

What Saith the Scripture?

<http://www.WhatSaithTheScripture.com/>

from the series

What the Bible Says About...

What the Bible Says About Contentment

"Godliness with contentment is great gain"

(1Timothy 6:6).

by Tom Stewart

3-24-2003

Preface

Godliness and contentment are indeed rare gems, but since they can only be found inseparably combined, they are the rarest of gem to be found in man. "Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in Faith, and heirs of the Kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him?" (James 2:5). Unlike the covetous of the world, Christians are to be content with their lot in life-- rich or poor, pleasant ways or a difficult road-- since they understand their physical circumstances to be both God's opportunity to mold them and reach the world. "To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (1Corinthians 9:22). Once it is fully realized that your physical circumstances ought to be treated only as secondary to your spiritual necessities, i.e., "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His Righteousness; and all these things [food, clothing, shelter] shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33), then it becomes *immediately* possible to be truly content. "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5).

This does not mean that Christians should pay no attention to their physical circumstances, for "no man ever yet hated his own flesh" (Ephesians 5:29). Attempting to improve one's pecuniary circumstances is in keeping with a Christian's stewardship or management of the talents given to him by the LORD, i.e., "it is required in stewards, that a man be found Faithful" (1Corinthians 4:2), so long as we understand that the wealth belongs to God and should benefit us only to the extent that it advances His Kingdom. "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive Power, and Riches, and Wisdom, and Strength, and Honour, and Glory, and Blessing" (Revelation 5:12). Neither does it imply that True Christians cannot abide in the condition of being rich in worldly wealth. "If riches increase, set NOT your **heart** upon them" (Psalm 62:10). Instead, they must not put their confidence in riches, and they must continually be burdened with seeking the right opportunity to make the best use of their wealth to promote the Kingdom of God. "17 Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the Living God, Who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; 18 that they do Good, that they be rich in Good Works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; 19 laying up in store for themselves a Good Foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on Eternal Life" (1Timothy 6:17-19).

What is True Christian Contentment?

True Christian contentment is a satisfaction with God in all of His Word, will, Providences, promises, and prophecies. "In Thy Presence is fulness of Joy; at Thy right hand there are Pleasures for evermore... a day in Thy Courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the House of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness" (Psalm 16:11; 84:10). The character of God is the great issue of Christian contentment. Are we truly satisfied with God? Do we really find our satisfaction in God's will for our lives? "From the end of the Earth will I cry unto Thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the Rock that is higher than I" (61:2). Can anyone actually show us a better way for our lives than what the LORD has already shown us? "4 Shew me Thy Ways, O LORD; teach me Thy Paths. 5 Lead me in Thy Truth, and teach me: for Thou art the God of my Salvation; on Thee do I wait all the day" (25:4-5). Do we truly find ourselves sufficient to question the decisions of the Almighty? "1 Moreover the LORD answered Job, and said, 2 Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct Him? he that reproveth God, let him answer it. 3 Then Job answered the LORD, and said, 4 Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer Thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. 5 Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further" (Job 40:1-5). After all, how can we be discontent with a God who loved us so much that He would send His Only Begotten Son to die for us, unless we do not feel that our sins were so bad or that His Gift was not so great? "Herein is Love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the Propitiation for our sins" (1John 4:10). If we have trouble with such basic thoughts about the LORD's Love and Faithfulness, then we will never be content with God without a metamorphosis or transformation of our hearts that comes with True Repentance. "Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby you have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit" (Ezekiel 18:31).

Our physical circumstances of poverty or riches do not necessarily reflect our contentment or discontentment with God, for contentment is foremost a spiritual matter of satisfaction with God. "As for me, I will behold Thy face in Righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness" (Psalm 17:15). But, if riches come to your lot, use them to glorify God. "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will He pay him again" (Proverbs 19:17). And, be forewarned that *riches are more often than not the mark of those who do not enter into the Kingdom of God*. "And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto His disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God!" (Mark 10:23). Contentment with God is generally at odds with the possession of wealth. "For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God" (Luke 18:25). The "deceitfulness of riches" (Mark 4:19) is the tendency to put undue confidence in your capacity to purchase your way out of the difficulty or suffering that God intends to further sanctify you. "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered" (Hebrews 5:8). Certainly, we can use the riches at our disposal to deal with our difficulties, but we must counter the use of riches with an even greater weight of trusting God and continually acknowledging that it is the Almighty "that giveth thee power to get wealth" (Deuteronomy 8:18) and that He alone "delivereth [us] out of all [our] troubles" (Psalm 34:17).

Instead of an idle use of riches to promote self-vanity or simply fleshly pleasures, it is the burden, responsibility, and honour of the Saints, who have any of earthly riches, to study how to do the most

good for God first and then man in promoting the Kingdom of God, i.e., "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required" (Luke 12:48). "37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the First and Great Commandment. 39 And the Second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:37-39). This obligation, of course, is to be carried by *all* the Saints in this New Testament dispensation through the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ that redeems the sinner from the penalty of sin (Salvation) and power of sin (Sanctification), for if sin is not clearly and continually defeated, how can one rightly claim to know anything of the faith that is in Jesus? "3 And hereby we do know that we know Him, **if we keep** His Commandments. 4 He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His Commandments, is a **liar**, and the Truth is **not** in Him" (1John 2:3-4).

True Christian Contentment was well depicted by the Apostle Peter in 44 AD as he slept peacefully in a Jerusalem prison awaiting his martyrdom the next morning at the hands of King Herod Agrippa. "1 Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the Church. 2 And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. 3 And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.) 4 And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions [sixteen] of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people. 5 Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the Church unto God for him. 6 And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison" (Acts 12:1-6). Surely, the Scripture, "Thou wilt keep him in Perfect Peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee" (Isaiah 26:3), aptly describes the Apostle Peter's faith in such dire circumstances. Peter knew that he would be martyred, because after the Resurrection, the LORD Jesus had told him, "When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not" (John 21:18). However, that was only twelve years earlier, and probably *not* a fulfilment of the prophecy, "when thou shalt be old." Nonetheless, beloved Brother Peter slept so soundly, when the "angel of the LORD came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: [that] he smote Peter on the side" (Acts 12:7), just to get his attention to inform him to leave. "It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so He giveth His beloved sleep" (Psalm 127:2). Thus, the LORD plucked Peter-- as He can us-- out of the hands of the executioner. "6 Blessed be the LORD, Who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth. 7 Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped" (124:6-7).

How Much Is Enough to Be Content?

The question arises, How much is enough for us to be content? Does the culture in which we live or the age in which we were born dictate the minimum wage or conditions with which we are to be content? "Be content with your wages" (Luke 3:14). The neglected Law of Love, which has been in effect as long as there has been a God of Love, has made clear the responsibilities of both labor and management, tradesmen and their competitors, merchants and consumers, governments and their citizens, nations and their neighbours, that each is to give due and equal consideration to the interests of the other as they would for themselves, but above all to give the supreme consideration to the

Almighty. "For all the Law is fulfilled in one Word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Galatians 5:14). But, the covetousness of both the employer and employee aside, contentment with God is more the issue than the terms of our earthly employment. "11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. 12 I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need" (Philippians 4:11-12). Never be afraid to act with the love demanded by God, for He will defend you and judge those who make abuse of your charitable conduct. "Whoso rewardeth evil for good, evil shall not depart from his house" (Proverbs 17:13).

Many would mandate for themselves a certain amount of food, clothing, and shelter for their contentment, but a Christian martyr would be willing to deny himself all of his food, clothing, and shelter, yea, his life also, if he may but witness a good confession of Jesus Christ. "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the LORD Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the Grace of God" (Acts 20:24). Again, satisfaction with Jesus as our Saviour from sin and sinning is essential to True Christian Contentment, for if we have the physical means of survival, for which we already possess the Divine Promise of His Supply, i.e., "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His Righteousness; and all these things [food, clothing, shelter] shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33), then the issue of contentment is not truly a physical or material concern, but a matter of more fully comprehending, trusting, and finding satisfaction in the nature and relations of our God to us in all of His names, titles, offices, and capacities as revealed by His Spirit to us through the Scriptures to cause us to "walk in [His] Statutes, and [to] keep [His] Judgments, and do them" (Ezekiel 36:27). "But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, Who of God is made unto us Wisdom, and Righteousness, and Sanctification, and Redemption" (1Corinthians 1:30). [See "[Relations of Christ to the Believer](http://whatsaiththescripture.com/Voice/Relations.Christ.Believer.html)" -- <http://whatsaiththescripture.com/Voice/Relations.Christ.Believer.html> -- by [Charles G. Finney](http://whatsaiththescripture.com/Fellowship/Charles.G.Finney.html) -- <http://whatsaiththescripture.com/Fellowship/Charles.G.Finney.html> -- e.g., "No one can too fully understand, or too deeply feel, the necessity of taking home the Bible with all it contains, as a message sent from Heaven to him; nor can too earnestly desire or seek the promised Spirit to teach him the true spiritual import of all its contents. He must have the Bible made a personal revelation of God to his own soul. It must become his own book. He must know Christ for himself. He must know him in his different relations. He must know him in his blessed and infinite fulness, or he cannot abide in him, and unless he abide in Christ, he can bring forth none of the fruits of holiness. 'Except a man abide in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered.'"] After all, contentment, life, and eternity for the Saints must be an ongoing revelation of the Eternal God to His people of His limitless character, for which we cannot restrain unending love, confidence, admiration, and praise. "Thou art Worthy, O LORD, to receive Glory and Honour and Power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy Pleasure they are and were created" (Revelation 4:11).

Middle Class Contentment

God did not give us His Word to promote economic warfare of the classes, for the "Kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but Righteousness, and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost" (Romans 14:17). However, the phenomenon of the Middle Class-- a distinct grouping of society "occupying a socioeconomic position intermediate between those of the lower working classes and the wealthy"-- lends itself well to description by the Old Testament Scriptures. "8 Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient [Hebrew, *choq*, something prescribed by God] for me: 9 lest I be full, and deny Thee, and say, Who is the LORD? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the Name of my God in vain" (Proverbs 30:8-9). The impression from Scripture

is that God would appoint or prescribe enough to keep the writer of the Proverb-- Agur the son of Jakeh-- from cursing God due to poverty, but not so much that he would forget God. Admittedly, "food convenient" (30:8) for one may not be the same amount or quantity which God appoints for another; thus, making it difficult to describe the Middle Class phenomenon as a certain indicator of Christianity's presence in a nation's socioeconomic structure. For this reason, it is safer to rely on the sure revelation of Scripture that we are simply to rely upon God to appoint for us our "meat [Greek, *trophe*, food or nourishment] in due season" (Matthew 24:45). If we are content with God as a rich Solomon or a poor Lazarus, then we will be more concerned about our relationship to the LORD Jesus Christ than any demographic class description that we are poor, middle class, or rich. "3 Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. 4 Delight thyself also in the LORD; and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart. 5 Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass" (Psalm 37:3-5).

The Blessed Poor

It would be a grave mistake, as well, to conclude that impoverished circumstances necessarily indicates a poverty of spirit. "And He lifted up His eyes on His disciples, and said, Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the Kingdom of God" (Luke 6:20). The familiar story of Job tells us how God removed all of the wealth from Job, the "greatest of all the men of the East" (Job 1:3). The All Wise God deemed it best to test Job with poverty to refine a man that He already considered upright. "And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him in the Earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?" (1:8). Satan, of course, accused Job of serving God only from the selfish motivation of what he could materially gain from God. "9 Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? 10 Hast not Thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. 11 But put forth Thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse Thee to Thy face" (1:9-11). The Almighty's purpose in testing Job with poverty was to magnify Himself, i.e., "Thus will I magnify Myself, and sanctify Myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the LORD" (Ezekiel 38:23), to shame the Devil, i.e., "18 Let the lying lips be put to silence; which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous. 17 Let them be confounded and troubled for ever; yea, let them be put to shame, and perish" (Psalm 31:18; 83:17), and to bring out even greater luster in the character of Job, i.e., "He knoweth the way that I take: when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (Job 23:10). [See our editorial, "[I Shall Come Forth As Gold](http://whatsaiththescripture.com/Fellowship/Edit_Come_Forth_As_Gold.html)" -- http://whatsaiththescripture.com/Fellowship/Edit_Come_Forth_As_Gold.html -- for understanding and help for why *apparently* bad things happen to good people.]

Reading through the Scriptures, the cause of the poor Saint is always undertaken by the LORD. "For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the LORD; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him" (Psalm 12:5). Though poverty may be used by God to indict and judge a prodigal son's waywardness, i.e., "How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!" (Luke 15:17), the same pecuniary want is also a valuable tool in the hands of Omnipotence to teach us our necessity to trust in Jehovah Jireh. "But my God shall supply ALL your need according to His Riches in Glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19). Though our circumstances cry out for immediate supply, God is more interested in what we learn

about Him, as much as He desires to tenderly and faithfully supply our need. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear Him" (Psalm 103:13). How long before we take the hint that the Master is using every circumstance of poverty or riches to draw us to an ever increasing and sanctifying knowledge of Himself? "But grow in Grace, and in the Knowledge of our LORD and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2Peter 3:18). When will we be free from the trifling, worldly focus that consumes itself with the equitability of the distribution of capital or the means of production in the hands of labourers or controllers of wealth? "13 And one of the company said unto Him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. 14 And He said unto him, Man, who made Me a judge or a divider over you? 15 And He said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth **not** in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12:13-15).

Though it is clear that God is against the rich oppressing the poor, for the "LORD executeth Righteousness and Judgment for all that are oppressed" (Psalm 103:6), riches do not necessitate wickedness any more than poverty would signify righteousness. "The rich and poor meet together: the LORD is the Maker of them all" (Proverbs 22:2). Be it remembered that the rich do not have a monopoly on oppression. "A poor man that oppresseth the poor is like a sweeping rain which leaveth no food" (28:3). The True Gain in life comes when a man learns to seek the Upright God. "The way of the just is Uprightness: Thou, Most Upright, dost weigh the path of the just" (Isaiah 26:7). Only in uprightness is there any advantage in poverty. "Better is the poor that walketh in his Uprightness, than he that is perverse in his ways, though he be rich" (Proverbs 28:6). Finding your satisfaction in God causes you to have compassion where God has compassion, i.e., "as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear Him" (Psalm 103:13), and you will be content with whatever disposition of His Law or Providence that finds its way to you, as well as whatever application it makes to the wicked around you. "He that by usury and unjust gain increaseth his substance, he shall gather it for him that will pity the poor" (Proverbs 28:8). The All Wise God promotes the most appropriate circumstances for the rich and poor to find their contentment in Him, but when the "rich man is wise in his own conceit; [then] the poor that hath understanding searcheth him out" (28:11). Each of us has the opportunity to improve his own lot in life; but more importantly, we have the circumstance and obligation to prove the LORD by discovering Him through His Own Word, trusting Him, and finding continual and enduring contentment with Him, or we become guilty of the impropriety of selfishly seeking to "do evil with both hands earnestly" (Micah 7:3). "A faithful man shall abound with blessings: but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent" (Proverbs 28:20).

Be Content or Be Judged!

God has providentially placed us in the wisest possible circumstances to secure our contentment in Him. "28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: 29 and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall He not **much more** clothe you, O ye of little faith? 31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? 32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. 33 But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His Righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. 34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow

shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" (Matthew 6:28-34). He has pleaded that we make our peace with Him, trust in the name of His Son, and find our deepest satisfaction and contentment in Him. "27 All things are delivered unto Me of My Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him. 28 Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you Rest. 29 Take My Yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am Meek and Lowly in heart: and ye shall find Rest unto your souls. 30 For My Yoke is easy, and My Burden is light" (11:27-30).

If we refuse the implorings of the Gracious God to find our contentment in Him, then God in all justice must judge us as the implacable rebels that we are! "6 Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief: 7 again, He limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear His Voice, harden not your hearts" (Hebrews 4:6-7). Why we have been spared this long without the ground opening and swallowing us up whole, is a testament to the merciful longsuffering of God; but, the final punishment of rebels testifies of the evenhanded justice of the Moral Governor of the Universe. "28 And Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that the LORD hath sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of mine own mind. 29 If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men; then the LORD hath not sent me. 30 But if the LORD make a new thing, and the Earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the LORD. 31 And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them: 32 and the Earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. 33 They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the Earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation" (Numbers 16:28-33).

Witness from the prophecies the inevitable future of the Great Whore, whose name is Babylon the Great (Revelation 17:5). "4 God forbid: yea, let God be True, but every man a liar; as it is written, That Thou mightest be Justified in Thy Sayings, and mightest overcome when Thou art judged. 5 But if our unrighteousness commend the Righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous Who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man) 6 God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?" (Romans 3:4-6). Her judgment has been promised, because her repentance is impossible. "1 And after these things I saw another angel come down from Heaven, having great power; and the Earth was lightened with his glory. 2 And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the Great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. 3 For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the Earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the Earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. 4 And I heard another Voice from Heaven, saying, Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. 5 For her sins have reached unto Heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. 6 Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. 7 How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. 8 Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for Strong is the LORD God Who judgeth her" (Revelation 18:1-8). [See our Revelation Commentary, "[Chapter 18: The Destruction of Babylon the Great](http://whatsaiththescriture.com)" -- <http://whatsaiththescriture.com>

/The.Holy.Bible/Commentary.Revelations.18.html -- for more about the judgment that will be brought down upon one who did not find her contentment with the LORD Jesus Christ.]

Scriptural Promises Concerning Contentment

The Promise, "**As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness**" (Psalm 17:15), is True Contentment and Satisfaction with God Himself, when we behold the face of God. Our desire is to obey God in spiritually beholding His face. "When Thou saidst, Seek ye My face; my heart said unto Thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek" (Psalm 27:8). We understand that we can only find God with wholehearted seeking. "And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:13). Your thoughts may be especially enabled to be directed to the face of God in the quietness of the morning before the rush of the day; but, *anytime* that you in faith "draw nigh to God... He will draw nigh to you" (James 4:8). And, we have been further shown that the same Holy Spirit that inspired and reveals the Holy Scriptures, is tasked with revealing to us Jesus Christ-- "the True God, and Eternal Life" (1John 5:20). "But when the Comforter is come, Whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me" (John 15:26).

"**And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not**" (Isaiah 58:11). This Promise of contentment is given especially to those who have fulfilled the condition named in the preceding verse of its context. "And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday" (58:10). Notice the beautiful mixture of spiritual and physical blessing promised to those who live their lives in an unselfish state of giving. "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk" (Acts 3:6). As much as we are concerned about our own physical well-being-- "no man ever yet hated his own flesh" (Ephesians 5:29)-- our greatest concern should be that our heart is in the right place, and that our greatest satisfaction would be in God. "He hath done all things well: He maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak" (Mark 7:37). With whatever strength we can muster, if we will unrelentingly cast ourselves upon the LORD, we will find our greatest satisfaction and only then will we be truly content. "Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and He shall sustain thee: He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved" (Psalm 55:22). Remember, if you have been kept in a holy walk before God, then content yourself that the Great God that sustains the lilies of the field will continually be your secret spring bubbling up in your innermost soul, "like a spring of water, whose waters fail not" (Isaiah 58:11).

Another Promise for our contentment emphasizes the joy and blessing that we find simply from the Word of God that we already possess. "**Thy Words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy Word was unto me the Joy and Rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by Thy Name, O LORD God of Hosts**" (Jeremiah 15:16). No doubt, the joyful blessedness described by Jeremiah is the same as the Psalmist, and is a promised picture of contentment for all those who presently meditate in the Law of the LORD. "1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. 2 But his delight is in the Law of the LORD; and in His Law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall

prosper" (Psalm 1:1-3). Such strong attachment to the Law of the LORD for the Saints of the New Covenant is *not* a return to the expired-but-pedagogical Ceremonial and Civil Law of Old Testament Israel, which was onerous to even the best of Jews-- when they *impatiently* attempted to practice its precepts. "1 And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved... 7 And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the Word of the Gospel, and believe. 8 And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as He did unto us; 9 and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. 10 Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?" (Acts 15:1, 7-10). And, though Jehovah still has a definite plan for the Nation of Israel, now "we [the Body of Christ] are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh" (Philippians 3:3). Therefore, we-- who are the true "Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God" (Romans 2:29)-- may content ourselves with appropriating all the blessings of the Old Covenant that our faith can lay hold of. "A faithful man shall abound with Blessings: but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent" (Proverbs 28:20).

Self-satisfaction for a Christian can never be a contentment with self that does not completely acknowledge that by the "Grace of God I am what I am" (1Corinthians 15:10). Selfishness and selflessness are rewarded with themselves, but the promised self-satisfaction of selflessness has the grand distinction of the Holy Spirit working in the Saint to "will and to do of His Good Pleasure" (Philippians 2:13). "**The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways: and a good man shall be satisfied from himself**" (Proverbs 14:14). The Saint can and should practice the necessity of finding contentment-- be he rich or poor. "7 The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: He bringeth low, and lifteth up. 8 He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the Throne of Glory: for the pillars of the Earth are the LORD'S, and He hath set the world upon them" (1Samuel 2:7-8). Christian contentment would only increase, if we could even understand in a small way the present blessedness that we possess. "The Blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it" (Proverbs 10:22). And, that blessedness can be enumerated only in a small way:

(1) Faith in the Son of God is blessed, i.e., "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him" (Psalm 2:12),

(2) A wholehearted walk of obedience is blessed, i.e., "1 Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the Law of the LORD. 2 Blessed are they that keep His Testimonies, and that seek Him with the whole heart... 11 Blessed are they that hear the Word of God, and keep It" (Psalm 119:1-2; Luke 11:28), and

(3) Patient watching and waiting for the LORD, e.g., to fulfill His Promises, to return for His Saints, etc., always makes us happy, i.e., "And therefore will the LORD wait, that He may be Gracious unto you, and therefore will He be Exalted, that He may have Mercy upon you: for the LORD is a God of Judgment: **blessed are all they that wait for Him...** 37 Blessed are those servants, whom the LORD when He cometh shall find watching:

verily I say unto you, that He shall gird Himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. 38 And if He shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, Blessed are those servants" (Isaiah 30:18; Luke 12:37-38).

Conclusion

As you can see, True Christian Contentment is primarily our heartfelt satisfaction with the person of God and not an estimation of our physical circumstances or our material worth. "1 O God, Thou art my God; early will I seek Thee: my soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth for Thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; 2 to see Thy Power and Thy Glory, so as I have seen Thee in the Sanctuary. 3 Because Thy Lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise Thee. 4 Thus will I bless Thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in Thy Name. 5 **My soul shall be satisfied** as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise Thee with joyful lips: 6 when I remember Thee upon my bed, and meditate on Thee in the night watches. 7 Because Thou hast been my Help, therefore in the shadow of Thy Wings will I rejoice. 8 My soul followeth hard after Thee: Thy right hand upholdeth me" (Psalm 63:1-8).

May we never be as the unsatiated rebellious. "Hell and destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied" (Proverbs 27:20). Instead, may we be as a Solomon, when he contented himself in seeking after the Living God, and concerned himself only with acquiring the wisdom, discernment, and judgment to obey Jehovah in shepherding his kingdom in fulfilment of his kingly duties. "11 And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern Judgment; 12 behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. 13 And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches, and honour: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days" (1Kings 3:11-13).

"O taste and see that the LORD is Good: blessed is the man that trusteth in Him" (Psalm 34:8).

Amen, and Amen!