

Stephen Charnock, in *The Existence and Attributes of God* (reprint, Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1958), pp. 538-543, writes:

Pure and perfect goodness is only the royal prerogative of God; goodness is a choice perfection of the divine nature.

This is the true and genuine character of God. He is good, he is goodness, good in himself, good in his essence, good in the highest degree, possessing whatsoever is comely, excellent, desirable; the highest good, because the first good; whatsoever is perfect goodness is God, whatsoever is truly goodness in any creature is a resemblance of God. All the names of God are comprehended in this one of good. All gifts, all variety of goodness, are contained in him as one common good. He is the efficient cause of all good by an overflowing goodness of his nature. He refers all things to himself as the end for the representation of his own goodness. "Truly God is good," Ps. 73:1. Certainly, it is an undoubted truth; it is written in his works of nature, and his acts of grace: Exod. 34:6, "He is abundant in goodness."...

1. We mean by this, the goodness of his essence, or the perfection of his nature. God is thus good, because his nature is infinitely perfect, he hath all things requisite to the completing of a most perfect and sovereign being. All good meets in his essence, as all water meets in the ocean. Under this notion all the attributes of God, which are requisite to so illustrious a being, are comprehended. All things that are have a goodness of being in them, derive to them by the power of God as they are creatures....

2. Nor is it the same with the blessedness of God, but something flowing from his blessedness. Were he not first infinitely blessed and full in himself, he could not be infinitely good and diffusive to us; had he not an infinite abundance in his own nature, he could not be overflowing to his creatures..

3. Nor is it the same with the holiness of God. The holiness of God is the rectitude of his nature, whereby he is pure, and without spot in himself. The goodness of God is the efflux of his will, whereby he is beneficial to his creatures. The holiness of God is manifest in his rational creatures, but the goodness of God extends to all the works of his hands. His holiness beams most of all in his Jaw, his goodness reacheth to everything that had being from him....

4. Nor is this goodness of God the same with the mercy of God. Goodness extends to more objects than mercy, goodness stretcheth itself out to all the works of his hands; mercy extends only to a miserable object, for it is joined with a sentiment of pity, occasioned by the calamity of another. The mercy of God is exercised about those that merit punishment, the goodness of God is exercised upon objects that have not merited anything contrary to the acts of his bounty. Creation is an act of goodness, not of mercy: providence in governing