

A
TREATISE OF
the Vocations,

or

Callings of men, with the sorts and kinds of them,
and the right use of them.

Prov. 10 verse 7.
*The memorial of the just shall be blessed:
but the name of the wicked shall rot.*

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The Epistle Dedicatory

To the Worshipful Master

Robert Traillor, Esquire, one of the Tellers in her Majesty's Exchequer, my very good friend.

Experience teaches, and it is a true conclusion propounded and proved in the Scriptures of the old and new Testament, that just as God in the beginning, by his omnipotent power, established the whole frame of the heavens and the earth, so he has in his wisdom directed them, and all things contained in them, to one main end: the manifestation of his glory. Though everything created by God's appointment, according to the law of creation, and the principles of its own entire nature, is and ought to be referred to this end, yet among the works of God some are more principally and directly made for that purpose; namely, Man, whom God has endued with the gifts of understanding and knowledge, and in whom he has engraved his own image in righteousness and true holiness.

Now, the QUESTION is how man, being fallen from that integrity in which he was created, and having brought a confusion upon the whole world by the fall, should yet be fitted and framed for such an end?

The ANSWER is, that God who is able to draw light out of darkness, and to rectify things that are confounded, has in great wisdom set an order in mankind, which by certain degrees tends directly to advance His own glory.

For in the *First* place, he would have man acknowledge him as his sovereign Lord, and to serve him immediately in the duties of faith and obedience. *Secondly*, it is His will that man being made a sociable creature, apt to converse with his own kind, should serve Him by serving man in the duties of love. *Thirdly*, he does not will that men conversing with each other, should be like wandering Rechabites, tied to no certain place or calling; and therefore, he binds all men, both by special assignment to Adam in his innocence, and by particular commandment to him and all his posterity, to be confirmed with some certain state and condition of life, in the family, in the commonwealth, or in the Church. *Lastly*, that man should use the place and office assigned to him by God, in a holy manner, performing the duties annexed to it in faith and obedience, and avoiding those vices that usually attend upon it, with all care and circumspection. In this manner, God has disposed the whole estate of mankind, for the accomplishment of the foresaid end: the honor and glory of His name.

Against this order two sorts of men offend. The *first* are those who live in the bosom of the Church, and are not ranged within the compass of any calling or condition of life, in which they might gain glory for God, or good for men. Under these are comprehended all Popish Votaries, such as Monks, Friars, etc., who have been justly condemned from ancient times as thieves and robbers, because living apart from the common societies of men, they are neither the members of any body, nor maintainers of any of the three states named before. And to them may be referred all wandering and straggling persons, who having no settled place of abode, and being neither members of any civil society, nor annexed to any particular Church, do the least good to men. The lives of these persons are so much the more odious because they are like the unprofitable drone that brings nothing into the hive, and yet feeds from the honey that is brought in by the labors of others.

Another sort of men are those who indeed are called to some certain condition and trade of life, in which they walk and yield some benefit to others; and yet they are greatly to be blamed in respect to their lack of the right use and exercise of their callings. For though they may be skillful and expert in their kind, yet they err in the main point, in that they do not practice their *personal* callings in and with the *general* calling. Whereas, on the contrary, the principal scope of their lives ought to be honoring God in the service of men; and the rule of direction to attain that end, is nothing else but a constant performance of the duties of the moral law, in that very calling in which they are placed.

In the following discourse, its Author, whose memory is blessed, has presented to our view a remedy for these and sundry¹ more corruptions that are incident to the lives of men, as also a warning to those who offend in this way: in it are handled at large, out of the word of God, the differences and right use of all callings whatsoever. In publishing this, I thought it good to choose your Worship, to whose protection I might commend it, and *that* is upon these considerations:

First, because you are and have been an ancient favorer and well-wisher to learning and learned men, of which amongst the rest, our College has already had very sufficient testimony; for which it acknowledges you by the name of a loving and liberal benefactor. Secondly, because (in my knowledge) you were very lovingly affected toward the Author of this Treatise while he lived, always having a reverent opinion of his gifts, and wishing him encouragement in all his proceedings. Beside these respects, it is my desire, by this dedication, to give you some testimony of a thankful mind, for your love and kindness towards me. And thus craving your acceptance of this, I take my leave, and commend you, with all your affairs, to the grace and favor of God.

Cambridge, Febr. 16, 1602

*Your Worship's in all kindness
to command, T.P.*

¹ A mixed assortment of different kinds.

1Cor. 7.20

Let every man abide in that calling, in which he was called.

From the 17th verse of this chapter to the 25th, there are two questions handled. First, whether a man being called to Christianity uncircumcised, must be circumcised after his calling. The second is whether being a bondman¹ when he is called, he must then leave his calling. Now the sum of the Apostle's answer to both is laid down in this 20th verse, as if he were to say, Let every man continue in that calling in which he was called to Christ; that is, in which he walked and lived when it pleased God by the ministry of his Gospel, to call him to the profession of Christian religion. The reason why I have chosen to speak of these words is because I mean to treat this point of vocation or calling — considering that few men rightly know how to live and go on in their callings, so as they may please God. Therefore to proceed in order in speaking about this point, FIRST I will show what *Vocation* or *Calling* is. SECONDLY I will set down the parts and kinds of it. THIRDLY, the holy and lawful use of every man's particular calling; all of which are in some sort touched on in the words of my text.

For the FIRST: *A vocation or calling is a certain kind of life, ordained and imposed on man by God, for the common good.*

First of all I say, it is a *certain condition or kind of life*: that is, a certain manner of leading our lives in this world. For example, the life of a king is to spend his time in the governing of his subjects, and that is *his* calling; and the life of a subject is to live in obedience to the Magistrate, and that is *his* calling. The state and condition of a Minister is to lead his life in preaching the Gospel and word of God, and that is *his* calling. A master of a family is to lead his life in the government of his family, and that is *his* calling. In a word, that particular and honest manner of conversation² to which every man is called and set apart, *that is* (I say) his calling.

Now, in every calling we must consider two causes. First, the efficient and author of it. Secondly, the final and proper end of it. The author of every calling is God Himself; and therefore Paul says, "As God has called every man, let him walk," verse 17. And for this reason, this order and manner of living in this world is called a *Vocation*, because every man is to live as he is called by God. For look as it is in the military camp: the General appoints to every man his place and standing; one place for the horseman and another for the footman; and to every particular soldier likewise: his office and standing in which he is to abide against the enemy, and to live and die in that place — it is even so in human societies. God is the General, appointing to every man his particular calling, and as it were, his standing. And in that calling He assigns to him his particular office; in performance of this office he is to live and die. And just as in a camp, no soldier can depart his standing without the leave of the General, nor more may any man leave his calling unless he receives liberty from God. Again, in a clock, made by the art and handiwork of man, there are many wheels, and every one has its several motions — some turn this way, some that way, some go softly, some apace — they are all ordered by the motion of the watch. Behold here a notable resemblance to God's special providence over mankind, which is the watch of the great world, allotting to every man his motion and calling; and in that calling, his particular office and function. Therefore what I say is true, that God Himself is the author and beginning of callings.

¹ A male bound to serve without wages; a male slave. In some cases, an indentured servant who paid his bond, was set free. He might continue to serve voluntarily; he was marked as a freeman by a hole in his ear.

² The interaction and conduct of a person in society with others.

This overthrows the heathenish opinion of men who think that the particular condition and state of man in this life comes by chance; or by the bare will and pleasure of man himself. Secondly, by what has been said, we learn that many persuading themselves of their callings, have for all this, no calling at all. As for example, those who live by usury, by cards and dice, by maintaining gaming houses, by plays and such things. For God is the author of every lawful calling; but these and such miserable courses of living are either against the word of God, or else they are not grounded on it. And therefore they are not callings or vocations, but avocations from God and his ways.

Now as God is the author of every calling, so he has two actions in it. First, he ordains the calling itself. And secondly, he imposes it on the man called. And therefore I say, *vocation is a certain kind of life, ordained and imposed by God*. For the first, God ordains a calling when he prescribes and commands it in and by His word. And those callings and states of life,

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which have no warrant from God's word, are unlawful. Now God in his word ordains callings in two ways. First, by commanding and prescribing them particularly, as he does the weightiest callings in the family, Church, or commonwealth. Secondly, by appointing and setting down certain laws and commandments generally, by which we may easily gather that he either approves or disapproves of them, even though they are not particularly prescribed in the word.

The second action of God, which is the imposition of callings, is when he particularly sets apart any man to any particular calling; and this must be understood of all callings in the world. Now God does *this* two ways. First, by Himself immediately, without the help of any creature. Thus in the beginning *Adam* was called and appointed to tend the garden of Eden (Gen 2.15). Thus *Abraham* was called from the idolatry of his forefathers, and received into the Covenant of Grace. Thus *Moses* was called to be a Prince over the Israelites, to guide them out of Egypt, into the promised land. And in the New Testament, the Apostles were thus called to preach the Gospel. Secondly, God calls mediately, by means, which are of two sorts: *men* and *angels*. *Philip*, being a Deacon, was called by an angel (Act 8.26) to be an Evangelist; and the set or appointed callings in the Church and in the commonwealth, are ordinarily disposed by men who are, in this matter, the instruments of God. And therefore men lawfully called by *them*, are truly called by *God*. Thus the Elders of *Ephesus*, called by the Apostles and the rest of the Church, are said to be called by the Holy Spirit (Act 20.28). And thus we see how God is the author of every calling.

The final cause or end of every calling, I note in the last words of the description: *For the common good*; that is, for the benefit and good estate of mankind. In man's body there are sundry parts and members, and every one has its several use and office, which it performs not for itself, but for the good of the whole body — as the office of the eye is to see, of the ear to hear, and the foot to go. Now all societies of men are bodies; a family is a body; so is every particular church a body; and the commonwealth also. And in these bodies there are several members, which are men walking in several callings and offices, the execution of which must tend to the happy and good estate of the rest — indeed, the good of all men everywhere, as much as possible. The common good of men stands in this: not only that they live, but that they live well, in righteousness and holiness; and consequently in true happiness. And to attain this, God has ordained and disposed all callings, and in His providence he has designed the persons to bear them. Here then we must in general know that he abuses his calling, whoever he is, if he is against the *end* of that calling, if he employs it for himself, and seeks wholly his own by it, and not the common good. And that common saying, *Every man for himself, and God for us all*, is wicked, and is directly against the end of every calling or honest kind of life.

So much for the description of *Vocation* in general. Now before I come particularly to treat the special kinds of callings, there are two general rules to be learned by all, which belong to every calling.

The FIRST: whatever any man attempts or does, either in word or deed, he must do it by virtue of his calling; and he must keep himself within the compass, limits, or precincts of it. This rule is laid down in these words of the Apostles: *Let every man abide in that calling in which he was called* — the drift of this is to bind men to their calling, and to teach them to perform all their actions by its warrant. It is said, *Without faith it is impossible to please God* (Heb 11.6); and *Whatever is not of faith, is sin.*^{Rom 14.23} Whatever is not done within the compass of a calling, is not of faith, because a man must first have some warrant and word of God to assure him of his calling to do this or that thing, before he can do it in faith. When the two brothers that strove about their inheritance, came to Christ and wanted him to make an agreement between them, Christ answered, *Who made me a Judge or decider between you?* (Luk 12.14) It is as if he had said, it is not within the compass of my calling: for I came to accomplish the work of man's redemption, and not to decide inheritances. Hereby he gives us to understand that everything to be done, must be done by warrant of some calling; and so long as men keep themselves in their callings, they have a promise of protection from God, *He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways* (Psa 91.11) — that is, so long as you keep yourself within the ways of your calling, so long shall my Angels preserve you. The example of David is worthy of our considering for depending on the providence of God, and walking in his calling, he had the protection of God: when Saul struck twice at him with a spear (1Sam 18.11, 13); when he was made a captain of thousands that he might be slain by the Philistines; when Saul commanded his own servants to kill him (1Sam 19.1); when he struck again at him with a spear; when he sought to take David in his own house; when he followed him to Naioth in Ramah; when he was absent from the solemn feast made by Saul; when the priests of Nob were slain, 85 persons, and all the inhabitants of the place (1Sam 22.18-19); when Saul persecuted him in the desert of Maon (1Sam 23.25-26).

Contrariwise, when any man is outside the compass of his calling, he is out of the way, and by this means he bereaves himself of the protection of the Almighty; and he lies open and naked to all the punishments and plagues of God. And if we mark it well, the word of God shows evidently to what dangers they are subject to, that

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do anything either without or against their callings. *Samson's* strength did not lie in his hair (as men commonly think) but because he went out of his calling by breaking the vow of a Nazarite when he gave Delilah occasion to cut off his hair. Therefore he lost his strength; for God promises strength, but with a commandment that he should be a Nazarite to the end (Jdg 13.5). When *Saul* was commanded to slay the Amalekites, against his calling he spared Agag out of foolish pity, and spared the best things (1Sam 15.20-21). And for that, Samuel reprov'd him of rebellion against God (v. 23), which was like the sin of witchcraft. For this very reason, he was rejected by God from being king over Israel. *Jonas* being called to preach at Nineveh, tried to shake off the calling of God by fleeing. But when he comes to the sea, he is tossed by a tempest, and thrown out of the ship, and swallowed by a fish that God has prepared for this purpose. When *Peter*, beyond the limits of his calling, would warm himself at the high Priest's fire, it cost him the breach of his conscience; for at the very voice of a young woman, he denied Christ with cursing and swearing. And the *exorcists* in the Acts (19.16), who without sufficient calling, took it upon themselves to conjure evil spirits in the name of Jesus, were overcome by those spirits, and gladly fled away naked and wounded. In a word, look at what judgments befall men; mark well the time and circumstance of it; and it will be found that they are cast upon them by the hand of God, when they are beyond their callings which God has prescribed them to keep.

Therefore this must always be remembered and practiced carefully, that we take nothing in hand unless we have first ranked ourselves within the precincts of our callings.

The SECOND general rule which must be remembered is this: that *every man must do the duties of his calling with diligence*: and therefore Solomon says, *Whatever is in your hand to do, do it with all your power* (Ecc 9.10). Paul bids the one that rules, to *rule with diligence*; and every man to wait on his office (Rom 12.8). And Jeremiah says, *Cursed is he that does the work of the Lord negligently* (Jer 48.10). What Christ says about the work of our redemption, that *it is food and drink for me to do my Father's will* (Joh 4.34), every man must say in the same way about his particular calling. There are two reasons for this diligence: first of all, the end of why God bestows his gifts on us, is that they might be employed in his service, and to his glory, and that is to be done in this life. Therefore Paul says, *Redeem the time*;^{Eph 5.16} and Christ says, *Walk while you have light*.^{Joh 12.35} And again, *I must do his work while it is day*.^{Joh 9.4} For we see tradesmen and travellers rise early to their business, lest night overtake them. Secondly, to those who employ their gifts, more is given; and from those who do not employ them, even what they have is taken.^{Mat 13.12} Labor in a calling is as precious as gold or silver. Based upon this, he that maims a man and disables him from doing the work of his calling, by God's law is bound to give him the value of his labor (Exo 21.19). And to a similar purpose, our people have a common saying, that an occupation is as good as land, because land may be lost, but skills and labor in a good occupation is profitable to the end, because it will help a need, when land and all things fail.

And on the other side, we must take heed of two damnable sins that are contrary to this diligence. The *first* is IDLENESS, whereby the duties of our callings and the occasions of glorifying God, are neglected or omitted. The *second* is SLOTHFULNESS, whereby they are performed slackly and carelessly. God in the Parable of the husbandman, calls those who are idle into his vineyard, saying, *Why do you stand idle all day?* (Mat 20.6) And the servant that had received but one talent is called an evil servant because he was slothful in the use of it. For so it is said, *You evil servant, and slothful* (Mat 25.26). Paul gives this rule to the Thessalonians, *He that would not labor, must not eat*^{2Th. 3.10}. He would have such a man, who walked inordinately, noted by a letter. And he showed this: that sloth and negligence in the duties of our callings, are a *disorder* against that good order which God set in the societies of mankind, in both church and commonwealth. And indeed, idleness and sloth are the causes of many damnable sins. The idle body, or the idle brain, is the workshop of the devil. The sea, if it did not move, could but putrefy; and the body, if it is not stirred and moved, breeds diseases. Now, the idle and slothful person is a sea of corruption; and when he is most idle, Satan is least idle — for then he is most busy to draw the person to manifold sins.

So much for the two general rules.

Now follow the parts and kinds of Vocations; and they are of two sorts: GENERAL or PARTICULAR. The *general* calling is the calling of Christianity, which is common to all who live in the Church of God. The *particular* is that special calling that belongs to some particular men, such as the calling of a Magistrate, the calling of a Minister, the calling of a Master, of a father, of a child, of a servant, of a subject, or any other calling that is common to all. And Paul acknowledges this distinction of *Callings* when he says, *Let every man abide in that calling in which he is called*; that is, in that particular and personal calling in which he was called to be a Christian. [I will treat] these two in order.

1. General Calling

The GENERAL CALLING is that calling whereby a man is called out of the world to be a child of God, a member of Christ, and an heir of the kingdom of heaven. This calling belongs to everyone within the compass of the Church, not any one excepted. Here I have just occasion to make a

long discourse touching the calling of men to Christ and Christian Religion, but I will only touch the *main duties* of it, of which there are especially **four**.

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The **first general duty** is the invocation of the name of God in Christ. When Saul got letters from the high Priests to persecute the Church, it is said by Luke that he received authority to *bind all that call upon the name of God* (Act 9.14). Paul, writing to the Church of Corinth, calls the members of it *saints*, and *those who call on the name of the Lord Jesus* (1Cor 1.2). By both of these places, the Holy Spirit would give us to understand that invocation is a main duty which every Christian man is to perform continually; and it contains both prayer and thanksgiving in the name and mediation of Jesus Christ. And indeed, by this action a Christian is distinguished and severed from all other sorts of men in the world who pretend devotion or religion.¹ By this it appears that, however all men may desire to bear this name and take to themselves this general calling, very few are indeed true and sound Christians; for not one of a hundred can rightly invoke the name of God. Though they can indeed repeat the words of prayer, they lack the spirit of grace and supplication whereby they should ask for grace in Christ's name, and give thanks for benefits received. Thus many who bear the name of Christ only for show, lack the power of that name. No, what is more, not to call on the name of God is made by the Prophet David, the note and mark of an Atheist, who *says in his heart there is no God* (Psa 14.1).

The **second general duty** is, as much as we possibly can, to further the good estate of the true Church of God. It is indeed principally the duty of the Minister, and yet generally it pertains to all. For in man's body, the eye by seeing, the ear by hearing, the tongue by speaking, and every part by its proper office, furthers the good of the whole body. Even so, all that are called to be members of Christ must, as much as it lies in them, procure the good of the whole mystical body of Christ. David, in the name of the whole Church, *says I will procure your wealth, and Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper who love you* (GNV Psa 122.9, 6). And after he had humbled himself for the two grievous sins of adultery and murder, in the end he prays to God to build the walls of Jerusalem. For the building of the tabernacle, the Jews brought free-will offerings according to their ability. Some brought gold and precious stones; others silver and silk; and those who had no better thing, brought rams' skins, and badgers' skins. Even so, in the building of God's Church, His spiritual tabernacle, every Christian must bring a free-will offering; he must do something even to the utmost of his power to the building of God's Church, even though his service is but lowly. Though men (as I have said) fondly imagine that this duty is proper to the ministers of the word, yet the truth is, it belongs not only to them, but to everyone that professes himself to be a member of the body of Christ; in this respect, he must, so much as he can, procure and further the good of the whole.

Here then we are to consider the **means** by which this duty may be done. They are especially three.

The **first means** is prayer, not only for ourselves, but for the good estate of the whole Church of God on earth. To this effect, Christ spoke to his disciples when he saw the Jews like scattered sheep without a shepherd: *Pray to the Lord of the harvest, that he would 'thrust forth' laborers into the harvest* (Mat 9.38). And in that prayer which is commonly called the Lord's Prayer, we are taught to say, *Let your kingdom come*.^{Mat 6.10} where "kingdom" not only means the kingdom of *glory* in heaven, but the kingdom of *grace*, which is the happy and blessed condition of God's Church on earth. And therefore Paul bids the Thessalonians to pray that God's word may have free passage and be glorified (2Th 3.1)

¹ "Religion" refers to piety (godliness), rather than to the outward trappings or practices of religion.

The *second means* is the work of edification, to which Paul enjoins the Thessalonians: *Edify one another* (1Th 5.11). And Jude in v. 20, *Edify yourselves upon your most holy faith*. The Church of God is a Temple made without hands; ^{Mar 14.58} the foundation is Christ; ^{1Cor 3.11} and every member of Christ, with all that pertains to God's election, are living stones. ^{1Pet 2.5} The builders of this temple principally are Pastors and Teachers; and not only them, but all Christian persons generally. The case stands here as it did in the building of the material temple, the builders of which were those who cut and laid stones, and wrought elaborate works. Besides these, there were many others who, though they could neither cut nor frame, they furthered the building either by carrying burdens, or making mortar. Even so, in the building of God's spiritual Church, though all cannot square stones like Masons, nor build as the Minister does, yet all without exception pertaining to the Church of God, must put their helping hands to further this building. And this may be done two ways: first, by using all good means by which we may draw our kindred, friends, and neighbors to the love and obedience of true religion. Paul propounds this duty to the Corinthians in his own example, saying *he pleased all men in all things, not seeking his own profit, but the profit of many, that they might be saved* (1Cor 10.33). Secondly, this thing is done by confirming those who are called, by often giving admonitions, exhortations, consolations, and all other like duties that serve this end. And by these duties, the least person in the Church of God, may build or edify.

Here I may justly complain of the neglect of this duty. For the case stands thus in the barren and fruitless age of the world: men are so far from the duties of edification, that they use all means to pull down rather than to build. For he that gives himself only to learn the *duties* of religion, and in some way to live accordingly, is made a sign and a byword among the common people, and also a wonder. And this shows that the practice of this duty of edification lies dead, to which nevertheless we are bound by virtue of our general calling.

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The *third means* of furthering the good of God's Church, is to confer the temporal blessings that God has bestowed on us according to our ability, to the good of it. Honor God with your riches, says Solomon (Pro 3.9). And that is done especially when they are employed to maintain and further true religion, and the worship of God. There are other ends for which God has given riches, but this is the principal end of all. Yet alas, this duty is but slenderly practiced by those who carry the name of Christ. For many of the richer sort spend a great part of their increase on hawks, bulls, bears, dogs, or they riotously misspend it in some sort of sporting or gaming; and thus they disable themselves from doing that good which they should to the Church of God. And the baser sort nowadays spend what they get in fine apparel and good cheer: and by this means the house of God is less regarded. For every common man nowadays must be a gentleman, and it is very hard sometimes for a stranger to discern the master from the servant. And there is such excess in all degrees, that now for daily attire, the noblest are the plainest. To this duty I may also add that every Christian parent, by virtue of his general calling, is to dedicate some of his male children, as much as possible, to the service of the ministry, if they have gifts and inclinations of nature fit for that calling. And in this case, the example of *Anna* may be a good direction for us to follow, who beforehand consecrated *Samuel*, her firstborn, to the Lord. By this means the ministry shall be continued, God's Church and religion maintained, and His Gospel published from age to age to the end of the world.

The *third general duty* of Christianity is that every man should become a servant to his brother in all the duties of love. A Christian is the freest of all men in the world. For in that respect he is the child of God in Christ; he is truly freed from hell, death, and condemnation; indeed, and in part he is freed from sin and Satan, and that is in this life. And yet, for all this, he

must be a servant to every man.¹ But how? By all the duties of love as occasion is offered, and that is for the common good of all men. Mark well the words of Paul, *Though I am free from all men, yet I have made myself servant to all, that I might win the more* (1Cor 9.19). If it is said that this duty pertains only to an Apostle, I answer that Paul enjoins it indifferently to every man: *Serve one another in love* (Gal 5.13). And for this cause, the servants of God are said to be *trees of righteousness* [Isa 61.3](#) whose leaves serve as medicine and their fruit for food, [Eze 47.12](#) not for themselves but for others. Let us therefore, in the fear of God, be careful to learn this duty; for the practice of it is the special ornament of Christ's holy Gospel.

The **last general duty** is set down by Paul: *Walk worthy of that calling to which God has called you* (Eph 4.1). Again, in Titus, he bids servants to so carry themselves toward their masters, *that they may adorn the Gospel of God in all things* (2.10). And he then sets down in the words following, how men may adorn religion by their profession; namely, by denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, by living soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world (2.12). In a word, this calling of Christianity is the most excellent calling in the world, and he walks worthy of it, who keeps a good conscience before God, [Act 23.1](#) and is unblameable before all men. [1Pet 2.12](#)

This duty I commend to the meditation and practice of all men whatsoever; we were once baptized, and in this we surrendered our names to God and Christ; and we are content to hear the word, and to receive the Supper of the Lord as a pledge of His mercy and love. We must therefore walk as those to whom the mercy and love of God pertain. Christ pronounces a *woe to those that give offense* (Mat 18.7).² And indeed it would be better for any man to be as far under the earth as he is above it, than by a bad and loose conversation, to slander the name of God, whose professed servant he is. As Christ says, *It would be better if a millstone were hung about his neck, and he were thrown into the bottom of the sea.* [Mat 18.6](#) As David prays, *Lord take from me rebuke and shame, which I fear, because Your judgments are good* (Psa 119.39). So must we pray, *Lord take from me rebuke and shame, for Your Gospel is good.* And that we may evermore walk worthy of this calling, we must,

First of all, depend by faith on the providence and mercy of God at all times.

Secondly, we must turn to Him daily by a continual renewing of our repentance.

Thirdly, we must endeavor to perform new obedience in respect of all his commandments.

So much for the *General Calling* common to all men as they are Christians. Now follows the second kind of calling, and that is *Personal*.

2. Personal Calling

A PERSONAL CALLING is the execution of some particular office arising from that distinction which God makes between man and man in every society.

First I say, it is *the execution of some particular office*; for example, the calling of a magistrate is to execute the office of government over his subjects; the office of a minister is to execute the duty of teaching his people; the calling of a master is to execute the office of authority and government over his servants; the office of a physician is to put in practice the good means whereby life and health are preserved. In a word, in every estate, the practice and execution of that particular office in which any man is placed, is his personal calling.

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¹ **Rom 6:18** And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. **Mar 10:44** "And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all.

² **Mat 18:7** ... offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!

Secondly, I add that it arises from that distinction which God makes between man and man in every society, to show what is the foundation and ground of *all* personal callings. And it is a point to be considered by us, which I thus explain: God in His word has ordained the society of man with man, partly in the Commonwealth, partly in the Church, and partly in the Family. And it is not the will of God than man should live and converse alone, by himself.^{Gen 2.18} Now for maintaining society, He has ordained a certain bond to link men together, which Paul calls *the bond of peace*,^{Eph 4.3} and *the bond of perfection*; namely, LOVE.^{Col 3.14} And however He has ordained societies, and the bond of them all, yet he has appointed that there should still remain a distinction between man and man, not only in regard to the person, but also in other respects. For the whole body is not the hand, nor the foot, nor the eye; but the hand is one part, the foot another, and the eye another. And however in the body, one part is linked to another, there is yet a distinction between the members of it: by which it comes to pass that the hand is the hand, not the foot; and that the foot is the foot, not the hand, nor the eye. So it is in societies; there is a distinction between its members, and that is in two respects:

1. *First*, in regard to the *inward gifts* which God bestows on every man — giving to several men several gifts according to His good pleasure.^{1Cor 12.11} This distinction in regard to inward gifts, Paul treats at large in 1Cor 12, through the whole chapter, where he shows the diversity of gifts that God bestows on his Church, and so correspondingly in every society. Now look: as the inward gifts of men are severed, so are the persons distinguished in their societies accordingly.
2. *Secondly*, persons are distinguished by *order*, whereby God has appointed that in every society, one person should be above or under another — not making all equal, as though the body were to be all head and nothing else — but in degree and order, he has set a distinction that one should be above another (Rom 13.7; 1Pet 2.13,14).

And by reason of this distinction of men, partly in respect to gifts, partly in respect to order, come personal callings. For if all men had the same gifts, and all were in the same degree and order, then all would have one and the same calling. But inasmuch as God gives a diversity of gifts inwardly, and a distinction of order outwardly, from this proceeds a diversity of personal callings. And therefore I added that personal callings arise from that distinction which God makes between man and man in every society. And thus we see what is a personal calling.

General rules for Personal Callings

Now before I go on to treat the parts of calling, there are other general rules to be learned, which concern all personal callings whatsoever.

RULE 1. Every person of every degree, state, sex, or condition, without exception, must have some personal and particular calling to walk in. This appears plainly by the whole word of God. *Adam*, as soon as he was created, even in his integrity, had a personal calling assigned to him by God, which was to tend and keep the garden. And after *Adam's* fall, the Lord gives a particular commandment to him and all his posterity, which binds all men to walk in some calling, either in the Church or Commonwealth, saying *In the sweat of your brow you shall eat your bread* (Gen 3.19). Again, in the renewing of the law in Mount Sinai, the fourth commandment not only permits labor on six days, but also enjoins us all (as I take it). For God's example is propounded there for us to follow: that as He rested the seventh day, so must we also; and consequently, as He spent six days in the work of creation, so should we in our personal callings. And Paul gives this rule, *Let him that stole, steal no more; but let him rather work with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have something to give to him that needs* (Eph 4.28). Christ, the head of men, lived with Joseph in the calling of a Carpenter till the time of his baptism. And upon this the Jews said, *Is this not the carpenter, the son of Mary?* (Mar 6.3) And after he was baptized and was, as it were, solemnly admitted into the office of a Mediator, the work of our redemption was then his calling, in which he both lived and died. Indeed, the Angels of God have their

particular callings, in that they do His commandments in *obeying the voice of His word* (Psa 103.20). And therefore all who descend from *Adam* must necessarily have some calling to walk in, either public or private, whether it is in the Church, or Commonwealth, or Family.

From this we may learn various points of instruction.

First of all, that it is a soul-disorder in any Commonwealth, that there should be tolerated rogues, beggars, or vagabonds; for such persons commonly belong to no civil society or corporation, nor to any particular Church; they are like rotten legs and arms that drop from the body. Again, to wander up and down from year to year to this end — to seek and procure bodily maintenance — is no calling, but the life of a beast; and consequently it is a condition or state of life that is flat against the rule that everyone must have a particular calling. And therefore the Statute made during the last Parliament for restraining beggars and rogues, is an excellent Statute; and being in substance the very law of God, is never to be repealed.

Secondly, hereby is overthrown the condition of Monks and Friars, who assert for themselves that they live in a state of perfection, because they live apart from the societies of men in fasting and prayer. But contrariwise, this monkish kind of living is damnable; for besides the general duties of fasting and prayer, which pertain to all Christians, every man must have a particular and personal calling,

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that he may be a good and profitable member of some society and body. And the ancient Church condemned all monks as thieves and robbers: for besides the general duties of prayer and fasting, they did not also employ themselves in some other calling for their better maintenance.

Thirdly, we learn by this that it is a miserable and damnable estate for those who, being enriched with great livings and revenues, spend their days in eating and drinking, in sports and pastimes, not employing themselves in service for Church or Commonwealth. It may perhaps be thought that such gentlemen have happy lives, but it is far otherwise — considering that everyone, rich or poor, man or woman, is bound to have a personal calling, in which they must perform some duties for the common good, according to the measure of the gifts that God has bestowed on them.

Fourthly, hereby it is also required that those we commonly call serving men, should have some other particular calling besides the office of waiting, unless they tend men of great place and state. For only to wait and give attendance is not a sufficient calling, as common experience tells. For waiting servants, because they spend most of their time in eating and drinking, sleeping and gaming after dinner and after supper, prove the most unprofitable members both in Church and Commonwealth. For when either their good masters die, or they are turned out of their office for some misdemeanor, they are fit for no other calling, being unable to labor. And thus they give themselves either to begging or stealing. The waiting man of Cornelius the Centurion, was also by calling, a soldier (Act 10.7); and it is to be wished nowadays that gentlemen would choose such servants who might not only tend to their persons, but also tend to some other convenient office. It is good for every man to have two strings to his bow.

RULE 2. Every man must judge that the particular calling in which God has placed him, is the best of all callings for him. I do not say simply *best*, but best *for him*. This rule is set forth to us in the example of Paul: *I have learned* (he says) *in whatever state I am, to be content and well pleased* (Phi 4.11). The practice of this duty is the stay and foundation of the good estate both of the Church and the Commonwealth: for it makes every man keep his own standing, and employ himself gainfully within his calling. But when we begin to dislike the wise disposition of God, and to think other men's callings are better for us than our own, then follows confusion and

disorder in every society. When *Absalom*, a child and subject of king David, was not content with his estate, but sought his father's kingdom, and said, *O that I were judge among you* (2Sam 15.4), many contentions and hurly-burlies¹ followed in the Commonwealth of the Jews all his days. And the sons of *Zebedee*, not contenting themselves with the calling of disciples, but being inflamed with a desire for honor and dignity, sought two principal offices in Christ's kingdom, which (they deemed) would be a civil and worldly kingdom. Hence there arose envy and heart-burn among the disciples; and further evils would have ensued if the wisdom of our Savior Christ had not cut them off.^{Mar 10.35-41} The Bishops of the Church of Rome, not contented with their Ecclesiastic estate, affected the honor of the Empire, and by this means brought havoc and ruin upon the whole Church.

Indeed, the very first family that was ever in the world, felt the sting of this evil. *Cain*, because he feared the loss of his primacy whereby he was to be a Priest, Prophet, and Ruler in *Adam's* house after his decease, slew his brother *Abel* (Gen 4.5-8). And this may well be gathered by the words of the text where, when Cain began to be angry, the Lord said, *If you do well, there is remission; if not, sin lies at the door* (Gen 4.7). Now Cain might perhaps reply and say, *This is well, but my grief remains, that I must lose my right and dignity*. To this God answers in the next few words, *And his appetite shall be for you, and you shall rule over him; namely, if you do well*. And from time to time, the greatest discords that have fallen out in the Church of God, have issued from this fountain.

And the same is also true in the Commonwealth. From this come treacheries, treasons, and seditions — when men who are not content with their own estate and honors, seek higher places; and being disappointed, they grow discontent, and thus go forward into all mischief. Therefore, in a word, the good estate of the Church and Commonwealth is when every person keeps himself to his own calling. And this will undoubtedly come to pass, if we consider what our callings are; and that we are placed in them by God; and therefore judge them to be the best callings of all for us.

RULE 3. Every man must join the practice of his personal calling, with the practice of the general calling of Christianity described before. More plainly, every particular calling must be practiced in and with the general calling of a Christian. It is not sufficient for a man to be a Christian only in the congregation, and in common conversation; but also in his personal calling, he must show himself to be a Christian. For example, a Magistrate must not only in general be a Christian, as every man is; but he must be a Christian Magistrate in executing the office of a Magistrate, in bearing the sword. A master of a family must not only be a Christian abroad in the town, and in the congregation, in the sight of strangers, but also in the administration and regimentation of his particular family: towards wife, children, and servants. It is not enough for a woman to be virtuous openly to strangers; but her virtue must privately show itself in her subjection and obedience to her own husband.

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A Schoolmaster must not only be a Christian in the assembly when he hears the word, and receives the Sacraments, but he must also show himself to be a Christian in the office of teaching. And thus must every man behave himself in his particular calling; because the *particular* calling and the practice of its duties, severed from the *general* calling, is nothing but a practice of injustice and profaneness. And the general calling of Christianity, without the practice of some particular calling, is nothing but the form of godliness without the power of it. And therefore both callings must be joined, as body and soul are joined in a living man. And that we may better join both our callings together, we must consider the main end of our lives; and that is to serve God in the serving of men in the works of our callings. God, as He has made man,

¹ A disorderly outburst or tumult.

so He can preserve man, without the help of man: but His pleasure is that men should be his *instruments* for the good of one another. For this cause He has ordained the excellent offices of Magistrates and Ministers, and an almost infinite variety of trades of life, all tending to preserve the body or soul, or both. Thus God manifests his fatherly care over us by the employment of men in his service, according to their several vocations, for our good. And so even the least vassal or bondman, must serve God by serving his master, as Paul teaches (Col 3.22).

And by this one point we may learn two things.

First, that they profane their lives and callings by employing them to get honors, pleasures, profits, worldly commodities, etc.; for thus we live to another end than God has appointed, and thus we serve ourselves, and consequently we serve neither God nor man. Someone will say perhaps, *What, must we not labor in our callings to maintain our families?* ^{1Tim 5.8} I answer, this *must* be done; but this is not the scope and end of our lives. The true end of our lives is to serve God, in serving man. And for a recompense of this service, God sends his blessings upon men's travails, and he allows them to take for their labors.

Secondly, by this we learn how men of lowly place and calling may comfort themselves. Let them consider that in serving men, by the performance of poor and lowly duties, they serve God; and therefore their service is not lowly in His sight. And though their reward from men is little, yet the reward at God's hand shall not be lacking. For seeing that they serve God in serving men, they may instantly look for reward from both. And thus we may reap marvelous satisfaction in any kind of calling, even if it is only to sweep the house, or keep sheep, if we can thus unite our callings in practice.

By this rule any man may rightly judge himself and others. For wherever these two callings are severed, whatever there is in show, there is nothing in substance. And by this we may also discern a common fault in the lives of many men who show themselves ready and willing to hear the word of God. Indeed, they may approve it, receive the Sacraments, and profess themselves to be members of Christ; and all these are good duties of the first and general calling. But go on further and look into their particular callings, and there you will find nothing less — it is *all* out of order. Some are usurers and oppressors; some engrossers;¹ some use false weights and measures; some lie and swear; some are loose and lascivious. It may be that such persons resolve themselves that all is well, when they do some duties of their general calling. But as they neglect the performance of these duties in their particular callings, they are far out of order; yes, they lead a dangerous and lamentable course of life. For though they are endued with excellent gifts, and are able to speak well, conceive prayer, and have some reverence to hear the Word, and receive the Sacraments, yet if they do not practice the duties of godliness within their own callings, it is all but hypocrisy. And therefore, unless they repent, the greater their gifts are, the more they shall make for their deeper condemnation at the Day of Judgment.

Again, this rule serves to teach all men the right way to reform their lives. If you would lead a life unblameable both before God and man, you just first of all think to yourself what your particular calling is, and then proceed to practice the duties of the moral law, and all other duties of Christianity in that very calling. And if you would have signs and tokens of your election and salvation, you must fetch them from the constant practice of your two callings jointly together. Sever them in your life, and you shall find no comfort, but rather shame and confusion, unless you repent.

Rule 4. Those who bear public callings must first reform themselves in private. When *Moses* went from Midian to Egypt to be a governor of the Israelites, the Lord withstood him on the way because of a fault in his private family, that his child was not circumcised according to the law of

¹ Those who force the price of a good higher by buying it up and creating a Monopoly.

God (Exo 4.24-26). How shall he order public matters for the common good if he cannot order his own private estate?

Rule 5. A particular calling must give way to the general calling of a Christian, when they cannot both stand together. For example, a servant is bound to his master to obey him either because he is a vassal, or at least because he is hired to serve for wages. Say the master, being a zealous Papist, threatens his Protestant servant, that unless he condescends to hear Mass, he will either burn at the stake, or carry a faggot.¹ Now the servant, seeing the malicious purpose of his master, and not finding himself able to bear the brunt of a trial in this case he departs and withdraws himself for a time. And the question is whether he does well to do this, or not? The answer is, he does. And in such a case, he may lawfully flee from his master;

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for a servant that is bound to an earthly master by a personal calling, is further bound to God by a general calling. And the particular calling of any man is inferior to the general calling of a Christian. And when they cannot both stand together, the particular calling must give way, because we are bound to God in the *first* place, and to man *under* God — and only so far as we may also keep our bond with God.

And so much for the five general rules that are to be practiced in every particular calling.

Two Sorts of Personal Callings

To proceed, PERSONAL CALLINGS are of two sorts.

The first sort are all those callings which are of the *essence and foundation* of any society, and without which the society cannot exist. As in a family, there is the calling of a master, and the calling of a servant; the calling of a husband and wife; of parents and children. And in the Commonwealth, the calling of Magistrates and subjects. And in the Church, the calling of the Minister and the people.

The second sort are all those which serve only for the good, happy, and *quiet estate* of a society. And these are of various sorts, some of them serving for the preservation of the life of man, such as the calling of a husbandman, or of a Merchant, etc.; some serving for the preservation of health, such as the calling of a Physician, and of the Surgeon, etc.; some serving for the outward peace, such as the calling of a Soldier, or of the Lawyer, etc.; some serving for the clothing and attiring of the body, and they are almost as many as there are parts of the body; some also serving for building, such as the calling of a Carpenter and Mason. In a word, look how many things are necessary for the good estate of any society — there are so many personal callings which do not belong to the essence and being of a society, but serve only for the good of it. And to one of these two kinds, all lawful personal callings may be referred.

So much for callings in general, and of the kinds of callings.

3. The Right Use of Callings

The third point to be considered, which is the most principal, is this: How every man may in a good and holy manner use his calling. Let this still be remembered, that I am not speaking of extraordinary callings, or of the general calling of a Christian, but only of ordinary and personal callings. The handling of this point is of great weight and moment, for by the right use of every calling, its works are made good works, even though otherwise they are but common and lowly in themselves. In a good work, three things are required. First, it must be done in obedience; secondly, in faith; thirdly, it must be directed to the glory of God. Now, the works of every calling

¹ A bundle of kindling used to start a fire.

when they are performed in a holy manner, are done in faith and obedience, and serve notably for God's glory, however lowly the calling is. For example, a man is by profession a shepherd; the calling is lowly and common, and its duties are suitable; yet if there is grace to use that calling aright, then its duties are good works before God. They were done with conscious obedience to God, for His glory, and the good of the master. The lowliness of the calling does not abase the goodness of the work. For God does not look at the excellence of the work, but at the heart of the worker. And the action of a shepherd in keeping sheep, performed as I have said, in his kind, is as good a work before God as the action of a judge in giving sentence; or a Magistrate in ruling, or a Minister in preaching. Thus then, we see there is good reason why we would seek to know how every man is to rightly use his particular calling. In the right use of any calling, **four** things are to be considered and performed:

1. Good choice of a calling.
2. Good entrance into it. (page 760)
3. Good continuance in it. (page 763)
4. An honest and good leaving of it. (page 774)

1. Good choice of a calling

For the first, in the choice of our callings, we must remember and observe *three* particular rules.

Rule 1. We are to choose honest and lawful callings to walk in. *Let him that stole* (says Paul) *steal no more: but let him rather labor and work with his hands, the thing that is good* (Eph 4.28). Here we are warned by the Holy Spirit to choose such callings as are honest. Again, all the works of our callings must be done in faith, and there is no faith unless the calling is honest.

For better direction in the choice of an honest calling, this general ground must be observed: every calling that serves to uphold and maintain the three several estates and societies — namely the estate of the Church, or the estate of the Commonwealth, or the estate of the Family — is grounded upon the moral law, and therefore lawful; and consequently it may be had, used, and enjoyed with good conscience. On the contrary, if it is a hindrance to any of these three estates, in whole or in part, it is an unlawful calling.

Rule 2. Every man must choose a fit calling to walk in; that is, every calling must be fitted to the man, and every man must be fitted to his calling. This rule is as necessary as the former; for when men are out of their proper callings in any society, it is as though a joint were out of place in the body. Now, in the choice of callings, two sorts of men must be considered: men who are of age, and children. Men who are of age choose fit callings for themselves when they test, judge, and examine themselves as to what things they are apt and fit for, and what things they not. And every man must examine himself about two things: first, touching his *affection*; secondly, touching his *gifts*. For his affection, he must search out what mind he has for any calling, and in what calling he desires most of all to glorify God. For his gifts, he must examine which calling they are best fitted for.

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Having thus tested both his affection and his gifts, and also finding the calling to which they tend to agree, he may say *that* is his calling — because he likes it best, and he is in every way best fitted for it. For example, one brought up in the schools of learning, desires to know what ought to be his calling. Well, he examines his affections or desire, and finds it most of all inclined to the ministry of the Gospel. He examines his gifts also, and finds both knowledge and speech that are fit for it. Now such a person may safely say that the ministry is the calling to which he is set apart. And any man in any other calling may say the same for himself. Yet, because many men are partial in judging their inclination and gifts, the best way for them is to use the advice and help of others who are able to give direction in this, and to discern better than themselves.

Now, touching children, it is the duty of parents to choose fit callings for them, before they apply them to any particular condition of life. And that they may better and rightly judge which calling their children are fit for, they must observe two things in them: First, their *inclination*; secondly, their *natural gifts*.

First, touching INCLINATION, every child, even in his first years, is affected with one particular calling more than another; some are affected with music more than others; some with merchandize; some with a more liberal kind of learning — some with this, some with that. And by this, the parents may judge something about their inclination and leaning. This was practiced among the Athenians, who before they placed their children in any calling, first brought them to a public place where instruments of all sorts were laid out; and they observed which kind of instrument each child took delight in; afterwards they applied their children to a similar Art with good success. And it will not be amiss for Christians to be followers of the heathen in this, or any other commendable practice.

Secondly, the NATURAL GIFTS which parents are to observe in their children, are either in their bodies or in their minds. And those children who excel in the gifts of the body are to be brought up in callings performed by the labor of the body, as in Mechanical Arts. And those who excel in the gifts of the mind, are to be applied to those sciences that are performed by wit and learning. The marks of a child that is fit for learning are these: a love of learning, a love of labor, a love of praise, and a wit that is neither too quick, nor too dull. A fine wit in a child is like a pen-knife that will not slice a large loaf, but only serve to cut a quill.

Again, in the gifts of the mind, mark a special difference; there are two kinds of understanding: *Active* and *Passive*.

The *active* understanding not only conceives of things invented by others, but can also invent things itself.

The *passive* understanding only conceives of things devised by others, and can but very hardly invent by itself. And everyone, both old and young, has one of these kinds of understanding.

Now, all those children that excel in this *active* understanding are to be set apart for the greatest callings in the Church and Commonwealth. *Democritus*¹ the Philosopher chose *Protagoras*² to be his scholar, because he showed wit in the artificial binding of a bundle of sticks.³ *Athanasius*, that famous Bishop,⁴ was first put to learning because he was found by the seaside playing the part of a Minister among the company of little children like himself, examining and baptizing them according to the solemn order used in the congregation. When he was a child, *Origen*,⁵ that famous clerk, used to question his father *Leonidas* about the sense of the Scripture, and he demanded from tradesmen the causes of things, and the use of their tools and instruments. And thus we see, in some sort, how parents may judge what calling every child is fit for.

And here all parents must be warned that the neglect of this duty is a great and common sin. For the care of most is that their children may *live* — not regarding at all whether they live *well*, and do service to God in a fit calling or not. And the truth is, parents cannot do greater wrong to their children, and to the society of men, than to apply them to unfit callings — as when a child

¹ Greek philosopher who developed an atomistic theory of matter (460-370 BC).

² Protagoras (490-420 BC); was a Sophist. Ironically, he did not share Democritus' love of mathematics.

³ The bundle was tied with such perfect geometric accuracy, that he seemed a mathematical prodigy. It later became clear that he had the *gift*, but not the *inclination*.

⁴ Athanasius (296-373), Bishop of Alexandria, famous for refuting Arius (the Arian Controversy).

⁵ Origen (185-254) – He reinterpreted Christian doctrine through the philosophy of Neoplatonism.

is fit for learning, to apply him to a trade, or other bodily service; or contrariwise, to apply him to learning when he is fittest for a trade. For this is like a man applying his toes to feeling, and not his fingers; and to go about on his hands and not his feet; and to set the members of the body out of their proper places. And this is the second rule.

Rule 3. He that is fit for various callings, must make a choice of the best.¹ Paul plainly teaches this much in the next verse of this chapter: *Are you called, being a servant? Do not care for it; but if you may be free, rather choose that* (1Cor 7.21). He gives this counsel, that a bondman having liberty as a choice, must accept it rather than continue as a bondman. Again, Paul bids the Corinthians to covet spiritual gifts, but *especially that they may prophesy* – he gives this rule, that in the choice of gifts, we must labor for the best gifts; and if we are to seek after the best *gifts*, then correspondingly, we must seek the best *callings*.

Here is a special rule for all young students in the Universities. Those who are brought up in the schools of the Prophets, desire to know what particular calling is best for them, because they have liberty to be either Schoolmasters, or Physicians, or Lawyers, or Ministers of the word of God. Paul, according to this general rule, shows that a choice must be made of the best calling. And in the first place, if gifts will serve, a choice must be made of the calling of a Prophet or teacher, and *that* above all others. Academic callings must have the first place.

So much for choice.

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2. Good entrance into a calling

Once a choice is made, we must then consider how a good entrance is to be made into the calling which we have chosen. Touching entrance, many points are to be examined. The first is, in what sort and manner an entrance must be made. And the right manner is this: every man must so enter that he may truly in conscience say, God has placed me in this calling, however lowly a calling it may be. Thus Paul says, *As God has called every man, so let him walk* (1Cor 7.17). And Christ our Savior never openly took upon himself the office of a Mediator till he was baptized, and in this he was called to it by the voice of his Father from heaven saying, *This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.*^{Mat 3.17} But immediately after, he began to teach and preach, and to show himself as the true Messiah in performing the duties of a King, Priest, and Prophet. There is no calling on earth, since the fall of *Adam*, that does not have crosses and calamities attending it; but they are held off by sufficient comfort, when our conscience can tell us we were placed in our callings by God himself; and when our conscience cannot say this, the comfort is gone.

Now, so that every man may certainly know himself to be called of God to this or that calling, he must have two things: *Gifts* for the calling from God, and *Allowance* from men.

For the *first*, to those whom God calls, He gives competent and convenient gifts or knowledge, understanding, dexterity to this or that, and such things, and thereby He makes them able to perform the duties of their callings. Contrariwise, those that enter into any calling, being utterly unable to perform the duties of it, were never called by God.

For the *second*, men are to be set apart to their particular callings by the appointment of men whom God has left on earth as his instruments for the ordering and disposing of vocations. For God has his deputies to allot men their offices in every society, such as parents and masters to dispose of persons in private families. For ecclesiastic callings, the *Governors* of the Church; for civil, the *Magistrate* and men of authority in the Commonwealth. And so anyone that would truly say, God has placed him in any particular calling, must also have the outward calling of

¹ That is, to be a “jack of all trades and master of none” is to deny your particular calling, and belittle your gifts.

men. And here it is to be remembered, that testing of gifts and free election, without partiality, should be in the design of all, especially of public callings. Thus in the Primitive Church, not so much as Deacons were admitted without just and sufficient testing (1Tim 3.10). And here, various abuses are to be reprov'd, such as, first of all, the buying and selling, the chopping and changing of civil offices; for where the calling is up for sale, there is little or no testing; little or no election takes place. And someone that buys his office must say his *money* called him, rather than *God*. Therefore, those who lay up money to buy offices, had best take heed beforehand. For the saying is true: *he that buys the seat, must sell justice; and where justice is sold, the poor are oppressed, and all goes to wrack.*¹ The same is to be said of the sale of Ecclesiastic livings,² to which the cure of souls is annexed;³ yes, dispensing and giving them hand over head.⁴ Indeed, to buy or sell the livings of the Church is not properly the sin of *Simon*,⁵ who sought to get the gifts of the Holy Spirit with money; yet this buying is a grievous sin, flat against the order that God has set down touching entrance into any calling. The very heathen themselves have complained of this chopping and changing of places, as the ruin of states and Commonwealths.

Alexander Severus, the Emperor, says, *It is necessary that the one who buys must sell. I will not allow buyers and sellers of offices. If I allow them, it is because I cannot condemn them, for I am ashamed to punish the one that buys and sells.* Seneca says, *This buying is the spoiling of Provinces;* and that, *he which buys must sell.* Justinian complains that *his dominions are robbed and pillaged because men take gold for offices; and he strictly forbids it.*

So much about entrance in general.

Now follow certain questions about it. If this is as I have said — that those who enter into any calling, especially public, must first be enabled with gifts from God, and also set apart by men after due testing and examination — then here a question is to be examined which the Papists used to propound; namely,

Ques. 1: *What calling did the first Preachers of the Gospel, and planters of our [Protestant] Church have?*

It is necessary to answer this question; for if they had no calling, then neither have we, who are the followers. And I answer two things. *First*, that they had their callings by virtue of which they restored the Gospel of Christ from the Romish Church itself; for they were either Priests or School Doctors:⁶ as in England, *Wycliffe*; in Germany, *Luther*; in Bohemia, *John Huss* and *Jerome of Prague*; at Basil, *Oecolampadius*; in Italy, *Peter Martyr*, and others. And therefore these, with many others, were ordained either in Popish Churches, or in schools, and there they were solemnly bound by oath to do the duties of their callings with a good conscience, by confuting error, and maintaining the ancient Apostolic faith.

Which is why, if this — *their* calling — has any force to stop the Papists' mouths, we say, the first restorers of the Gospel in our times had their first callings from *them*.

Obj: It may said that these men were all perjured for preaching against the Church of Rome, to whose allegiance they were bound by oath.

Ans. 1: I answer that, by virtue of their oaths at their ordination, they were bound only to the Catholic and Apostolic Church, and not to the present Church of Rome. For the words “the

¹ That is, to “wrack and ruin” – to decay and decline.

² Paid church offices.

³ The “curate,” or clergyman, is charged with “the care of souls” – it’s not just a way to earn a living.

⁴ Without heed of what one is really doing: rashly, recklessly.

⁵ “Simony” is defined as buying and selling ecclesiastic offices.

⁶ Doctors: scholars with degrees from colleges and universities.

Catholic and Apostolic Church of Rome,” which now run in the tenor of the oath, were not so strictly used in former times, but are more urged now of late.

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Ans. 2: Secondly I answer that many of them had callings that were in some sort, extraordinary; I say *in some sort*, distinguishing the *office* of teaching, and the *use* of it. The office which they performed was ordinary; but the execution of this office, in purging and restoring true religion — not in respect to that true order which God had set down in His word, but in respect to the abuse of it in the Romish Church — was extraordinary. Which I will declare in this manner: God calls men extraordinarily when he does not bind Himself to ordinary laws of vocation set down in His word. And He does this in three ways.

First, *by His own immediate voice*. Thus *Abraham* was called, and *Moses* in the bush, and so were the *Apostles* of Christ called immediately; and *Paul* likewise after Christ’s ascension.

Secondly, He calls *extraordinarily, by the ministry of creatures*: as *Elisha* was called by *Elijah* (1King 19.16); thus *Aaron* was called by *Moses*;^{Exo 4.14-15} and *Philip* was called to baptize the Eunuch, by the message of an angel (Act 8.26).

Thirdly, *by special instinct*, and extraordinary inspiration of the Spirit. We have examples of this in the word of God: *Philip*, who by his first calling was a Deacon, went and preached the Gospel in Samaria, and first began the Church of God there — not by a calling from the Apostles, because they were ignorant of his preaching (Act 8.14); and we may not think he engaged this work of his own brain — and therefore, in all likelihood his calling was by a special instinct of the Spirit of God. Again, when the Church of Jerusalem was dispersed, men came from Cyprus and Cyrene, to Antioch, without any outward calling; and yet they preached there, no doubt by the instinct of the Holy Spirit, as it appears the hand of God was with them. I say the like about *Luther* and the rest: namely, that they were stirred up by the special instinct of the Spirit of God, whereby they were moved to restore the Gospel to its former purity, as they did.

Obj: But some will say this doctrine lays open a gap to all heretics and deceivers, for they may likewise plead extraordinary instincts, and by this means, seduce and deceive the people of God.

Ans: I answer, there are certain special notes and marks whereby we may discern an extraordinary calling from the illusions of the devil, whereby he suborns heretics to deceive the world.

First, extraordinary calling never has a place, except when ordinary calling fails. There are two special times in which God calls men extraordinarily. The *first* is in the founding and planting of the Church; and upon this, the Apostles and Evangelists were called extraordinarily. The *second* time is when the Church of God is defaced, and universal apostasy takes place. For then there is no place for ordinary calling, and therefore to restore the Church again to her former estate, He calls men extraordinarily. We may not look for any reformation of a stew from those who live in it, unless the occasion is extraordinary; and the same is to be thought of the Reformation of a heretical and Apostolic Church, as without a doubt the Church of Rome is.

Secondly, we may discern men who are extraordinarily called, by the doctrine which they deliver, which must be the very doctrine of the Prophets and Apostles. So that the one who pleads an extraordinary calling, and yet brings any other doctrine, is not called by God, but is deluded by the devil. Thus *Moses* taught us to judge true and false Prophets, not by their miracles, but by their doctrine (Deu 13.1-3). And when it was demanded of Christ by the Scribes and Pharisees, by what authority he did those things, he answered by demanding a similar question: whether John’s baptism, that is, his ministry and doctrine, were of God or not (Luk 20.4). And if his doctrine was of God, then his calling was also of God; and consequently the calling of *Christ* was of God, because it was the office of John to testify of him.

Thirdly, they may be discerned by their lives and conversations. Christ has foretold that false prophets in sheep's clothing would come, which are inwardly ravening wolves (Mat 7.15). How then shall we know them? The answer is by their fruits (v. 16); that is, not only by their doctrine, but also by their lives: because their office is to teach, not only by doctrine, but also by example. Now the men whom God called to restore the Gospel, he gave sincerity of judgment, along with integrity of heart and life — which the Lord in mercy joined together for the confirmation of the truth of their calling. And the one that teaches *wholesome* doctrine, and produces *contrary* fruits, is in that regard a false prophet, even though his doctrine is ever so true.

Fourthly, those whom God calls extraordinarily, he furnishes with gifts above the ordinary measure of men: namely, he furnishes them with knowledge, zeal, wisdom, constancy, courage, and other gifts that serve for the discharge of extraordinary callings. And this we find to be true in the first ministers of the Gospel, but especially in *Luther*, whom God notably armed with boldness and courage to withstand the whole Church of Rome. In our own age, some upstarts have said they were Elijah, John the Baptist, and Christ; but, they have been exposed¹ by this last mark: for when their gifts were examined, they have been found to come far short of the gifts of many ordinary men.

Now, if we lay all these marks together, it will easily appear that the first preachers of the Gospel in this age may, at least some of them, be said truly to have received extraordinary callings from God. For first, they preached in such a time when no face of a true Church was to be seen, and a general apostasy overspread the world. Secondly, they renewed the very doctrine of the Apostles and Prophets. Thirdly, they adorned their doctrine with godly life and conversation.

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And lastly, they were all, or most of them, furnished in great measure with sufficient gifts of knowledge, wisdom, zeal, and courage, to manage their callings and professions.

Obj: But the Papists say there was nothing extraordinary in them, because they could not confirm their doctrine by miracles.

Ans 1: I answer *first*, the doctrine which they taught did not then need to be confirmed with miracles, seeing that when it was first published, it was sufficiently confirmed by miracles wrought by the Prophets and Apostles.

Ans 2: *Secondly* I answer that extraordinary men do not always confirm their callings by miracles: such as John the Baptist and various Prophets in the Old Testament, who never wrought any miracles.

Ans 3: *Thirdly*, the gift of working a miracle may be given to one who is an enemy to God and his Church, such as the gift of prophecy may be given, which is greater.^{1Cor 14.12} For *Balaam* and *Caiaphas* both prophesied,² and yet they were professed enemies to Christ and his Church. And Moses says plainly that false Prophets coming among the people would work miracles for this end: to *test* them (Deu 13.1-3). Therefore, the working of a miracle does not always serve to confirm an extraordinary calling.

Ques. 2: Secondly it may be asked, *If entrance is made into a lawful calling with an evil mind, and by evil means, what then must be done?*

Ans: I answer, he is not to forsake his place, but to repent of his bad entrance, and do the duties of his calling with diligence and good conscience, waiting after this for further approval from God and also from men. When he has in any measure obtained this, he may proceed in his

¹ Originally “descried” – to be perceived.

² Num 22.35; Joh 11.49-52.

calling with good conscience: for the after-approval and acceptance — though it does not justify the bad entrance, yet it does make up for it.¹ A Prince, such as *William the Conqueror*, enters into a land or kingdom, and by war and bloodshed he seeks to subdue a people, and to make them subject to him. Now, by the bad entrance he is not a lawful king, for every lawful king is placed by God, and by men that are appointed under God to set up Princes over them according to the laws and customs of the several kingdoms. Yet if the people willingly submit themselves to this usurper, and are content to yield subjection, and the king likewise is content to rule them by good and wholesome laws, then he has now become a lawful Prince, even though his entrance was but tyrannical.

On this ground *another question* is answered, touching the calling of the Ministers of our [Protestant] Church.

Obj: Some say our Church is no Church, that our Ministers are no Ministers; that indeed, the preachers of the Gospel are the worst of all. The ground of their opinion is because (they say) we have no good and lawful entrance to our calling and ministry according to the word of God.

Ans: In answer to them, let us grant the case that all the preachers and Ministers in the Church of England were unlawfully called; indeed, lacking the very substance of true calling (which no man can, with good conscience, either speak or think), yet it is possible that there may be a true Church of God among us, and lawful preachers of the word, because they may have an after-acceptance and approval both from God and from man. And an after-acceptance makes up for a bad entrance.

Furthermore, it is evident that our ministers have approval both from God and man. For *first of all*, God enables them to teach the true and wholesome doctrine of the Prophets and Apostles, which is one special mark to distinguish a false prophet from a true. *Secondly*, God enables them with grace to adorn their doctrine and profession with reformed lives. *Thirdly*, God's hand is with them, in that He blesses their labors for the conversion of many souls to God, in all parts of this land. And by this, as it were, God sets His hand and seal for the approval of our callings. The question was raised among the Corinthians whether *Paul* was an Apostle or not. And Paul himself answers that *if he were not an Apostle to others, yet he was an Apostle to them, because he was the minister of their conversion* (1Cor 9.1, 2). Now, if this is a good reason to prove the extraordinary calling of an Apostle, then no doubt it will serve much more to prove the calling of an ordinary minister.

Ques. 3: Thirdly, it may be asked, *Whether a man entering into a calling may lawfully offer himself, and make the means to enter it or not?*

Ans: *Paul* answers this question when he says, *He that desires the office of a Bishop desires a worthy work* (1Tim 3.1). Here we are given to understand how it is not lawful to *desire* an office. It is true indeed, there are unlawful desires for places and callings; namely, when they are sought from a vain and greedy mind, for pleasure or for money's sake.² Yet, when they are desired or sought for conscience' sake, to discharge a duty to God and man, there is no offense. Now, if the desire for an office is lawful, then to show that desire by honest and lawful means, is not unlawful. Therefore, men may use honest and lawful means to enter into a calling fit for them, if they bring sufficient gifts for the discharge of it, and along with that, they submit themselves to examination and election according to lawful order.

The prophet *Isaiah*, as soon as God had touched his tongue with a coal from the Altar, was ready to go at the call of God; and when the Lord said, *Whom shall I send?* he answered, *Here I am, send me* (Isa 6.6-8). And following the example of this holy Prophet, any man may show himself

¹ Originally, "makes a supply thereof." That is, it supplies a good entrance after the fact.

² "for lucre's sake" — out of greed: 1Tim 3.3, 8; Tit 1.7; 1Pet 5.2.

willing to enter into an office when God has furnished him with gifts; if so, he may be called. Here then is a lesson for those who are brought up in the schools of the Prophets: as soon as they are enabled to do the offices of ministers, their duty is to show they are willing and ready to take this kind of calling upon themselves, in a godly manner. And therefore, without question, it is a fault in many, that being enabled

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with sufficient gifts, they nevertheless employ themselves wholly in their private studies, not showing any willingness to take it upon themselves to discharge any ministerial calling for which they are fit. For whoever seeks a calling in the Church of God for money's sake, is unlawful; yet, to seek a calling is not unlawful in itself, if there is an honest mind, good means, and the glory of God is truly intended.

Ques. 4: Fourthly, it may be asked, *Whether a man may enter into two callings at once, or not?*

Ans: I answer, by distinguishing, in some respects he may, and in some he may not. An entrance may be made into two callings in *three cases*:

First, when God has combined two callings together by His own appointment. Thus *Melchizedek*, that he might be a lively figure of Christ our Savior, was a king and priest, and he did the offices of both King and Priest (Heb 7.1). And the high priests that were successors of *Aaron*, by God's appointment, were not only Priests, but civil judges also. *Jehoiada* the high Priest was protector of Judah in the nonage of *Jehoash*; ¹ and by virtue of his protectorship, he slew *Athaliah*, that usurping Queen (2King 11.15). And there is no marvel at this, because the Levites were the common lawyers, and the Scriptures were the positive laws of the Jews; and therefore none were so fit to be Judges as the priests and Levites. Even as in *this land* [England], the fittest Judges in both civil and criminal causes, are Lawyers who are expert in the laws of the land. In this regard, it was not so great a burden among the Jews to manage the office of a Priest, and to execute civil judgment.

Secondly, two callings may be combined when entering into them at once is not against the word, and it is for the common good. Thus *Eli* in the kingdom of Israel was a Priest by one calling, and a Judge by another calling. Thus *Samuel* was a Prophet and a Judge. Thus *Moses* was a Prophet and a civil governor, indeed, a Prince. For in those times, both states were so corrupt, that sufficient ordinary men could not be found to discharge either calling severally.

Thirdly, two callings may be endured when, being joined, they do not hinder each other, nor the common good. Thus a man may lawfully be a Master of a family, and a Merchant, or any other trade whatsoever. We have examples of this in the word of God. *Abraham*, besides being a Master of a great family, and in his family also being a prophet and priest in offering sacrifices, he was by another calling, a mighty prince and a great warrior. And the same may be said of the Patriarchs; they were governors in their families, and also princes bearing the civil sword, as it appears in the example of *Judah*.

Now, there were two reasons why they might bear both these offices; firstly because the Church of God was then very small and comprised one family; and secondly, the doctrine of religion was comprised in a few heads,² and delivered from man to man by tradition. And in this case, *Paul* was an Apostle by one calling, and at the same time, a Tent-maker by another calling. This was because of the poverty of the Church of Corinth, and also because he hoped hereby to stop the mouths of false Apostles who would have accused him of taking advantage of the Gospel. And in

¹ That is, while *Jehoash* was a minor; 2King 11.21.

² Headings or subject-matter; general principles.

a similar case of necessity, I have no doubt that the Ministers of the Gospel now may take other callings — with this always being remembered: that such callings are not hindrances to their principal callings, nor offenses to men.

Now I come to the SECOND PART of my distinction, to show *when men may not enter into two distinct callings at once*; and that also is in *three cases*:

First, if God has disjoined these callings by His word and commandment. *Secondly*, if the practice of the one hinders the practice of the other. *Thirdly*, if combining them together hinders the common good.

On these grounds, our Savior Christ being the Teacher of the Church, refused to be judge of the inheritance between two brothers (Luk 12.13-14). And hereupon the Apostles, in order to do the duties of their own callings, refused to perform the office of Deacons (Act 6.2). From this I gather that in towns, corporations, and societies, care (as much as possible) is to be taken, that various offices and charges being weighty of themselves, and of diverse kinds, are not laid on the shoulders of one man. For the execution of them all breeds distraction, and distraction disables the most able man in the discharge of even one office. He that comes to the corn heap, the more he opens his hand to receive, the less he holds — so too, if one enlarges himself to bear more offices, the fewer he will discharge.

Ques. 5: Furthermore, it may be asked here, *whether it is lawful to enter into two trades at once, or not?*

Ans: It is not unlawful, if they do not hinder each other, and combining them does not hinder the common good of men, and the party does not intend dishonest gain, but the common good. Nevertheless, it is inconvenient in a peopled commonwealth; for then, one man shall live hard by another. Yet if one calling is not sufficient to maintain charge of a family, a second calling may be added under the former conditions.

Ques. 6: Again, it may be asked *whether one may have two farms at once or not?*

Ans: Some have thought it not convenient; but the truth is, it may as well be asked whether it is lawful to have two coats at once or not? For in a commonwealth, all must not be equal, but some may be above, and some under others in regard to wealth. And therefore those who have a number of farms, whether it is by inheritance or by honest purchase, may lawfully enjoy them.

And so much for a good entrance.

3. Good continuance in a calling.

The third main point to be considered is good continuance in a calling. This continuance consists in the constant practice of the duties and works of the same calling.

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And **two points** must be considered in this.

- I. FIRST, what are the *works* of our callings which must be done, and what are their marks?
- II. The SECOND, in what *manner* they must be done (p. 766).

For the FIRST POINT,

I. The works of our calling must have three qualifications.

1. They must be the *proper* works of our callings;
2. They must be *profitable*; and
3. They must be *necessary*.

The *first* is Paul's rule, *Live in peace* (1Th 4.11).¹ But how will that be done? He answers, *by minding our own business*. And Peter gives the same rule: requiring that *no man suffer as a busybody in other men's matters* (1Pet 4.15). In both these passages, the Holy Spirit teaches us that we must first of all,

1. Search out what are the PROPER works of our own callings, and then afterwards, do them. The husbandman must attend to husbandry, the Minister to preaching, etc. On this one point, sundry faults are opened that commonly occur in the lives of men —

Such as, *first*, when men look at the things of others, not regarding their own matters. We have an example in John 21.21-22. Our Savior Christ said to *Peter*, "You follow me." Now *Peter*, little regarding his own duty, is compelled to ask in a kind of curiosity, what *John* must do. But our Savior Christ checks him, and says, "If I will that he tarries till I come, what is that to you?" And this is the common fault of the world: men who lightly regard and slackly perform the duties of their own callings, are nevertheless very ready to talk about and inquire into the state and lives of other men; and it is food and drink to them. Let a good report be given about a man and it is not regarded; but evil reports are taken up at the first rebound — they spread like wild-fire. And all this arises from vain curiosity, which is condemned here as the bane of all societies. These busybodies are like those who read books with the intent only to discover its faults. And they are like the spider that creeps over the whole garden only to gather poison. But men that fear God must learn to know their own business, and to allow their talk and meditation to be employed in that way.

Secondly, here is condemned the curiosity of those who intrude on the duties of other men's callings. As I showed before, it is a dangerous sin. This appears by the example of *Uzzah*,^{2Sam 6.6} who was slain for touching the Ark, even though his intent was only to keep it from falling — for he had no such calling; and by the example of the men of Bethshemesh, fifty thousand of whom died for looking into that Ark of God,^{1Sam 6.19} when they had no calling to do so; and by *Korah, Dathan, and Abiram*, who felt compelled to challenge the office of *Moses*.^{Num 16.1-3}

Thirdly, hereby is condemned the study and practice of figure-casting and judicial astrologies;² for thereby many, on false grounds, go in search of what will befall other men, either in life or death — things that God would not have known before they come to pass.

In a word, everyone that does not do the duties of his own calling diligently, and with good conscience, is hereby condemned.

2. The second property is that the works of our callings must be PROFITABLE, not only to the doers, but to the Commonwealth. The law of nature teaches this. Under this second property, sundry men are to be blamed.

First, the tradesman that gets his living by making foreign and fond fashions of attire which serve no use, except to be displayed as flags and banners, either of folly or pride, or wantonness. For all such fashions are condemned by the word of God,³ yes, by the very light of nature. And therefore those who live by selling and making them cannot be free from offense — indeed, their offense is greater. For if there were no inventors of vain novelties, they would not be so commonly used as they are.

¹ **1Th 4:11** that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands;

² That is, divination and forecasting by looking for signs. **Mat 12:39** But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign;

³ **1Tim 2:9** in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing; **1Pet 3:3** Do not let your adornment be *merely* outward--arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on *fine* apparel;

Secondly, here the Alchemist is to be reproved, who spends his time and substance laboring to change baser materials into gold, a thing that in truth is impossible. For it is a kind of creation to turn one kind of creature into a creature of another kind, as every metal is. And that which is said, or rather dreamed of, *the Philosopher's Stone*,¹ is but a fairytale and nowhere to be found except in Utopia. And there is no question but that one day an account must be made of the good time unprofitably spent in seeking it.

3. The third condition of our actions is that they must be NECESSARY. We must consider the nature and quality of the works of our callings. In every calling there are two kinds of works. Some are principal, without which the calling cannot be maintained; and some less principal, which are not essential to the calling. Now, men must especially give themselves to practice the principal works of their callings. For example, the action of a Minister in his calling is to read and to preach the word of God. Now, reading is the less necessary work, and preaching is the most principal; and for this reason he must give himself especially to the practice of preaching. In this way we might go through the callings of all men and note the many needs in each. Magistrates in towns and corporations carry and draw the sword to maintain peace and civil order; it is well done, for it is a work of their calling; yet it is not the principal work, and they commonly fail in this: that they do not use the sword for this end, to urge men to keep the commandments of the first tablet, to practice pure religion (piety), and to keep the Sabbath day. This is the main duty of the Magistrate who specially bears the sword for the good of men's souls. A Master of a family is to care not only for the bodies, but also for the souls of his household; for this is the principal duty; and most householders are faulty in this. For commonly they take on the lesser duties, and leave the principal one.

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They care for the bodies of their wives, children, and servants while neglecting the means of the salvation of their souls. This is clean contrary to the rule in hand, which enjoins the practice of the principal duties in the first place; therefore all careless and ignorant masters of families are to be warned here, to have special care to provide for the saving of the souls of all those who live under their government. This also shows us the faults of many students, who setting themselves apart for the work of the ministry, first give themselves to study the Fathers and ancient writers. Whereas their first and principal duty is to be soundly instructed in the word of God, and to ground themselves in the main points of religion, so that they may be able to know what is true, what is false, what is to be done, and what is not to be done in all matters, whether they concern faith or manners. And when this good foundation is laid, then the foresaid helps may be added with good success.

Again, what I call necessary works are those which, upon due consideration, are not only lawful in themselves, and agreeable to our calling, but also expedient in the doers: for if they are not expedient, though otherwise lawful, they are not to be done.

Before I proceed any further, here is a necessary question to be handled:

Ques: Whether the works and actions of a calling done by a man who enters unlawfully into that calling, are nullities or not; that is, are his actions to be reputed as not done?

Ans: I answer that in things that are done, there are two kinds of faults; one is in the work, the other in the worker. A fault in the work is when the action itself is done amiss; and it may be done amiss in *substance*, or in *circumstance*. If the fault is in the SUBSTANCE of it, it is indeed a nullity, and must be reputed as not done. Secondly, the fault of the WORKER is when an action of a lawful calling is done by one who is not lawfully called. Now then, when the fault of an action is

¹ The philosopher's stone is a legendary substance (tincture or powder), allegedly capable of turning inexpensive metals into gold. It was sometimes believed to be an elixir of life for rejuvenation, immortality, or superior insight.

not in the work itself, but in the person that works it, then it is not to be reputed a nullity, nor is it to be reversed as nothing.

For example, one called lawfully to the ministry baptizes infants in the name of the Father, and of the virgin Mary: here is a fault in the action done, and that is in the substance of the baptism; therefore there is no baptism here, but rather a profanation of the ordinance of God. Now put the case further, that the baptism is administered by a man who is called, though not lawfully; I say if there is no fault in the action, but only in the man, that baptism is not to be reputed a nullity.¹

This doctrine is agreed upon by the common consent of Divines, and also by the laws and orders of kingdoms, as it may plainly appear in particular. *Augustus Caesar*, a Roman emperor, invaded the kingdom of the Jews, and brought it into a Province. And thus he was made king of the Jews, not by lawful means, but by intrusion. For all this, the actions done, and the commandments given by him, were the reputed commandments of a king, not revered by any Jew, but obeyed by all. For when he commanded that all the world, including the Jews, would be taxed, they yielded themselves to this commandment. Indeed, righteous *Joseph* and *Mary* went to their own town to be taxed. [Luk 2.1](#) *Caiaphas* was honored as high Priest among the Jews; [Mat 26.3](#) and though his entrance was by corruption and bribery, yet notwithstanding, the actions done by him in his office were not esteemed nullities, but valid actions.

And therefore, our Savior Christ allowed himself to be accused, arraigned, and judged by him; and he was also content to come into the Temple and worship God according to the manner of the Jews, even before *Caiaphas* himself. The Scribes and Pharisees that were the Teachers of the Jews, [Joh 3.10](#) did not have many of their calling that came by succession from *Aaron*; [Exo 29.9](#) and for judgment, they were also heretical in part, holding some things against the foundation [of faith]; namely, justification by works, etc. [Rom 9.32](#) And yet our Savior Christ, because they sat in *Moses'* chair, bids the Church of the Jews, and his disciples, to listen to them so far as they taught the doctrine of *Moses*. [Mat 23.3](#) From this it is manifest that if there is no fault in the work, the defective calling of the worker does not make a nullity of the actions done. For however the worker sins in his unlawful entrance, and in that regard is not to be approved, yet the actions in the calling to which he has entered, are the actions of that calling; for though he is called amiss, yet he stands in the place of one lawfully called. And we are to differentiate between one who is called, though unlawfully, and one that has no calling at all. For the actions done *without* calling are indeed nullities; whereas, if there is *any* calling, even though the entrance is badly made, it does not make the action void. And whoever denies this ground of truth, overturns the regiment of kingdoms, Churches, states, and societies whatsoever.

By what has been said, a question is resolved concerning baptism. Many of our ancestors were baptized by Mass-priests, and never received any baptism except in the Church of Rome.

Ques: Now the question is *Whether that baptism was sufficient or not, and whether they must be re-baptized?*

Ans: I answer thus: the Romish priest is no minister of God and Christ, but of Antichrist, in that he offers Christ as a real sacrifice for the quick and the dead, in which his office chiefly stands. Yet, because the priest has been and is designed by men to baptize, and he stands in the place of a lawful minister, his action is not void. For though he is not a minister lawfully called to baptize, yet he is not a mere private man, but is between both; that is, he is one called, though amiss, through ignorance and oversight of men. Consequently, he is one that, in the act of baptizing, stands in the place of a right and lawful minister.

¹ A sacrament is not dependent on the faith of the one administering it, but on the faith of the one receiving it. Thus, if an evangelist is an unbeliever, but the Gospel is true, any conversion resulting from it is likewise true.

Obj: Again, it pleases some, carried more by affection than judgment, to dispute in this manner: There is no right and lawful calling allotted for ministers in the Church of England. Therefore, there are no Sacraments among us, nor true preaching of the word of God. Our Sacraments (they say) are but for show, and the effect of all preaching with us, is no better than the illusion of the devil.

Ans: I answer, let it be granted that there is no lawful calling of ministers in the Church of England (which is nevertheless both false and wicked), yet this will not follow: that our Sacraments are no Sacraments, and our preaching is no preaching; for though men are unlawfully called, yet their actions are the actions of Ministers, if they are called at all. The preaching of a minister unlawfully called may be true preaching; and Sacraments may be true Sacraments; otherwise Christ would not have said of the Scribes and Pharisees, “Hear them,” even though they were of Tribes other than *Levi*, and came into office by bribery and similar corruption. A bad entrance does not make the actions done, void and of no effect, if the doer is fit to stand in the place of a right and lawful agent. And, as a good entrance does not always make the actions good — because where there is a good entrance into a lawful calling, there may be a later apostasy — so on the contrary, the defect of a good entrance does not make a nullity of all ministerial actions.

Now I come to the SECOND POINT touching continuance in calling; namely,

II. The works of our calling must be done in a particular manner.

It is not sufficient for a man to do the proper works of his calling, unless he does them in a good and godly manner. And that a man may do them in a good and godly manner, two things are principally required:

1. *Holiness*, and
2. *Constancy*.

1. TO DO A WORK IN HOLINESS, the word of God teaches that a double sanctification is required.

- A. The first is sanctification of the WORKER.
- B. The second is sanctification of the WORK and the action to be done.

A. The SANCTIFICATION OF THE WORKER is necessary for two reasons:

1. Because the *person* must first please God, before the *work* of the person will please Him. *For to the unclean, all things are unclean* (Tit 1.15). Yes, not only their works, but their minds and consciences are defiled. And the reason is plain; for so great is the corruption of our wicked natures, that we defile whatever thing we lay our hands on. If men are not repentant sinners, all the actions which they do, though good works in themselves, are very sins and offenses before God, in that they do not proceed from an upright heart, nor are they done to the glory of God.
2. Because, unless we are “born anew of water and the spirit,”^{Joh 3.5} we can look for no success or blessing upon our labors; it is the righteous man’s privilege. *Whatever he does, it shall prosper* (Psa 1.3). No other man may look for this favor at God’s hand. Righteous *Joseph* prospered in all that he did; for the Lord was with him when he was made ruler over the house of *Potiphar* the Egyptian (Gen 39.2-3).¹ And Jehoshaphat says, *Believe the Lord and*

¹ **Gen 39:2** The LORD was with Joseph, and he was a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. ³ And his master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD made all he did prosper in his hand.

his Prophets, and you shall prosper (2Chr 20.20). While the Ark remained in the house of Obed-Edom, he prospered and all his house.^{2Sam 6.11}

How much more then shall someone prosper, that has not only the sign of God's presence, but God Himself dwelling in his heart? If it is said that in our experience we find the ungodly man prospers as well as the godly,¹ then I answer, the prosperity of the wicked is like the quails which God sent to the Israelites in the wilderness, which brought a plague and destruction with them; for they died while the meat was still in their mouths. The prosperity of the wicked serves to their deeper condemnation.²

Hence we learn that being designed and set apart for any calling, we must first of all, from our hearts, turn to God from all our sins, and use *means*³ to become new creatures; because unless we repent and turn to God, and with constant purpose cling to Him, the best actions of our callings, though we had no other sins, shall be sufficient to condemn us. Consider that no work ever pleased God till the person of the worker is accepted in His sight. The blind divinity of the world is this: that those who go diligently about their business, live peaceably with all men, and do no man hurt, have all things go well with them, and God will have mercy on them. These things are indeed good and commendable, but they are not sufficient. For unless the person that does these things goes further, and repents of his sins, and dies to them by virtue of the death of Christ, and lives to God, all his peaceable and upright dealings will in the end prove no better than fig-leaves before God. For even the best works that can be, are damnable sins in the doer, unless he turns to God, and is *in Christ*.

In the same field, at the same time, in the same business, there is the work of the ox, and the work of a man; now I ask, which of these two is the better work? I know the answer will be the work of the man; but the truth is, unless he is renewed by the grace of God, his labor is worse than the labor of the beast; for the beast in his kind obeys God; the unrepentant sinner does not. And thus actions that are lawful in themselves, become unlawful in him — not because they are done, but because they are done in an evil manner; even as the channel is faulty, not because it *carries* the water, but because it *defiles* the water.

B. The second thing required is SANCTIFICATION OF THE WORK or action.

This point also must be learned and practiced, for it is not sufficient to do a lawful action, unless it is done in a holy manner; for lawful actions, unless they are sanctified, are sins. This may be made apparent by one and the same action done by two persons. The Publican and the Pharisee go together to pray; they both do one and the same action; and yet the one is approved for his prayer, and the other is not.^{Luk 18.10-14}

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This is because the one — that is, the Pharisee — prayed in the pride of his heart, and profaned the lawful action of prayer. The Publican prayed in the humility of his heart for the pardon of his

¹ **Job 21:7** Why do the wicked live *and* become old, Yes, become mighty in power? **Psa 73:12** Behold, these *are* the ungodly, Who are always at ease; They increase *in* riches. **Jer 12:1** Righteous *are* You, O LORD, when I plead with You; Yet let me talk with You about *Your* judgments. Why does the way of the wicked prosper? *Why* are those happy who deal so treacherously?

² **Ecc 8:13** But it will not be well with the wicked; nor will he prolong *his* days, *which are* as a shadow, because he does not fear before God. **Psa 73:17-19** Until I went into the sanctuary of God; *Then* I understood their end. ¹⁸ Surely You set them in slippery places; You cast them down to destruction. ¹⁹ Oh, how they are *brought* to desolation, as in a moment! They are utterly consumed with terrors.

³ The ordinary means of grace are *prayer*, the *preaching* of the Word, and the *sacraments* (WLC #154; WSC #88). But it is not enough to pray, listen, or receive. The means must be *used*: they must be *exercised in faith* with a purpose and intent to be *sanctified* by them: **Mat 7:24** "Therefore whoever *hears* these sayings of Mine, and *does* them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock."

sins; and his action was not only lawful in itself, but also holy in the doer. And this is the point that must be learned and practiced in all the actions of our callings: that they must not only be lawful in themselves, but also lawful in regard to us.

This reveals the blindness and ignorance of men among us, who think it is sufficient for them, if the actions which they do are lawful. For example, peddlers think they may use their own liberty in buying and selling, because bargaining is God's ordinance; and they think it is needless to regard in what *manner* they buy or sell. Indeed, commonly they do not so much as dream of this: that they are to perform their actions in such a way, that in their doings they may approve themselves unto God.^{2Tim 2.15}

In the SANCTIFICATION OF THE WORKS of our calling, *two things* are required:

1. *The word*, and
2. *Prayer* (1Tim 4.5).¹ (page 773)

For what Paul sets down about the use of food and drink, must be extended to all the ordinances of God whatsoever. I will speak of both these in order.

1. First of all, THE WORD OF GOD must be our rule and square by which we are to frame and fashion all our actions, and according to the direction received from it, we must do the things we do, or leave them undone. David, a king, no doubt had wise and godly counsel; and he himself was a man of great wisdom, being a Prophet of God. And yet he says, *the word and the laws of God are his Counsellors* (Psa 119.24). And what the Lord commands the King, is that sitting on his throne, he should have the Book of the Law before him, to do all things in it (Deu 17.19). That is what every subject, in his particular place and standing, must likewise perform.

Peter fished all night and caught nothing. In the morning Christ came and bid him to toss his net into the sea. Though discouraged by bad success before, this man quickly says, *Lord, at your word I will do it* (Luk 5.5). And this much is what every man should daily say in his place: that he will do the works of his calling at God's commandment, and according to his word.

When the people of Israel came out of Egypt and went into Canaan, a type of the kingdom of heaven, during their whole journey they were led by a pillar of cloud in the day, and by a pillar of fire in the night. When the cloud stood still, they stood still; and they were to follow it whichever way it went, forward or backward. Now look, as the Israelites went to the earthly Canaan by following the pillar of fire and the cloud, so we must go, blindfolded as it were, and allow ourselves to be ruled by the word of God in the works of our calling. Though it seems to our reason to go backward, what it commands, that we must do; and what it forbids, that we must avoid.

Many things might be repeated out of God's word for our better direction in particular actions, but I will reduce them all to two heads. For some directions serve for avoiding vice, and some others for the practice of virtue.

A. The VICES to be avoided in the works of men's callings are especially two:

- (1) *Covetousness*, and
- (2) *Injustice*. (page 770)

(1) Covetousness is a notorious vice, whereby nearly all men apply their calling and its works to gathering wealth and riches. This is one of the chief and master sins of the world; and from this a sea of evils flow both into the Church and the Commonwealth. There are many who have good affections and receive the word with joy. Yet, like the thorny ground, they are choked with the cares of this world.

¹ **1Tim 4:5** for it [*i.e.*, every created thing] is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

Now then, consider that Covetousness is so vile a sin, that those who are placed in *any* calling must take heed of it, and be careful lest it take root in their hearts, and draw them to many other evils. Paul says, *Those that would be rich* — that is, those who use the labor of their callings only to gather wealth — *fall into many and grievous temptations* (1Tim 6.9), and so consequently, into damnation. And therefore he adds that *Covetousness is the root of all evil* (v.10).

Obj: It may be objected that unbelief is the first particular sin that ever came into the world, and consequently, that covetousness is not the root of all evil.

Ans: I answer that unbelief is a mother of sin, from which all other sins arise; yet covetousness is also a root in another respect; because as the root gives sap and nourishment to all the branches, so does covetousness to every other sin whatsoever. Where it reigns, no sin dies or decays. In the body, when the spleen swells, all other parts decay and consume. Even so, when the heart swells with a desire for riches, all the graces of God are consumed and fade away.

Judas no doubt had many good things in him. He forsook all to be a disciple of Christ; he preached the Gospel to the Jews just as the rest of the disciples did; he worked miracles and cast out devils; and what is more, he was one of Christ's own family, and as it were, a steward: he bore the money bag and disposed of all things. And yet, at the last, because he allowed this damnable sin of covetousness to prevail within his own heart, he condescended to sell his Master for thirty pieces of silver. And thus all good things in him came to nothing; for presently upon this fact, he went and desperately hanged himself; and threw himself down with such violence that his bowels gushed out. And thus it will fall out with all those who nourish this sin, and give way to it, however furnished they are with knowledge, zeal, and a commendable life. If it is allowed to prevail, it will bring them at last to fearful and lamentable ends.

In an ordinary family it is a great disorder to see the Master play the servant, and the servant do the office of the Master. Much more then is it a disorder in the Church of God, which is the family of Christ,

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that men set their minds on the world, and make themselves servants of riches, which should rather serve them. Our Savior Christ says, *The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath*; [Mar 2.27](#) then much more were riches made for man, and not man for riches.

Again, covetousness and worldly desires are against the order of nature, for when we come into the world, we bring nothing with us; and while we live here Nature is content with little; and when we die, we must carry nothing with us but a coffin, or a winding sheet. Why then should we set our minds so much on earthly things?

Again, the gate of heaven is narrow, and the way is narrow; so that we must be willing to struggle and creep before we can make any entrance, and deny all that we enjoy. Now, when in the works of our calling, we lived only to get wealth, we set bars on heaven's gates, as it were, and load ourselves with burdens which make us unable to pass. Therefore special care must be had, that our time and calling are not spent in gathering earthly treasures. [Mat 6.19](#)

Every man in his calling may remedy this vice and its practice, by doing these two duties: First, he must restrain his action from the world. Secondly, he must turn and dispose it to better things. For the first, our affection is like a sea, which being allowed to pass its banks, overflows the whole country. And therefore, to keep our desires in compass, every man in his place and calling, just labor for two things: first, for contentment; so says the Holy Spirit, *Do not let your conversation be in covetousness, but be content with what you have* (Heb 13.5). This contentment is esteeming that particular estate in which God has placed us, to be the best of all estates for us that can be. We have a notable example of this virtue in the Apostle Paul who had learned in whatever estate he was, to be content with it. And therefore he says, *I can be abased,*

and I can abound; everywhere and in all things I have been instructed both to be full, and to be hungry, to abound, and to have want (Phi 4.11-12). This, which Paul practiced, is quickly said, but not so quickly done.

Now, so that we for our parts may follow his example and be content in every estate of life, we are to perform these duties:

First, we must labor to see a particular providence of God, and to experience it in all things that come to pass. In health, wealth, and liberty, all men acknowledge a providence; but in the contrary estates of sickness, bondage, and poverty, etc., the blind world sees no providence, nor goodness of God. It shuts up all the goodness of God in health and wealth. But those who profess the knowledge of the true God must better acquaint themselves with this providence and goodness of God, and labor to feel it in sickness as well as in health, in want as in wealth, in persecution as in liberty and peace. And when we can in some good measure do this, the experience of divine providence will breed and produce contentment. We have an example of this in *Job*, who in the midst of troubles said, *The Lord gives and the Lord takes away, now blessed be the name of the Lord* (Job 1.21). In these words let us mark his contentment, and the cause of it: namely, his persuasion that God himself laid that affliction on him; that persuasion being settled, he gives thanks to God.

Secondly, we must labor to be resolved in conscience, with David, *that God is our portion* (Psa 119.57), that is, that God the Father is our Father, Christ Jesus is our Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit is our Sanctifier and Comforter. In this we must settle our consciences; and then may we say as David did, *I have a goodly heritage* (Psa 16.6). And we shall find our minds more settled and contented with any estate — good or bad — that befalls us by the will and appointment of God. All men are well pleased with health, liberty, and wealth; and if we could be able in truth to say, *the Lord is my portion*, we would be well pleased with sickness, bondage, and poverty. And thus are we to endure ourselves to contentment.

Now to better restrain our affections from the world, *two things* must be done.

*First of all, we must in this life resolve ourselves to seek no more beyond those things that are necessary and sufficient for us and ours.*¹

For seeking abundances is not lawful, nor does it stand with a good conscience, which I will prove in this manner: We may seek what we pray for, but we have no warrant to pray for abundance; but for things that are necessary and sufficient, we have a warrant to pray, as *Agur* does: *Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me* (Pro 30.8). And Christ taught us to pray in this manner: *Give us this day our daily bread*; that is, bread sufficient to perpetuate our lives. And Paul plainly condemns the desire for riches; that is, for things more than necessary, affirming that those who desire to be rich, fall into the snares of the devil (1Tim 6.8-9).

Some have observed twelve wonders in the Manna of the Jews: 1. The children of Israel were fed with it, 40 years. 2. To the godly, it tasted according to everyone's desire. 3. To the ungodly it was loathsome. 4. An omer of it sufficed all stomachs. 5. Whether men gathered more or less, they had a full measure, neither more nor less; that is, an omer-full. 6. Two omers-full before the Sabbath, on other days only one omer-full. 7. It fell every day, except on the Sabbath. 8. It melted in the sun, and was hardened in the fire. 9. It was kept many years in the Ark without

¹ One wonders if Mr. Perkins would have us still living in caves as hunter-gatherers; if he thinks the pursuit of progress and a better life is evil; if maintaining the *status quo* a virtue. No, that's not his point. His point is to condemn *greed* and *avarice*. He shows how materialism arises from discontentment with God. And he distinguishes between seeking betterment only for oneself, at the expense of others; and seeking it for others, at our own expense — between seeking the favor of men by our wealth, and seeking the favor of God by our humility. Thus the pursuit of progress and a better life is not evil, when we seek the common good with our God-given gifts (1Cor 12.7) — WHG.

putrefying. 10. Being preserved till the next day, it putrefied, except on the Sabbath. 11. He that gathered least, had his omer-full. 12. He that gathered most, had only his omer. Now, by most of these wonders — and especially that Manna laid up till the next day putrefied, and every Jew had an adequate measure, whether his labor was more or less — we are taught that seeking and desiring abundance does not please God.

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The Lord commands the king by express law that he should not multiply his horses, nor his silver and gold (Deu 17.16-17). It is not intent of God here to bar kings from seeking things sufficient to maintain their kingdoms; but to moderate their affections, so they do not seek that abundance which may serve to maintain not just one, but two or three kingdoms. If *God* sends an abundance of things more than necessary for Princes, they may receive them from the hand of God; and they are therefore to be thankful for them. But kings themselves may not seek more than what is sufficient for their estates.

Now, if this is the duty of the Prince, then much more is it the duty of the people. Subjects in kingdoms should content themselves if they have as much as will provide them food and clothing, and this much they may lawfully seek. For example, a master of a family may with good conscience seek that measure of wealth which will in Christian wisdom be thought fit to maintain him and his family with adequate food and clothing. Having obtained this much, a pause must be made, and he may not proceed further to enlarge his estate by seeking that abundance which may well serve his own house, and a second, or many families more.

Ques: It may be asked here, *How are we to judge what is sufficient for any man?*

Ans: I answer, we must estimate sufficiency not by the affection of covetous men, for then nothing would ever be sufficient. But we are to proceed by the same rule as in the case of apparel. Because the word of God has given no particular rule how every man or woman should be attired, our rule must therefore be the example and judgment of the godly and grave men and women of our estate and order. So likewise for a sufficiency in things in this life, our rule must be the common judgment and practice of the most godly, frugal, and wise men with whom we live. What they in good conscience judge to be sufficient and necessary for every man, according to his place and calling, that is to be deemed sufficient. And here we must remember not to make one rule for all men, that things sufficient for one should be sufficient for all; but every man must be measured according to his condition and degree. For as one man is above another in degree, more or less, so for one, more is required for sufficiency than for another.

Obj: But the covetous man may take exception and say, *Every gift of God may be sought:* Abundance is the blessing and gift of God, and therefore it may be sought.

Ans: I answer that we must distinguish the blessings and gifts of God; some of them are simply blessings, and some are blessings only in some respect.

Those which are simply blessings are those gifts and graces of God that are not only blessings in themselves, but also blessings in every man that has them; and such are the gifts of faith, of repentance, of the fear of God, and the love of God and man. The second kind which are blessings only in some respect, are those which are good in themselves, but are not good for every person that has them; such are riches and an abundance of worldly things.

Thus, then, I answer that every blessing of God may be sought if I know it is a blessing to *me*. Therefore I may lawfully seek faith and repentance, and all those gifts of God which are simply blessings. But we may not seek those things which are only blessings in some respect, unless we can say they are blessings to *us*. A sword and knife are good things in themselves, and they have their use; but these are not good in the hands of a child, or of a madman, because they may hurt

themselves by them. And so riches are good in themselves, but not for every man; and therefore they are not to be sought any further than we know they are good and profitable for *us*.

Obj: Secondly it is alleged, when men seek abundance and find it, that God would not give it to them unless it were a blessing: because whatever is of God is good.

Ans: I answer, first of all, that in giving abundance to a covetous man, God is void of all blame; for the question is about the man's seeking and receiving, not about God's giving. Again, when God grants abundance to some who seek it, he gives a blessing; but it is like the quails he gave to the Israelites, which brought a plague with them. For God oftentimes gives temporal blessings in His wrath.

Obj: Thirdly, it may be alleged that God has made a promise to every righteous man that he shall receive abundance: *riches and treasures will be in his house*, says David (Psa 112.3); and therefore he may lawfully seek riches.

Ans: I answer in two ways. *First*, that "riches" in the word of God often means things that are necessary, and not abundance. *Secondly*, if "riches" is taken for abundance, then I answer that promises concerning temporal blessings must be understood with the exception of the cross and chastisement. And therefore the meaning of the Psalmist is that riches will be given to the righteous, unless it is the will of God to exercise and try him by want and poverty. And this passage must be thus understood, as appears plainly in Heb 11.37, where some are commended because they endured poverty by faith, wandering to and fro in sheepskins and goatskins. And *Lazarus* when he died, was received into *Abraham's* bosom, even though in his lifetime he did not have so much as crumbs from the rich man's table to feed his body. [Luk 16.19-22](#)

Now then, if the promise were absolute, every man might seek abundance, and every believer should have it; but seeing it is conditional, and we are uncertain whether it will please God to try us by want or not, therefore we may not seek abundance.

Obj: Fourthly, it may be alleged that every man must do good to the Church and Commonwealth, and therefore he must seek plenty, so that he may have the means to do this good.

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Ans: I answer, we must do good indeed, yet within the compass of our estates and callings, and according to our ability; for God accepts every man according to what he has, and not according to what he does not have.

Obj: Lastly, it is alleged that there are examples of righteous men, such as *Abraham, Jacob, and Solomon*, who abounded with riches.

Ans: I answer, they did not get their riches by seeking abundance: they were made rich by God's sending, and not by their own seeking. So men may accept abundance when it is the pleasure of God to bestow it on them while they walk in their callings. And it cannot be shown that either *Abraham, Jacob, or Solomon*, lacking riches, sought them. But commonly, the covetous man lays plots as to how to get so much for himself, and so much for his children, so many hundreds, and so many thousands; whereas *Jacob* asked God only for food and clothing. [Gen 28.20](#)

Therefore, whatever is said to the contrary, the truth is, that no man can with good conscience seek things more than are necessary. And this one thing must be like a cord to us, to restrain our affections from the world: that God has given a commandment that we must seek only things that may, in Christian wisdom, be deemed necessary.

Now let us proceed to search for *how we may turn our affections from the world to better things*. This is the way: just as hot-headed persons who desire to restrain their hastiness must

turn it against themselves for their own sins, even so, the worldling¹ who desires to turn his greedy² mind from earthly things, must set his mind on the kingdom of heaven.^{Mat 6.33} And to do this, two things are especially required:

First, we must endeavor to have the eyes of our minds enlightened by God's Spirit, that we may see how happy the estate is that God has prepared in his own Kingdom for those that love Him.³ Thus Paul prayed for the Ephesians, *That the eyes of their understanding might be enlightened, that they might know what the hope was of their calling, and what were the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints* (Eph 1.18). The beast that goes into a bare common,⁴ once it sets its eye on a better pasture, will go without further delay, over hedge and ditch and all, till it comes into that pasture. Now that which is in nature, should much more be in those who are partakers of the grace of Christ. Therefore, although like moles, we have our heads always rooting under the earth, yet if by grace we but cast our eyes to the joys of heaven, we cannot help but turn our hearts from the love of this present world.

We have a notable example of this in *Moses*, who when he might have been heir to *Pharaoh's* daughter, refused the honor, *esteeming the rebuke of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; because he had regard for the recompense of reward* (Heb. 11.24-26). Thus God in mercy opened his eyes, and made him see the happy estate of the kingdom of heaven, and thereby caused him to leave and forsake the honor and wealth of Egypt.

Secondly, we must endeavor to have in our hearts a sense and feeling of the want of Christ, and to see our damnable estate in ourselves; and how greatly we stand in need of the blood of Christ to wash away our sins. Behold a notable means to make any man (even if he were covetousness itself) turn his heart from the money of this world, and seek wholly after spiritual and heavenly things. For the consideration of our own misery in ourselves, and a lively sense of the need we have of Christ, will make us hunger after him and his righteousness, above all worldly things.

We find by experience that many are endued with good gifts of knowledge, of joy in the word of God, zeal, etc. who nevertheless in their callings are overcome with this soul-sin of covetousness. And the reason is because they were never thoroughly touched with any sense or feeling of the need they had of Christ; their hearts were dead in sin and corruption, and they never knew the vileness of their own natures, and in what extreme misery they are, apart from Christ. And if they might be brought to seeing their unworthiness, and made to hunger after him, they would then begin to say with Paul, *I consider all things as dung in regard to Christ* (Phi 3.8); and with David, *as the hart pants after the rivers of waters, so thirsts my soul after you, O Lord* (Psa 42.1). This is the counsel of Christ: *First seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness* (Mat 6.33). We must, in ourselves, be like the wounded man that lay in the road, that Christ Jesus the true Samaritan may come by us to dress our wounds, and to power his own precious blood into our souls. For as *Mary* said, *God fills the hungry with good things, but the rich he sends away empty* (Luk 1.53). And thus we shall be able, by God's grace, to turn our affections that are set on the world, to heavenly things. Thus also we see how to walk in our callings with good conscience, and to avoid the sin of covetousness.

(2) Injustice. Now I come to the second sin of injustice, whereby men abuse their callings to the hurt and hindrance of others, either publicly or privately. We have an example of this in

¹ A person absorbed by the concerns and interests and pleasures of the present world.

² Originally "griple" – meaning gripping, grasping, or greedy.

³ **1Cor 2:9** But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him."

⁴ An open grassy space shared by a community.

Zaccheus the Publican, who enriched himself by false accusations (Luk 19.8).¹ Now this sin spreads itself as largely through all degrees and states of men, as the former sin of covetousness, as it will appear if we simply take a look at what are the principal callings.

And first, we begin with EMPERORS and PRINCES, by whom is practiced the greatest injustice that can be, because they are in the greatest callings. For many of them do not content themselves with their own dominions, but encroach either by fraud or violence on their neighbor kingdoms; and for increasing their estates, they do not spare shedding rivers of blood — as today with the Turk in Asia;² and the Spaniard also, who seeks by all means to make himself the Emperor of the Western world.³

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Similar injustice appears in the calling of those MAGISTRATES who take bribes, to favor particular men in executing justice and judgment. Injustice also creeps into the chair of *Moses* (MINISTERS) when the word of God, the food of men's souls, is withheld; and also when it is corrupted partly by the poison of men's errors, partly by the devices of man's brain. Injustice in the calling of the LAWYER is to take larger fees than statutes or conscience will allow; and also to delay lawsuits, indeed not from morning till night, as *Jethro* said to *Moses*,^{Exo 18.13} but from term to term, and year to year, in order to increase their gain. In the calling of the PHYSICIAN, it is injustice to prescribe medicine on the inspection of urine, which by the best and most learned, is judged to be insufficient and often deceitful; indeed, to prescribe drunkenness and fornication as the cure of some diseases; and to prescribe medicine for absent parties, upon establishing the cost at the time of the interview.⁴ In the calling of the MERCHANT and TRADESMAN, there are false weights and measures, diverse weights and measures; engrossing,⁵ mingling, changing, setting a gloss on wares by powdering, starching, blowing; black markets,⁶ glozing,⁷ smoothing,⁸ lying, swearing, and all manner of bad dealing. In the PATRON, there is a presentation given, but with a secret condition of having his own tithes or some other fleece out of the living.⁹ In the LANDLORD, there is raising of rents, taking immoderate fines, enclosing grounds that have lain common out of mind¹⁰ — and the cause is lack of sobriety and temperance, in diet and apparel.

In the HUSBANDMAN and CORN-MONGER, there is exceeding injustice in hoarding grain till a time when they can gain a further advantage; and in taking whatever they can get for their own, even though it leads to the blood of the poor being shed¹¹. In the calling of the PRINTER, who should serve the special good of the Church and Commonwealth, there is exceeding injustice done to both by publishing libels and heretical books, whereby errors are spread abroad; just as there is by publishing unchaste, immodest, and unprofitable writings. And in the calling of the

¹ **Luk 19:8** Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold."

² *The Long War between the Ottoman Empire of Turkey, and Habsburg Austria (1593–1606).*

³ In 1605, the year Perkins wrote this treatise, Philip III ruled Spain (Catholic). James I ruled England (Protestant). Philip was being urged to invade England. On 5 Nov 1605 the Gunpowder Plot under Robert Catesby and Guy Fawkes (both Catholics), attempted to blow up Parliament; hence Perkins phrase, "rivers of blood."

⁴ Basically, selling drugs for a price without having a patient to prescribe for — drug-dealing.

⁵ Cornering the market in order to drive up the price of goods - monopolizing.

⁶ Originally "dark shops" — fly-by-night street vendors who set up shop in dark alleys to sell illicit wares.

⁷ Selling faulty goods that have been patched up or painted over, as though new or perfect.

⁸ A smooth sales pitch that misleads the buyer as to the value of the object.

⁹ A patron obtains a living (a position) for someone, but in the fine print, he will take a percentage of all income.

¹⁰ What had long been a public easement or common area, is suddenly enclosed and claimed as private property.

¹¹ For example, the Peasants' Revolt of 1381.

BOOKSELLER there is similar injustice, in that they sell all books, good and bad, of truth and falsehood, doing it hand-over-head (without any regard), to everyone that comes to them. For at this day in England, a Papist may furnish himself with all kinds of books about his own heresy, and that is in the shops of the Protestants — a thing to be thought upon which greatly hinders the good of our Church.¹

Thus over all estates and callings, the canker of injustice has spread itself, so that we may take up the complaint of the Prophet *Micah*, *It is hard to find a righteous man: every man lays a net for his brother, and seeks his hurt, his blood, and utter undoing* (Mic 7.2). This is so plain, that the one who has only half an eye may see it. Yet the unjust man does not lack excuses, but faith.

Obj: The world is nothing, and therefore those that would live in the world must do as other men do.

Ans: This indeed is the blind reason of ungodly men. But Paul gives another rule, and bids us to *walk unblameably in this present world, as lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation* (Phi 2.15). And if the whole world were to give themselves to the practice of injustice, yet the child of God must carry himself in his calling in such a manner, that he may be a light to those with whom he lives.

Obj: Others, more blind and shameless, to maintain their injustice, allege the example and practice of our Savior Christ, in sending for another man's ass and colt when he went to Jerusalem (Mat 21.2-3).

Ans: But who does not see the notorious abuse of this passage of Scripture? For our Savior Christ did this as Lord, not only of the beast, but also of the owner. And therefore when he sent his Disciples, at the same time he inclined the heart of the owner to be willing to let them go: showing himself thereby to be the Lord that has the hearts of men in his hand, and consequently the governor of all other things.

Other allegations for the defense of injustice are of no moment.

Now then, we must enter into an examination of all the works of our callings. And finding what does not stand with equity and justice, we are to forsake it. And to better persuade us to this, these reasons may be used:

First of all, it is God's commandment that every man should deal justly in the works of his calling. As *Paul* says to *Titus*, *The grace of God that brings salvation to all men has appeared, and teaches us that we should deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and that we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world* (Tit 2.11-12). Again, *Let no man defraud or oppress his brother in anything* (1Th 4.6). Now then, if we have been faulty in this previously, let us now begin to make this commandment a matter of conscience.

Secondly, we must consider with ourselves, that as long as we practice injustice in our particular calling, all our worship and service of God in prayer and thanksgiving, in hearing the word and receiving the Sacraments, is an abomination to the Lord. For this reason he says to the Jews, *I abhor your Sabbaths and new moons* (Isa 1.13); and the reason is because their hands were full of blood. Again, the Lord professes that the sacrifices offered to him by the Jews were as if a *man were to cut off a dog's neck*, and offer it to Him in a sacrifice (Isa 66.3), because they lived in their wickedness.

¹ Perkins isn't advocating censorship or book-banning. He points out these are Protestant shops, run by Protestants, who profess the Protestant faith, follow Protestant practices, attend Protestant churches, and believe the doctrine of Roman Catholicism is damnable error. Yet to make money, they will set all that aside, and help *promote* the error. In 1662 the Roman Catholics will regain control of the Church of England, and eject all the Protestants from their pulpits, in large part because doctrinal error was promoted by these booksellers, and made acceptable to the people.

Thirdly, those who practice injustice have the curse of God to follow them. *Paul* says that *the unjust man shall never enter into the kingdom of God* (1Cor 6.9). And *Moses* says that those *who use false weights are an abomination to the Lord* (Deu 25.15-16). Look then, however many practices of injustice are used in any man's calling, so many bars and stops there are to keep him from the kingdom of God.

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Lastly, let us mark what *Paul* says about himself, that *in all things he had a care to please God in consideration of the terror of the Lord* (2Cor 7.1).¹ It is as if he had said, "I know in the last day that I must come to the bar of God's judgment, and there be tried for all the things I do; and therefore I endeavor to keep a good conscience in all the works of my calling." And in the very same manner, every one of us should stir ourselves up to the practice of justice, and to avoiding bad dealing in our callings. For at the last day, the bad practices of every man shall be made manifest, and we shall be judged according to what we have worked when we lived in the flesh.

So much for the two vices to be avoided in every man's calling.

B. The VIRTUES required of us in the practice of our callings are many, but two especially:

- (1) *Faith*, and
- (2) *Love*.

(1) Faith. By Faith I mean not only saving faith, but another particular faith arising from it, whereby we must be persuaded that our particular calling and its works, are pleasing to God, and that He will bless them for Christ's sake. And whatever is not of this faith, is sin. [Rom 14.23](#) When *Noah* is said to build an ark by faith (Heb 11.7), it not only means justifying faith, but along with that, another particular faith that flows from it. By this particular faith he was persuaded that the building of the Ark was a work acceptable to God, and that he would find a blessing in it. And without this particular faith, no man can please God in any calling.

Now, there is a relation between faith, and the word: where faith is, *there* must be a word of God; and where there is no word, there can be no faith. And therefore, that the actions of our callings may be done in faith, we must have a word on which to build our faith. And this word is twofold: a word of *commandment*, and a word of *promise*. The *commandment* is that word of God whereby the actions of every man's calling are either expressly commanded, or at least approved. The *promise* is a particular word — either directly propounded, or gathered from the Scripture as a just consequent — whereby God has promised to bless the labors and works of our callings. And for knowledge of both these, everyone must labor in his place. The Magistrate must have a commandment from God in His word that must authorize him to draw the sword; and a promise of blessing and protection when, upon good cause, he draws the sword indeed. The Minister must have the same for his calling, and the man of Trade for his. And the one that does not have both commandment and promise, cannot possibly do the works of his calling in faith.

Now if any thinks this is strange and hard, let them consider what is done in towns and corporations. Men of the same trades have their Wardens and Masters of their Companies, yes and decrees and ordinances to which they bind and conform themselves. Now, if men are content to bind themselves to their own ordinances, will they not much more yield themselves to the commandments of God, and walk in their callings according to them?

Again, when men thus live by faith, having regard to God's commandments, it causes them to do their actions in obedience. And when by the same faith they rest on the promise of God, it will

¹ [2Cor 7:1](#) Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

make them cast their works on the Lord, and free them from disquieting and distrustful cares which pull the heart in pieces. And by this means also, they will ease their minds when they lie under the crosses that are incident to every calling since the fall of *Adam*: for in this promise we shall behold the blessing and goodness of God in the midst of our troubles. Just as the wood that *Moses* cast into the bitter waters made them sweet, so the promise of God viewed by the eye of faith, sweetens the troubles and crosses of our callings.

(2) Love. The second virtue is love. Faith which is alone in justification, does not go alone in life and conversation, but love and faith are both joined together: for faith works by love.^{Gal 5.6} And yet they are not one and the same virtue, but differ in their actions. As the man that serves a mason on the ladder has use of both his hands — with one he steadies himself, and with the other he reaches up his burden — so every man in his calling has the use of two spiritual hands: the hand of faith keeps him in compass and steadies the mind on the word of God; and the hand of love reaches itself out to others in duties of love towards God and man. And thus faith and love differ.

Now the practice of love stands in two things.

First, we must refer all the works of our callings to the honor, praise, and glory of God, and here is the principal thing in which love consists. And therefore *Paul* says notably of himself, *The love of Christ constrains me* (2Cor 5.14), signifying thereby that because Christ had so loved him as to shed His blood for him, that very love constrained *Paul* to refer all that he could do, to the honor and praise of Christ. Now look at what *Paul* says here — every man in his own particular calling must say this same thing: that the love of Christ in shedding His blood for him, constrains him to do all things for the honor and praise of his name.

The second duty of love is to apply the works, duties, and labors of our callings to the good of the Church and Commonwealth, and the place of which we are members. Thus *Paul* says to the Galatians, *Serve one another by love* (Gal 5.13). And this is done when we employ our labor for the good of our brothers.

And thus briefly we see how love is put into practice.

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If we examine ourselves by these two points, it will appear that most men come short of their duties; for whereas it is the property of unfeigned love not to seek its own things,^{1Cor 13.5} but the good of others,^{1Cor 10.24} the common practice of men is to employ their pains for themselves according to the saying, “Every man for himself, and God for us all.” Now are the evil days in which men are lovers of themselves.^{2Tim 3.2} The moving cause in almost every man that causes him to do the duties of his calling, is a regard for private benefit. It is hard to find a man that labors in his calling upon love to God’s glory and the good of his brethren.

Thus we see how GOD’S WORD gives direction for the holy use of our callings.

2. Prayer. The second means to sanctify our callings and their works is Prayer. This prayer is that by which we not only pray to God for the pardon of our sins, and for the supply of such graces as concern eternal life, but particularly for a blessing on the labors of our callings whose beginning must be with prayer, and in due season must end with thanksgiving. The commandment to this purpose is plain, *Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God* (Col 3.17). The meaning is that when we attempt any business, either in speech or action, we must first call on God for His blessing, and give him thanks in the end. *David* says, *Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain that build it; and unless the Lord keeps the City, the watchman keeps the watch in vain* (Psa 127.1).

If *Paul*, before he boarded the ship, prayed on the shore,^{Act 21.5} then much more must we do it in the main and weighty works of our callings. Parents in their families teach their children to say,

Father, I pray you bless me; Mother I pray you bless me. Well, God's Church is His family, and men that live in it are the children of God; He is the Father and the Master of that family. Therefore let this practice of earthly parents teach us, when we begin the actions of our calling, to go to our heavenly Father for His blessing. This we must remember to practice, and so shall we sanctify the works of our callings.

2. TO DO A WORK IN CONSTANCY. The Second thing required in doing the works of a man's calling *in a good manner*, which also serves for a good *continuance* in the calling, is *constancy*. And it is nothing else than a perseverance in good duties, which is needed all the more because it is no commendation for us to choose a good and fit calling, and enter into it, unless we see its duties through to the end.¹ For even as the soldier in the field must not change his place in which he is placed by the General, but must abide by it, even to giving his life; so must the Christian continue and abide in his calling without change or alteration.

There is a certain lightness in the nature of man whereby it comes to pass that many like other men's callings better than their own; and hereupon they are moved by every light occasion to alter their calling. But in the text in hand, the Holy Spirit meets with this lightness by commanding every man to continue constant in doing the duties of his particular calling; *Let every man abide in that vocation in which he was called.* And we must be careful to avoid,

Three impediments to Constancy: A. Ambition, B. Envy, and C. Impatience.

A. Ambition. This is a vice whereby any man, thinking better of himself than there is cause that he should, becomes malcontent with his particular calling, and seeks *for himself* a higher place and a better estate. We have an example of this Ambition in our first parents, who by Satan's allurements, became malcontent with that estate in which they were created, and sought to attain to the condition of God Himself.^{Gen 3.5} And this sin of theirs clings fast to the nature of every man, and by it we are easily carried to a dislike of our condition. Thus *Absalom* through Ambition was moved to seek his father's kingdom, judging basely of his present estate; for out of natural self-love springs Ambition.

And to better redress this vice in ourselves, every man must enter into consideration of his own estate: we must think to ourselves that in respect to our bodies we are but dust and ashes,^{Gen 18.27} and to dust we must return again^{Ecc 3.20} — that in respect to the disposition of our hearts, being altogether set upon sin, we are far more wretched than any other creature; and also that of ourselves, we do not have any sufficiency for doing the least and smallest duty of the basest calling in the world. For of ourselves, we are not sufficient to think one good thought, much less to perform one good duty that is acceptable to God, in any calling whatsoever. And therefore we must consider with ourselves that in our particular callings, we are but weak instruments in the hand of the Lord, who is the principal worker and agent. These and like meditations might move us to contentment in the calling in which God has placed us.

B. Envy. The second impediment to Constancy is *Envy*, which is a pining away of the heart when we see others placed in better callings and conditions than ourselves. This is a common sin, and it is the cause of great dissension in the Commonwealth. It is one of *Machiavelli's*² policies that in a Commonwealth it is necessary for men of various degrees and callings to envy and malign each other. But contrariwise, it is indeed a manifest *hindrance* to constancy in good duties, and hurtful to both Church and Commonwealth. And to better redress this fault, we are to consider that the greatest callings are not ordained to maintain pride, or for the private

¹ Originally, "to through-stitch" them, or thoroughly stitch them, not leaving any loose ends.

² Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527) Florentine statesman and author of "The Prince"; he advocated a strong central government, and advised that acquiring and exercising power may require unethical methods and intrigue.

benefit of men, but for the common good. Secondly, those who are placed in the greatest callings have the greatest charges, and therefore they are to give the greatest account to God. [Luk 12.48](#)

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C. Impatience. The third impediment to Constancy is *Impatience*, which is a disquiet of mind arising from the continual troubles that are incident to all callings, especially when men are not able to bear them, nor brook the injuries that are commonly done to them in word or deed. This very sin makes many a man leave his place. Those who go to sea for their delight, choose fair and calm days. Afterward, being sick, indeed tossed by wind and weather, and in some danger of losing their lives, they wish themselves on land again. They are grieved that they ever came onboard ship, professing that if they make it back to land, they will never go to sea anymore.

It fares even so with many men, both in the Church and the Commonwealth, that they take a liking to this or that calling; they enter into it hoping for pleasure, wealth, and the approval of men. Then afterward, upon finding themselves disappointed in their expectation, and having to walk in their callings with many troubles and discomforts, they become impatient, and either *do* indeed, or greatly *wish* to, leave their callings.

Now, to remedy this vice, we must resolve to go on doing the duties of our callings, to go through to the end despite all crosses or calamities¹ that may befall us in any way — arming ourselves with all fit and necessary patience. Thus Christ commanded his disciples *to possess their souls with patience.* [Luk 21.19](#) And Paul charges the Philippian *to let their patient and equal minds be known to all men.*² The Surgeon who is to cut his patient, goes on to launch and work his cure, however much his patient cries: so must we in our particular callings go on with courage and constancy, to do the works of it for the glory of God and the good of men, even though there are ever so many causes and impediments to hinder us. And as *Paul says, to pass through good report and bad report, through shame and rebuke.* [2Cor 6.8](#)

And that we may thus constantly proceed in all good duties, with all patience, we must often remember that the duties of any lawful calling, however lowly, are accepted and approved by God. Our Savior Christ himself complains in this way: *I have labored in vain; I have spent my strength in vain* (Isa 49.4). Here we see the little success that the Head and perfect Doctor of the Church had in his calling; but let us see how he comforts himself. Surely in this way, in the words that follow: *But my work is with my God* — that is, however men do not submit to my doctrine, yet my Father approves it. It was a thing that troubled *Paul*, that his labor in the ministry did not turn to the good of all, but it was *to some the savor of death unto death.* [2Cor 2.16](#) Yet he comforts himself with this, that always to God it was a sweet smelling savor; and by the same consideration of God's approval, we should arm ourselves with patience, that we may with good conscience go on in good duties to the end.

So much for the three *impediments* to Constancy. To proceed further, the Constancy that is commanded here, must be understood with,

Three things that affect it: A. Helps; B. Vacations; and C. Changes.

A. Helps. Touching *Helps*, the ordinance of God is for the better continuance of callings; so that customs and tribute are paid to Magistrates; necessary stipends, tithes, and dues are paid to ministers of the word. And *Moses* says that all those who perform the offices of their callings diligently, and despite all this fall into decay, lacking the blessing of God on their labors, must be

¹ Originally, "to go through-stitch in all crosses and calamities..."

² *Geneva Bible, Phi 4:5* Let your patient mind be known to all men. The Lord is at hand.

helped by lending freely, by forgiving debts, and other similar courtesies (Deu 15.7-8).¹ Let hard-hearted men think upon this — those who will not in such cases lend freely, but prey on such persons till they have sucked their bones. These are the bane and plague of a commonwealth; these are the ones who make beggars and vagabonds. For where there is no free lending, there many a man goes to wrack and ruin.

B. Vacation. This is to cease from doing the duties of a particular calling for some time or space; and it has its warrant from God's word, which allows a vacation in *three* respects.

(1) *First*, for RELIGION'S sake, which is the principal vacation of all, and it is commanded in the fourth commandment, *Remember the Sabbath Day* — that is, the day of rest, or of vacation — *to keep it holy.*^{Exo 20.8} And here every man is bound in conscience before God, to cease from the duties of his calling on the seventh day, which is now in the New Testament, the Lord's Day, and so it is to continue to the Last Judgment. And this vacation is necessary even in common reason; for without it, there can be no good proceeding in religion. It is the means to begin, continue, and increase both knowledge and grace. He that has the most excellent natural gifts, will never be able to attain to learning, unless he sets himself apart and gives himself to study. Much more then, the knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven cannot be obtained unless men at some times lay aside all worldly affairs, especially on the Sabbath days.

Therefore it is for the good of families, towns, countries, and kingdoms, that the Lord's Day is kept. And consequently, it is in our interest² to take the benefit of this vacation, and to use it for the increase of faith, repentance, and obedience, if we desire the salvation of our own souls. God, who is the sovereign King over all, might have enjoined us in perpetual labor from one day to another for all the days of our lives; but tendering our good and salvation, he enjoined us to labor six days, commanding a vacation on the seventh.

(2) The *second* vacation is in respect to RECREATION, which also has its warrant when it is lawfully used. God commands every man to labor in his calling, and to eat his own bread in the sweat of his brow.^{Gen 3.19} And in commanding labor, He allows the means that make us fit for labor. And therefore, along with this, He admits lawful recreation, because it is a necessary means to refresh either body or mind, so we may better do the duties which pertain to us. I have spoken of recreation elsewhere; therefore it will suffice now briefly to propound a caveat or two.

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Touching recreation, these caveats must be remembered:

First of all, it must be moderate; otherwise it is a means to call and draw us from our callings. *Secondly*, it must be in lawful things. *Thirdly*, it must be on the days of labor, for only then is labor commanded, and therefore recreation — which is a ceasing from labor for a time, and serves only to make us more able to continue in labor — must be on the six days, and not on the Sabbath. Because we must abstain from the ordinary labors of our callings on the Sabbath, we are much more to abstain from our accustomed recreations. For where that which is most necessary and principal is forbidden, there the less necessary is also forbidden: labor is the more necessary and principal, and recreation serves for labor. This being so, it is a notable abuse of many to make the Lord's Day a set day of sport and pastime, which should be a day set apart for the worship of God, and the increase in the duties of religion. And this is especially the fault of householders, who having employed their servants to labor six whole days together, give them the seventh day, which is the Lord's, for recreation.

¹ **Deu 15:7** "If there is among you a poor man of your brethren, within any of the gates in your land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart nor shut your hand from your poor brother, ⁸ "but you shall open your hand wide to him and willingly lend him sufficient for his need, whatever he needs.

² Originally, "it stands us in hand."

(3) A third vacation is in time of NECESSITY, when men are disabled by reason of sickness, age, imprisonment, or any other just impediment. And the ordinance of God is that those persons who have the trembling hand (as *Moses* speaks of it, Lev 25.35),¹ should be maintained with those things necessary to life and health, by the labor of other men's callings. This thing must not be marvelled at, for the goods we have are not our own, but the Lord's;^{1Cor 4.7} we are but keepers and stewards of them. And it is God's will that the poor should have title to a part of every man's goods — and for this cause, it is a shame if they do not have relief without roving, begging, or crying.

And here TWO QUESTIONS are to be examined that are much spoken of, and often moved.

Ques. 1: First, because it is a general duty to visit our neighbors in time of sickness, it is asked *Whether it is lawful at all to cease from this duty in time of plague or pestilence?*

Ans: I answer, there may be and there is a lawful vacation from this duty, and it may be done with good conscience for some time, and upon some occasion.

For *first of all*, it is lawful to maintain our own lives; if it is without the hurt or hindrance of the lives of other men. Now, to flee in time of contagious pestilence, is to preserve the life of some without the hurt of any.

Secondly, in common dangers such as famine, fire, and sword, men may flee from their neighbors for their own safety; and therefore, in like proportion, we may flee in times of contagious sickness.

Thirdly, in the Church of the Jews, the leper was put apart from the society of men; and that, in effect, was the same as if all the Jews had withdrawn themselves from *his* society.

And therefore now, it is not always unlawful to flee in time of contagious pestilence.

Obj: It is alleged that to flee is a flat distrusting of God, as though he would not preserve and defend us.

Ans: I answer that distrusting God is not a fault in the *action* of fleeing, but in the *persons* that flee. Men who labor for food and drink, many times distrust the goodness of God; yet the fault is not in the labor itself, but in the parties that endure the labor.²

Obj: Secondly, it is alleged that to flee is to forsake those to whom we are united in the bond of neighborhood, which is unlawful.

Ans: I answer, when the parties visited have sufficient helps appointed by the Magistrate, both for their bodies and souls, then to flee is not to forsake; and in such cases, the parties visited are not to desire the presence of their neighbors.

Obj: It is alleged that *David* never fled when the people were stricken with the plague.^{1Chr 21.17}

Ans: There are special reasons for it. *First*, that plague was sent by God suddenly. *Secondly*, his very sin was the cause of that plague upon the people. *Thirdly*, David had no cause to flee, because he then was assured that he would escape.^{1Chr 21.12-13}

Thus then, visiting neighbors and friends, though it is a necessary duty, sometimes allows for vacating ourselves; we may with good conscience go aside and seek the safety of ourselves and those that belong to us, if necessary help has otherwise been provided for the sick.

¹ The phrase, "falls into poverty" in this verse, is the Hebrew *mowt yad*, meaning trembling hand; in the LXX it is rendered into Greek as "a disabled hand."

² This is no answer. The question is, *why* do they flee? Fleeing out of prudence is not distrust of God. In Matthew 24, Jesus urges believers to flee to the mountains at the impending destruction of Jerusalem; so too in Jer 6.1.

Ques. 2: The second question is *Whether the Ministers of the Gospel may flee in time of persecution?*

Ans: I answer, they may, if they are freed from the bonds of their callings by which they are tied to their charges. Thus *Moses* fled to Midian;^{Exo 2.15} and *Paul* out of Damascus;^{Act 9.25} and our Savior *Christ* from among the Jews.^{Joh 7.1} Secondly, I add that Ministers who are not freed from their callings may for a time, by the consent of the people, go aside for their own safety and for the further good of men, till the brunt of the persecution is over — especially if they in particular are aimed at.¹ When *Demetrius* raised an uproar at Ephesus about *Diana*,^{Act 19.24f.} and the people had caught Paul's companions, *Gaius* and *Aristarchus*, Paul was moved with zeal, and would have entered into the midst of the mob. But as Luke says, certain brethren overruled him, and would not allow him to enter, but made him withdraw himself. Thus then, it is manifest that in common dangers, public callings allow their vacating in various causes.

So much for vacations. Now I come to *changes*.

C. Changes. A change of calling is a lawful going from one calling to another. It is not the Apostle's meaning to bar men from diverting from this or that calling, but he gives them an *item* to keep them from changing on every light conceit, and every sudden occasion. Changes may be lawfully made, as it appears in this: *Amos*, by calling, was *first* a herdsman,^{Amo 1.1} but *after*, a Prophet.^{Amo 1.3} The Disciples were *first* fishermen,^{Mat 4.18} and *after* Apostles.^{Mat 10.2}

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Our Savior Christ himself was by calling a Carpenter, in his first and private life,^{Mar 6.3} until he was thirty years old. Yet after his baptism, he showed himself to be the Messiah and Savior of the world.^{Joh 1.41; 4.26}

Nevertheless, a change may not be made except upon urgent and weighty causes; and these are two especially:

- (1) *Private necessity*; and
- (2) *The Common Good*.

(1) PRIVATE NECESSITY is when men cannot maintain themselves and theirs by the callings in which they are engaged; then they may take themselves to other callings. Thus a merchant may become a husbandman, and a husbandman, a Merchant. Thus a Physician may become a minister of the Gospel. And thus *Paul*, an Apostle, upon private necessity, returned to the calling of a tent-maker, yet so as to perform his ministry when occasion was offered.^{Act 18.3}

(2) THE COMMON GOOD. The second cause of making a lawful change, is the *public good*. Thus a private man may become a Magistrate. And it must be remembered that so often as we change, it must be to better and more excellent callings in which we may glorify God more, and bring a greater benefit to the Church and Commonwealth.² Thus Paul bids the Corinthians to seek the best gifts, which might serve for the best callings.^{1Cor 12.31} Here the fault of some is to be reprov'd. They have notable gifts of nature and learning; but because they would attain worldly wealth, they make themselves Merchants, or factors to merchants,³ or serving men to great persons. Whereas, for their gifts, they might do God better service in the greatest callings of the Church.

And so much for *Constancy*.

¹ That is, their presence would put others in danger.

² By this standard, it would be wrong for a President to become a Merchant, or retire to private life. And yet Joshua retired from being Judge and Commander of the Armies of Israel, to rebuild a small village in the hills (Jos 19.49).

³ A businessman who buys or sells for another in exchange for a commission.

The consideration of this — that we are bound to be constant in the duties of our *particular* callings — must teach us, much more, to be constant in the *general duties* of Christianity. And therefore let us all be careful not only to profess the true religion for the present time, but to continue constant in this profession to the end. Our general calling does not allow for any vacation or change, as our particular callings do. Well then, in that we profess ourselves to be members of Christ, in these days — our happy days of peace — let us arm ourselves against the evil days to come, so that we may be faithful to the end.

Again, in the *general* calling, every man is bound in all good conscience, to obey God in all his commandments. Here also our constancy must appear, so long as we live, that we may say with *Paul*, *I have finished my course, I have fought a good fight*; ^{2Tim 4.7} And with *Hezekiah* on his deathbed, *Lord, remember how I have walked before you with an upright heart, and have done that which is acceptable in your sight*. ^{Isa 38.3} God has made a most merciful promise of life everlasting, which is the comfort of all comforts, and without which, the case of God's children would be of all, most miserable. ^{1Cor 15.9} And this promise is made to those who continue faithful to the end. ^{Rev 2.10} These are the ones on whom God will bestow the crown of life.

And so much for *Continuance* in our callings.

4. *Good ending of a calling.*

The last point to be considered is the good ending of a calling. And in this, two things are required: 1. the *Resigning*; and 2. the *Accounting*.

In the Parable of the rich man's steward, ^{Luk 16.1f} the Lord calls his steward, and bids him give an account of his stewardship, for he can no longer be a steward. Here we see, besides the *resigning* of our callings, there must be an *account* made of our doings in it. Of these two, in order,

1. *The Resigning of a calling.*

This is nothing else but the laying down of that calling by ceasing to put in execution the works and duties of it. In resigning a calling, two things must be considered: First *the timing of it*. Secondly, *the manner of it*.

A. *The timing of it.*

This is not left to our own choice, for we may not leave our callings when we please; but prescribing it belongs to God. As in the field, the soldier may not leave his post whenever he wants, until he has a warrant from the Captain. For as the case stands in one kind of calling, so by portion it stands in the rest. Now, in one particular calling, namely, in the office of the Levite, the entrance into it, the continuance of it, and the ending of it, is in the will of God. He prescribes the time when the Levite must enter it: namely, at thirty years of age; and how long it must continue: twenty years; and when it must end: namely, at fifty years of age. And therefore, the prescribing of particular seasons and times of laying down other callings is not altogether without the will of God. Hence it follows that no man is to lay down the calling in which he is placed, till he can say by some warrant in his conscience, that it is the good will and pleasure of God that he will then resign and cease to do the duties of it any longer.

This rule has His truth in all things whatsoever, whether pertaining to the Church or Commonwealth. And by this rule we may judge the contrary: what may be thought of resigning our callings, both civil and ecclesiastic, upon no other ground than the wills of men, for attaining greater wealth, pleasure, and advancement.

To go yet further in this point, callings are of two sorts: changeable and perpetual. Changeable callings are those which are imposed for a season, as for a year or two, or longer; and such callings are to be resigned according to the appointment of those who imposed them. But in

perpetual callings, the case stands otherwise, and other conditions are required. Nevertheless, ***there are four special times in which such callings may be resigned.***

(1) First, when men are utterly disabled, either by age, or any incurable disease of body or mind, or by lack of gifts. Then indeed, whatever the calling is, either public or private, civil or ecclesiastic, it may be laid down. When *Moses* was stricken in years, and saw the end of his days at hand, he called the whole congregation and tells them that being a hundred and twenty years old, he was no longer able to go in and out before them; that is, no longer able to perform the office of a Judge and Prince. And therefore he resigns his office to *Joshua*, who judged the people in his stead (Deu 31.2, 7).

(2) The second time of resigning is when any man is lawfully deposed for committing a crime or offense. Thus the Priests that offered sacrifices before the Lord, if they fell away to idolatry, were deposed from the office of the Priesthood, and ever after they were employed in some service in the Temple (Eze 44.12-14).

(3) The third time of resigning is the time of death. For when God calls us from this life, we then receive a discharge from our particular callings. For after this life, the children of God cease from their labors, and in their death, they begin their perpetual and eternal Sabbath. For the time of this life, by God's commandment, we rest every seventh day, and labor in the other six. But after, we shall continually, without ceasing, do that which now for substance we do on the Sabbath day: that is, honor and praise, and glorify the name of God, in everlasting joy.

(4) The fourth time of resigning is at the Last Day of JUDGMENT, for those who are still alive; that is, the general time of all resignations. For as *Paul* says, Christ Jesus must then resign his kingdom up into his Father's hands,^{1Cor 15.24} and put down all human rule, authority, and power. For then, civil, ecclesiastic, and economic states and callings, in regard to government, must have an end. Yes, Christ himself, in regard to the manner of his regiment, must give up his Kingly office; and the execution both of his Priesthood, and his Prophetic office, must then also have an end — though the virtue and fruit of these offices shall abide forever. Then there will be no more prince nor people; magistrate nor subject; master and servant; parents and children; but God shall be all in all to the elect.^{1Cor 15.28}

Thus we see the *time* of resigning a calling; the *manner* follows.

B. The manner of it.

The manner is to resign our callings in and with the testimony of a good conscience; which is when our consciences bear witness that we have, in the works of our callings, kept ourselves unblameable, and have endeavored in all things to do the will of God. We have examples of this in the Scripture.

When *Samuel* was no longer able to judge the people, he called the whole congregation of the Israelites, protesting to them that he had not taken any man's ox or ass, received any bribes, or done any man wrong; but in all things, he had kept a good conscience (1Sam 12.3). And in agreement with this protestation was the people's testimony. And *Paul*, when he drew near the end of his days, says he had now fought a good fight, and kept the faith; and that now it only remained for God to give him a crown of righteousness, laid up for all those that love the appearing of the Lord Jesus.^{2Tim 4.7-8}

Now in the Day of Judgment, it will not suffice that men and women are found in the works of their callings (though that is far better than to be employed in the works of ungodliness). I say, it will not suffice, for at the Last Day, two shall be in the field, in the works (no doubt) of their callings; yet the one shall be taken, the other refused. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, the other refused.^{Mat 24.40-41} Therefore, besides the practice of a lawful calling, care must be taken to keep a good conscience to the end, both before God and man.

And so much for *Resigning* a calling.

2. The Accounting of a calling.

The second and last point is the Account that every man must make of the works of his calling. Now, that such an account is to be made, is apparent in the parable of the rich man and his steward. And *Paul* says, *Every man must go to judgment and give an account for himself* (Rom 14.10, 12). And *Solomon* tells the young man, roving in his own ways, that *for all this he shall come to judgment* (Ecc 11.9). Few are truly persuaded of this last and great account, because it is deferred. But we believers ought to be better resolved, and prepare ourselves for it.

Touching this Account, two things must be considered. First, what is this accounting? Secondly, how is it made? Giving an account is nothing else but an action of the reasonable creature, especially of man,¹ in which he must be answerable and accountable to God for all his actions, both of his general calling, and his particular calling. And by the law of nature, we are bound to this: indeed, if inferior officers in the Commonwealth become accountable to the highest Magistrates, for all their doings, then much more must every creature become accountable to God his Creator, for the duties of his calling in which he does homage and service to Him.

There are four things required in this accounting:

- I. The presenting of every person before God.
- II. Manifesting all the works they have done.
- III. Examining these works.
- IV. Giving and rendering to every man according to his works.

For the first,

I. Presenting all persons before the tribunal of Christ. This shall be brought to pass by the power of God. For as in the beginning, every creature had its being by the word of God, so it shall be in the Day of Judgment: God shall but speak the word, and all reasonable creatures, living and dead — though many thousands of years before — shall present themselves before Him to give account of all the actions done in this life.

II. Manifesting all the works they have done. Secondly, when all men and angels are set before the presence of Christ, then every work they have done will be made manifest, even the most secret works of all. As *Ecclesiastes* says, *God will bring every secret thing to light* (Ecc 12.14). And if any think it strange, we must know that God has books of record in which all men's thoughts, words, and deeds — good or bad, secret or open — are recorded. And of these, *Daniel* speaks when he says that he saw the Ancient of Days, and the books laid open (Dan 7.9-10). We may not imagine that these are material books, like the registers of men, or the books of Captains in the field, in which are set down the names of their soldiers, and their expenses. But by these books we must understand, first of all, the infinite knowledge and providence of God; secondly, the consciences of men, which testify of our doings and are like a thousand witnesses.

III. Examining these works. The third thing that is done in this accounting, is the trial of every man's work in respect to obedience, or disobedience. The trial shall be made by the will of God, revealed partly in the Law, and partly in the Gospel, which is the rule to discern good and evil works.

IV. Giving according to each man's works. The fourth and last action is the giving of reward to every man, according to his works. He that has been a faithful servant shall hear the voice of Christ saying to him, *It is well done, you good and faithful servant; you have been faithful in a little; enter into your Master's joy* (Mat 25.21). But he that has been unfaithful, or unjust in the

¹ Angels will be judged as well, hence this qualification.

works of his calling, shall hear the same voice of Christ saying, *Take him, bind him hand and foot, and cast him into utter darkness.* ^{Mat 22.13}

And thus we see what this accounting shall be.

Preparing to make a good account.

Now then, let us search a little as to how we may be able to make a good account before God at the Last Day. For doing this, we must take a beforehand reckoning of ourselves in the time of our life. For in common experience we see that those who desire to make just reckonings with others, reckon first with themselves. In this beforehand reckoning, three things must be done:

First, we must draw up the bill of our receipts and expenses.

The BILLS OF RECEIPT are framed thus: we must call to remembrance what graces, blessings, and gifts we have received from God, whether temporal or spiritual. For temporal blessings, we must thoroughly think of our peace, health, wealth, liberty, and good name, and all things of this kind. For spiritual things, we must consider what knowledge, faith, hope, love, and repentance God has bestowed upon us; and also what gifts we have received for the discharge of our callings. Indeed, of all other things that we have enjoyed, we must take a full and just receipt, for they are the talents of our Lord, and he looks for a reckoning. ^{Mat 25.14, 15, 19}

This being done, we are next to frame our BILLS OF EXPENSES, which are nothing else but large considerations of our own sins, calling them all to our remembrance, as much as we can, whether committed against God or man, with all the abuses of our gifts, all our ignorances, negligences, and frailties whatsoever. Tradesmen, for their *temporal* estates, keep in their shops books of receipts and expenses. Shall we not then, much more, do the same for our *spiritual* estates? *Job* says, *if he disputes with God, he cannot answer one word for a thousand* (*Job* 9.3). By this he insinuates this much: that he had looked into the whole course of his life, and had found even thousands of sins in himself. When the Prophet *David* says, *Who knows the errors of this life?* (*Psa* 19.12), he signifies that he had exercised himself in searching out his own offenses and transgressions. *Ezra* could not have said that *his sins, and the sins of the people, were like a huge mountain* (*Ezr* 9.6), unless he first took a close account of his own life, and the lives of the people. And so must every one of us do, for all the things that we ever did. The consideration of our earthly matters makes us know our worldly estate; and so will the consideration of our daily offenses, and spiritual estate, give us some light and knowledge as to how the case will stand with us when we appear before the great God of all the world, to give our account.

Second, consider whether we will be able to settle our account with God

Now, when these two bills of our accounts are made, we must consider, in the next place, whether we are able to make an even reckoning with God or not. In doing this, we will find that our reckonings will be far short of what God requires at our hands. There are few who think about these things: for men commonly persuade themselves that all will go well with them at the Day of Judgment, and that they will make a short and easy reckoning, because God is merciful. It is hard to find men whose hearts are touched, or their eyes open to see and believe, *first*, that they must give an account; and *secondly*, that they are as utterly unable to do it as *Job* was, who could not excuse one in a thousand of his offenses before God.

Let us therefore labor to see our uneven and scant reckonings, and to shake off that spiritual drowsiness which possesses our minds, so that we cannot so much as say, *What have I done?* or *How does it stand between God and me?*

And when we have attained this knowledge, that we are unable to make a just reckoning with God, then *in the third place*:

Third, we must cling to Christ

We must cling to our surety Christ Jesus, the only son of God, God and man. And for the time of this life, we must humble ourselves before God and pray to Him, that He would accept the only satisfaction of Christ, in his death and passion, as a sufficient payment for all our sins and wants whatsoever. For thus we are taught to pray, *Forgive us our debts* (Mat 6.12). And we must not only be hearers of these things, but doers also.¹

And to better persuade us to practice these three duties, let us consider that this accounting at the Last Day will be a *strict* accounting. For as Christ says, *We must give an account for every idle word* (Mat 12.36). And Paul says, *The Law is a handwriting of condemnation* (Col 2.14); that is, a bill of our own hand against us, for by the Law we are debtors to God. And either we must fulfill the justice of it, or else, according to the tenor of the Law, we must undergo eternal judgment — unless we are acquitted by the obedience of a Mediator.

If we think to escape this accounting by absenting ourselves, we are deceived. For at that time, not so much as one man in all the world shall be missing. Many will then wish with all their hearts, that hills and mountains would fall on them, and grind them to powder, that they might be hidden from the presence of the Lord. But that will not serve them. All, without exception, must come to this accounting; not one shall be freed. And we may not think that Christ will either not know, or not remember our particular offenses. We used to make fair weather with men,² and keep close our doings from the eyes of the world. But the Lord will spy our most secret sins; in him there is no lack of knowledge or discerning. He can discover *Adam*, even though he is hiding in the thicket of Paradise, and spot him in the midst of his fig leaves.

At this great day of accounting, everything secret shall be made manifest. What shall we then do? Some plead that they are no great sinners, they are no whore-mongers, no adulterers, nor blasphemers, nor thieves — and therefore they hope to make a good enough account. But (alas), this is a fond and poor excuse; for the wages of the least sin is death.^{Rom 6.23} And he that breaks the law but once, and that in thought only, is guilty of eternal condemnation.³ And therefore it will not go for payment to say that we are not as great a sinner as other men.

What then *shall* we say? That we have walked in our callings, and always meant good, and did no man hurt; and therefore we hope that God will be merciful? This indeed is the common excuse, but it is not sufficient payment with God. For as *the Baptist* says, *The axe is laid to the root of the tree; and he does not further say that every tree shall stand which does not bring forth bad fruit; rather, every tree that does not bring forth good fruit shall be cut down and thrown into the fire* (Mat 3.10).

In a word, let us devise what excuse we can, it will not serve the turn. Will you make up your record with charitable giving and good works, according to the opinion of many who look to be saved by their *works*? But they are not current payments on this account, because one breach of the Law mars all the good works we do. And the one that would be justified by works is bound to fulfill the whole law, in the rigor of it.^{Gal 5.3} Besides this, the best works we do are in themselves defiled in the sight of God.^{Isa 64.6} What then shall we do? Shall we undergo the curse of the Law? Some, of a desperate mind, say that if the worst comes, there is but one way out. But far be it from us to think or speak this way, for the curse of the Law, and the wrath of God, are most horrible and eternal, without rest or ease. All the fire in the world is but ice in comparison to that spiritual and eternal fire of hell.

¹ Rom 2.13; Jas 1.22.

² To give flattering representations of yourself.

³ Jas 2.10; Mat 5.28.

Thus then, having turned ourselves every way, and finding no help in anything, we must fly to our surety, Christ Jesus,^{Heb 7.22} who was content to stand in our place upon the Cross, and there to shed his blood for the redemption of our sins.^{Col 1.14}

Thus, in this life, while the day of grace remains, we are to make beforehand a reckoning with ourselves, in our own persons, never resting till we have assurance in our consciences that the books in heaven are *cancelled*, and that God is content to account Christ as His satisfaction, as a payment for our sins. And this being done, we shall be able to make a good account before the Lord, at the Last Day of Judgment.

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Glory to God