**VOLUME 1; CHAPTER 25 - THE PREACHING OF G. CAMPBELL MORGAN**

**THE PURPOSE OF THE ADVENT: To Reveal the Father by G. CAMPBELL MORGAN**

*He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.*

*John 14:9*

THIS IS NOW THE THIRD STUDY ON THE GENERAL SUBJECT OF the purposes of the Advent. Having spoken of the fact that Jesus was manifested to destroy the works of the devil, and of the fact that He was manifested to take away sins, we now turn to that wonderful fact that He was manifested to reveal the Father. I have chosen to take this, His own statement of truth, in this regard because of its simplicity and its sublimity. In our translation of the passage, so simple is it that no word of two syllables is employed save the word "Father." "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father"; and yet so sublime is it that among all the things Jesus said concerning His relationship to the Father none is more comprehensive, inclusive, exhaustive than this. Its very simplicity leaves us no room for doubt as to the meaning of our Lord.

The last hours of Jesus with His disciples were passing away. He was talking to the disciples, and four times over they interrupted Him. Peter first, "Lord, whither goest Thou?" While He was yet answering Peter, Thomas said, "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest; how know we the way?" While He was yet dealing with Thomas, Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." Ere He had done with Philip, Jude said, "What is come to pass that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" The lonely Christ, recognizing the fact that the nearest friends of His life, His own followers, did not perfectly understand Him, could not walk with Him along the via dolorosa, were afraid of the gathering shadows, yet taught them, patiently and gently answering objections, clearing away difficulties, storing their minds with truth.

Philip's interruption was due, in the first place, to a conviction of Christ's relation in some way to the Father. He had been so long with Jesus as to become familiar in some senses with His line of thought. He had heard over and over again strange things fall from the lips of the Master. He had listened to the wonderful familiarity with which Jesus had spoken of God as "My Father." In all probability, moreover, Philip was asking that there should be repeated to him and the little group of disciples some such wonderful thing as they had read of in the past of their people's history. He would have read therein of the great and glorious theophanies of days gone by, of how the elders once ascended the mountain and saw God; of how the prophet had declared that "in the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple"; of how Ezekiel had declared that when he was by the river Chebar he had seen God in fire, and wheels; in majesty and glory.

It was to that request, based upon a vision of Christ's relationship to the Father, based upon the memory of how God had manifested Himself to the men of olden days, that Jesus replied. I cannot read this answer of Jesus without feeling that He divested Himself of set purpose of anything that approached stateliness of diction, and dropped into the common speech of friend to friend, as looking back into the face of Philip He said, "Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know Me, Philip? he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." Mark the simplicity of it. They were most familiar with Him. I think you will agree with me that it requires no stretch of the imagination to believe that they had looked upon His face more often than upon the face of any other during the three years. They had listened with greater interest to the tones of His voice than to any other sounds that had come to them during that period.

The very simplicity of it is its audacity. The word may not be well chosen, and yet I take it of set purpose. If you want to know how audacious and daring a thing it is, put it into the lips of any other teacher the world has ever produced. Looking into the face of one man, who was voicing, though he little knew it, the great anguish of the human heart, the great hunger of the human soul, Christ said, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father," and in that declaration He claimed absolute identity with God. So much for the setting of my text and the claim thereof.

That claim has been vindicated in the passing of the centuries. The conception of God which is triumphant, intellectually capturing the mind, emotionally capturing the heart, volitionally capturing the will, came to the world through that One Who, standing Man before man, yet said to Him, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."

My purpose this evening is not to argue but to consider. I shall ask you therefore to consider with me, first, what this revelation of God has meant to the race; and, secondly, what it has meant to the individual.

First, consider the highest knowledge of God which man had before the Advent, and the new values consequent upon the manifestation in Jesus.

What conception of God had man before Christ came? Taking the Hebrew thought of God, let me put the whole truth as I see it into one comprehensive statement. Prior to the Advent there had been a growing intellectual apprehension of God, accompanied by a diminishing moral result. There had been a growing intellectual apprehension of truth concerning God. That is the first half of my statement. It is impossible to study the Old Testament without seeing that gradually there broke through the mists a clearer light concerning God: the fact of unity of God, the fact of the might of God, the fact of the holiness of God, the fact of the beneficence of God. These things men had come to see through the process of the ages. There had been progressive understanding of the fact of God's might. There had been progressive understanding of the fact of His holiness. There had been progressive understanding of the truth of His beneficence. Yet, side by side with this growing intellectual apprehension of God, there was diminishing moral result, for it is impossible to read the story of the ancient Hebrew people without seeing how they waxed worse and worse in all matters moral until the last. The moral life of Abraham was far purer than life in the time of the kings. Life in the early time of the kings was far purer than the conditions which the prophets ultimately described. This diminishing moral result is not to be wondered at. In proportion as men grew in their intellectual conception of God, it seemed increasingly unthinkable that He could be interested in their everyday life. Morality became something not of intimate relationship to Him and therefore something that mattered far less. In some senses that has been repeated during the last half century. The discoveries of the scientists have created an ever-increasing sense of the greatness of the universe. Every decade has given man a larger grasp upon the truth of the universe. With the progress of man's intellectual apprehension of the greatness of the universe, there has been an increase necessarily in his conception of the God of the universe, until at last God has grown out of knowledge and men have declared that He is unknowable, and have defined Him as force, as intelligence - or as the operation of force and intelligence combined. The greater the universe, the greater the God, and the greater the God, the less man has been able to appreciate his relation to Him.

Think of the great Gentile world as it then was, and as it still is, save where the message of the Evangel has reached it - for the things of the Gentile world prior to the Advent are the things of the Gentile world until this hour, save where the Gospel of the grace of God has reached it.

In Gentile thought there is always a substratum of accurate consciousness. Go where you will, get down deeply enough, and you will find in the common consciousness of humanity a substratum of truth. When it begins to express itself it does so falsely. When it begins to take that deep under-lying conviction, and put it into form or expression it breaks down; but there is universally a sense of God.

Occasional flashes of light have broken out of this underlying sub-consciousness. We have had such remarkable teachers as Zoroaster, Buddha, Confucius, men speaking true things flashing with a new light.

Notwithstanding these things, a perpetual failure in morals and a uniform degradation of religion have been universal. No voice which has spoken some message of truth out of the sub-consciousness in the passing of the centuries has been able to lift those to whom it has been addressed in the moral scale. The history of the Hindu religion is, perhaps, the most conspicuous illustration of this fact. Buddhism as it is practiced today and Buddhism as Buddha lived and taught are at the poles asunder.

Wherever you find Gentile nations you find these things true - a substratum of accurate consciousness, occasional flashes of clear light, but perpetual failure in morals and uniform degradation of religion. The failure has ever been due to lack of final knowledge concerning God.

At last there came the song of the angels and the birth of a child. At the close of one swiftly passing generation of teaching and of working, of gathering a few souls together, there stood One in the midst of a little group of disciples, and at the same moment in the midst of all humanity, and He looked into the face of one man and said, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."

Through that Advent and ministry there came to men a new consciousness of God.

I turn to the centuries that have passed since His coming. What effect has that coming had in the realm of revelation? By that I mean among those who had received revelation from God. First, the inclusion in His teaching and manifestation of all the essential things which men had learned in the long ages of the past. He did not deny the truth of the unity of God. He re-emphasized it. He did not deny the might of God. He declared it and manifested it in many a gentle touch of infinite power. He did not deny the holiness of God. He insisted upon it in teaching and life, and at last by the mystery of dying. He did not deny the beneficence of God. He changed the cold word "beneficence" into the word throbbing with the infinite heart of Deity, "love"! He did more. He brought to men the new, that toward which they had been groping but had never found. That which men had imperfectly expressed in song and prophecy He came to state. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." Not Elohim, not Jehovah, not Adonahy, none of the great names of the past, all of them suggestive, but "He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father." In and through Him that truth of fatherhood was revealed. When I say that I beseech you remember that fatherhood means a great deal more than we sometimes imagine it means. It is not merely a term of tenderness. It is also a term of law and discipline. But Fatherhood means supremely that if the child have wandered away the Father will suffer everything to save and bring it home again. Within the realm of revealed religion this truth emerged, that the one God, mighty, holy, beneficent, is the Father Who will sacrifice Himself to save the child. There man found the point of contact in infinite love which never abandons him, never leaves him. That is the truth which, coming into revealed religion, saved it from being intellectual apprehension minus moral dynamic, and sent running through all human life rivers of cleansing, renewal, regeneration.

Wherever Christ comes to people who have never had direct revelation, He comes first of all as fulfilment of all that in their thought and scheme is true. He comes, moreover, for the correction of all that in their thought and scheme is false. All the underlying consciousness of humanity concerning God is touched and answered, and lifted into the supreme consciousness whenever God is seen in Christ. All the gleams of light which have been flashing across the consciousness of humanity merge into the essential light when He is presented. I will take the illustration which is the lowest and the simplest, and therefore perhaps the profoundest at this point. It is an old story, I have often used it before. In Africa are found men of whom we speak as superstitious, perhaps the lowest in all the scale intellectually. The only form of religion they have is that of which we speak as fetish worship, which means nothing less and nothing more than that the uninstructed mind of the savage connects with some charm - a little piece of stick, a little piece of leather - certain values that are beyond his ken, supernatural values. He does not think it possible to be fortunate in business, in pleasure, in home or in marriage or any-thing else save as he is accompanied by his fetish. That is a low form of religion. You smile at it - and yet I know of people in England who carry charms about with them. In Africa, if you are about to trade with one of these men after he has driven his cattle hundreds of miles, and discovers that in his unutterable folly he has not brought his fetish with him, you cannot persuade him to trade with you. He will tramp all the weary miles back again, and postpone his traffic for days, weeks, months, because he cannot trade unless that fetish is with him. You smile at him. When Jesus meets that man he does not destroy that belief. He fulfils it. Christ comes to him and says in effect, "You are perfectly right in your underlying consciousness that you cannot be fortunate in business or home or marriage or pleasure unless you have dealing with the thing that is more than you are, the supernatural. You must have God with you." Jesus takes out of the black hand the fetish, the little piece of leather or stick, and flings it away and puts back into the hand His own pierced hand, saying, "Lo, I am with you all the days - business days, pleasure days, home days, all the days. Never do business without God." Before you mock the African who will not traffic without his fetish learn this, that if you do business without God you are far more heathen than he is. Christ comes not to contradict the essential truth of Buddhism but to fulfil it. He comes not to rob the Chinaman of his regard for parents, as taught by Confucius, but to fulfil it, and to lift him upon that regard into regard for the One great Father, God. He comes always to fulfil. Wherever He has come, wherever He has been presented, wherever men, low or high in the intellectual scale, have seen God in Christ, their hands have opened and they have dropped the fetishes and the idols and have yielded themselves to Him. If the world has not come to God through Him it is because the world has not yet seen Him; and if the world has not yet seen Him the blame is upon the Christian Church.

The wide issues of the manifestation of God in Christ are the union of intellectual apprehension and moral improvement, and the relation of religion to life. When you are tempted to admire Buddhism, or to admire Confucianism, and to think that in these God has spoken to men, never forget that in no system of religion in the world has there come to men the idea of God which unites religion with morals save in this revelation of God in Jesus Christ. There is through all India today divorce between religion and morals. There a man may be the most immoral of all men and yet be religiously a saint. But wherever this manifestation of God comes, and the heart of God and the sacrifice of God, behind His unity and His might, His holiness and beneficence, emerge into view, there men have found that religion means morality.

I pass, in the second place, to say some few words concerning the effect of the manifestation in relation to the individual. Here I propose to see one man as illustration. I think we cannot be truer to the text than by taking Philip, the man to whom Christ spoke. Mark the words of Jesus to him, "Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know Me, Philip?" The evident sense of the question is, "You have seen enough of Me, Philip, if you have really seen Me, to have found what you are asking for, a vision of God." There is no other interpretation of Christ's question possible. "Show us the Father and it sufficeth us," was Philip's request. "Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know Me, Philip? he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." He surely meant that Philip had seen enough of Him to have found the Father. What, then, had Philip seen? What revelations of Deity had come to this man who thought he had not seen and did not understand? Christ evidently intended to say he might have seen and might have understood. What were the things to which Christ referred? I am not going to indulge in speculation. I might gather up the general facts of His teaching and His doing, but I think we shall be safer if we adhere to what Scripture tells of what Philip had seen.

All the story is in John. Philip is referred to by Matthew, Mark, and Luke as being among the number of the Apostles, but in no other way. John tells me of four occasions when Philip is seen in union with Christ. I will take the first three, for the last is the one in which our text occurs. Philip was the first man Jesus called to follow him. I do not say the first man to follow Him. There were other two who preceded Philip, going after Christ in consequence of the teaching of John. Philip did not go to inquire. It is distinctly stated in the first chapter of John's Gospel that Jesus found him and said, "Follow Me." That was the first man to whom Christ used that great formula of calling men which has become so precious in the passing of the centuries. "Follow Me." What happened? "Philip findeth Nathaniel, and saith unto Him, We have found Him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write." That was the first thing that Philip had seen in Christ, according to his own confession, One Who embodied all the ideals of Moses and the prophets. When he said, "We have found Him, of Whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write," he did not refer to any particular word of Moses. The word he used covers the whole of the Old Testament teaching. What he meant was, "We have found Him Who embodies the ideal of Moses, and the ideal of the prophets, all the teaching of Moses, all the messages of the prophets. We have found Him." It was the cry of a soul inviting another soul. It was the cry of a soul who had this conviction borne in upon it - Here is One Who fulfils all the ideals and suggestions and intention: of the whole religious economy of the past! That was the first thought.

I find Philip next in the sixth chapter, when the multitudes were about Christ and they were hungry. Jesus singled out Philip and said to him, "Whence are we to buy bread, that these may eat?" John is very careful to state that Jesus did not ask that question because He needed advice, "for He Himself knew what He would do." He asked it to prove Philip. Philip answered, "Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient, that everyone may take a little." That is the back-ground. What happened next? Philip, who considered it impossible to feed the hungry multitude, is next seen with the other disciples seating them ready to be fed, incredulously, perhaps; I do not know. Then he watched this selfsame Jesus take the loaves and fishes of the lad and break them. Then with the others he carried the food to rank after rank until all the assembled multitude were fed. So that Philip had now seen Someone Who in a mysterious way had resource enough to satisfy human hunger. That is not all. Philip then listened while in matchless discourse Jesus lifted the thought from material hunger to spiritual need and declared, "I am the Bread of Life." So that the second vision Philip had of Jesus, according to the record, was a vision of Him full of resource and able to satisfy hunger both material and spiritual. I see Philip next in the twelfth chapter. The Greeks coming to him said, "Sir, we would see Jesus." Philip found his way with Andrew to Jesus, and asked Him to see the Greeks. Mark the relation with the Father, and that there was perfect harmony between them, no conflict, no controversy. He saw, moreover, that upon the basis of that communion with His Father and that perfect harmony, His voice changed from the tones of sorrow to those of triumph, "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Myself." That was Philip's third vision of Jesus. It was the vision of One acting in perfect accord with God, bending to the sorrow that surged upon His soul in order that through it He might accomplish human redemption.

We now come back to the last scene. Philip said, "Show us the Father and it sufficeth us." Gathering up all the things of the past, Christ looked into the face of Philip and replied, "Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know Me, Philip? When thou didst first see Me did there not come to thee the conviction that in Me there was the embodiment of law and righteousness? When thou didst watch Me feed men didst thou not understand that I am the One Who can satisfy all the hunger of the human heart? In the mystery of that strange hour when thou didst bring the Greeks to Me didst thou not understand that in union with God I am moving toward unutterable pain in order that men may be set free?" No, Philip had not seen these things. We are not to blame him. They were there to be seen, and by and by, the infinite work of Christ being accomplished and the glory of Pentecost having dawned upon the world, Philip saw it all. Then Philip saw the meaning of the things he had seen and had never seen, the things he had looked upon and had never understood. Then Philip found that having seen Jesus he had actually seen the Father. When he looked upon One Who embodied in His own personality all the facts of the law and righteousness, he had seen God. When he had looked upon One Who could touch the loaves of a lad until they fed a multitude, and One Who could deal with the spiritual needs of restless hearts until they were rested, he had seen God. When he had seen a Man Who shrank from sorrow yet pressed into it because through it in co-operation with God He could ransom humanity, he had seen God.

This manifestation wins the submission of the reason. This manifestation appeals to the love of the heart. This manifestation demands the surrender of the will. Here is the value of the Advent as revelation of God.

Let my last word be one in which I ask you solemnly to see what this means in your case. Call back your thoughts from the wider application of the earlier part of my sermon. Call back your thoughts for a moment from the particular application in the case of Philip, and think what this means to you. Is it true that this manifestation wins the submission of your reason, appeals to the love of your heart, asks the surrender of your will? Then to refuse God in Christ is to violate at some essential point your own manhood. To refuse, you must violate reason which is captured by the revelation, or you must crush the emotion which springs in your heart in the presence of the revelation, or you must decline to submit your will to the demands which the manifestation makes.

May God grant that we shall rather look into His face and say, "My Lord and my God"! So shall we find our rest and our hearts be satisfied. It shall suffice as we see the Father in the Christ.