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.*

*Hebrews 10:14*

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPTION OF RELIGION IS RIGHT RELATIONSHIP between God and man. The Biblical doctrine of man is, essentially, that he is the offspring of God, whose relation to God, therefore, is threefold: first, that he has the right of personal access to God; second, that there the possibility of direct, immediate intercourse with God is given to him; finally, that the privilege and responsibility of co-operation with God in carrying out God's designs rests on him. After the briefest declarations concerning the origin and nature of man, the Bible introduces the subject of sin. Sin, according to its teaching, results in the exclusion of man from God, the cessation of communion with Him, and the consequent inability to realize the privilege and fulfil the responsibility of co-operation with Him.

The ultimate message of the Bible, however, is neither that of the essential nature of man nor that of his sin. The final message of the Bible is that of redemption. It is the literature of redemption. It is therefore a message to sinning men, to those who are excluded from their birthright by sin; excluded from the consciousness of the presence of God, denied fellowship with Him, and unable to fulfil their responsibility to Him either personally or relatively. To that state the Bible appeals. The Bible has been written for sinning and not for sinless men. If I may venture to put into brief words that which shall express the whole message of the Bible, then I shall employ the very words of the Lord Himself, for that which is the truth concerning the Word incarnate by His own declaration is true concerning this written word: "I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."

The burden of the Bible was perfectly expressed in the words of the wise woman of Tekoa to King David when he was fleeing from Absalom, in which she uttered the profound truth, "God … deviseth means that he that is banished be not outcast from Him." So far as the Biblical revelation is concerned, this great declaration has been made in two stages, both of which are referred to by the writer in the opening words of the treatise from which our text is taken: "God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in His Son." The first stage was that of the revelation to the fathers in the prophets by divers portions in divers manners. The final stage is that of to-day, the revelation in the Son.

The method of the old economy was suggestion, prediction, illustration. That of to-day is the method of finality, fulfilment, realization. In the Hebrew system one phase of the necessity for human redemption, and one phase of the way of its provision was revealed in all that splendid ritual of the Hebrew people, revealed particularly in the offerings as they shadowed forth the way of approach to God by sinning man. It is the way of complete dedication, accompanied by sacrifice and propitiation, with the resulting elements of atonement and forgiveness. In that pictorial system there were five offerings, named, respectively, the Burnt Offering, the Meal Offering, the Peace Offering, the Sin Offering, and the Trespass Offering.

These may be divided into two groups, the first consisting of three offerings, the Burnt, the Meal, the Peace: the Burnt, the symbol of the dedication of the entire life to God; the Meal, the symbol of the dedication of the service of the life to God; and the Peace, the symbol of that fellowship with God which is possible on the basis of the dedication of life and of service. In each case there was the element of sacrifice connected with the offering.

The second group consisted of two offerings: the Sin Offering, which suggested the necessity for, and the method of, putting away sins in order that man might be brought back to his birthright of access to God, intercourse with God, and co-operation with God; and the Trespass Offering, which dealt with certain definite acts of sin.

The writer of this letter to the Hebrews declared that these offerings were not in themselves efficacious, and in that declaration he wrote in harmony with the teaching of the great Hebrew prophets. In his argument he quoted from the ancient Hebrew Scriptures, and his quotations might be multiplied, for they are manifold. The declaration of the seers of the old economy was persistently that in themselves these sacrifices, these offerings, had no value, no efficacy, but that they pointed to something profounder, were adumbrations of something greater, shadows of it demonstrating its reality. In this chapter the word of the writer of this letter, is a striking, suggestive one, "The law having a shadow of the good things to come, not the very image of the things." While he recognized that there can be no power, no dynamic, no saving virtue in the shadow, he did nevertheless recognize that there can be no shadow without the substance. There was infinitely more in these ancient sacrifices than feasting and fasting; they were evidences of the existing purpose and power of Deity, to be yet more perfectly manifested. The whole argument of the writer of the letter was that the deepest, profoundest meaning of all those offerings of the ancient ritual was fulfilled in human history in the Person and work of the Son of God, "For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." We must be true to the conception of the writer if we would understand his meaning. To whom, then, was the writer referring? Who is it that by one offering can perfect forever them that are sanctified? The answer is found in the opening declaration of the letter, "God … hath spoken unto us in His Son, Whom He appointed heir of all things, through Whom also He made the worlds; Who being the effulgence of His glory, and the very image of His substance, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." In that august and remarkable introduction of the central Person in the mind of the writer we find relationships with all the arguments that follow. When I read that He, this wondrous Son of God, perfects forever them that are sanctified, I remember that associated with the description of His inherent being and glory and beauty is the declaration that He has made purification of sins.

The declaration of our text, then, is that in and through Him the Son of God man may be restored to right relationship with God, and that in every way. If the Biblical conception of religion be that of man in right relationship with God; if the Bible teaches that sin has excluded man from access to God, from intercourse and from co-operation, the ultimate word of the Bible is that God has devised means by which the banished shall not be outcast, the means being that in His Son God has wrought the work through which man may be restored to his right of access, restored to his communion and fellowship, restored to both the responsibility and privilege of co-operation with God.

Let us, then, consider this declaration of the text as it deals with the one offering provided in Christ, with the perfection provided for men, and with the condition of appropriation.

"By one offering." Let us think of that offering in itself, in its sufficiency, and in its exclusiveness.

First, in itself. Directly we begin to attempt to think of this one offering in itself there are so many aspects of the matter that we are in difficulty. Let us follow the simplest method and consider the offering, using the word as a noun, that which was offered; and then consider the offering, using the word as a verb, the act of offering, the way of the offering.

What, then, is this one offering through which Christ hath perfected forever them that are sanctified? We are not left to any speculation; we follow the statement of the writer and we have a clear and distinct declaration of what that offering was. From verse fourteen, which constitutes the text, I glance back to verse ten, and there I read these words: "By which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." Ere I am able to comprehend the meaning of that utterance, I move backward still a little further, and notice a very remarkable and significant quotation from one of the psalms,

Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not,

But a body didst Thou prepare for Me.

By the offering of that body of Jesus Christ, that body prepared for Jesus Christ, He perfects forever them that are sanctified. We must briefly give attention to one matter of detail, and perhaps of difficulty. The quotation of the psalm here by the writer is a quotation from the Septuagint, and not from the Hebrew Scriptures. In the Hebrew the psalm reads:

Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not,

But Mine ear hast Thou opened.

I draw attention to the difference because it has created difficulty as to whether the translators of what we speak of as the Septuagint version thought for some reason that there was a mistake in the Hebrew, or whether the text as it is in the Hebrew today is correct. There is a sense in which the vital, underlying spiritual value is not changed in either case, for the word as we have it in the Hebrew text and in the Bible, "Mine ear hast Thou opened," has no reference whatever to that ancient rite or ceremony by which the servant coming to the doorpost had his ear pierced in order that he might demonstrate his fidelity. The thought is that rather of making the ear absolutely attentive in order that the soul may be mastered by the Divine will. That is the whole story of the human life of Jesus. I have no doubt that the Septuagint version is the true one, I build my view on the fact that the New Testament writer quoted the psalm in this way, as I believe, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, thus distinguishing between the true and the false and giving us a most remarkable statement concerning that offering which our Lord made: "A body didst Thou prepare for Me." Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, this word was fastened on by the writer of the New Testament to show that the sacrifice of our Lord by which we are redeemed, even on the physical side, was that of a body especially prepared by God for His Son. Thus the One Who hung on the Cross is differentiated from all other men, even in the matter of His physical life. In that word, "a body didst Thou pre-pare for Me," is involved the mysterious method of incarnation which is recorded by two of the evangelists, that of the virgin birth of our Lord. In an activity, wholly within the compass of the Divine power, God did purify human flesh and through that purification gave to us the immaculate Son of His love in human form and human being. He was in Himself the sinless One, not a member of our sinning race, but a member of our race, brought into it by a Divine over-ruling and activity of love and power so as to share that which is essential in humanity and be separate from sinners and from all things which have ruined and spoiled humanity.

Then we must remember that His living body fulfilled its true function, that of being an instrument of the spirit. The body of a human being is but the earthly instrument of the spirit, which is the essential fact in the life of that human being. Thus reverting to the original economy and ideal of creation, this Man of Nazareth fulfilled the Divine purpose, and His body, prepared for the specific purpose, was the perfect instrument of His spirit. His spirit was never imprisoned within His body, was never mastered by the appetites of the body, was never deflected from the course of rightness by the allurements of the body, was never clouded in its vision of God by illicit answer to the cry of the body. It was the instrument of the spirit; and as in His spirit life this Man of Nazareth was separate from sinners, holy, undefiled, so also in all His bodily life He was separate from sinners, holy, undefiled. Therefore, when we think of the Man of Nazareth, and in those hours in which we properly rejoice at His nearness to us by reason of His humanity, let us with equal propriety and solemnity tremble and wonder as we recognize that He was alone, distanced from us in Himself in spiritual life and in bodily life; that He stands alone, unique in all the centuries, a lonely Man by virtue of His purity and uninterrupted adjustment to the holiness, purity, and rightness of God.

If these things be remembered we shall never fall into the unutterable blunder of imagining that the evangelical doctrine is that one man died for other men, we shall never fall into the unutterable mistake of imagining that on the Cross some one member of our own race did persuade God to a change of mind and a change of relationship concerning men. We shall watch through all the process for the movements of God, for which He first did prepare a body for the Son of His love; and we shall watch Him as He moves along the way of men, ever recognizing His entire separation from humanity, even in the hours of close, mysterious identification.

In the Hebrew economy the Burnt Offering was symbolic of the dedication of the whole life to God; the Meal Offering was symbolic of the dedication of the service, for in that offering men brought what they themselves had wrought, the result of their own toil; the Peace Offering was the symbol of the unbroken fellowship with God which results from the dedication of the life and the service. We immediately see how that wonderful kindergarten of the old economy found its fulfilment in Jesus. On all the pathway of His pilgrimage the supreme note was that of the dedication of His whole life to God. I reverently quote in this connection from the Roman epistle: "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." That was the apostolic appeal to redeemed men, that they should make the body the sacramental symbol of the spiritual attitude. Reverently I declare that this is exactly the story of the life of Jesus; His spirit was ever yielded to God in perfect obedience, and the body perpetually expressed that attitude of the spirit, so that every journey the body took was a journey God-ordained, and every activity of those gentle hands was an activity God-inspired, and every glance of His eye was the outlooking of the purpose and will and intention of God. All the body of the Lord expressed the fact of the dedication of His whole life and being to God. It was also the medium of a dedicated service, for all that He did He did under the Divine authority; I do nothing of Myself; I speak nothing of Myself; what My Father gives Me that I do; what My Father gives Me that I speak. All His service was God-inspired. I see Him with the children about Him, angry with the disciples who would prevent them coming, and I hear the thunder of His love, "Suffer the little children, and forbid them not, to come unto Me: for of such is the Kingdom of heaven." That is a Man acting under Divine impulse and Divine authority. I see Him on another day, when, looking into the eyes of the false rulers of His people, He says to them, Woe unto you! scribes, hypocrites, whited sepulchres, full of dead men's bones. That was not a passing spasm of human passion; was God speaking out of His holiness and His wrath to the men who oppressed other men. Therefore He realized the meaning of the Peace Offering. He was always at peace with God, always in fellowship with God. He spoke with august and reverent familiarity of His Father at all times and in all circumstances, feeling that no sanctity was violated when He linked God to flowers, to sparrows, and to children.

Consider, then, the worth of that One, and mark the worth of that body, prepared in infinite mystery and by infinite power, the perfected and unharmed instrument of the spirit, perfectly adjusted to God. There has been nothing like it in human history.

We pass now to the word "offering" as a verb. The intention of the offering was symbolized in the two remaining offerings of the Hebrew economy, the Sin Offering and the Trespass Offering. Its method was co-operation with God, and its purpose, reconciliation of man with God, making peace, or, again to take up the august word of the Old Testament and of the Christian Church, making atonement.

In Jesus, fulfilment of the symbolism of the Burnt, the Meal, and the Peace Offerings, we see the sacrificial element. Have I spoken of the Burnt Offering of a dedicated life? He was a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Have I spoken of the Meal Offering of dedicated service? In all His service there was the element of vicarious suffering. With infinite ease He healed the sick as Matthew records - no, not with infinite ease, for Matthew adds, "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our diseases." Have I spoken of the Peace Offering of fellowship? Our Lord's unbroken peace with God was challenged by the perpetual restlessness of humanity, and found expression again and again in the hot discontent of, His heart with things unlike God. Take sin out of the world and Christ had known no sorrow. He might have lived a life of perfect dedication, a life of perfect dedication in service, a life of perpetual peace untroubled by sorrow, undesolated by agony. But in this world the measure of His perfection was the measure of His pain. The measure of our nearness to Christ is the measure in which we are capable of suffering with sinning men and sinning women. If we are merely righteous, cold and hard when we have sinners to deal with, we know very little about God or Christ. The measure of purity is the measure of pain in the presence of impurity. All through His life there was this sacrificial element, until at last everything was gathered up in the infinite, awe-inspiring mystery of the offering of His body on the Tree.

All the demand of the Divine character was perfectly met in that offering. In such life there ought to be no pain, no death; if pain and death were there, and that by the very will of God, pain and death were there for some wider and beneficent purpose. All the demands of the Divine character are met in that Person.

Once again, that which it is so extremely difficult to state or to comprehend, but which nevertheless is the declaration of Scripture and must be true or all our religion fails, in Christ there was the fulness of the Divine consciousness: "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead corporeally." All the Divine consciousness was in Him, and the Divine consciousness includes the whole creation, the consciousness of all men and of all life that has consciousness. All was focused in Him. That body prepared by infinite power and in infinite mystery, and yet of my very nature, was the central instrument of the spirit which in co-operation with God was conscious of the fulness of the Divine consciousness.

Not only did it please the Father that all the fullness should dwell in Him as to consciousness, but also as to resources. The supply of Deity was vested in Him in order to co-operate in the Divine work.

So, in the light of these unfathomable things and of Divine facts that defy our mathematical terms, I read my text again: "For by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified."

I say in the presence of God that I am not astonished now, when I think of Who Christ is, and what that body really meant, even though I cannot fathom the mystery. If there are depths too deep for me and heights too vastly removed for my climbing, still I feel that here is the place of refuge:

Rock of ages, cleft for me,

Let me hide myself in Thee.

That one offering excludes all human activity which is insufficient to realize the restoration which man seeks. It excludes the value of human merit, for human merit is worthless. It excludes the necessity for all human intervention which, in its presence, becomes blasphemous and impertinent.

In considering the perfection provided through the offering we go back to the initial words of our meditation. The perfection provided is the restoration of everything lost. Through that one offering we have perfection of access to God, for we come to God now by way of a cleansing which is immediate and continuous. We come to God by the way of a renewal of our spiritual life which is progressive. We come to God by way of a reconciliation which is constant.

It is the perfection of communion with God. Communion with God is, first, the sense that we have no secrets from Him, that He knows everything, all our sin and our failure:

Thy kind but searching glance can scan

The very wounds that shame would hide.

Do you know the restfulness of getting alone with someone to whom you have not to say anything about yourself because that someone knows? You do not, unless you know God. Do you know the awful agonizing awkwardness of attempting to make yourself known to your nearest and dearest? Fellowship with God means that there is no such agony, no such awkwardness; all things are naked and open before the eyes of Him with Whom I have to do. That is the doctrine that fills the soul with fear until the soul is reconciled; but it is the doctrine of infinite comfort to the soul that has rested on Christ.

It is not only a sense that we have no secrets from Him, this communion with God; it is also the desire and capacity to know His secrets, and the fact that He tells us His secrets. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him."

Fellowship means, moreover, the appropriation in intercourse with Him of His wisdom, so that we need no longer blunder our way through darkness - He will direct; it means appropriation of His might, so that we need no longer struggle helplessly against difficulties - He will energize; it means appropriation of His love, so that we are never alone. In fellowship with our Lord we can say with our Lord, My Father doth not leave me alone!

All that issues in perfection of ability. Restored likeness to God is renewed fitness for co-operation with God, and that is in itself regained power.

The condition for appropriating the perfection provided is sanctification. There are different aspects of sanctification. Sanctification is separation to the will of God. It is wrought in the soul of man by the ministry of the Spirit. It is made possible by the work of the Son.

The reference to sanctification in this text is to that act of the Spirit, in response to faith, whereby we are accepted in the beloved. All such are adjusted to the will of God, perfect but not yet perfected; perfect in standing, relationship, and resources, but yet to be perfected in experience, in finality and complete realization.

The dwelling place of the saints is the holy place. They sit at the table of shewbread and have communion with God; they trim the golden lampstand and bear their testimony to the world; they stand before the golden altar of incense, God's remembrancers and intercessors; and, most wonderful of all, they pass beyond the holy place into the holy of holies, and, standing face to face with God hold communion unafraid, because on the mercy seat are the tokens of that one offering whereby He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.

This is our only perfection. Let us not presume upon it. Let us not repose our confidence in anything else, not in our Christian service, not in our preaching, or our work; for at the last we shall come home, and we shall do, saying:

Nothing in my hand I bring;

Simply to Thy Cross I cling!

Naked, come to Thee for dress;

Helpless, look to Thee for grace:

Foul, I to the fountain fly;

Wash me, Saviour, or I die!

I think that will be the last prayer I shall ever pray, and it will be answered, "For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified"!

This is not only our only perfection, it is our sufficient perfection. Let us perfectly trust it. Let us answer all its demands, that we may realize all its power. Let no doubt of the efficacy of the one offering lurk in the heart, and so we shall enter into the very peace of God.