**VOLUME 4; CHAPTER 04 - THE PREACHING OF G. CAMPBELL MORGAN**

**RESTLESSNESS AND ITS REMEDY by G. CAMPBELL MORGAN**

*Who will shew us any good?*

*Psalm 4:6*

THAT IS NOT THE INQUIRY OF THE PSALMIST. IT IS A QUESTION which he quotes, in order that he may reply to it. Let us, therefore, read not only the inquiry but also the answer: -

There be many that say, Who will shew us any good?

Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us.

Thou hast put gladness in my heart,

More than in the time when their corn and their wine are increased.

In peace will I both lay me down and sleep;

For Thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety.

"Who will shew us any good?" So far as we are able to judge from the pages of history, humanity is one in all ages. There are changes upon the great stream of human life, but they are surface changes; changes in manners and in methods, and even in the maxims of men; but underneath is the same human nature, asking the old questions, making the old complaints, and wondering with the old amazement. Humanity today is confronting the problems of long ago. In the process of the ages they come to the surface, and men attempting to answer them, find themselves again and again unable so to do, and decide presently that they will abandon the effort, and the problem sinks back in the tide and is forgotten. It reappears, and when it reappears we call it new, but "there is nothing new under the sun."

In the days of the Psalmist he said there were people who asked, "Who will shew us any good?" It is the language of a man who, looking back, is dissatisfied, looking around him is full of cynicism, and looking on is pessimistic. It is the language of restlessness and dissatisfaction. The question is being asked today by men in utterly different circumstances. Satiated men, overfull, full to repletion, come at last to the moment when they say, "Who will shew us any good?" Hungry men, conscious of the pinch of poverty and the pang of want, gaunt, desperate men say, "Who will shew us any good?"

Successful men, using the word as the world uses it, men who seem never to have failed in any enterprise their hands have touched. We watch them as they climb from point to point, until at last we think of them as having achieved the most remarkable success, and then they come and sit by us and say, "Who will shew us any good?" "Vanity of vanity, All is vanity,"

Men who have failed, for some reason we are never able to discover, there are men who always seem to fail; trial after trial, attempt after attempt, effort after effort, but always beaten, always a little lower, until at last with heartbreak they say "Who will shew us any good?"

Is it not worth our attention that men in such opposite circumstances make the same inquiry? Does not that fact suggest that the inquiry is a revelation of some underlying malady which is independent of circumstances; the full man, the hungry man, the man successful, and the man of failure are alike disappointed. Let us hear their challenge. It is sounding in our ears on every side. This age is peculiarly restless. There a hot feverishness manifest on every hand expressing itself in a thousand ways and with ever varying emphasis. I venture to say that you can express the whole of it in this old, simple, blunt language of my text, "Who will shew us any good?" Is life worth living?

Have we any answer to that inquiry? In reply to that inquiry concerning the inquiry, I would say at once, yes, we have an answer. The answer is as old as the inquiry. The answer lies here upon the page of this ancient psalm. While men may quarrel about the authorship and about the date, I am infinitely more interested to discover its consciousness of human unrest and its answer. Here is the answer:

Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us.

Thou hast put gladness in my heart,

More than in the time when their corn and their wine are increased.

In peace will I both lay me down and sleep;

For Thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety.

Am I not right in saying that is an all-sufficient answer? Has not the consciousness of this congregation agreed as to the accuracy of that answer? "Who will shew us any good?" said the restless, feverish men of the psalmist's day, and he replied, the source of good I will declare, "Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us"; the experience of good I will recount in your hearing,

Thou hast put gladness in my heart,

More than in the time when their corn and their wine are increased;

and finally, I will give you the result of this goodness, "ln peace will I both lay me down and sleep."

"Who will shew us any good?"

Is that the inquiry that was hot in your heart as you found your way to the sanctuary tonight, my brother? Is that question you are asking, sister mine, after all the attempts to satisfy the craving of your fine nature with the things of dust and the excitements of the world? Tired, broken, disappointed, angry, cynical, do you say, Is life worth living?

I pray you listen in the sanctuary to this great answer, "Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us," which being interpreted, may thus be explained. This man, and those of us who take our stand by his side in testimony, declare that we find good where God found it and finds it. If that declaration seems for the moment to wander a little away from the meaning of the Psalmist when he said, "Lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance," I beseech you keep that word in mind while I depart to a distance only that I may come back to it to discover its richest meaning and profoundest intention. We find good where God found it. Where did He find it? We read those old and familiar words in the first chapter of Genesis. I want you to be quite simple and like little children, and see what the first chapter of Genesis says, Light, the earth and the sea with all its myriad forms, the sun in the heavens in the daytime, and the silver queen of night, all the flowers, the birds of the air, and the fish in the sea, and the great creatures on the earth, and man; and God said these things are good. "Who will shew us any good?" Wherever you are you are near to some of these things. God says these things are good. Turn a deaf ear to the man who tells you they are evil. They are not evil. Do not believe the man who affirms that this is a wicked world. It is an absolutely untrue statement if by the world you mean the earth God created. These things are good. Light is good. The earth with its store of wonders is good. The deep and fathomless ocean of which the finest thing in literature is in the Bible, "Thy way was in the sea, And Thy paths in the great waters." The ocean is good. All the flowers and fruits of the earth, the fauna and flora of nature are good. The brightness of the sun, and the sunlight in either winter or summer; the radiance of the moon and the pictures she flings upon the sky as she plays with the clouds; these things are good. The fish in the sea, the fowls of the air, in every sense are good. You are living in the midst of these things and are saying, "Who will shew us any good?"

There is something wrong somewhere. Step a little higher and look once again at the Genesis picture. This time not at isolated items which in every case God pronounced good, which in every case rested the heart of God, and at last so rested Him that He hallowed the day of rest as a memorial of His own satisfaction with the things in the midst of which you live your life and I live mine. Climb a little higher and what are the conditions which are presented to your vision in this early chapter. The first is that of the supremacy and sovereignty of God. The second is that of the viceregal dignity of man. He is made a little lower than God, and is given dominion over all the creation beneath his feet. The third is that the creation potentially is waiting for the touch of men in fellowship with God to answer him in laughter and flowers, the abundance of harvest, yielding up to him the deep and profound secrets that lie within her bosom. If you will take one step higher and look no longer at isolated items, no longer at the condition, but look at the spiritual suggestiveness of this first chapter of Genesis with its picture of original conditions, what do you find? A picture of fellowship. A picture of co-operation. A picture of happiness. A picture of fellowship between man and God, and between man and everything beneath him; and therefore, between everything beneath man and God, through the instrumentality and mediation of man.

Man in rebellious selfishness shuts God out of his life. There is the tragedy of it all. As God is my witness, the last filing desire to do is to speak in metaphor, or to look at dim and distant pictures. If you came here tonight saying, "Who will Shew us any good?," the root trouble with you is that you do not know God. I will make that affirmation on the positive side. No truly Christian man or woman ever asks that question. The man or the woman who by grace has come into fellowship with God says, "Thou hast put gladness in my heart. More than they have when their corn and their wine increased."

"In peace will I both lay me down and sleep:

For Thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety."

If you are hot and restless, unable to sleep, unable to find anchorage, crying out in the agony of your soul, "Who will shew us any good?" Is life worth living? The reason is that you have lost touch with Eden. You have lost consciousness God.

Now some of my young friends are saying, We understand the reason for that very peculiar reading in Genesis, but why did you turn to Matthew? I read that old story of the baptism of Jesus, and of the word that came out of heaven, because there, in the Man of Nazareth coming to fullness of life and just entering upon the ministry to which He was ordained, I find God's new resting place. If that sentence sounds a strange one let me tell you just what I mean. In Genesis God saw that His creation was very good, and He rested; and then came the tragedy of rebellion, the tragedy of sin, and man lost his rest. When man lost his rest through sin, God Iost His rest, and never found it again until He rested in His Beloved. "In Whom I am well pleased." Pleased with earth and air and sun and flowers and fish and fowl, the whole creation; pleased with man, but wounded in man's apostasy, God never found rest again, until He found satisfaction in the perfection of the humanity of Jesus. If you should be inclined to charge me with imaginative interpretation, I pray you hear me while I quote the words of Jesus upon a memorable occasion. Passing through the Bethesda porches, He saw a man who had been for thirty-eight years in the grip of infirmity. He healed him, and when men criticized Him for working a miracle on the Sabbath day, He answered, "My Father worketh even until now, and I work." You must interpret His word by His miracle. He claimed in that moment to be identified with God in activity, and what was the activity? It was activity in the presence of human limitation resulting from sin, the activity which wrought against the thing that spoiled until it was spoiled, and man remade.

But the earth when it was created did not yield up its secrets, did not sing its songs, did not come to the full manifestation of its potentialities. Man was there to discover its secrets under the guidance of God, to make it sing its songs, to bring its potentialities out into flower and glory. There are most curious notions abroad in the world about the garden of Eden. I have seen pictures of it. They are almost invariably pictures of impossible Italian gardens, through the wonderful pathways and amidst the curious flowers of which man is seen walking. I do not so read my Bible. I read, "The Lord God planted a garden eastward, in Eden," that is, fixed its habitation, marked its limitations, arranged its boundaries, and put man "into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it"; made him responsible for it, put him there that he might delve, in order that presently to his unutterable amazement and growing wonder, flowers might grow, and fruits might ripen; put him there that through the process of the cultivation of that planted garden, under the government of God, he should bring to light its hidden secrets. Every rose that blooms lies potentially in mother earth, but it never blossoms to perfection until man's hand has worked in co-operation with Divine power. That is the picture that I find in Genesis. It is a picture fellowship and co-operation, and therefore of happiness. No one in Eden's garden said "Who will shew us any good?" God said it was very good; and man, yielding obedience to the throne of the Eternal, and exercising authority over everything beneath him, said, it is very good. There was no restlessness, no feverishness, no disappointment, until - ah me, that is the root of the malady - I leave the until incomplete.

You say, "Who will shew us any good?" God help you to see the tragedy of all this. It is not true of all of you. Some of you find perfect rest in one little plot of your garden because you find God in every blade of grass. "Who will shew us any good?" say they, and they cross the great Atlantic back and forth and play bridge and never see the beauties of the sea or listen to the anthem of the hurricane! They play cards ceaselessly, and then say, This voyage is very tiresome! "Who will shew us any good?"

Man out of harmony with God has lost the key to nature, and has lost the capacity for rest, and is hot and feverish and restless. The Man of Nazareth realized the first intention of God. In Genesis I read that man was given dominion over the fish of the sea and the fowl of the air and the secrets of the earth. In this Book of Psalms I find the question asked, "What is man that Thou art mindful of him?" Singing up out of the Psalmist's essential humanity came the answer,

Thou hast made him but little lower than God,

And crownest him with glory and honour.

Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands,

Thou hast put all things under his feet.

But I cannot find that man, until I come to the gospel stories, and then the writer of the letter to the Hebrews quotes the ancient psalm and says, "We see not yet all things subjected to him. But we behold Him Who hath been made a little lower than the angels, even Jesus." If you watch Jesus at His work you will see the perfect Man mastering the secrets of nature. His miracles are attestations of His perfect humanity rather than demonstrations of His Deity.

Why do I linger here so long? Because to eyes that have ever looked upon the Son of God, the picture is full of glory and beauty. Yet I have another purpose. If in the things I have now endeavoured to say, you have caught a new consciousness of the perfection of the Man in Whom God found His rest, follow Him to the end, I pray you. What is the end of His life? The cross, What is the cross, "Who will shew us any good?" There He is, spoiled, mauled, murdered by men who ask that question. God came incarnate into the lives of the multitudes who had lost their vision of God, and "There is no beauty that we should desire Him." Therefore He was bruised and broken. "We did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted." We were wrong. "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed." Incarnate God is upon the cross. Is that the end?

Is that the last word? By no means. Another man is hanging on a cross by His side, a thief, a robber, a malefactor. Out of the strange mystery of crucified iniquity there comes this weird and awful cry addressed to the central figure, "Jesus, remember me when Thou comest in Thy Kingdom." From the lips paling in death comes the regal answer, "Today shalt Thou be with Me in Paradise."

I see the first gleam, it is not the full light, but the first the accursed tree is the healing tree. The cross erected by man's sin is enwrapped in the Divine determination to save. By that sign of the cross, I know that all the tragedy is being dealt with, and that man can be remade. Behold Eden, and out of its ground came thorns, a curse upon man's sin. Behold the cross, and see the thorns are plaited into a crown bathed in blood on His brow. Coincidence do you say? There are no coincidences as accidents in the economy of God. Just as Mrs. Browning sang truly when she sang that the chaffinch implies the seraphim, so that crown of thorns reveals the way by which God deals with the malady, in order to bring man back into the consciousness of rest and of goodness. By that cross men may be repossessed of Eden.

Yes, you say, you mean that if a man shall trust in that cross he will find his way to heaven. I certainly do mean that, blessed be God, but I mean something else. I mean that by the way of the cross, by man's restoration through that cross into the place of fellowship with God upon the ground of sin forgiven, man can find his way into Eden here and now in this world. Do not let us be afraid of the simple illustrations with which we began, the light, the earth, the sea, the sun, the moon, the stars, the flowers, the birds; all the things of the man can go back and find delight and rest in all these. You have often heard the saints singing it, and they mean it they know the cross,

Heaven above is softer blue,

Earth beneath is softer green;

Something lives in every hue,

Christless eyes have never seen,

Birds with gladder songs o'erflow,

Flowers with deeper beauties shine,

Since I know as now I know

I am His and He is mine.

"Who will shew us any good?" The Psalmist's answer is the only one -

"Lord lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us,"

You have lost this world, because you have lost God. You find no rest in your own garden because you are out of fellowship with the God of the garden. You are tired of everything in this life because God made you for Himself, and you cannot satisfy the clamant cry of your deep, profound life apart from Him. It is quite impossible.

Shall we not get back to Him? You say, The journey is so long. No, there is but a step betwixt thee and God. At this moment, while the preacher is uttering his last words, and while the men and women who are sitting next you know nothing and can know nothing of the transaction, you can return to Him, and the light of His countenance will be lifted upon you, and the gladness that is greater than the gladness of plenty of corn and wine will fill your heart, and the peace of God which passeth all understanding will garrison your heart, because you are right with God. May He bring us to the trysting place in His grace, and constrain us to that return which means perfect rest.