

THE GOODNESS OF GOD

The goodness of God is that which disposes Him to be kind, cordial, benevolent, and full of goodwill toward men. He is tender hearted and of quick sympathy, and His unfailing attitude toward all moral beings is open, frank, and friendly. By His nature He is inclined to bestow blessedness and He takes holy pleasure in the happiness of His people.

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. The goodness of God is the drive behind all the blessings He daily bestows upon us. God created us because He felt good in His heart, and He redeemed us for the same reason.

All our religious activities and every means of grace, however right and useful they may be, are nothing until we understand that the unmerited, spontaneous goodness of God is back of all, and underneath all his acts. Divine goodness, as one of God's attributes, is self-caused, infinite, perfect, and eternal. Since God is immutable, He never varies in the intensity of His loving kindness.

The whole outlook of mankind might be changed, if we could all believe that we dwell under a friendly sky, and that the God of heaven, though exalted in power and majesty, is eager to be friends with us. But sin has made us timid and self-conscious, as well it might. Years of rebellion against God have bred in you fear that cannot be overcome in a day.

But if you are truly penitent, you may come, trusting only in the loving kindness of the Lord, and the past will not be held against you. You wonder "what kind of disposition does God have"? "What will I find Him to be like?" The answer is that He will be found to be exactly like Jesus Who said: "He that has seen Me has seen the Father".

Christ walked with men on earth that He might show them what God is like, and make known the true nature of God to a race that had wrong ideas about Him. This was only one of the things He did while here in the flesh, but this he did with beautiful perfection. From Him we learned how God acts towards people.

The hypocritical, the basically insincere, will find Him cold and aloof as they once found Jesus. But the penitent will find Him merciful, and the self-condemned will find Him generous and kind. To the frightened He is friendly

and to the poor spirit He is forgiving. To the ignorant He is considerate and to the weak gentle, and to the stranger hospitable.

If we would be welcomed as the prodigal son was, we must come as a prodigal son came. There will be a feast of welcome. The greatness of God rouses fear within us, but His goodness encourages us not to be afraid of Him. To fear and not be afraid, that is the paradox of faith.