**VOLUME 3; CHAPTER 08 - THE PREACHING OF G. CAMPBELL MORGAN**

**THE PURPOSE OF LIFE by G. CAMPBELL MORGAN**

*Every one that is called by My name, and whom I have created for My glory; I have formed him; yea, I have made him.*

*Isaiah 43:7*

THE FIRST APPLICATION OF THIS TEXT WAS TO GOD'S ANCIENT people Israel. The whole message of which it forms a part was delivered to the chosen nation. The opening word of the text indicates the fact that the prophet was thinking, not so much of the whole nation as of the individuals who made up the nation. "Everyone" is a distributive by use of which the thought passes to individual life, and the great purpose of its being. "Every one that is called by My name, and whom I have created for My glory; I have formed him; yea, I have made him."

My purpose in taking this verse is not at all to deal with it in its application to the nation of Israel. Neither is it my purpose to deal with it in its application to individual members of that nation only. It is my purpose rather to take it as a revelation of the principle that has application in the case of every individual life; for while there are special ways in which Israel was indeed the chosen nation, and special ways in which the members of that nation were the chosen people of God, yet we must ever remember that all the things said concerning them, in their deepest intention, reveal the thought and intention of God for all men. I have taken this verse out of the ancient prophecy, then, because I conceive it to be a remarkable declaration of the real purpose of human life. "Every one that is called by My name, and whom I have created for My glory; I have formed him; yea, I have made him."

The whole burden of the message of the verse, and consequently the burden of the message I bring you tonight, may thus be expressed in briefest words, Man is created for the glory of God. The Bible makes clear to us that this is true, not only of the elect people, but of all humanity. The charge made by the prophet in the ancient days against the king of Babylon was couched in these remarkable terms, "The God in Whose hand thy breath is, hast thou not glorified." We should have charged neglect of his kingdom; with encouraging vice. He was guilty of all these things, but the spokesman of the eternal purpose and the mouthpiece of the Divine message to the profligate king said nothing of these manifestations. He at once struck at the root of the trouble, "The God in Whose hand thy breath is hast thou not glorified." It is equally evident that the principle has application to all men when we come to study the New Testament argument of salvation. Paul, in his letter to the Romans, having shown that the Gentile failed because he held down the truth in unrighteousness, and the Jew because he failed to be obedient to the revelation of God, sums up the whole situation in these striking words, intimately related to the thought suggested by my text, "All have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God." So whether it be the ancient Babylonish king, or whether it be humanity, both Jew and Gentile, the Bible declares that human failure consists in failure to glorify God. That brings us back to our text, with its simple central declaration, "whom I have created for My glory."

A right understanding for the purpose of human life will give us the true standard by which to measure our lives. That is the supreme difficulty, we so perpetually measure ourselves by wrong standards. When Robert Burns sang,

O wad some power the giftie gie us

To see ourselves as ithers see us,

he did not touch the deepest thing in human life. It would be a great advantage to us sometimes if we could see ourselves as others see us, but it would be a temporal and passing advantage. If we would find the supreme advantage we must see ourselves as God sees us. When Dr. Jowett was Master of Balliol, on one occasion at dinner a lady, desiring to draw from him some smart witticism, asked him, somewhat flippantly, "Tell us, Dr. Jowett, what do you really think of God?" His answer came quick and sharp: "Madam, it matters nothing what I think of God; it matters everything what God thinks of me." When we allow the Scriptures of Truth to do their work in our lives they always compel us to that judgment seat. We come to the standard of eternity, to the balances of the sanctuary, to the measurements of God.

The declaration of the text is supreme, "whom I have created for My glory." I call you then to quiet meditation on that declaration along two lines. First, man a creation of God; and secondly, man a creation of God, for Himself, and for His glory.

First, then, man a creation of God. In this one brief verse three words are employed to describe that creation, Whereas I am not going to detain you at any length, for detailed examination of them, suggestive as such examination would be, I cannot wholly pass them over. "I have created … have formed … I have made." The Hebrew words living at the back of these three English words are as distinct as are the English, and more so; for we may interchange the English words, but we cannot interchange the Hebrew, each one having a separate emphasis and signification. The first word is the essential one, to which I draw your attention specially, have created," It is an all-inclusive word, which indicates actual causing to be, by the God of omnipotent power and wisdom. At your leisure you will read again the first chapter of Genesis, and you will find these words there used with great accuracy. The word translated "created" appears in that chapter three times only. The word translated "made" occurs over and over again. The word "created" is used only when there was evidently an entirely new beginning, a new departure. If you accept the evolutionary theory of creation you will remember that there are gaps that have never been filled; not a missing link, but many missing links. "Three principal links are missing. There is the link between man and the highest form of life beneath him. There is the link between the animal life which is sentient and the vegetable life that lies beneath it. There is a missing link at the back of everything as to origination of the first fact in creation. At those points in your book of Genesis the word "created" occurs and nowhere else. "In the beginning God created," the primal activity of Deity. The word appears again between the vegetable and the animal kingdoms. It occurs again when man appears upon the scene. It is the essential word that indicates the original act of causing to be.

The second word in this particular verse, the word "formed," is a word which indicates a process. It is a word which is perpetually used of the potter at his work at the wheel. By manipulation of things already existing, a new thing is made to be.

The third word, "made," is a word which indicates the outlook on the result. I have made. I have accomplished. I have finished.

I cannot think that it is without signification that the prophet gathered up the three great words used to describe the making of anything when he spoke of what God does in the case of man. I have created him; the original essential thought was that of God, and the act by which the thought of God was realized was that of God. I have formed him; all the mysterious and hidden processes so full of interest and yet for ever baffling the ingenuity of man perfectly to discover are the processes of God. I have made him; when at last he stands upon the earth the completed being the finality of the work is of God.

To me in this great declaration of my text there is infinite comfort. Man in all his complex nature is a thought of God, a work of God. I look out upon nature everywhere, and see in the handiwork of man inventions and improvements, but there is no advance in man, save as man is developed; that is, save as that which already lies within him potentially is realized in the process of human history. All the culture of this age and of every age is simply the development into visibility of powers Divinely bestowed in the original creation of man. How wonderful are the thoughts of men. I see them expressed in architecture, in sculpture, in art, in poetry, in philosophy; but all these are broken lights of that essential thought of God which He wrought out when He made man. Some of you will remember how angry John Ruskin was with the railway train, with what vehement passion he denounced the monster that swept over the landscape and spoiled it. I plead guilty, if guilty be the word to use, to being a disciple of John Ruskin. I owe more than I can tell to his writings, but I never could follow him in that vehement denunciation of the railway train. I stand upon an eminence, and looking out over the landscape see the fields of exquisite green, or, as Ruskin says, the ploughed field which sweeps up the hillside in folds of russet velvet; and as I look a railway train comes thundering across the country. Then I am always inclined to worship the man that made the train, because of the ingenuity that is revealed in it, the wonderful and determined master-ship of nature that laughs at mileage and acres, and moves swiftly to its destination. I see in the train, not the smoke, that is a process and will be consumed presently, but rather the power of humanity manifesting itself. Everything that has come from the thinking and planning and working of man is the result of the creation of God. Man is God's thought, and God's creation, and in himself is infinitely more than all his work. Humanity is the creation of God, the crowning creation, the last fact in the wonderful process of creative power. Every human being stands upon that final eminence, and the greatness of man is but evidence of the greatness of God. Man is of Divine creation.

Man is not only of Divine creation in that broadest sense. Every man is a Divine creation. There is an old saying which is used about some outstanding man. I have heard it used on this side of the Atlantic of Oliver Cromwell, and on the other side of Abraham Lincoln. God made Oliver Cromwell and broke the mould; God made Abraham Lincoln and broke the mold. I have no quarrel with the statement. I have a perpetual quarrel with the suggestion. What is the suggestion? That God occasionally makes some remarkable man and breaks the mould, that there may be no repetition. He breaks the mould after He has made every man! Every man is a lonely individuality, a special thought of God, incarnate. When Jesus stood before Pilate, and Pilate challenged Him as to Kingship and as to truth, Christ said, "To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." It was a great declaration of conscious individuality, potentiality, responsibility. Every man can say the same in some measure. The trouble is we do not all find out for what we were born and for what purpose we came into the world. In the great economy of God, in the wondrous, matchless marvel of His government it is true of every human being, "whom I have created for My glory."

But it is not only that man is Divine creation; according to the teaching of this book He is a Divine expression, made in the image of God. Perfect personality can only be postulated of God Himself, and that personality is limited in man. Whatever you think of personality, you are thinking finally of the infinite, eternal personality in God. Force, mind, heart, will. Are these elements that constitute personality in man? They are all shadows of the things that constitute the personality of Deity. Man is distinct from all lower creation in this, and herein lies his dignity, that in some way, which perhaps he never perfectly understands, he is kin of God; in His image, made with His likeness, an outworking into visibility of the essential facts concerning God Himself.

Because of these things man is the one link between the material and the spiritual. He is the point in which all lower forms of life touch the highest and become familiar with it. He is the point at which all the highest forms of existence touch the lower, and make them flash and flame with beauty. I pass over all this world and I see everywhere life in creation, but it never becomes spiritual until I see it in man. There is never recognition of the infinite and the eternal until I come to man. I think there is profound significance in the discovery of the opening declarations of John's gospel, where the mystic writer says of the incarnation of the Word, "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men." You cannot say that of anything lower in the scale of creation. You can say "In him was life" of every blade of grass, of every daisy that decks the sod, of every bird that poises in air its wing, and sings the song of seraphim; but you cannot say "the life was light" until you come to man. All else was created by God; but when creation reached man man turned round and looked into the face of God and knew Him. Light flamed with the coming of man. In him the lower orders of creation reach light, and finality. In man earth has traffic with heaven. In man heaven stoops down to earth and makes it beautiful. This is true of every man. Created by God. An expression of God. A link between the material and the spiritual worlds.

Now pass to the second of these thoughts. For what is such a being made? I have created him, said Jehovah by the mouth of Isaiah, for My glory. Here my difficulty begins, I know this is the ancient phraseology of the Church. We are all familiar with it, but how shall we say it so that the declaration may startle us into attention and change the whole order and current of our lives? It ought so to do, and will so do, if we can but hear it as we ought to hear it. Allow me a moment or two with the background of negation. What is the purpose of human life? There is the day of birth, and out there somewhere is the day of death, and these are but human terms, the full meaning of which none of us fully understands. The beginning and the end. What is the real meaning of the interim, of all that which lies between the wail of birth, and the darkness of death? What is the real meaning of human life, its true purpose? I will mention some things to you. The amassing of wealth, the acquisition of knowledge, the pursuit of pleasure. I mention these things only to dismiss them. You have already dismissed them. The deepest in you has said at once, No, it cannot be that a man Divinely created, himself an expression of Deity, a link between the material and the spiritual worlds, has as the purpose of his existence such things as these. Let them be dismissed. I will not stay to argue them for a moment.

Once again. Think of the day of birth. Think of the day of death. Tell me what is the purpose of the life that lies between? Is it the salvation of the soul? Certainly not. That is but the initial activity enabling a man to fulfil the purpose of his being. Is it then sympathy with sorrow? Assuredly not. The day will come - it seems slow in coming but it will come - when God shall wipe away all tears from men's eyes, and sorrow - listen, this is not my imagination, this is inspiration - "sorrow and sighing shall flee away," like black plumaged birds, never to return. Then is the purpose of life the service of humanity? No, that does not touch the deepest. That may be a method by which man today will fulfil the purpose of his being, but there is a profounder answer.

What, then, is the real meaning of this strange, complex, and marvellous life of mine; creation of God, expression of God, in itself a link between dust and Deity, between the material and the spiritual? I go back to the ancient prophecy. "Whom I have created for My glory." Allow me to illuminate that declaration by the revelation of the Bible generally, without referring to any particular passage. Man is created first for the knowledge of God. Man is created secondly for communion with God. Man is created thirdly for action with God. Man is created finally for revelation of God.

Man is created first for knowledge of God. There is given to man a consciousness of God which no other being has. The light of the uncreated beam is focussed in the lens of a human spirit. Zophar, in the olden days, said, "Canst thou by searching find out God?" and the answer intended, and the accurate answer, is, By no means. Yet man can know God, although he cannot know Him absolutely and perfectly, just as a man cannot encompass in his thinking eternity. Although eternity as a thought baffles the proud intellect of man, a man can know it. The moment in which a man knows the limitlessness of space he knows that he cannot know it; but in knowing that he cannot know it, he knows it. The moment a man encompasses in his mind the thought of unending duration he knows he cannot know all the meaning of it; but knowing that he cannot know it is to be sure of it, and so to know it. No dog thinks of eternity. No lower form of life thinks of unending space. No other created being can know God, but man is made to know Him. This is the first way in which man glorifies God, by coming to know Him. To this bear witness the words of Jesus Himself, so full of meaning. "This is age-abiding life, that they should know Thee, the only true God, and Him Whom Thou didst send."

Man is made not merely for the knowledge of God but also for fellowship with God, communion with God. In every man there is a desire, and capacity to listen to the voice of God. In every human being there is the possibility of sympathy in thought and feeling with God. It is sadly lacking in all of us, even in the best; yet there is no man or woman in London but is capable of communion with God; no man or woman but that can desire and cry out after the living God. Where that listening and that crying out and that desire are instructed and directed and obeyed, then God is to be found and known, and communed with. If my assertion is not enough, then in this sanctuary tonight there are hundreds of witnesses who still hear the voice saying amid the city's din and bustle, "This is the way, walk ye in it." For this communion man is made.

All of these are but preliminary and fundamental things. Not merely for knowledge of God and communion with God man is made, but also for co-operation with God. What was it in the beginning? Go, dig this garden and keep it. When the first man began his delving and his digging, his watching and his cultivation, until there came first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear; first the sapling, then the tree, then the verdure garments, and then the fruit, what was he doing? Working with God, He was partner with God. When the last man delved in your garden, and put in those russet bulbs that had no form or comeliness that you should desire them, and waited and watched until the spring time came and kissed the ground, and out of the russet bulb came the glorious flower, that man worked with God. Co-operation with God is the law of human life, and for that man was created.

I come from Eden and look at the second man, the last Adam.

The whole story of how He glorified God is told in His own words, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." Co-operation with God in His case was Redemption and Renewal; gathering the thorns out of the garden and bathing them in His blood that the curse might be removed. It is a metaphor, a figure of speech, but the infinite fact behind is far finer than the figure can ever suggest. The Church in so far as she fulfils the Divine ideal, to use the apostle's words of all its members, is composed of "workers together with God." Today saintly men and women are in co-operation with God, and presently in those dim and purple distances of the ages to come the ransomed will co-operate with God, for through the Church the kindness of God is to be manifest, and to the principalities and powers in heavenly places is to be made known by them the wisdom of God.

So that man finally fulfils the purpose of his being by such activity with God as results in the revelation of God. Angels desire to look into these things; they bend over, peer into, watch with intense interest the whole process and progress of man. Why? Because, according to that great Pauline teaching, the angels are learning God through His manifestation in humanity as they cannot learn Him anywhere else. Man reveals to man the truth of God, as in the Fatherhood of God he realizes the brotherhood of man. Devils are learning through human history God's righteousness and God's power, and the ultimate doom of evil. For co-operation with God man is made.

Thus man fulfils the purpose of his being. Every man who is living for any lower thing than to glorify God is prostituting God-given powers. It is an ugly word. It is a word that is hardly used in polite society. Yet I pray you remember there is a prostitution as vile as the sin we shudder at; which yet, alas, man seldom trembles at the thought of. It is the prostitution of human life to anything lower than the glory of God. Do I take these hours, these days; these powers, this thought, this mind, this spirit, and use them for any other purpose ultimately than to glorify God? That is prostitution. Sin is just that, wilful, chosen failure to seek the glory of God. That was the meaning of the word of Jesus when He said concerning Nicodemus, and through him concerning every man, "Ye must be born anew." That was the meaning of Paul when he wrote, "Ye have put off the old man with his doings, and have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of Him that created him."

Now I have done; and you will begin. In the light of this consideration, what about our life? God requireth that which is past. Where is it? What of the years that have gone? Yonder the day of birth, I can name it, and date it, and fix it. Somewhere is the day of dissolution. I cannot name it. I cannot date it. I cannot fix it. All these years since then till now have gone. What have I done with them? No such question can be asked, and honestly answered without our having to confess, "We have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God," Yet it is to those who have so sinned, and so come short of the glory of God that He sent His Son. "The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost." Here tonight in actual and spiritual presence is that self-same Saviour. One of the words of my text is the word "formed," the word which I reminded you indicates the activity of the potter. Take that word and let me finish with it. Take that word as I find it in this same Bible. The vessel that the potter formed is marred, spoiled, ruined in the hand of the potter, but He will make it again another vessel.

See how you have failed. See how you have grovelled in the dust. See how when the golden crown was held over your head, like the man with the muckrake you sought the satisfaction of the glitter of a straw. Behind you are the years the cankerworm hath eaten. The promise is that "He will restore the years that the cankerworm hath eaten." The promise is that "He will make it again another vessel." All He asks is that you will understand another great declaration of this chapter, "I am Jehovah; and beside Me there is no Saviour." Let us come to Him as a Saviour and we shall find Him full of pity, full of power. The past may be forgiven and we may yet live to His glory.