

A Lord's Day Snippet!

Biblical And Southern Studies

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O God, my Hope, my Heavenly Rest,
My all of Happiness Below,
Grant my Importunate Request,
To me, To me, Thy Goodness Show;
Thy Beatific Face Display,
The Brightness of Eternal Day.

Before my Faith's Enlightened Eyes
Make all Thy Gracious Goodness Pass;
Thy Goodness i the Sight I Prize,
O might I see Thy Smiling Face!
Thy nature In my Soul Proclaim,
Reveal Thy Love, Thy Glorious Name!

There, In the Place Beside Thy Throne,
Where all that find Acceptance Stand,
Receive me up into Thy Son;
Cover me with Thy Mighty Hand;
Set me upon the Rock, and Hide
My Soul in Jesu's Wounded Side.

O put me in the Cleft; Empower
My Soul the Glorious Sight to Bear!
Descend in this Accepted Hour,
Pass by me, and Thy Name Declare;
Thy Wrath Withdraw, Thy Hand Remove,
And Show Thy Self the God of Love.

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

The Majesty of God's Goodness

"There is none good but ... God."

Matthew 19:17

Our majestic God is the epitome of eternal good! He is the source of all good, the cause of all good, the sustainer of all good, the definer of all good, the defender of all good, the essence of all good, the sovereign of all good, therefore God is the perfect good. Yes, as

noted He is good and His practices are all good—“Thou art good, and doest good” (Ps. 119:68). “Goodness is the brightness and loveliness of our majestic Creator” [Charnock].

But we now go back to the declaration of the Lord Jesus, “There is none good but ... God.” This remarkable declaration was in answer to the question, “Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?” This question led the Lord Jesus to ask, “Why callest thou me good?” Since this man did not acknowledge Jesus as God how can he ascribe goodness to Him as if He were a mere creature. “You must own me to be God, since you own me to be ‘good:’ goodness being a title only due, and properly belonging, to the Supreme Being” [Charnock]. Goodness is a choice perfection of the triune God. Thus, Jesus concluded, “There is none good but one, that is, God.” When Jesus finished by telling the young man to liquidate his possessions and distribute the proceeds to the poor and follow Him the young man went away preferring physical possessions to eternal life. The young fellow had approached the Son of God merely as another man and missed the Lord and Saviour.

God is the *summum bonum* that is the sovereign or chief good! God’s goodness is eternal, essential, innate and is described as great in goodness—“I will declare thy greatness. They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness” (Ps. 145:6-7). He is the *optimus maximus* or the best and greatest good! Goodness is inseparable from the idea of God. The existence of God cannot be credibly believed unless there is belief that goodness is the essence of His nature. God is infinitely good because He has a perfect nature and is the Sovereign so His perfection cannot be searched out. The goodness of God is the yardstick for all other good.

God is good in what He is and what He does in His creation or God is good and does only good. The Goodness of God is considered in the category of a communicative attribute. It is the “goodness of God that leadeth to repentance” (Rom. 2:4). The goodness of God is not to be equated with His mercy. Goodness is an extension to more people than mercy because those who receive mercy because of the condition or state they are in, but goodness extends to general creation. One has said, “Goodness and mercy are distinct, though mercy is a branch of goodness.... The grace of God respects the rational creature, mercy the miserable creature, goodness all His creatures, brutes, and the senseless plants, as well as reasonable man.”

God is unchangeably good by His nature. God’s goodness is such that He could never be bad. There is nothing He brings to goodness that could equal the good that He is innately. God is the primary good, the essential good, the chief good, the unmixed good. There is nothing good but God Himself, and there is not a comparative in goodness to His goodness. All true good is *ex deo*. Just as God is holy by nature even so He is good by nature, by behavior, by action, by word. If God did not punish evil, He would not be good.

His goodness should not be equated with weakness or indulgence. His goodness does not condone injustice, but His goodness is seen by others when He punishes sin. The question has been asked, “How could God be a friend to goodness, if he were not an enemy to evil?” “All His attributes, which are parts of his goodness, engage Him to punish sin; without it, His authority would be vilified, His purity stained, His power derided, His truth disgraced, His justice scorned, His wisdom slighted; He would be thought to have dissembled in His laws, and be judged, according to the rules of reason, to be void of truth goodness” [Charnock]. Remember “the goodness of God endureth continually” (Ps. 52:1). “That God is good is taught or implied on every page of the Bible and must be received as an article of faith as impregnable as the throne of God” [Tozer].

Stephen Charnock declared, “God is only originally good, good of himself. All created goodness is a rivulet from this fountain, but Divine goodness has no spring; God depends upon no other for his goodness; he has it in, and of, himself: man has no goodness from himself, God has no goodness from without himself: his goodness is no more derived from another than his being: if we were good by any external thing, that thing must be in being before him, or after him; if before him, he was not then himself from eternity; if after him, he was not good in himself from eternity. The end of his creating things, then, was not to confer a goodness upon his creatures, but to partake of a goodness from his creatures. God is good by and in himself, since all things are only good by him; and all that goodness which is in creatures, is but the breathing of his own goodness upon them: they have all their loveliness from the same hand they have their being from. Though by creation God was declared good, yet he was not made good by any, or by all the creatures. He partakes of none, but all things partake of him. He is so good that he gives all, and receives nothing; only good, because nothing is good but by him: nothing has a goodness but from him.”