

Covetousness

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Of the Nature of Covetousness

Covetousness is an immoderate desire of riches. The apostle implieth as much, under this phrase, *boulomenoi ploutein* they that will be rich, 1 Tim. vi. 9; under that word, will, a desire, and that unsatiable desire, is comprised. The notation of both the words before mentioned, namely, love of silver and desire of having more, do demonstrate that covetousness consisteth in a desire.

Desire of riches is not simply covetousness, for a man may lawfully pray for them. So much is intended in the fourth petition. Now what a man may pray for, he may desire, with the same limitations as he may pray for it. Therefore it is an immoderate desire: that is, when a man is not content with that portion which God by his providence in a lawful and warrantable course doth afford unto him, but (according to the apostle's phrase) he will be rich; he will have more than God alloweth him in a fair way; and if he cannot otherwise get more, he will be discontent.

The general object of covetousness is riches. Under this word all the commodities of this world are comprised, and withal abundance of them, yea, more than is necessary. Things necessary may be desired, but not superfluity, Prov. xxx. 8.

This sin is especially in the heart. One may have little, and yet be covetous; and one may be rich, and yet free from covetousness.

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