

41, 42, 'Martha! Martha! thou art careful, and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful;' and makes us shrink at trials: 2 Tim. iv. 10, 'Demas hath forsaken us, having loved this present world.'

(3.) That our inclination to worldly things is various according to the temper and constitution of men. As the channel is cut so the river runs: Isa. liii. 6, 'We have turned every one in his own way.' Some are carried away by pride, some by vainglory, some by sensuality, some by worldliness. Uprightness and sincerity lies in observing the tender part of the soul, and preserving ourselves from that sin which is most natural to us: Ps. xviii. 23, 'I was also upright before him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity.'

(4.) That many times, when pretences are fair there is a secret reserve in our hearts. The devil seeketh to deceive men with a superficial change and half reformation, and moveth them to take on the profession of religion, and yet secure their fleshly and worldly interest. The most dangerous cheat of our souls is by halving it between God and mammon: Mat. vi. 24, 'No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other: ye cannot serve God and mammon.' When we are not so mortified as to subject ourselves entirely to Christ's direction upon the hopes of eternal life, or the happiness of the world to come, and to part with all things in the world, when it is necessary so to do; or else we must part with this salvation. Many think they are not worldly because they have some thoughts of heaven, and do something for it in seeking after it; but the business is whether you seek it in the first place, and make it your principal end and scope, to which all other things are subordinated and referred? whether you can forsake all rather than miss heaven? Jesus Christ, though he prized good beginnings, and would not discourage any, yet admitteth none to the privileges of grace that are but half converted, whose hearts are in secret league with the world, though they seem to be affected with the offers of eternal life.

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## SERMON II.

*And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is God.—MARK X. 18.*

WE have seen the young man's question, here is Christ's answer, in which observe two things—

1. His expostulation with him, 'Why callest thou me good?'

2. His instruction of him, 'There is none good but one, that is God.'

*First,* For the expostulation, 'Why callest thou me good?' He doth not simply blame him for giving this title to him, but argueth with him about it—

1. To show that he loves no compliments or fair words, which proceed not from sound faith and love to him. Christ saw that he was

ignorant of his divine authority, and foresaw that he would not take his counsel, and therefore expostulates with him, 'Why callest thou me good?' As elsewhere, Luke vi. 46, 'Why call you me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?' *Cui res nomini subjecta negatur, is nomine illuditur*—It is a mockery to give titles to any one when we do not answer it with suitable endeavours; as those that gave Christ honourable titles, 'Hail! king of the Jews!' but buffeted him, and spit upon him; and so here, 'Why callest thou me good?'

2. He takes occasion to draw him from his error of conceiving him as a mere man. The attribute of good belongeth truly and properly to none but God. Now, saith Christ, is that thy meaning, to acknowledge me for such? Our Lord was now about to try his obedience by a special precept, and therefore it was first necessary that he should be apprehended and acknowledged as God, and lawgiver to the souls of men. Mere moral goodness could not qualify him for that. Christ will be known to be God by those that come to him, or else they cannot worship him aright.

3. Our Lord would teach us by his own example to cast all the honour we receive upon God. We may own goodness in creatures, but not to the wrong of God; at least, all must be acknowledged to be transferred by him, and we must be faithful to the supreme giver. This is a common sin, that when God doth any good by the creatures, the minds of men stick in the creatures, and never look up to God, and from thence came idolatry first into the world. Therefore, to cure this evil, when we receive any praise and commendation, we should refer it to 'the Father of lights, from whom cometh every good and perfect gift,' James i. 17. The apostles, that did not set up a trade for themselves, but went abroad as factors for Christ, were very jealous of usurping divine honour. When Peter had made a lame man walk, Acts iii. 12, 'Why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?' He was loath that the glory of God should be hidden. So Acts xiv. 14, 15, when the men of Lystra would have worshipped them, 'They rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, and saying, Sirs, why do you these things? we also are men of like passions with you.' On the contrary, it cost Herod dear for owning the applauses of the people: Acts xii. 22, 23, 'The people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man: and immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory, and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.' The receiver is as bad as the robber, and therefore Herod was smitten for taking what the people ascribed to him. We should be very tender in this point, when good is done by us or ascribed to us, to refer all to God, who is the author of all that little good we do for him. This is the constant practice of humble and self-denying spirits: Luke xix. 16, he doth not say, 'my industry,' but 'thy pound hath gained ten pounds.' And when Paul had been much in labours, much in afflictions and mighty in spirit, he said, 1 Cor. xv. 10, 'By the grace of God I am what I am;' and 'not I, but the grace of God that was with me.' So Gal. ii. 20, 'I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.' As the heathens were wont solemnly to cast their crowns and garlands into their fountains, this is to crown the fountain of all our mercies. God's children, that

are seen in the work, disappear in the praise, that God only may be acknowledged; and therefore they are rather buffeted than pleased with their own praises. Look, as Joab when he had conquered Rabbah, sent for David to wear the honour of the conquest, 2 Sam. xii. 27, 28, so should we deal with God, cast all our crowns at his feet. If we do anything, let God have all the glory. Christ himself hath taught us so to do, 'Why call you me good? there is none good but one, that is God.'

4. I suppose the chief reason was to beat down this pharisaical conceit. This young man was too highly conceited of his own and others' external goodness and righteousness before men, 'Good master, what good thing must I do?' not looking to the inward power of grace in the heart. The pharisees, whose leaven he was tainted with, had this conceit, as if men were of themselves good, and perfectly good; and therefore, to teach him humility and self-annihilation, he takes this advantage from the compellation given him, to inform him that in proper speech God only is good, and that humility and brokenness of heart doth better become men than the conceit of their own goodness and righteousness and self-sufficiency; and therefore, 'Why callest thou me good?'

*Secondly*, I come to Christ's instruction of him, 'There is none good but one, that is God;' and there you have two propositions—

1. That in some sense there is no man good.

2. That God only is good. 'Εὐ μὴ is put not exceptively, as if God were a man, but adversatively; no man is good, but there is one good, that is God.

*Doct. 1.* There is no mere man that is absolutely and perfectly good. It will be needful to explain this. I shall do it negatively, and affirmatively.

*First*, For the negative part.

[1.] It is not to be so understood as if in no sense man were good, for it is said in Luke vi. 45, 'A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good.' Some degree and kind of goodness may be ascribed to men; and it is said of Barnabas that he was 'a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost,' Acts xi. 24; and Joseph of Arimathea was said to be 'a good man and just,' Luke xxiii. 50. Therefore certainly in some sense a man may be said to be good.

[2.] This is not so to be understood as if there were no distinction between men, but they were all equal in sin. No; but as Jeremiah had two baskets of figs, some very good and some very bad, so there are two sorts of men in the world, some good, some bad; some that walk after the spirit, and others that walk after the flesh; some that mind earthly things, and others that mind heavenly things. This is an everlasting distinction between man and man, that will outlive time. The distinction of great and small ceaseth at death, but the distinction of good and bad lasts for ever, and issueth itself into these two places, heaven and hell. It is a misconceit for any to go away with this thought, that because Christ says there is no man good, therefore there is no distinction between the state of nature and the state of grace, between the regenerate and unregenerate. There are some that are totally wicked, that make a trade to do evil; there are others that have a principle

of goodness infused into them; some 'whose spot is not the spot of God's children,' Deut. xxxii. 5, and others who though they have sin remaining in them, yet it reigns not over them.

[3.] It is not so to be understood as if it were unlawful wholly to acknowledge that goodness that is in others. We have God's own example to warrant us. God, as soon as he saw that anything was good, he uttered and declared it, and said it was good: Gen. i. 4, 'God saw the light, that it was good.' He said it first of light, then of other creatures. God would be no author nor example of smothering the due praise of good actions. That man hath little goodness in himself that will not own it in others. Indeed we are forbidden to 'call good evil, and evil good,' Isa. v. 20, as the world is usually guilty of this misnomer. None are good but those that flatter them in their sins, and none are evil but those that are zealous for God. This preposterous judgment is forbidden, but it is nowhere forbidden to call good, good, and to own the graces of others; that were enviously to defraud the virtuous of their due respect.

*Secondly, Positively.* How is it then true that no man is good? *Ans.* Three ways—No man is of himself good, nor perfectly good, nor good comparing him with God.

[1.] No man is of himself good, but only by participation of God's goodness. As all the stars derive their light from the sun, so do we derive our poor weak ray wherewith we shine, from the Father of lights: James i. 17, 'Every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights.' It is God that makes us to do good, and receive good, for 'he worketh all our works in us,' Isa. xxvi. 12, and hath a greater share in the good that we do than we have ourselves. All the tribute that we pay him, we have it out of his own exchequer; for we have all and every part from God; he giveth the will, the very first motion and inclination to any good; and he giveth the deed and the final accomplishment: Phil. ii. 13, 'It is God that worketh in you both to will and to do, of his good pleasure.' Our good works are more God's than ours; we may say of them, as Austin of his illegitimate child, *In eo nihil habui præter peccatum*—Lord, I had nothing in this child but my sins. So it is true of the fruit of our souls as well as of our bodies, nothing is ours but the defect, all the good is God's; yea, as he sweetly saith in another place, speaking of this very case, in his comment upon the 137th psalm, *Opus tuum vide in me, Domine non meum; nam meum si videris dammas me, tuum si videris coronas me; nam et quecumque sunt opera mea abs te sunt, ideo tua magis quam mea sunt*—Regard, O Lord, in me, not my work, but thine own; if thou regardest my work, thou damnest me; if thine own, thou crownest me, since whatsoever good I have, I have it from thee, and therefore it is rather thine than mine. Well, then, no mere man is good, that is, good of himself.

2. No man is good, that is, absolutely and perfectly good. The perfection of righteousness, so as to do good without sin, is not to be found in any man, no, not in the best man upon earth. In heaven indeed they are made perfect: Heb. xii. 23, 'To the spirits of just men made perfect. But here upon earth 'there is not a just man that doeth good, and sins not,' Eccles. vii. 20, but either at one time or other he will sin; or

in the same action none doeth good and sins not. Noah, Abraham, Lot, Moses, David, Peter, they had all their *navos*, their blots and blemishes; nay, in all things, in their best actions there is somewhat faulty and defective. Nehemiah, where he doth appeal to God for the remembrance of his great works, he desireth God to spare him according to the greatness of his mercy: Neh. xiii. 22, 'And I commanded the Levites that they should cleanse themselves, and that they should come, and keep the gates, to sanctify the sabbath-day. Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy.' And we read of Aaron's 'bearing the iniquity of the holy things,' Exod. xxviii. 38; and 'in many things we offend all,' James iii. 2. Some in all things, and all in some things, either by way of omission or commission. This is true of regenerate and unregenerate.

[1.] As to the unregenerate. When God looked upon his creatures as they passed his hands, he saw all was good, Gen. i. 31; but when he looked down from heaven upon men in their natural condition, and as they had made themselves and defiled themselves, so 'they were altogether become filthy and abominable, and there is none that doeth good, no not one,' Ps. xlii. 3; and 'there is none righteous, no not one,' Rom. iii. 10; that is, pleasing and acceptable with God; it is true of them, none is good.

[2.] As to the regenerate, none is good, that is, wholly free from sin. Paul complains, 'I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwells no good thing,' Rom. vii. 18. And Christ saith to his own disciples, those who were the children of God, those to whom he makes a promise of the Spirit, Luke xi. 13, 'If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children,' &c. Even the children of God are evil in this sense, that is, not perfectly good. *In optimis non nihil est pessimi*—There is some evil in the best. (1.) There is evil in their natures; there are the relics and remainders of much sinful corruption, the flesh and spirit; like Hannah and Peninnah, always vexing and thwarting one another: Gal. v. 17, 'The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.' The most of the sanctifying grace which we have is the least part of that which we want and that we should have. In the best, sin is like a wild fig-tree; cut off the boughs and branches, yet still there will be some strings that will be sprouting out again; or like the leprosy in the house that could not be cured by scraping, till it was pulled down to the ground. There is a tincture of the old leaven which remains in the best heart. (2.) There is evil in their best actions: Isa. lxiv. 6, 'But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags;' not only our sins, but our righteous operations; the productions of the soul cannot exceed the force of our principles, and if there be a double principle, there must be a double operation. (3.) There is new evil which we contract by our actions: John xvii. 10, 'He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet.' He that is purged from sin, and washed, contracts new soil. *In bono itinere pulverem colligis*, saith Bernard—In the good we do we contract filth, as we gather new dust in our walking up and down. So that none is perfectly thoroughly good.

3. No man is good in comparison with God. That goodness that we have in participation from him will appear no goodness in compari-

son with him. If the heavens themselves, the purest part of the world, are not clean in his sight, how much more evil is man? Job xxv. 5, 6, 'Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not, and the stars are not pure in his sight. How much less man that is a worm, and the son of man, which is a worm?' Elsewhere it is said, 'He chargeth his angels with folly,' Job iv. 18. If he charge his angels with folly, that is, if he seeth mutability in the angelical nature, take it in itself, and without his confirming grace, there is folly in the angels, then what is man, whose foundation is in the dust? When the prophet Isaiah had seen God in a vision, and heard the angels cry, 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts!' Isa. vi. 3, what then? ver. 5, 'Then said I, Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips,' &c. When he had seen God, then he bewails his own vileness. So Job xlii. 5, 6, 'Now mine eyes have seen thee, wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.' The consideration of God's holiness and dignity obscureth all the glory and praise of the creature. As when the sun is up, the lustre of the stars is no more to be seen than as if they were not, so when God is thought on, and we are compared with him, there are none good, no not one. While we compare ourselves with one another, one may be called bad, another good; but when we compare ourselves with God, no man is good. Look, as it is in respect of entity or being, none is but God; when other things are compared with God, they are called things that are not; so it is true of goodness, we are not good when compared with a holy God. 'I am more brutish than any man,' saith Agur, Prov. xxx. 2. This was a lesson Christ would teach the pharisee, to bring him to humility and self-annihilation.

*Use 1.* I might take occasion hence to confute two popish errors. One is touching the state of perfection in this life, that some men endowed with special grace may keep the law perfectly; but if they could do so, they could be without sin, and perfectly good. Now who can say, 'I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin,' Prov. xx. 9. Will they reply, that some are free from sin, but out of humility they forbear to say so, *propter periculum inanis gloriæ*, for fear of vainglory? But there is a truth in the thing, *non tantum humiliter, sed veraciter dicunt*; where are the saints that dare say they are free from sin? It is not a complimentary speech: 1 John i. 8, 'If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.' He doth not say, as Austin observes, *Nulla est humilitas in nobis*—'There is no humility in us; but, *Nulla est veritas*—'There is no truth. When Paul said he was 'the chiefest of sinners,' 1 Tim. i. 15, and 'the least of the apostles,' and 'not meet to be called an apostle,' 1 Cor. xv. 9, it was not a fit of humility, but a pang of conscience that forced him to make that confession. Another error this confuteth is the doctrine of merit; for if no man be good, no man can merit anything at all at God's hands. The best of God's children have no other claim but the mercies of God and the merits of Christ: Rev. vii. 14, 'These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.' It was not their innocency and faithfulness that recommended them to God; those that are most righteous in active or passive obedience need washing; it is Christ's

satisfaction must make them white; they could not appear before God in their own holiness. Therefore Paul desireth, Phil. iii. 9, 'To be found in Christ, not having his own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.' They were cleansed from the guilt of their sins, not by their own sufferings, but by the blood of Christ.

*Use 2.* This should ever keep us humble in ourselves, for all the good in us is of God; and it should keep us in a self-loathing frame and posture of spirit, for there is none of us perfect, especially when we come to God.

1. It should ever keep us humble, for all the good that is in us, natural and spiritual, is not of ourselves, but of God: 1 Cor. iv. 7, 'Who made thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou hast not received?' If we be proud of anything, it is that we are more in debt than others; for all is from God, for of ourselves we cannot so much as think a good thought: 2 Cor. iii. 5, 'Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God.' A thought is less than a desire, and a desire less than an action; now we are so far from perfecting a good action, that we cannot frame a good desire, and so far from lifting up a good desire, that we cannot think a good thought of ourselves; and John xv. 5, 'Without me you can do nothing.' He doth not say, *Nihil magnum*, no great thing, not work miracles, but *nihil*, nothing. All the glory is due to him.

2. It should keep us in a self-loathing frame and posture of heart, because the good that is in us is so imperfect and mingled with so much evil of sin. Time was when we were altogether evil, and made a trade and profession of sin: Gen. vi. 5, 'God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.' And now God hath infused a little good into us, it is like a flower in the midst of many weeds that are ready to choke it, or like fair water running through a sink, that doth always taint and defile it; and therefore this should make us 'loathe ourselves for our ways and doings, that are not good,' Ezek. xxxvi. 31. And especially when we come to God in our addresses to him, this should stir up self-loathing and holy shame in us; for then the third consideration comes in, that none is good in comparison with God. When we repair to God, we have actual thoughts of his purity and holiness, and therefore should be more deeply possessed with a sense of our own vileness and baseness: Job xl. 4, 'Behold I am vile; what shall I answer thee, I will lay mine hand upon my mouth;' Gen. xviii. 27, 'Behold now I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, who am but dust and ashes.' If the seraphim clap their wings on their faces, as abashed at God's holiness, Isa. vi. 2, oh! how much more should the saints, when they set themselves in God's special presence, and behold God, as it were, looking with a full eye upon them, and looking him full in the face, how should they loathe themselves in a sense of their own vileness!

*Use 3.* It instructeth us, since none is good, where our happiness lieth, not in the plea of innocency, but in the pardon of sin: Ps. xxxii. 1, 2, 'Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.' Which must be humbly sought out in the name of Christ; not blessed is the man who hath no sin, but blessed is the man whose sin is pardoned; so it necessarily brings us to submit to the righteousness of Christ: Rom. x. 3, 'For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God.' The proud heart of man is loath to stoop, or be beholden to another; we prize a patched coat of our own rather than a velvet coat of another's. Nothing driveth us to a necessity of this submission so much as this consideration—

*Doct. 2.* That God only is good.

The goodness of God cometh under a twofold consideration—there is his goodness in himself, and his goodness to us. The one implies the perfection and excellency of his nature, the other his will and self-propension to diffuse his benefits; the one his perfection, the other his bounty. To speak of these distinctly.

*First,* The absolute perfection of his nature and being, which is such as nothing is wanting to it or defective in it, and nothing can be added to it to make it better. In the creature there is a more general and natural goodness, and a more special and moral goodness. The natural goodness is the due proportion of a thing to the law and nature of its being, when it is good in its kind; so this first goodness in God is the perfection of his nature. As Philo saith, *ὁ οὐτως ὢν τὸ πρῶτον αγαθον*, the first being must needs be the first good. As soon as we conceive there is a God, we presently conceive that he is good, as being the fountain and pattern of all the good that is in the creature. As the sun hath light in itself, and giveth light to all other things, so God, that is the principle of all good, must needs be apprehended to be good and perfect. In short, God is good, and only good, four ways—originally, essentially, infinitely, and immutably.

1. Originally. He is *ἀνταγαθος*, good of himself, and from no other, which no creature can be. A creature is only good by participation and communication from God. The good he hath is from the Father of lights: James i. 17, 'Every good and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights.' If God had his goodness from any other, then he were not the first cause and the fountain of all things; then there would be something superior to God, and so he could not be God.

2. He is essentially good. Not only good, but goodness itself. Goodness in us is an accessory quality, or a superadded gift, but in God it is not a quality, but his essence. The goodness of God and the goodness of a creature differs, as a thing whose substance is gold differs from that which is gilded and overlaid with gold. A vessel of pure gold, the matter itself gives lustre to it; but in a gilded vessel, the outward lustre is one thing, and the substance is another. The essence and being of an angel is one thing, and its holiness another; the holiness may be separated from the essence, for the essence and being of the angels was continued when their perfection and goodness was lost; so man's substance is one thing, his holiness another, but in God his goodness is his being. Our first parents continued their being whea



they lost their integrity ; but God cannot be God if he be not good, for goodness is his very essence.

3. God is infinitely good. A creature's goodness is limited, but since the perfection of God is from himself, and not from another, there is nothing to limit it or to give it any measure, and therefore it must be infinite. The goodness of the creature, since it comes from God, is limited according to the measure wherein God will dispense it, to some more, to others less, according as his wisdom thinks fit. God is an ocean without banks or bottom ; the goodness of a creature is but a drop from the ocean, or as a nutshell filled with the water of the sea. God loves himself as much as he can be loved. God is so infinitely good as he cannot be better : 1 Sam. ii. 7, 'There is none holy as the Lord.'

4. God is immutably good ; it cannot be diminished or augmented, for in infiniteness there are no degrees ; it can never be more than it is, or less than it is ; for God actually hath all possible perfection ; there can be no addition made to it. And since he hath it by his essence, and from himself, there can be no subtraction from it, for then God would lose his being ; but the goodness of a creature may still be increased to further degrees, or be diminished. No angel is so good but he may be better, and may be diminished and lessened into nothing. Our state is full of changes ; as the sea hath its ebbings and flowings, so hath grace a gradual increase or decrease. At first man was *peccabilis*, he might sin ; afterward *peccator*, a sinner ; then he is purified by grace. God is pure, but we are purified, and we may lose all again, if we consider the nature of the thing, but not because of the promise of the covenant. We were once defiled, but God's goodness ever is and ever was in the same fulness.

*Use 1.* To humble us in our converses with God. He is good, but we are evil ; he is heaven, but we are hell ; he is perfect, but we are poor defective creatures. Therefore in all our approaches to him we should come the more humbly to him, and go the more holy from him ; for it is sad when we come to the good God, and are never the better. If we go to the fire, we expect to be warm. Oh ! when you come to the fountain of goodness, we should come away better.

*Use 2.* To make us thankful. Where we reap any good, comfort, or benefit by man or any of the creatures, we are to bless God, and to be thankful to him especially, from whom all that good cometh. Though we ought not to be unthankful to the instruments of good, yet we ought especially to bless God, for the goodness of the creatures cometh from him : 1 Sam. xxv. 32, 'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me.' So Gen. ix. 25, 26, 'Cursed be Canaan ; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. Blessed be the Lord God of Shem, and Canaan shall be his servant.'

*Use 3.* If we would have good wrought in us, let us look up to God. As rivers are supplied from the sea, the gathering together of all goodness is in God : Exod. xxxi. 13, 'I am the Lord that doth sanctify you.' All we have is a derivation from his fulness, and as a candle lighted at a torch doth not diminish the light of the torch, so God doth not lose by giving.

*Use 4.* Let us love God, and love him above all things, for he only

is good. Goodness is that which is amiable and desirable; so when God is said to be good, we say he is of such an essence as is most amiable and desirable. Therefore let us love God above all things with our chiefest love, for he is most worthy of our love, and by preferring his glory above all things that are dear to us, being content for his sake to part with all which we have in the world, and also to long and wait for that time when we shall fully enjoy him. If the object of love be good, there is none good but one, which is God; he is good of himself, good in himself, yea, goodness itself; there is no good above, or besides, or beyond him; it is all from him, if it be good.

1. He is primitively and originally good, good of himself, which nothing else is, and therefore he is called 'the fountain of living waters,' Jer. ii. 13. The creatures are but dry pits and broken cisterns. Other things, what goodness they have is of him, therefore it is infinitely better and greater in him than in them.

2. He is the chiefest good. Other things are good in subordination to him. All the goodness that is in the creature is but a spark of that good which is in God. If we find any good there, it is not to detain our affections, but to lead us to a greater good; not to hold us from him, but to lead us to him, as the streams lead us to the fountain, and the steps of a ladder are not to stand still upon, but to lead us higher. If the prince should woo us by messengers, and we should leave him and cleave to the messengers, this were extreme folly, and a great abuse and wrong to the prince. By the goodness of the creatures, God's end is to draw us to himself as the chiefest good. Here is goodness in the creature, but it is mixed with imperfection; the goodness is to draw us to God, the imperfection to drive us from the creatures.

3. He is infinitely good. In choosing God for our portion, one hath not the less because another enjoyeth it with him; here is a sharing without division, and a partaking without the prejudice of copartners. We straiten others in worldly things so much as we are enlarged ourselves; finite things cannot be divided but they must be lessened, they are not large enough to be parted. But this good is infinite, and sufficeth the whole world; every one possesseth this portion entire, as the same speech may be heard of all, and yet no man heareth the less because another hears it with him, or as no man hath the less light because the sun shineth to more than himself. The Lord is all in all; the more possess him the better: as in a choir of voices, every one is not only solaced with his own voice, but by the harmony of those that sing in consort with him. Many a fair stream is drawn dry, or runneth low by being dispersed into several channels, but that which is infinite cannot be lessened.

4. He is eternally good, immutably good, and so the most durable portion: Ps. lxxiii. 26, 'God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.' The good things of this life are perishing, and of a short continuance. We leave other good things when we begin to take possession of God. At death wicked men perceive their error, when the good which they have chosen cometh to be taken from them; but a man that hath chosen God for his God entereth into the full possession of him. Well, then, other good things may busy and vex us, but they cannot satisfy us; this alone sufficeth all; it giveth health,

and peace, and honour, and glory. Necessities that are not satisfied by him are fancies, and the desires of them are not to be satisfied, but mortified. If we have not enough in God, it is not the default of our portion, but the defect of our capacity.

*Secondly*, Good is good as it implieth his bounty and beneficence. So he told Moses, Exod. xxxiii. 19, 'I will make all my goodness to pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee, and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy;' so Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7, 'The Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin.' *Bonum est primum et potissimum nomen Dei*—Damascene. Goodness is the first and chiefest name of God. We cannot conceive of him by anything that concerneth us so much as by his goodness; by that we know him, and for that we love him. We admire him with reverence for his other titles, but this doth first insinuate with us, and command our respect to him. The first temptation that ever was in the world was this, to weaken the conceit of his goodness to the creature; the devil would fain have persuaded Adam and Eve that God was not so good to them as they thought, but that he envied their happiness. The heathens had a conceit that the Godhead was envious, harsh, and sour in his restraints. Still the children of God find it a great temptation; nothing withdraws their heart from God so much as this, when the esteem of God's goodness is lessened; therefore the psalmist cries out, 'Truly God is good to Israel,' Ps. lxxiii. 1.

Now this goodness of God's or his bounty, is twofold—

1. Common and general to all creatures, especially to mankind: Ps. cxlv. 9, 'The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works;' to all things, to all persons, he bestoweth many common blessings upon them, as natural life and being, health, wealth, and the like. Nay, he is good to the young ravens: Ps. cxlvii. 9, 'He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry.' He is good to wicked men: Mat. v. 45, 'He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.' Nay, even to idolaters: Acts xiv. 17, 'He left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave them rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness.' God might have testified his godhead and being by acts of vengeance, but he would rather among the heathens testify it by acts of bounty; though they were a bad people, yet they had a good God.

2. His more especial goodness towards his church and faithful people, whom he blesseth with spiritual and saving benefits in Christ. So it is said, Ps. lxxxiv. 11, 'No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly;' Lam. iii. 25, 'The Lord is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him.' There is a peculiar goodness which God hath to his people, and all his blessings to them come from it: 2 Thes. i. 11, 'That God would fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness.'

*Use 1.* The consideration of his goodness is matter of great comfort to the godly and faithful at all times but especially in the time of

trouble and distress. At all times : Ps. c. 5, 'For the Lord is good, his mercy is everlasting, and his truth endureth to all generations.' Here is the stability of the saints, which keeps them in life, and heart, and comfort in all conditions, but especially in a time of want and afflictions, inward or outward. It is a great cordial of the saints to think of the goodness of God. Do we want direction? Ps. cxix. 68, 'Thou art good, and doest good; teach me thy statutes.' Do we want support and deliverance? Nahum i. 7, 'The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble, and he knoweth them that trust in him.' Do we feel the burden of sin, or do we fear the wrath of God? Ps. lxxxvi. 5, 'For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive.' When his old sins troubled him: Ps. xxv. 7, 'Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions; according to thy mercy, remember me for thy goodness' sake, O Lord.' Do enemies insult, and boast, and threaten much? Ps. lii. 1, 'Why boastest thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man? the goodness of God endureth continually.' Though they have never so much might and power, and do never so much machinate against you, yet they cannot take away the goodness of God, therefore you have no cause to be discouraged. God may seem to break down the hedge, and forget his poor servants, and leave them as a prey to their enemies, yet he changeth not his affection to them. In the agonies of death here is our cordial and support. Austin, when he came to die, had this speech to those that were about him, *Non sic vixi, ut me pudeat inter vos vivere, nec mori timeo, quia bonum habeo Dominum*—I have not so lived as that I should be ashamed to live among you, and I have not so believed as that I am afraid to die, for I have a good God. This supports us, and is a very great cordial to our heart; he is a good God to all that put their trust in him.

Use 2. Let it move all to repentance: Rom. ii. 4, 'Despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?' God is good, but not to those that continue in their sins. There is hope offered. Oh! come, try, see how good he will be to you: Ps. xxxiv. 8, 'O taste, and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man that trusteth in him.' If goodness be despised, it will turn into fury. In point of gratitude the goodness of God should melt our hearts into godly sorrow for sin. The kindness from men melteth us, it is as coals of fire, as fire melts a thing, and makes it capable of any impression. The borrower is a servant to the lender. God hath not lent, but given us all that we have. Oh! let it break our hearts with sorrow that we should offend so good and bountiful a God. Saul had but a rough military spirit, yet when he heard how kind David had been to him in sparing his life, 'He lift up his voice and wept,' 1 Sam. xxiv. 16. Methinks when we hear how good God hath been to us all our days, this should make us ashamed of the insolences and abuses we have put upon him. Every man will condemn him that wrongs one that never hurt him. God hath done us no hurt, but a great deal of good. What! will you sin against God, that is so good in himself, and so good to all his creatures, and return evil for all his goodness to you? I beseech you by the mercies of God, deal not so unkindly; how can you sin against him, and abuse all his mercies?

*Use 3.* Honour and praise him for this in word and deed: Ps. cxviii. 1, 'O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good.' You all have tasted of the goodness of God, now what shall be done to the Lord for this? Certainly we should be good, and do good, that we might imitate our heavenly Father.

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### SERMON III.

*Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, do not kill, do not steal, do not bear false witness, defraud not, honour thy father and mother.—MARK X. 19.*

IN former discourses upon this context, you have heard of a necessary question asked, and that by a young man, concerning the way to eternal life. He doth not put it upon good words, or anything less than good works really to be done, 'What good thing must I do that I may inherit eternal life?' Yet, because he spoke in a legal sense, Christ accommodates his answer thereunto. First he gives answer to his compellation, 'Good Master,' and now to his question, to convince his conscience, and bring him to brokenness of heart, and now remitteth him to his rule.

1. He mindeth him of his pattern, 'Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, which is God.' This young man had too high a conceit of his own goodness, therefore Christ shows him that originally and absolutely that title belongeth to God only.

2. He refers him to his rule. Though we be not so perfect as God is perfect, yet if we answer our rule, the law given to us, it is enough for us creatures, and therefore the young man is put upon that trial. Thou art not good as God is good, so thou canst not be, for God alone is good; yet 'thou knowest the commandments, do not commit adultery,' &c. Observe here—

[1.] Christ directeth him to the commandments for an answer to his question. The question was, 'What must I do that I may inherit eternal life?' Christ saith, 'Thou knowest the commandments,' &c. That here is a direct answer to the question appeareth by comparing the evangelists; for we see, Mark xix. 17, 18, it is drawn dialogue-wise thus, 'If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, thou shalt not commit adultery,' &c. If thou lookest to be saved by doing, keep the law perfectly.

[2.] For the particular commandments, he instanceth in those commandments for his trial which were more apt to convince him of his sin and of his imperfection: and here it is notable that they are all of the second table, 'Do not kill, do not commit adultery,' &c. And there is one clause, 'defraud not,' that is left out in Luke; and in Matthew instead thereof there is put this general clause, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,' Mat. xix. 19.