

# GOD'S GOODNESS

By

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*"The earth is full of the goodness of Jehovah,"* Psalm 33:5

It is by giving praise and honor to God for His glorious attributes that we come to desire them for ourselves and are thus "transformed into the same image from glory to glory."<sup>1</sup> Significantly absent in modern thought is the supreme attribute of God: His goodness.

The spirit of revolution in this century, which includes the destruction of the home, the overthrow of morals and the refusal to submit to God, springs from the evil philosophy that it was not good of God to create man capable of sin, and it is not good that man be punished and disciplined by suffering, pain and inequalities. The modern view is that God made a mess of the world and humanists must straighten it all out, first by getting rid of God.

The mistaken idea of what is required of a good God is illustrated in scripture by the man who demanded of Jesus, "Bid my brother divide the inheritance with me." Jesus refused and, instead, gave a lesson on covetousness.<sup>2</sup> Today there are millions who measure God's favor only in terms of material wealth.

On another occasion a wealthy man, who had addressed Jesus as "good teacher", was told to sell all his possessions, give the money to the poor, and become His follower. But the rich man refused the commandment.<sup>3</sup> Had he believed Jesus to be truly good he would have obeyed, knowing that one who is 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. "Every good and perfect gift comes down from the Father of lights above with whom there is no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning."<sup>4</sup> This simply says that God doesn't change; His nature remains constant, and that nature is ever to 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."<sup>5</sup>

His goodness is seen in the creation, when upon the conclusion of each day's work, God "saw that it was good."<sup>6</sup> So long as man walked according to God's law and fulfilled the divine purpose for which he was created, he was seen as good. It was when Adam rebelled and sought to establish his own judgment — "To know good and evil" — that he became evil.<sup>7</sup> Evil exists where the goodness of God is rejected. Nevertheless, man's sin cannot reduce God's goodness. "Thou are good, and do good," sang David.<sup>8</sup>

Man changes continually and not always for the better, as the evolutionists wish. He is relatively good at times and, at other times, quite evil. But God changes not. It is the spirit of anti-Christ that demands constant change: new morals, new laws, new art forms, and new lifestyles. But God is the same. If He were to change, it would be for the worse, for He is already absolutely good.

God is good to all in spite of the noise about inequality. "Jehovah is good to all; and His tender mercies are over all his works."<sup>9</sup> Denying this fact, men ask, "If God is

good to all, why is there suffering and want?" This generation is too steeped in humanism to understand the goal of God. The goodness God holds out to man is designed to fulfill His purpose, not the various purposes of man. It does not necessarily require that we be prosperous nor physically strong nor favored by other men. Health, money, and worldly success are neither marks of happiness nor 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, regardless of adversities and hardships that may come with it. David wrote, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I may learn thy statutes."<sup>10</sup>

Failure to see God's goodness and give Him thanks leads to vain reasoning and ultimately to a heart of darkness and sensual corruption, as described by Paul.<sup>11</sup>

The humanist cannot accept God's standard of goodness. Through the power of government he usurps the role of God, reduces 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 can see them. For such arrogance God destroyed ancient Babel, confused the language and separate the people.

In nothing is the goodness of God so clearly manifest as in His judgment. Given the power to exterminate sin and evil, God could hardly be considered good if He fails to do so. John the Baptist linked goodness and judgment when he declared, "There comes 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 unquenchable fire."<sup>12</sup> Note that John considered Jesus to be much better than himself, even though Jesus said that John was the greatest man born of woman. Yet it is on the basis of His great goodness that Jesus is to judge the world and cleanse it of all the wicked, like a farmer cleans the threshing floor of the undesirable chaff by burning it up.

Prophets and apostles alike, who wrote of God's goodness, also wrote of a coming day of judgment when all the ungodly will be destroyed by fire.<sup>13</sup> How the humanists howl with indignation at the suggestion that a good God would do this. But, it is His very goodness that demands justice and the destruction of all who have rebelled against the good.

Judgment will be proof-positive of God's goodness, as symbolized by the song of the elders in Revelation. "We give thee thanks, O Lord God...because you have taken thy great power and did reign. and the nations were wroth, and thy wrath came, and time of the dead to be judged, and to give their reward to thy servants, the prophets, and to the saints, and to them that fear thy name, the small and the great; and to destroy them that destroy the earth."<sup>14</sup> In all history there has been nothing like this: the absolute and final elimination of everything that is evil and the correction of everything that is wrong.

Paul wrote of a day like ours, when corruption abounds because men have no 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.*"<sup>15</sup> Goodness is unpopular. In television and movies dramas the hero sneers at virtue and flaunts his freedom from moral restraint. Godly convictions are held up to ridicule by the media. Even so-called church leaders apologize

for God's law's against sodomy and adultery. The church becomes a mockery devoted to the service of this world rather than to the service and praise of God.

Jesus, "the good shepherd," in whom there was no sin<sup>16</sup> and who always obeyed the Father,<sup>17</sup> gave a demonstration of how God's goodness prevails in that which to the world appears terribly bad. It was "for the joy that was set before him (He)endured the cross," and has been glorified by God.<sup>18</sup> By His death, seen as tragedy by the world, righteousness and salvation are 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."<sup>19</sup>

It is this goodness (righteousness) which is essential for our fulfillment of God's purpose. No worldly success. Not health nor wealth. Not equality. This may be found by sinners under judgment. God's purpose is to make us good, that we might fellowship with Him.

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,"<sup>20</sup> and that "to them that love God all things work together for good, even to them that are called according to his purpose."<sup>21</sup>

When Jesus was facing the cross, at which time God's most severe judgment would be levied upon Him, He addressed God as "righteous Father."<sup>22</sup> He still saw the Father, the one who demanded His death on the cross, as good.

"Oh taste and see the Jehovah is good."<sup>23</sup>

"Yea, Jehovah will give that which is good...for Jehovah is good, his loving kindness endures forever."<sup>24</sup>

"Praise ye Jehovah, for Jehovah is good."<sup>25</sup>

"The earth is full of the goodness of Jehovah."<sup>26</sup>

#### REFERENCES

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