

Joy in God's Providence

by Jared Waterbury

The doctrine of particular providence brings joy to the believer by giving them a sense of confidence and contentment, knowing that God is actively involved in their life and is working everything out for their good.

Scripture: Psalm 139:16, Proverbs 16:9, Matthew 10:29, Romans 8:28, Romans 15:13, Philippians 4:11

Topics: "Gods Providence", "Christian Joy"

Description

Jared Waterbury preaches about the doctrine of a particular providence as taught in the Bible, emphasizing the belief that not even a sparrow falls to the ground apart from the will of God, and that every detail of our lives is noticed and numbered by the Almighty. This doctrine, when practically recognized, becomes a foundation of joy for the pious man, bringing God near and acknowledging His hand in the minutest affairs of life without diminishing His dignity as the Creator of all. By interpreting the will of God in all aspects of life and trusting in His providence, the Christian finds consolation, encouragement, and joy, even in the midst of dark and disastrous circumstances.

Transcript

The Bible teaches the doctrine of a particular providence. "Not a sparrow," says Jesus, "shall fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered." This doctrine is, by the pious man, not only believed, but practically recognized in all the business and events of life; and it is this practical recognition alone that constitutes it a foundation of joy.

How many are there who do not sympathize in the least with this view of divine providence. They are willing to install the great Creator on the universal throne, and pay him the homage due to a distant and comparatively uninterested monarch too lofty to stoop to the affairs of men, and too much absorbed in his vast empire above, to interfere in the concerns of this diminutive sphere. Hence, we hear so much of chance, of fortune, of second causes, and so little of the divine hand, in the vicissitudes of nations and of individuals.

The Scriptures teach that the bird that folds its wing and falls to the earth, or that is arrested by the archer's arrow and drops bleeding to the ground, is directed in its fall by the hand of God. Yes, even the hairs of our head, insignificant as they may singly seem, are still noticed and numbered by the Almighty. Not a step that we take, nor a purpose that we accomplish, do we take or accomplish independent of him.

This is the view that brings God near; that acknowledges his hand in the minutest affairs of life, and yet detracts not from his dignity as the maker and mover of the spheres. He who 'lighted' up the sun, formed the moth that bathes its beautiful wing in the bright sunbeam; and that insect's existence as truly demonstrates the infinitude of his power, as does the great fountain of light in whose radiance it rejoices.

The pious mind embraces this scriptural doctrine of a particular providence, and finds it both consolatory and encouraging. In all that relates to the external world- its physical changes, and its great moral and political events- the Christian man is busy in interpreting the will of God. Where other men are prying into second causes, and noticing their influence alone, he traces the finger of Providence operating through these causes in the production of the highest good. Here, his advantage must be conceded in having, above others, his heart fixed on the great First Cause, whose fiat is the law of the universe, and whose power, wisdom, and goodness, are pledges for the rectitude of his government. Let then the clouds rise ever so dark and disastrous; "let the sea roar, and the mountains shake with the swelling thereof," he can sit calm amid the scene, and sing of Him who, though "clouds and darkness be round about him," makes "justice and judgment the habitation of his throne."

But it is in view more especially of his own private history that the Christian finds this idea of a particular providence so productive of joy. From his infancy onward he sees and acknowledges the hand of his heavenly Father. He turns back to the first page of his earthly existence, and loves to read a lesson of gratitude in the parents whose affectionate looks awakened the first infant smile. He marks a divine hand thrown around him during the reckless period of youth, and pointing out his path as he emerged from youth into manhood. Even disappointments which, at the time of their occurrence, were so hard to bear, in the retrospect he sees to have been ordained from a kind regard to his real good.

It is a practical impression of this unseen hand moving in all that happens to the believer, administering the cup of joy and of affliction, and all for his ultimate good, that throws over the soul a quiet confidence, and enables it in "every situation to be content."

His heavenly Father is at the helm, and no adverse wind that blows, or threatening waves that rise, can excite a fear in his trustful heart. If the wisdom that laid the plan of the universe in all its minute circumstances, as well as its grand results, is busied in shaping his lot in life; and if the power that is omnipotent is also, under the guidance of eternal love, employed in carrying out these designs- if this be so, as he firmly believes, how calm and thankful, yes, even joyous, must be his feelings.

Then must every blessing be viewed as from the hand of God; and even disappointment be interpreted as an inexplicable yet certain token of the divine favor, which is to be overruled for the greater good of the soul. Now who can deny that such a doctrine puts the language of praise as well as of prayer into the lips, and enables him who believes it to "rejoice in the Lord always!"

Confidence in God's providence spreads satisfaction and joy over the soul of a pious man. He knows, that while every incident is ordered and arranged by the great Head for the good of the whole, yet each individual's good is included in, and is conducive to, the good of the whole. He will therefore be ever deciphering, among the vicissitudes of his journey, the tokens of divine favor which blend in with all that he enjoys and all that he suffers.

In his passage to the eternal rest, not one inch will be too thorny, nor one moment too dark. No cup will be too bitter when he is convinced that his heavenly Father has given it to him to drink; but bracing himself against the flood of evils which he may be called to meet, or rather strengthened by divine grace cheerfully

to bear what divine Providence has justly assigned, he will go on his way rejoicing in the full belief that all things will at last work together for his good.

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