**VOLUME 7; CHAPTER 19 - THE PREACHING OF G. CAMPBELL MORGAN**

**LIKE GODS OR GODLIKE by G. CAMPBELL MORGAN**

*They that make them shall be like unto them.*

*Psalm 115:8*

*We shall be like Him.*

*1 John 3:2*

IN THE CHAPTER OF "CONFORMITY TO TYPE" IN HIS "Natural Law in the Spiritual World," Henry Drummond wrote:

The protoplasm in man has a something in addition to its instincts or its habits. It has a capacity for God. In this capacity for God lies its receptivity, for it is the very protoplasm that was necessary. The chamber is not only ready to receive the new Life, but the Guest is expected, and, till He comes, is missed. Till then the soul longs and yearns, wastes and pines, waving its tentacles piteously in the empty air feeling after God if so be that it may find Him. This is not peculiar to the protoplasm of the Christian's soul. In every land and in every age there have been altars to the Known or Unknown God. It is now agreed upon as a mere question of anthropology that the universal language of the human soul has always been "I perish with hunger."

What Drummond declared in that remarkable passage as "now agreed upon as a mere question of anthropology" I desire to emphasize in order that we may consider in the light of it these two passages of Scripture, which immediately suggest a somewhat remarkable and startling contrast.

There is a master passion in every human life, some one principle which at least professes to render the life consistent and cohesive, and drives it in some given direction. That truth may be stated in another form. Man cannot live without a God. The origin of the word "God" is etymologically obscure. The simplest use of the word, so far as we are able to trace it, is one which suggests a Supreme Being, and, consequently, a Supreme Authority over human life.

The term "God" has been applied to erroneous conceptions of Deity, as to nature, interest, power, and activity; but underneath all the mistakes the word "God" suggests a Being superior to men, a Supreme Being, who, therefore, whether His authority be exercised righteously or unrighteously, mercifully or cruelly, beneficently or tyrannically, yet has power over men.

The recognition of that essential and simple thought concerning God has produced very many different attitudes on the part of men toward God, attitudes depending on the conception of the character of God which they may have entertained.

There is no living man or woman or child who has come to years of understanding but that has, in some form, in some fashion, a God. They may decline to use the word "God"; but the fact remains, no human life can continue without some conception of a Supreme - we need not say "Being." We may say force, or power, or motive; but the supremacy is the quality of importance.

In the passage quoted, Drummond declared that this is because human nature is made from its very beginning with a capacity for a God, and consequently lives in the experience of a clamant cry after God. That I take to be the statement of a simple truth from which there can be no escape.

Out of that conscious necessity for God has arisen all forms of worship. If we go back to the old days of wide-spread idolatry, or if we examine the great systems of idolatry which still exist; though we have a thousand and one varied expressions of idolatry, we find on examination that they fall into three main divisions, which our Old Testament Scriptures deal with: the worship of Baal, the worship of Moloch, the worship of Mammon. We today may affect to smile at those old ideas, but they still exist. There are thousands of men worshiping Baal in London, thousands of people bowing at the shrine of Moloch in this city at this hour, and how many are worshiping Mammon?

What does it mean when a man worships Baal? It means that he must worship something. What does it mean when a man offers his sacrifice on the shrine of Moloch? It means that there is that in his nature which drives him to the activity of sacrifice. What does it mean when a man worships Mammon with all his heart and all his soul and all his mind and all his strength? It means that he must exercise heart and soul and mind and strength in one supreme and all-inclusive act of worship in some form. Man is by nature and instinctively, whether he will or not, religious. I did not say good. I did not say pious. I did not say holy. I did not say righteous. I said religious.

Religion is that which binds a man. Every man is bound somewhere, somehow, to a throne, to a government, to an authority, to something that is supreme, to something to which he offers sacrifice, and burns incense, and bends the knee. I glance back for a moment to those old systems, and I see men worshiping Baal, the god of nature; Moloch, the master of the emotions; Mammon, the deity of will power. Though the method of the worship has changed, and though the faces of the worshipers are others than those of old, and though the language of the worship is not what it was, the essence is the same, and the common fact of worship comes thrilling and thundering, vibrating and sounding through the ages, expressing itself in a thousand new ways with every new-born generation. Through all the long history of the human race men have worshiped. The common principle throughout all this great fact is that man has capacity for God, must have a god, must bow the knee in some form at the altar of his god.

In the light of that great underlying truth I return to our two passages of Scripture.

The psalmist was dealing with idolatry, boasting and vaunting in holy joy in the fact that Israel trusted Jehovah, and putting into contrast to that trust of Israel in Jehovah the trust of men in the idols that they had created for themselves. In a passage of fine scorn he spoke of these idols: mouths that speak not, eyes that never see, ears that hear nothing, noses that smell not, hands that never handle, feet that never travel, throats through which no speech comes. He was describing idolatry as it manifested itself in his day and in his age; and having described it, he said these idols were made by men, and they that made them were like them.

John was speaking in exquisite tenderness of the new relation between man and God, which is the result of the mission of Jesus; and the music of the whole passage thrills through the mind of every child of God who knows it. "Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him."

"They that make them shall be like unto them." "We shall be like Him." These two statements constitute a great contrast, but they contain a common principle. The common principle is that every man becomes like his God. You must have a God. You have a God. You are growing like Him! If your god is false, you are becoming false; if your God is true, you are growing in truth; if your god is hard, you are becoming hard; if your God is tender, you are becoming compassionate. The principle is described in these two passages as working in two opposite directions to two opposite results. Insensate gods create insensate men. The one living and eternal and loving God makes men living and eternal and loving.

Let us look at these things carefully by taking these texts and examining them a little more closely. We will consider first, the men who become like their gods; and, second, the men who become Godlike.

First, then, the men who become like their gods. And here we need not refer to the idolatry of the past save as it reveals perpetual principles. I have no care to attack and denounce and combat the idolatry of Eastern lands. Henceforward I refer only to the idolatry described by the psalmist as manifest in his day, that we may discover that though the garb is changed and the language altered, the essence is the same in our day and in our land as it was in Syria. The very essentials of idolatry which expressed themselves in strange and crude forms in days long gone exist in our own days.

The worship of Baal was the worship of nature, and when man begins to worship nature he finally enters into the holy of holies of nature to its most mystic center, to its most mysterious realm; and consequently the worship of Baal in those olden days finally became a worship which expressed itself in ways that must be nameless in the congregation of the saints. We still have this deification of the intellect in the days in which we live. Men who own no allegiance to the throne of our God enthrone in His place human intellect, indulge in philosophies, follow speculations, are given, as the apostle said in writing to Timothy, to "fables and endless genealogies," consult together concerning the long-continued and perpetual emanation of life, attempt to knock at the door of the deepest heart of Nature and fathom its profoundest secret, ask for the solution of the riddle of the universe. That is idolatry. It is the deification of intellect, and when a man says, I will refuse to worship or believe or bow the knee in the presence of anything that does not come within the grasp of my own mind, and that cannot be encompassed in the reach of my own thinking, that is Baal worship.

There are other men who deify their emotional nature, and strange as it may be, the idolatry that deifies the emotional nature always descends to a lower plane than the idolatry that deifies the intellect. Not that the emotional nature is lower than the intellect, but that it is higher, and the higher the faculty the lower its sweep if you degrade it. It has often been said, and I for one feel that it is true, that a woman is capable of a far deeper degradation than a man; and that is not to reflect upon womanhood but to say that the finer fabric, when once thickened and coarsened, becomes more vulgar than the texture of that which is coarser in itself. And what is true by way of illustration is true in this matter. When man burns incense to his emotional nature the outcome is lust, in the most debased sense of that word. Love is the true deity of the emotion; but if a man lets emotion master him lust is the result. And careful as I would be to make reference to such subjects here, there are times when the prophet must speak. On every street men are worshiping Moloch, and it eventuates in the most awful cruelty that it is possible for the heart of man to conceive. Love prostituted becomes hatred. Adoration debased becomes loathing. You have but to have eyes lit with God's love, and hearts tender with His compassion, to see the most awful and devilish cruelty being practiced in the glare of the London streets every day that you live.

There are also those who worship Mammon, moved by the passion for power that makes a man want to possess wealth. Men who desire to possess wealth simply for its own sake are very few and far between, and they are always men who have lost their reason. That is not the worship of Mammon. I have a pity for the man that piles up golden sovereigns and puts his fingers into them. But there is another man who grinds and drives and schemes and plans for the same gold, not in order that he may put his fingers into its yellow glitter, but that he may drive men and make them serve him and obey him. Infinitely more cruel than the worship of the intellect or the worship of the emotion is will worship. Jesus said once to men, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." The devil of the Middle Ages was painted with horns and hoofs and a tail and fire coming from his mouth. That devil is dead, because he never really existed. The devil today enthrones himself most often behind Mammon, the greed for power, the lust for possession that deadens and hardens every aspect of human life. The love of money is a more terrible thing than the drink traffic. Kill the love of money and you will sweep the drink traffic out in six months. This worship of Mammon is a more terrible thing than the awful prostitution of our streets. If only I could burn up the love of money in the hearts of landlords I would close all the houses of ill fame. It is not the girl on the street with whom I am angry. It is the man who is behind the business and makes possible the continuance of the vaunted and flaunting sin by reason of his damnable love of gold. That is the worship of Mammon. And it is everywhere. I never walk down London streets without seeing an altar besprinkled with blood, a worshiper debased and degraded!

Yet look again, oh, look again, and see this: the horror of the whole thing is due to the fact that the capacity which prostituted works ruin is a Divine capacity. The thing in the man that drives him to the deification of his intellect, to the enthronement of his own emotion, to the love of power, what is it? Oh, God, open our eyes to see it. It is the cry of the soul after God with parched lip, and breaking heart, and throbbing brow. Though he does not understand his own language, he is saying everywhere, "When shall I appear before God? Oh that I knew where I might find Him."

But pass on. When a man makes a god for himself he always constructs his god on the pattern of himself. Take the older forms of idolatry, or the more recent forms to which I have been referring, and what is man doing when he worships? He is making a god on the pattern of himself. You cannot find me a single idol in the world today but that if you will come back from that deity and narrow the lines that enclose it you will find the man who made it. Every deity that a man makes for himself he makes on the pattern of himself.

I will imagine that I am back among the old idolators whom the psalmist described. I must have a god, I must have something that represents to me the thought of authority, of supremacy. I will make my god of gold, of silver, or out of a tree; and I set to work with carving instruments to make my god. How shall I make it? I must give him a mouth. Why? Because I have one. I must give him ears. Why? Because I have ears and can hear. And so through all the gamut of the senses, whenever a man makes a god he makes it on the pattern of himself. "They that make them" make them on the pattern of their own personality.

So today. The moment you see a man deifying his intelligence you say, What does he know of intelligence? He knows that he knows, and he deifies the capacity for knowledge. He lifts a part of himself out of himself, and he says, That is supreme. I worship that. Or a man is deifying his emotion, and you say, What does he know of emotion? He says, I can love, I can hate. That is the greatest thing. I will worship love and hate. I will give free rein to the sweep and the thrill and the throb of myself. It is always himself enlarged that he worships. And when a man worships Mammon, what is it he worships? His own will power. He says, That is the thing, to be able to will, and see it done; to wish, and to achieve; to decide, and see it carried out. It is a true instinct, and it is part of the man, and he enlarges it and worships it. Every man makes his god on the pattern of himself. That is the first thing.

Look once again. Whenever a man makes a god on the pattern of himself he makes something less than himself. A man says, I will create a god. I will give to this god a mouth and eyes and ears and nose and hands and feet and throat, all greater than I. A mouth that can utter a more authoritative speech. Eyes that can see greater distances. Ears that can hear minuter sounds, more feeble vibrations. A nose that can scent with a more remarkable accuracy. Hands that can encompass more work. Feet that can travel greater distances and more swiftly. A throat out of which the thunders roll instead of the puny speech that is in my throat. And see, he says, now I have made something greater than myself.

Yet he has not done so! Let the psalmist interpret the result. Listen to his fine scorn. A mouth, greater? Infinitely less, it cannot speak. Eyes, greater? Infinitely less, they cannot see. When a man builds a god on the pattern of himself he makes something less than himself. Bring the thought into our present age, and what have you? A man deifies intelligence, but what is this that man deifies? He deifies his own capacity, and he says the ultimate knowledge is the great thing. And where does he end? In agnosticism. And what is agnosticism? A confession of ignorance. I start to worship the ultimate knowledge, and when I have worshiped ultimate knowledge long enough I say, I cannot find it. I am an agnostic. I am ignorant. I went after the ultimate, and all I found was its hollow laugh of mockery as it evaded me through the mysterious door of the protoplasmic germ. That is the end of it.

Or a man deifies his emotion, and he says emotion is the great thing, a thrill, a throb, a passion, an excitement, and he worships it. How does it end? He built up something in himself that was real, and when he had constructed it, and went to worship it, he found what? Did I say lust? I will repeat it. What is lust? Hunger. A man set out along the line of the worship of an enlarged capacity for mere emotional satisfaction, and he found the opposite of satisfaction - hunger, panting desire, and no water; perpetual craving, and no bread. And here again I speak carefully, if you will bring down that one fearsome illustration of the worship of Moloch that I have more than once referred to, it is a patent commonplace, almost too shocking to mention, but awfully true, that the end is the same awful desire that can never be met, and that is hell begun ere hell is reached.

Or if a man shall deify Mammon because he would worship his will, what is he doing? Constructing something less than himself. He has a will. It is a divine power. He can choose, he can elect; and, in order to elevate it and deify it, and reach out after larger things, he comes at last to a night dark with clouds, lit with the glare of the vivid lightning, and he hears the voice which says: "Thou foolish one! This night is thy soul required of thee!" and the hand that grasped unloosens, and nothing is there, and the will that mastered bends to the blind fate of oncoming death. He has worshiped something he thought higher, and finds it infinitely lower.

But all this is not finality, nor is it the most terrible thing. The most terrible thing is that, when a man deifies something he thought higher, in the moment he discovers it lower he finds he has dragged himself down to the level which he discovers it occupies. The man who worships an insensate god becomes insensate; the man who worships something that looks and never sees, himself presently looks and never sees, listens and never hears.

The worship of anything less than God blinds and blasts and burns to cinders every distinctive excellency in man, until life itself becomes an unutterable weariness. Do not laugh at the man who talks about killing time. Next to killing the Son of God, or killing my fellow man, killing time is the most awful guilt and the direst tragedy. Do you want to kill time? You have lost your power to see. Give me that little child for a minute or two. I will put that little child down in a one-acre field, with nothing but green grass and buttercups and daisies, and the child will weave garlands and make crowns and play at kingdoms, and see everything; and you trot over Europe and sweep round the world and see nothing. You have become like your god. Your worship has degraded you. You may have pored over the musty tomes in your search after intellectual crowning, you may have followed every new call of emotional temptation, you may have planned and schemed to grasp power by the worship of Mammon, but these things give you nothing except their own emptiness, their own inability, and, at last, alas! too late, you will find that all you have gathered is vanity. You may live in a soft, miserable age that does not like the preacher who thunders to you about hell, but I tell you you are lighting the fires for it yourself if you are worshiping a false deity.

But let me pass to the other side. "We shall be like Him." I ought to say it with bowed head. I ought to say it with reverent demeanor. I ought to say it in tones that thrill with a great sense of the infinite Grace. I think that when John wrote it his pen throbbed with the sense of the infinite mystery.

"We shall be like Him." Like whom? A careful exegesis of this text must refer the pronoun "Him" to the Father. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God. For this cause the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not" - that is God. "Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that if He" - God - "shall be manifested, we shall be like Him" - God. The reference is to the Father. Jesus said one day to an inquiring man, "Have I been so long time with you and hast thou not known Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." Yes, we shall be like the Son, and, being like the Son, we shall be like the Father.

Notice first the fundamental change of suggestion. The other men were men who made gods; these people are people whom God has remade by new birth. The primal capacities are redeemed, intelligence is illuminated, emotion is inspired, will is dominated. So instead of saying that when men make gods they make them like themselves; I have to change the whole position and say, When God makes men He makes them like Himself.

Moreover, when men make gods they make them less than themselves; when God makes men He makes them greater than themselves. Man was never perfected on the earth, even when he stood in Eden's perfection, and now John has to write, "We are the children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be." There is something more, there is something grander. The intelligence has been illuminated, and we have seen into the heart of the riddle of the universe; we have not found the protoplasmic germ - we have found God. The emotion has been enkindled, and we do not worship it; but it fastens on the eternal Love, and is hungry never more. We worship will, but we are not foolish enough to worship our own; instead, we sing with sweet old Faber: -

I worship Thee, sweet will of God,

And all Thy ways adore;

And every day I live I seem

To love Thee more and more.

These are present realizations, but John says this is not all. There is something else. "It is not yet made manifest what we shall be." We are not at the end of the process. We are just beginning. We are learning the alphabet. We do not know all, but we know something. "We shall be like Him." Much as I love the work of exposition, I have no exposition for that. That defies the expositor, that makes the exegete bow in worship. That is the cry of a heart resting in God. That is the language of the soul in whom the wilderness ends, and the eternal morning flames and flashes with glory. There is neither hunger nor thirst, there is no unsatisfied desire. "Like Him," walking in light with Him who dwells in light - that is the highest function of intelligence. "Like Him," acting in love with Him who is essential love - that is the highest possibility of the emotional nature. "Like Him," operating in power under Him who is essential life, and whose will is therefore perfect in its goings - that is the final action of human will.

Oh that I could speak to you one by one. What would I say? I would say this: Who is your god? Who is your god, young man? Who is your god, young maiden? That is your first question. It is the supreme question, but I beseech you, find your answer quickly, and find it truly, Who is your god?

Today only can you answer that question; tomorrow we shall all know. How shall we know? We shall see the likeness to your god in you. Already it is manifesting itself!

I know that man's God. Who is it? The one only living God. How do you know? See the love in his eyes, the light on his life, see his likeness to the infinite order, see the sweet certainty and peace that make him sing the song of triumph, when the tempests are sweeping round him. I know your God, sir, I can see Him in you.

I know your god also! His marks are already on you. I meet you on the highway, and look into your face, and as God is my witness, my heart often goes out in compassion for you. The brand is there, the shadow of death is on your face, the vacuous stare is there. You are becoming like your god, man! Already it is beginning to be seen.

Listen for a minute, not to me; listen, man, listen to the voice that is speaking within you. Can you hear it? I will tell you what is being said in your heart now: "Show us the Father." That is it. Whatever the desire that is operating in your heart at this minute, that is what it means. You are going back to the thrill of a shameless sin, and the thing you really want is God. The clamant cry that you are trying to answer in a wrong way is the cry of your being after God.

There are some who say, Yes, it is true; what shall we do? I have the answer to that cry in your heart. They are not my words, but I am here by holy ordination, the ordination of the pierced hand on my head to utter them for my Master. Do not hear them as mine, hear them as His. "No man knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him. Come unto Me." "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." Crown Him and find God. Find God and grow like Him. God helps you now to answer His call and find all that your heart needs.