

# GOD'S GOODNESS

By

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*“The earth is full of the Goodness of the Lord.”* (Ps. 33:5)

It is by giving praise and honor to God for His glorious attributes that we come to desire them for ourselves and gradually are “transformed into the same image from glory to glory” (2 Cor. 3:18). Significantly absent in the thinking of modern man is the supreme attribute of God: His goodness.

The spirit of revolution, which is not limited to overthrow of government but also means the destruction of home, the overthrow of morals and the refusal to submit to God, springs from the satanic assumption that the earth is not filled with God's goodness; that, in fact, it is not good of God to create man so that he can sin, and it is not good that man be punished and disciplined by suffering, pain and inequalities. The modern view of things is that God made a mess of the world and now the humanists must straighten it all out by, first, getting rid of God.

The mistaken idea of what is required of a good God is illustrated in the scripture by the man who approached Jesus and demanded, “Bid my brother divide the inheritance with me.” Jesus refused and, instead, preached a sermon against covetousness. The sermon was good for that man, but he probably went away unhappy with Jesus for not getting the money for him (Luke 12). Another case in point is the young man who addressed Jesus as “Good Teacher.” Jesus told him to sell all his possessions, give his money to the poor and become His follower. But the rich young man refused the commandment “for he had great possessions” (Mark 10). Had he believed Jesus to be absolutely good, he would have obeyed Him gladly, knowing that the One who is perfectly Good would not require anything that is not good. It is this faith in God's goodness that is necessary for the believer to have peace, contentment and courage.

God is intrinsically good; that is, He is good in essence. It is His nature against which all qualities must be measured. In that nature there are no flaws and no weaknesses. “Every good and perfect gift cometh down from the father of lights above with whom there is no variation neither shadow that is cast by turning” (James 1:17). God doesn't change; His nature remains constant, and that nature is to ever do that which is good. His will is good, because it reflects His nature. Charnock wrote, “God can no more act contrary to His goodness in any of His actions than He can un-God Himself.” His goodness is seen in the creation, when upon the conclusion of each day's work, God “saw that it was good.” This declaration was based upon the fact that what God created fulfilled His intent and purpose in creating it. So long as he walked according to God's law and thus fulfilled the divine purpose, man was looked upon as good. It was when Adam rebelled and sought to set up his own judgment — “to know good and evil” — that sin entered in. Evil exists where the goodness of God is rejected.

Nevertheless, man's sin cannot reduce God's own goodness. "Thou are good, and does good," sang David (Psalm 119:68). Man changes continually, and not, as the evolutionists like to wish, always for the better. He is relatively good at times, and at other times, quite wicked. But God changes not. It is the spirit of anti-Christ that demands constant change: new morals, new religion, new laws, new "art forms" and new fashions. But God, Who was good from the beginning, is the same; if He were to change, it would be for the worse for He is already Absolute good.

God is good to all in spite of the noise about inequality. "Yahweh is good to all: and His tender mercies are over all His works" (Psalm 145:9). The modern mind totally rejects this, asking, "If God is good to all, why is there suffering and want?" Modern man is too steeped in humanism to understand the goal of God. The goodness God holds out to man is designed to fulfill God's purpose, not man's. Furthermore, the benefit God offers does not necessarily require that we be prosperous, nor physically strong, nor favored in any way by men. Health, money and success are not necessarily marks of happiness or of God's favor. God gives to each what is good for that individual. The one who receives God's gifts with thanksgiving will be blessed in what he receives. He will prove that God has been good to him. "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I may learn thy statutes" (Psalm 119:71). But the one who resists and is unthankful to Him will be hardened ultimately to the point of cursing Him. Job recognized that all his troubles came from God, so his wife suggested that he curse God and die. Instead, he declared that even though God slay him, yet would he trust Him. His belief that God is good proved to be correct and his faith was vindicated.

The humanist cannot accept God's standard of goodness. Through the power of government he usurps the role of God, reduce all men to equality, declaring that it is not good of God to give some more talent, wealth or wisdom than others; that all men must be treated the same regardless of their character, morals or purposes. Thus he assumes omniscience: to see men and things and the future as only God sees them. For such arrogance God destroyed ancient Babel, confused the language and separated the people.

In nothing is the goodness of God so clearly manifest as in His judgment. Since God has the power to exterminate sin and evil, to fail to do so could hardly be considered good. John the Baptist linked goodness and judgment when he declared, "There cometh one who is mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am unworthy to loose...He will thoroughly cleanse His threshing floor, and He will gather His wheat into the garner, but the chaff He will burn up with an unquenchable fire" (Matt. 3:11-12). Now, note what John was saying here. First, that Jesus is good, better than any man that ever lived. John himself, Jesus said, was the greatest man ever born of woman; but here John admits that Jesus is so much better than he that he is unworthy to untie His shoes. Second, on the basis of His great goodness, He will judge the world; cleanse it of all the wicked and evil like a farmer cleans the threshing floor of all the undesirable chaff by burning it up.

All the prophets and apostles who wrote of God's goodness also wrote of a coming day of judgment when the world and all the ungodly will be destroyed by fire (2 Peter 3:7). How the humanists howl with indignation at the suggestion that God would do this; if

God is good how could He do such a thing? It is His very goodness that demands justice and destruction of the wicked. What rank injustice to perpetuate forever by His divine power the wickedness, pain and sorrow that is wrought by the multitudes who reject His goodness.

Paul prophesied concerning a day like ours, when critical times arise because men have no real love of goodness. "But know this that in the last days grievous times shall come, for men shall be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, haughty, railers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, no lovers of good" (2 Tim. 3:1-3). In the language of the "in-crowd," goodness turns them off. We see the evidence in drama where the hero sneers at virtue and seeks his own way. We see it even in the churches where the members conform to the world in order to enlarge their membership and be considered compatible with their neighbors. The church becomes a demonic mockery devoted to the service of this world rather than to the worship and praise of God.

Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd." He is intrinsically, essentially and eternally good. "In him is no sin" (1 John 3:5). He claimed: "For whatsoever things the Father does, these the Son also does in like manner." His death was at once a demonstration of obedience to the Father's good will, and a demonstration of how God's goodness prevails in that which to the world appears terribly bad. Jesus obeyed the Father, and did it for the "joy set before him," giving us an example of how good it is to obey the commandments of God because they are always good. By his death, seen as tragedy by the world, righteousness was made possible to every believer. "Him who knew no sin He made to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. 5:21).

It is righteousness which is essential for our fulfillment of God's purpose. Not success in the world. Not health, nor wealth. Not equality, nor opportunity. These may be found by rank sinners doomed to destruction in the Day of Judgment. A good God wants fellowship with one who stands justified, and righteous, so He has provided the means of our standing righteous through the fact of Christ's bearing our judgment. "And being made free from sin, you become servants of righteousness" (Rom. 6:18).

Paul said of Jesus that He "went about doing good" (Acts 10:38). What did He do? He led no demonstrations, supported no political parties, and raised no funds for charities. He did some healing; but mostly His work was preaching: telling of the absolute goodness of God, and pronouncing judgment upon the Jews and other rebels. Paul said this was doing good. Christ was the goodness of God incarnate. "He is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens." We are commanded to "run with patience the race that is set before us looking unto Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith" (Heb. 12:1-2). Christian faith is to believe wholeheartedly that God is Good; that all He is doing today is good; that He has "Fore-ordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of His will" (Eph. 1:5); and that "to them that love God all things work together for good, even to them that are called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:28).

When Christ was facing the cross, at which time God's most severe judgment would be levied upon him, He addressed God as "righteous Father." He still saw the Father, the one who gave Him the burden of the cross, as good.

"Oh taste and see that Yahweh is good." (Psalm 34:8). "Yea, Yahweh will give that which is good ... for Yahweh is good, his loving kindness endures forever" (Psalm 85:12; 100:5) "Praise you Yahweh, for Yahweh is good" (Psalm 135:3).

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