

Of Contentedness. What It Is. the Grounds of Contentedness.

by William Gouge

Contentedness is a satisfaction of the mind concerning the sufficiency and fitness of one's present condition, referencing God's wise providence.

Scripture: 2 Kings 4:13, Psalm 22:26, Psalm 91:16, Psalm 132:15, Proverbs 19:23, Joel 2:19, Philippians 4:12, 1 Timothy 6:8, Hebrews 13:5

Topics: "Christian Contentment", "Godly Providence"

Description

William Gouge preaches on the importance of contentedness, highlighting how it distinguishes between contentedness and covetousness, emphasizing that a contented mind is never unsatisfied with any condition. He explains that satisfaction accompanies God's blessings, such as long life, food, and provision, and extends to all aspects of life, including peace, trouble, honor, and adversity. Gouge emphasizes that contentedness is not based on a set quantity but on trusting in God's wise providence and being satisfied with what He provides.

Transcript

Contentedness is a satisfaction of the mind concerning the sufficiency and fitness of one's present condition.

This general matter of contentedness, a satisfaction of mind, doth not only put a distinguishing difference betwixt contentedness and covetousness, but also sheweth that they are diametrically contrary one to another: for a covetous mind is never satisfied with any estate: and a contented mind is never unsatisfied with any.

This satisfaction useth to accompany such things as God bestoweth on such as he taketh an especial care of. Such persons having long life are satisfied therewith. God with the blessing giveth satisfaction, Ps. xci. 16. 'The meek shall eat and be satisfied,' Ps. xxii. 26. God 'will satisfy the poor with bread,' Ps. cxxxii. 15. When God promiseth to send corn, wine, and oil as a blessing, it is added, 'ye shall be satisfied therewith,' Joel ii. 19, 26.

This satisfaction is said to be of the mind, to shew that it extends itself as far as covetousness doth; which is an inward inordinate desire of the mind. A contented person doth not only forbear outward indirect

courses of getting more and more; but doth also restrain the motions of his mind or soul, from desiring more than God is willing to allot unto him.

The sufficiency mentioned in the description, hath not reference to any set quantity or measure which the contented person propounds to himself; but only to the wise providence of God, who doth give to every one of his what is sufficient for him: answerably a contented person so accounts his own estate, and is satisfied. She that made this answer, to him that would have spoken to the captain of the host for some reward to her, 'I dwell among mine own people,' was such a contented one, 2 Kings iv. 13.

This word fitness is added, to shew that contentedness extends itself not only to the things which are needful for man's livelihood, as food and raiment, 1 Tim. vi. 8, but also to the several estates s hereunto man is subject: as of peace and trouble, ease and pain, honour and dishonour, prosperity and adversity. Contentedness makes a man account that estate, be it joyous or grievous, whereunto God brings him, to be the fittest and seasonablest for him.

The present condition wherewith a contented mind is limited in this text, admits a double reference. One to the time past; wherein though his condition hath been better, yet he repineth not at the alteration thereof.

The other reference is to the time to come; wherein though he have never so great hope of bettering himself, yet for the present he remaineth content with his present condition.

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