

SERMON CXCVIII.

WE have Considered some General Rules for our right understanding of the *affirmative* part of this Precept. It follows, that we proceed to a more particular laying open of the Principal and Comprehensive Duties that we are enjoyned in by it.

IN the *Answer* before us, we may observe, 1. The *Object* about which this Precept is concerned, viz. *Wealth* or *outward Estate*: Which comprehends under it, whatsoever may be serviceable for the Necessity, Convenience or Comfort of the Body, or any way serve the Advantage of the Temporal Life of the Man. 2. The *Subject* concerned in this Precept, *Our selves and others*, i. e. other Men; for it refers to the Love that we owe to our *Neighbour*; and we formerly observed, that every Man oweth this Love to *Himself* in the first place, and is by it to regulate his Love to his *Neighbour*. 3. The *Duty* it self, comprehensively laid down in two things, viz. The *Lawful Procuring*, and *Furthering* of it: Intimating, that there is an *Unlawful* doing this, which Men are in danger of, if they do not take the greater heed to themselves; and giving us to understand, that God hath in the Moral Law, circumscribed this matter, and given Rules about it, which we ought, with greatest Circumspection to heed, in all our Management of these outward Concerns.

FOR the better laying open the Duties here required, we may reduce the whole, to Two Comprehensive Heads. 1. The *righteous Obtaining* and *Possessing* of our share in these things. 2. The *righteous Improvement* that we are to make of them; for this also comes within the Comprehension of this Precept. Here then,

First, THERE is a Righteousness to be observed in the *Obtaining* and *Possessing* of our share in these things. We formerly took notice, that Mankind in general are entituled to these things, by an Act of Divine Beneficence, from Him who is the first Proprietor, and Lord Paramount over all things, viz. GOD Himself: But then, there is a Way in which Men come to have their particular share in these things, prescribed by God Himself; and this is that which we are now concerned to enquire after; it being our Director in our Prosecution of these things.

AND here in *general*, We have then a lawful Claim to these things, when we Gain them so as that we neither violate our own Consciences, nor offer any Wrong to others, either by Violence or Fraud.

BUT this may be more *particularly & distinctly* laid open. And here, a Man may come to have Right of Property in an Estate, either more *Immediately* by *himself*, or more *Mediately* by *others*; which may be considered severally.

I. A Man may obtain this Right more *Immediately* by *himself*. And here, there are Three ways, in which he may lawfully get an Estate. And here I shall not speak distinctly about the difference between a *Real* and *Personal* Estate; for whatsoever difference Civil Laws and Customs have made between these, upon grounds of Prudence or Policy; yet the Righteousness in coming by a Property in it, and a Power of Disposing of it, is the same; and that is the proper *Theological* Consideration of it.

And,

1. BY an *orderly Seizure* of that which before was no Man's particular Property, but lay in Common. When I say no Man's, I intend, that it neither belonged to any particular Person, nor to any Community of Men associated in a Civil *Oneness*. And the Reason of this is in the Law of Nature, and is confirmed by God's first Constitution, *Gen. 1. 28*. And renewed after the Flood, *Gen. 9. 1*. God at first gave to Adam, as the common Head of Mankind, and so in him to his Posterity, a common Claim to these things: And when afterwards the World was laid wast by the Flood, and Noah was the Head of the Renovation of Men, for the new Peopling of the desolate World, He Confirmed it: We are therefore told, *Psalm 115. 16*. — *The earth hath been given to the children of men*. And it is observable, that the Word *Subdue*, in *Gen. 1. 28*. properly signifies, *To bring a thing under one's Power*, i. e. *To seize it for Use*: So that it is evident, that such a Portion of the Earth, as is not Possessed by any other, is without any particular Lord, and is a *Vacuum Domicilium*, and lies ready for any Man's Service, who shall fix upon it, and make Use of it as his own: And the same Claim lies open for any Place, which, tho' formerly Possessed, is utterly Deserted: (Hence that in, *1 Chron. 4. 39, 40*.) And they who thus seize and Occupy it, have a good Title of Possession, Ratified to them by the Charter of Heaven. Hither also belongs the finding of Treasures, in or on the Earth, which have no Proprietor; but, God Provisionally leads these to them, or makes a discovery of them Casually: These also may lawfully be seized, and taken Possession of by the Finder; for they were before *Common*, and came within the Privilege of the *former*: Only this may not be extended to *Lost Goods*, which have another Owner; and Justice requires, that Endeavours be used, that they may be restored; but if no such can be found, who shall shew a better Claim than the Finder?

2. BY *Spoils lawfully taken in a just War*. Touching the *Lawfulness* of War, we considered under the *Sixth* Command; where also we took Notice, when a War may be accounted *Just*. Now it is certain, that when God delivers up an Enemy into the hands of those who fought against them, in a lawful and necessary Quarrel, not only their Persons, but their Estates do fall into the lawful Possession of the Conqueror; for they have by this made a Forfeiture: And as it is *Clemency* to spare them, so it is *Justice* that they suffer, for their injurious treating their Neighbours. Hence the Word of God Warrants this, *Numb. 31. 12. 1 Sam. 30. 23. Deut. 20. 14*. Only observe, that because War is to be made by *lawful Authority*, it therefore follows, that there is a Division to be made according to *Equity*; but the Prey is *Lawful*, and every one hath a share in it: And it is allowable that the Souldiers should have a Liberty to take some-

something for themselves, besides what is to come to a just Dividend: Hence that, *Numb. 31. 53.* Though in this Case, *Humanity* is to be used, and all unnecessary *Cruelty* is to be avoided, as was formerly observed.

3. BY *Labour or Industry in a lawful Calling.* I call this *Immediate*, not in respect of the Providence of God, for it is a *Medium* appointed by Him, to be used by us, in order to our obtaining the Conveniences and Comforts of this Life; but with respect to Men, because herein his Immediate Dependance is upon God for His Blessing upon his own Diligence in his Employments.

AND here I shall take the liberty to Commemorate; because all, both Men, Women and Children are concerned in it; and neither Rich nor Poor, Noble nor Ignoble are discharged from it.

HERE then we may Enquire, 1. Wherein it appears that every one ought to be Occupied in some lawful outward Calling? 2. What may be accounted a lawful Calling? 3. What is required to the honest Exercise of a lawful Calling, or the following it Lawfully.

Quest. I. WHEREIN it appears that Every one ought to be Occupied in some Lawful outward Calling?

Ans. THE word *Calling* is variously used: And we know that sometimes it is put for the State into which a Person is put by Conversion, which is *Spiritual*; but that is not here intended: I therefore say an *outward Calling*, and by it I understand some honest Employment, wherein Persons do Occupy themselves for the convenient Support of the Affairs of this Life, in the Post that God's Providence sets them in: And by the Affairs of this Life, I intend, not only his *Private and Personal* Concerns, but also the *Common Benefit* of Mankind among whom he lives, and the *Body Politick or Ecclesiastical* whereof he is a Member: For every Man is bound to do his share for the Support of these, as well as of himself and his Family.

NOW there is a twofold Calling which all Men are concerned in, *General and Particular.*

THE former is called *General*, because All Men are equally bound to it, and it is one and the same to all; and that is, the Devoting of themselves to the Service of God, and the working out of their own Salvation: The Business of it is, to serve to the great End they were made for, and in it to obtain *Eternal Life*: Hence that Advice, *Phil. 2. 12. Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.* This is never to be neglected; for every one hath a Soul to save, and hath a Rule given him, how he may attain it.

THE *Particular Calling* is that which nextly concerns this Life, and the Affairs of that immediately; tho' it is to be subservient to the other, because Man is to be ultimately bound for the Glory of God: But because it is that wherein the Man is to uphold his present Subsistence, and be Beneficial in his Generation to Mankind, it so hath a reference to

this Life. Now because Mankind are made for Society, and they have a mutual Dependance one upon another, and there are a great many Employments requisite for this End; hence particular Callings are Diverse, and no one Man can pursue them all: But that every Man ought to be Employed in some one or other, is the thing under Consideration; and this both the Light of Nature and the Word of God give their evidence unto. My meaning is, that Man is made for Labour, and not for Idleness; and that he is to use Diligence in this Labour; and that nothing else can Excuse him from it, but when the Providence of God disableth him for it, by some Infirmity of Body or Mind, which makes him incapable of it; as Sickness, broken Bones, or Distraction. And many Evidences may be given for this, which I shall only mention.

1. THAT God required this of Man in his State of Integrity. When God made Man at first, and had given him the Lordship over the Earth and Sea; yet we read, *Gen. 2. 15. The Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden, to dress it, and to keep it,* Which saith that He found Business for him, to take Care of his Bodily Concerns; and this was agreeable to the Nature and Constitution of Man, and the Active Powers which were put into him at first; so that this was not a fruit of the Curse, but a Moral Duty laid upon him as he was a Creature put into such an Order of Being. It is true we read in, *Gen. 3. 19. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.* But this doth not intimate that Labour and Diligence was of the Curse, but only the Toil, and Travail, and Wearisomeness attending it, which had he not Fallen, would have been Pleasant and Delightful, and no way Irksome.

2. THE Word of God every where requires it of Man, as the way to Prosperity; and forbids the neglect of it with Threatning. We have the Apostle's Precept, *1 Thes. 4. 11. 12. And study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, (as we commanded you) That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing.* And his Caution in, *2 Thes. 3. 10. If any would not work, neither should he eat.* And it is given as one part of the Character of a Virtuous Woman, *Prov. 31. 16, &c. and Ver. 24.* It is therefore recommended as the way to Prosper, *Prov. 10. 4. 13. 4. 22. 29.*

3. THUS only can a Man be Profitable, in all the Civil Relations that he bears. This is the only way for him to live Honestly in the Place that God hath set him in: And this is the way for him to Support himself, and not be a Pest to the Community he lives among: This is necessary that he may Provide for his Family, and Support them honourably and comfortably; and prevent his using dishonest and unlawful Courses for it: Thus only can he serve the Publick, and contribute to the upholding of Church and State; and prevent his being a Drone in the Hive: And he oweq

not only his Wealth in proportion, but himself also to the Publick, and we are told, 1 Tim. 5. 8. *If any man provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.*

4. *THE Practice of all Civilized and well Regulated Governments do establish this.* Among the *Greeks*, not only did *Draco's* Laws that were written in Blood, punish *Idleness* with Death; but the more mild Laws of *Lycurgus* and *Solon*, provide that no Man should Live out of Business; that Children, as soon as capable, should be carefully Educated in some Employment; and that every Man should once in a Year, give a true Account in what way he had Maintained himself, and his Charges; and put a Note of Disgrace on all that could not make it appear that it was in a Lawful Calling.

5. *THE Irrational Creatures preach this Lesson.* All of which in their Kind, by an Instinct of Nature, are diligent for their own Supply: And the Spirit of God sends Slothful Persons to School, to Learn of them, *Prov. 6. 6, 7, 8.* And Experience tells us, that in the Commonwealth of *Bees*, no *Drone* is suffered, but is driven out of the Hive, as a thing unprofitable: Hence that of the Poet, *Ignavum formas, &c.*

6. *WITHOUT some Employments, Mankind is exposed to all manner of sinful Temptations.* We formerly took Notice, what influence *Idleness* hath into the Breach of the *Seventh* Command; and it may be applied to all the rest of the Precepts of the Second Table: So that for Men not to Live in an honest Employment, is the way to all Mischiefs. Well then did one say, 'Doubtless, the wilfully useles Man, had better to be in the Earth, than upon the Earth. But I shall not here further insist.

Quest. 2. *WHAT may be counted a Lawful Calling?*

Ans. IT is necessary, that we a little Commemorate here; for tho' in strictness, nothing can be justly denominated a *Calling*, but that which is *Lawful*; for, by a *Calling*, Men properly understand, such an Employment as God approves of, and calls Men in His Providence to apply themselves to; yet there are those Employments, which too many addict themselves to, which have no Divine Warrant; and therefore we had need to be well informed in this Affair.

AND here let us observe, that a *Calling* or Employment, with respect to it's *Lawfulness*, may come under a double Consideration, either as it is considered in *it self*, or with respect to this or that *Person*.

(1.) *WHEN may a Calling be Lawful in It self?*

A. A *Calling* is then Lawful in *Itself*, when it Answers the Ends of it, according to the Rules prescribed in the Word of God. God hath not only commanded Employment to Men, but He hath limited what is Right, and what is Wrong; and he cannot Transgress the Limits set, without Sin.

AND here observe these Rules,

1. IT must be a *Calling*, in which a Man may *Expect and Pray for God's Blessing upon it.* Prosperity in any Employment depends on God's Blessing, (*Psal. 127. begin.*) and we are to Pray over our Affairs, that God will Succeed us in them; and we must Pray in Faith, if we would Speed with Him. Nothing therefore can be Lawful, but what God hath given a Promise to us about, in our faithful serving Him in: If therefore, we cannot serve Him in our following of it, we may be sure it is *Unlawful* for us, and to be avoided.

2. IT must be such a *Calling* as is *consistent* with our observing the other Precepts of God's Law. None of the Commands of God do Clash one with another, nor lay a necessity on us to break one, for the observation of another: We are by *this* Command, bound to Work for our Livelihood, and support of all outward Concerns; but it is not enough that in this way we see a rational Probability of advancing an Estate in this World, but if by so doing we must violate any other Precept, that tells us, it is not Lawful: If we cannot Worship God, and Serve Him in it, and shew all that Love to our Neighbour which is required in the Second Table, it is not Lawful for us to follow it, *Jam. 2. 10.*

3. IT must be such a *Calling*, as is of *Benefit to others.* It is not sufficient that we have a prospect of Gain to *Our selves*, by it, but we must have a respect to the Common Good of Mankind. Such Vocations only are Lawful, wherein we may Advantage our selves without real Harm to others, or necessary Damage to the Publick. For we are not to Live for *our selves* only, but for *others* too; and that general Precept is ever to be attended by us, *Matth. 22. 39. Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self.* And that Golden Rule given by our Saviour, *Matth. 7. 12. All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.*

4. IT must be a *Calling* of *Good Report.* It is true, there are some Callings more *Honourable*, others more *Despicable*; but this is not the thing I here intend; but there is a *Moral* Respect here to be had, and all Christians ought to have a regard to it, for the Honour of God, and their own Good Name. Some Callings have an Ill Report among sober Men, not for the *means* of them, but for the *scandalousness* cleaving to them; and such a *Calling* no one that stands upon the Credit of Religion, or his own Repute, will willingly follow: Hence that, *Phil. 4. 8. Whatsoever things are of good Report*— But these things may be more particularly Exemplified, when we come to the *Negative* part of this Command.

(2.) WE may now Enquire, When a *Calling* may be Lawful for *this* or *that Person*?

Ans. IT is here to be taken for granted, that a *Calling* in it's *own* Nature, may be Lawful and Laudable; and yet it may be a Sin for *this* or *that* Person to undertake it, as will appear in the sequel. Here then we may take a short Account of lawful Vocations. Observe then, some are *Publick*, others are *Private*.

1. *PUBLICK*

1. **PUBLICK** Callings are such, wherein Men do serve in a Publick Station, and for the common Benefit immediately. And these are either Civil or Religious: and they comprehend all such as are, by vertue of their Office, obliged to lay out their Time & Care, in serving the Publick; and for that end, there is a sufficient & honourable Support due to them, from the Publick whom they so serve. And this is the next and immediate End of these Callings, so far as they refer to this Command, inasmuch as God hath appointed Labour to be the *Medium*, by which we are to maintain our selves & ours; and it is Wages due to us from you, for whom we lay out our Time & Strength. To the former of these belong all Civil & Military Officers, who are kept in actual Service; as also, all such as are employed for the Education of Children in good Literature: To the latter, all such as are called to serve at the Altar; and so lay out themselves for the good of the Souls of Men; and to these also there is a Maintenance suitable due, as the Apostle proves, both from the law of Nature, and the law of God, 1 Cor. 9.

2. **PRIVATE** Callings, or such, wherein Men do nextly serve the Providence of God, for their particular support, & supply of the things of this life. Tho' these also are to serve ultimately to the Glory of God, and the common Benefit of Mankind, of whom they are Members; and these comprehend under them, all the other Employments, which come within the Rules of Lawful, before given us, which would be endless here to enumerate. And here we may in general observe, that it would be neither for a Man's own advantage, nor for the common benefit of Men, for all to follow, one & the same Calling; and for all to aspire after it, because they think it more honourable, more profitable, or more easy; is a false measure, and tends to the ruine of humane Society. Hence it follows, that every Man ought to observe a Call in God's Providence, to direct him in his seeking & engaging in a particular Calling if he expects God's approbation and blessing in it. And for this he ought to be well satisfied, that he hath a Call of God according to Scripture Rules; and therefore to bring it to, and try it by them. Now God calls Men to this or that Occupation, either Extraordinarily or Ordinarily.

1. **T H E R E** is an Extraordinary Call, which God gives some Men to some Employment; and these more peculiarly respect the Publick Employments of Men. Thus in former times God called more Immediately: Thus were Moses and Aaron called & impowred: Thus was Saul called to the Kingdom; and thus were the Prophets of old to that function. Thus the Prophets, Apostles & Evangelists in the Primitive Times of the Gospel Church, Gal. 1. 1. And it is to be observed, that as God made His mind known to them by Immediate Revelation, so there was not required Antecedent Fitness, for it, but with the Call, God bestowed it on them. Hence we read, 1 Sam. 10. 9. Jer. 1. 9. Luke 24. 45. But these are for the present in most part, if not wholly ceased.

2. **ORDINARY**: And this is to be known by us Mediatly; not by inspiration, but by searching the mind of God about it; and is governed by His Mediate Providence. And here I shall only offer,

(1.) **I N** regard of Publick Employments, there must be a Call by Men. I dispute not here the particular Way or Mode of this Introduction, which is a Prudential and is very different among Men; and the consideration of that belongs to the Fifth Command. But, tho' God hath given to Men Directions, for the Qualifications of Men; yet the Determination of it, upon this or that Person, is nextly Humane: Nor can any Fitness in the Person introduce him, unless he be so Called, nor can he impose himself. This therefore was one Maxime acknowledged, 2 Sam. 16. 18. *Whom the Lord and this people & all the men of Israel choose, his will I be, and with him will I abide.*

2. **I N** both Publick & Private Callings, every Man is to have regard, to his own Fitness to Discharge such an Employment. There are Gifts to be regarded, which if a Man have not, neither a desire of, nor an Invitation by Men to such a Service, ought to satisfy him; and the reason of this is very plain, because they have no Promise that God will give them Gifts Immediately, upon their daring to undertake in it; and without these Gifts, they can never serve God, nor profit Men, nor keep a good Conscience, in pursuing such an Employment. And this is true, not only in regard of Publick Callings, the Misery of bringing Persons unqualified into which, whether through their Ambitious Winding themselves in, or the Prejudices of Men concerned in the affair; is too notoriously experienced among Men, to need any other Proof given of it. But also in Private Occupations, when Persons have neither a Faculty for it, nor were ever Educated to it, meddle with a Business in which they are unskilled; and must therefore unavoidably, either hurt themselves, or others, or both; and so cannot comply with the Rules of Commutative Justice. Thus therefore it is necessary, that either the Calling be such, as the Man may by a Natural Genius take unto, (as some there are) or hath been instructed in, by a laudable serving to such a Trade, and is acquainted with the Rules of it. Hence that, Prov. 14. 8. *The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way: but the folly of fools is deceit.* And if a Man hath a Will to be honest, yet if he hath not a Skill in his Calling, he must needs err, in the occupying himself in it. And this will serve to reprove the folly of those that neglect their Children in their Youth; and do not take care to bring them up to such things, as may Qualify them for the serving of their Generation, in such a Post as the Providence of God shall see meet to set them in.

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