

The Goodness of God

"Thou crownest the year with Thy goodness" Psalm 65: 11.

F. A. Hughes.

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Happy indeed is our portion if, as believers, we can look back over the year now drawing to its close and recognize with thankful hearts that its outstanding feature has been the goodness of our God!

The word "crownest" might be rendered "encircled for protection" or "compassed about," and is so given in Psalm 5: 12 — "For thou, Lord, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt Thou compass him as with a shield." The same word is again seen in Psalm 103 where the Psalmist breaks forth "Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me bless His holy Name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits . . . Who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things."

As we read the context in which these verses appear, our hearts must surely well over in praise and thankfulness to our God for His gracious continuing care throughout a year marked by increased lawlessness and danger on every hand. These conditions we cannot, and would not, ignore; but it is blessed indeed to prove the encircling, protecting hand of our God day by day, and *occupied with His goodness*, find an outlet for our affections as we each would say in response to Him "Bless the LORD, O my soul".

"Let all those that put their trust in Thee rejoice; let them ever shout for joy, because Thou defendest them: let them also that love Thy Name be joyful in Thee," (Psalm 5: 11).

"We shall be satisfied with the goodness of Thy house . . . O God of our salvation: who art the confidence of all the ends of the earth . . . which stilleth . . . the tumult of the people . . . thou visiteth the earth, and waterest it: Thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water," (Psalm 65: 4-9).

Again David says, "Thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice" — or "to shout with joy." "Outgoings" suggest a variety of blessedness, — liberty, fountains of refreshment; a mine of wealth; quiet pastures — are all embedded in the word, and under the hand of God can enrich our every day — our mornings and our evenings, too.

The "goodness of God" cannot be measured by human terms, containing as it does that which is bountiful, joyful, loving; expressive of what He Himself is — for God is good. The inheritance into which God would bring His people of old was a land upon which His eyes rested "from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year" (Deuteronomy 11: 12); so also our portion is centred in One who is ever the Object of God's pleasure and delight, He of whom the Psalmist could speak prophetically, "Thou hast met Him with the blessings of goodness; thou hast set a crown of pure gold on His head" (Psalm 21: 3).

Enriched, satisfied, defended, accepted in God's Beloved, may we go forward in confidence saying from full hearts "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life;" and in reciprocal affection to the God who has so blessed us may we desire to be ever near to Himself, knowing even in the present day the blessedness of dwelling "in the house of the LORD."