SERMON XXXVII.

MAT. 24. 45, 46.

Who then is a faithful and wise Servant, whom his Lord hath made Ruler over his Household, to give them Meat in due season?

Blessed is that Servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing.

IN the Parallel place of St. Luke upon our Saviour's Exhortation there (as here) to Watchfulness Peter makes bold to ask him, Lord, speakest thou this Parable unto us, or even to all? ver. 41. Which Question of his our Saviour answers with another Question in the words of the Text, Who then is that faithful and wise Servant? &c. By which he gives him and us to understand, that although in part he meant all others, yet especially * them and their Successors, to whom he committeth the Government of the Church: for if the ordinary Souldier must Watch, then much more he that stands Sentinel. The Text therefore, and the Auditory suit, and in it you have these Four particulars.

1. Your Office. Servants, but yet made Rulers over the Lords Household.

2. Your Work and Employment, to give them Meat in due season.

3. Your Qualifications requisite for the discharge of it. You must be Faithful and Wise, ver. 45. and so sincere, constant and instant about it, that the Lord, when he cometh, may find you so doing, ver. 46.

4. Your Reward. Happy Men if you be such, and do so, it's no less than Blessedinness; Blessed is that Servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing. You see I have much way to rid in a little time. I must therefore make the more haste, and view some things only in transitum, and lay upon nothing long, nor need I in so Pious and Judicious an Auditory.
I begin with the first, viz. their Office, which may be considered in a double reference. 1. To God in that word ἀργός they are but his Servants. 2. To his People. They are ἔτη τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς, They are made Rulers of his Household.

1. The Governors of the Church are but Servants of Christ. Moses a King in Jeshurun, Deut. 33. 5, and yet but the Servant of the Lord, Josh. 1. 1. Faithful in God’s House, but as a Servant, Hebr. 3. 5. Paul, not inferior to the chiefest Apostles, 2 Cor. 11. 5. and yet acknowledgeth himself to be the Servant of Jesus Christ, not only as a Christian, but as an Apostle, Rom. 1. 1. Though (as Aristotle observes) Nature makes them that have but weak parts to be Servants to Men; yet Grace teacheth Men of greatest Gifts Graces and Places to be Servants to Christ, who in the Government of his Family will be sure ever to be the Lord over his own House, as the Apostle speaks, Heb. 3. 6. whilst highest Church-Officers but Servants, and set over it, not as their House, but Christ’s.

And in this, differing from Kings and other Civil Magistrates, that Church-Government and Governors are not Despotic, but merely Ministerial.

That whereas Princes κατ’ αὐτοὺς & κατ’ εἰς αὐτοῖς, Exercise Lordly Authority over their people, our Saviour’s peremptory Interdict is vos autem non sic. In his Church he permits no such Lording it over his Heritage. Διὰ κόσμος ὡς ἀνάφλος, Matt. 20. 26, 27. a Minister and a Servant is the highest office he suffers them to aspire to.

They, though Servants (Ministers of God, Rom. 13. 4.) yet are permitted to be such Lords, as to create Offices, and to enact Laws for all things in their Government, provided they be not against the Law of God. And so both are ἀνάφλον κράτισι, Ordinances of Man, 1 Pet. 2. 13. Here, though whilst observing the general Rules of the Word the persons may be designed and chosen by Men, yet the both erecting of Offices and the enacting of Laws is the Prerogative of the supreme Lord and Law-giver. They must be the Ordinances of Jesus Christ, which we as Servants must administer, and he only as Lord institute. No dogmatizing for us here, Col. 2. 20. The servants of Christ must not be Lords of his people’s Faith; the Lord make us helpers of their joy, 2 Cor. 1. 24. As Church-Governours we are Servants to Christ, and in some respects to his Church, 2 Cor. 4. 5.

Be not therefore highminded, but fear. If God be a Majer, upon
upon that account he expects Fear, Mat. 1. 6. and if we be Servants, though we have cause to be thankful, yet I am sure we have none to be Proud; and yet Men’s Servants often are, and were well that Christ’s Servants never were. There is one that styles himself Servus Servorum, who (the Apostle tells us) exalts himself above Dominus Dominantium; and therefore we had need be very wary; and the rather, 1. Because as Pride is a spiritual sin, so it’s through our corruption very subject to breed in Spiritual transactions. Liquor full of Spirits soon set on a bright flame.

2. Especially in Novices; νεοφύτος τυφώδης, 1 Tim. 3. 6. not a Novice, lest being put up be fall into both the sin and condemnation of the Devil. Whence some call the Devil’s first sin was his proud of his Office. A Novice, whether in Christianity or in Office, either is new, or be newly put into it, is subject to be proud, as the Child of his new Coat. We had need therefore be the more careful.

3. And lastly, the rather, because to be sure many will be very watchful. New things are much viewed, and strangers most looked after. When Austin and his Company came first into England, the direction given, to discover whether they were the true Servants of God, or no, was to mark whether they were proud or humble. Look for the like eyes upon us now. Some have been so quick, or rather maliciously evil, that they could foresee, that in the managing of these affairs we would be proud, as the Devil foretold, that Job would be a Blasphemer; O that our humility, as well as Job’s Patience, might make the Devil and such devilish malice a Liar: and no better way than by knowing our place, and the Text tells us, it’s to be Servants; and that place and relation tells us our duty.

That what the Scripture requires as due from our Servants Use 2. to us, we owe much more to God: calls for Subjection, Obedience, Fear, Fidelity, not with Eye-service, as Men-pleasers, but with singleness of heart, as unto Christ, waiting upon him to appoint you your work. Consult his Word and Providences, and say as, Acts 9. 6. Lord what wilt thou have me to do? And for direction, assistance, and acceptance in your doing of it.

And then, because a Servant is but ὁργανῶν ἐμπυροστος, a rational tool in his Master’s hand, to be ad nutum Domini, resigning up our Reason to his Wisdom, and our Will to his Commands, doing it willingly, cheerfully, fully, without contradiction, or exception.
Frequently and sadly thinking of our Account, Heb. 13. 17.
which will be very great, when we have so many besides our selves
to reckon for; and yet most certain, and cannot be avoided, Luk.

And yet comforting and encouraging our selves in a faithful
and joyful expectation and assurance of a faithful and bountiful
Lord's reward. From Enemies, Strangers, yea from Fellow-Servants (it may be) envy and hatred, derision, opposition,
and the greatest injuries and mischiefs they can reach us:
but what's all this to our Master's last Enge, well done good and
faithful Servant, enter into thy Master's Joy?

Thus much of your Office, as in reference to God in the word
Δσλος. You are but his Servants.

2. Secondly, Consider it in reference to his People, so you
by it are made Rulers of his Household. In which words, two
things: 1. The place it self; It's επὶ της Ῥωμας, Rulers of the
Household. 2. The Institution of it, and the investiture, or put-
ing them into it, in the word Κατακεραυνοω, he hath made or constituted
Ruler of his Household. I shall briefly touch upon both.

1. For the Place or Station, Rulers of God's Household, as he,
2 Chron. 31. 13. is called, אֲלֹהֵי בֵיתוֹ the Ruler of the
House of God. I confess, the word is not here in the Original,
as it is there; but

1. The Phrase in this place implieth it επὶ της Ῥωμας (ομεριας)
over the Household, i.e. in place of Rule and Superiority over the
Household: as Gen. 41. 43. its said, Παρασσει, made Josph
over all (i.e. as our English rightly ex-
presseth it, Ruler over all) the Land of Egypt, according as it's
expressed, Act. 7. 10. Κατακεραυεω αὐτῷ νυμενον εἰς 'Αργολιον.

2. Other places in plain words and full titles express it, where
they are called डीस्लोς, डीस्ल्के, न्युमे, न्यूप, न्यूप, न्यूप, न्यूप,
words partly in Scripture, and partly in other Authors, given to
Princes in Common-Wealths, to Generals & Captains in Armies,
to Governors in Families; in all which there is an authoritative
power of Rule and Government over them that are set under
them. They are called Rulers, and that word commands Obedience.

Fathers, and that speaks Authority.

Elders, and such a γεροςτα, such a Senate hath power.

Were it but only Sheperds and Stewards (as he that is here
called Δσλος is in Luke called οικονόμος, that tells that although
like the Centurion, Matth. 8. 9. they be under a Superior Au-
thority,
on MAT. 24: 45, 46.

Authority, yet as such, they have others, under theirs. Called 
Mark 13: 34, but not taken for an ordinary Porter, but servus
atriensis, a Steward that hath the Keys of all, as Isa. 22, and yet
as Porters, to let in and keep out of the House of God, and from
his Table. Even they who most of all raise up the Authority of
the whole Church, as the immediate and first Subject of Church-
power, as totum and finis, do freely grant the Exercise of that
Power in some things, as only vested in the Officers, and in some
other things in them especially. But the Duty of this place, e-
specially of this day, is not to dispute Controversials, but to ex-
bore and urge Practicals.

And therefore, in that God by this Office hath advanced you
so high, as to set you over his Household, be exhorted so far to
know your Place, and the dignity and worth of it, as not to be
ashamed of it, nor to be baffled in the Execution of it. Take
heed of such an height of Spirit, as to grow proud of it; (of
which by and by) but yet pray and labour for such a generous
magnanimity of Spirit, as may in some measure answer the
worth of it, and may help you with a Holy ταγγηνος, a free
boldness of Spirit, to manage it. Great Men expect it in their
Stewards: and the great God requires it in his. This Masculine
Ingenuity was in Jechonias in his Temple-work. It's
said, his Heart was lifted up in the ways of the Lord, 2 Chron.
17: 6, and Nehemiah, that unwearied and undaunted Repairer
of Jerusalem's Ruins, when the breaches were many, and the
rubbish that hindered their work much; the strength of the La-
bourers little, and yet decaying, and the scorns, insolencies, and
oppositions of Enemies very great, and yet increasing; how
did he by Faith and Prayer, raise up his own Spirit, and by en-
couraging both Words and Actions endeavour to do as much
for his Fellow-Labourers? Chap. 4, and 6. Trinubialis Paulus, a
low little Man for stature of Body, and yet for lowliness of
heart yet lower, in his own Eyes least than the least of all Saints,
Ephes. 3, 8. yet there was magnum in parvo. With what an
Heroick Spirit doth he carry on the work of his Ministry?
How doth the little Man stand as it were on Tiptoes, when the
Pride and Malice of false Apostles and others, would have de-
bas ed that Fastigium Apostolicum, with a δεξαμεν την διακονιαν, I
magnify mine Office? Rom. 11: 13. Yours is nothing near so
high, yet whilst it is over God's Household, too high to be trum-
pled upon by the foot of Pride: which yet it is, and will (on pur-
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pole) be more, if Enemies once perceive that their Scorn and opposition can baffle you into a degenerate Despondency, whom this height of your Office should set above any such Indignities. A Luther's Courage with a Melancthon's Meekness make between them a fit temper for a right Church-Man.

Although what I have herein said, perhaps is not enough to raise some of our Spirits, yet it may be to some is too much, who will think I preach that Pride, which (out of their Charity) they say we will practice.

And therefore because it is a Duty of Humiliation we are now upon, I shall rather press Humility.

And that as from the former Particular, because by our Place we are Servants; so also even from this, because that by it we are set over God's Household: For, though the Station be High, yet be not high-minded, but even therefore the rather fear. Lower thy Sail, the higher the Wind is. In Ezekiel's Vision we read the Rings were so high that they were dreadful, Chap. 1. 18. As the higher we are, the more we tremble when we look downward: The height and weight of your Places, though it may make an empty pragmatick spirit Proud, yet (when well considered) strongly engageth them that are better advis'd to be Humble, Watchful, Fearful.

As for Instance. Are we over God's Household?

1. It's an High Place, but withal it's a great Charge, which will bring at last to a great Account, Heb. 13. 17. If we be Overseers, Acts 20. 28. then (as Nebemish, contended with the Rulers, Chap. 13. 11. so) we shall be accountable for whatever miscarriage in our Charge is occasioned by our over-sight (As Diogenes struck the Master for the miscarriage of his rude Scholar). By our Offices we are made Debtors, Rom. 1. 14. And shall we be proud of such engagements? I that cannot answer for one of a thousand of mine own sins, Job 9. 3. How shall I for the sins of (it may be) thousands that I have the Charge of?

2. The higher the Place, the more in view. (As a blemish in the Face, in the Eye most visible). Our Saviour told his Apostles, that they were as a City that is set on an Hill, set high; but therefore could not be bid, Mat. 5. 14. We may be sure to have many Eyes upon us, and, it's to be feared, too many of them evil enough, and what care (then) need we have that our Nakedness be not discovered in this our ascent to God's Altar? Exod. 20. 26.

3. The
3. The higher the place, the lower and heavier the Fall, if we tread away: And no Precipice so dangerous, as when Satan prevails with us to cast ourselves down from the Pinnacle of the Temple. The instances of Korah (in the Law) and of Judas (in the Gospel) and of many others since, say plainly; that as God in a way of Judgment begins at the Temple, Ezek. 9. 6. so none heavier than such as have been inflicted on evil Church-Men. And justly: For of them it's especially spoken, the Servant that knoweth his Master's Will, and doeth it not, δικαιοφθαλμος, shall be beaten with many stripes, Luke 12. 47.

And therefore, if the higher my Place is, the greater is my Charge and Account, the more Eyes upon me, and the more desperate will be my downfall, How should this prick the bladder of my swelling Pride? How should it compose our Spirits to an humble, meek, awful, and watchful frame in all our Walkings, and especially in our Church-Administrations? When Christ the Master of the House was Meek and Lowly, how should we learn of him, who are but Servants, and at best but Stewards, set over the House, but not to be on the House-top, presently in Passion when at any time we are crossed? St. Paul teacheth us a better Lesson; The Servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all Men, apt to Teach, Patient, ἐν σωφρόσυνῃ ἀντίδιαστασιν, 2 Tim. 2. 24, 25. Let not this Superiority be corrupted into a proud Superciliousness. Some say it will ruine us. I hope they will prove false Prophets; I am not in telling you that it will very ill besem us. For,

In the third place, This Height in being over God's Household calls upon us (as I said before) not to be ashamed of the Office, so not to be a shame to it. But as we are herein much Dignified, so to walk worthy of this high and holy Calling, and to labour to be as much above others in Grace, as we are in Place. Is de nobis omnibus judicet, qui omnibus melior, was once the Vote of the People in the choice of their Censor. Think that it's the expectation of our People in each Pastor, or other Church-Governor and Censor. This εἰσιν οὖν, this Superintendence of ours in the name and nature of it, speaks more of Care and Labour, than of Honour and Preferment. And therefore let it be our shame, Mar. labour and care with Paul, to magnifie our Office, as in a vigo-rous asserting it against such as oppose it, so in calling Beauty and Glory upon it in our holy, just, wife, grave, and faithful Ma-
nagement of it. The Law admitted of no Blemishes in their Priests, Lev. 21. 17, 18. &c. And would it not look very ill-favoured, to see greater Deformities in the Gospel's Ministers? But what a sweet Note is that of Paul's, I Thes. 2. 10. Ye are Witnesses, and God also, ἐστι δὲ καὶ ὅσιος καὶ ὅσιός ἐστιν ἠμῶν, how holily, and justly, and unblamably we behaved our selves among you that believe. I, that was for a Paul, for a Scholar of the highest Form, who (as Chrysostom faith of him) as for his Divine Contemplations was ἐν ζωγραφίας ἄνθρωπος, so in regard of his heavenly Conversation ἦσσαν γὰς ἄγγελος. Yea, and for us too to aspire unto, and labour after, that our Abilities, Graces, Carriages, may in some measure, if not answer, yet suit with our Offices, that when the one is high, the other may not be low; in the one, over others, and in the other under all. I say no more, but with Solomon, The Way of Life is above to the Wise, that he may depart from Hell beneath, Prov. 15. 24. The Lord help us in this kind, both to be Wise our selves, and to be a means of making others also Wise to Salvation.

2. Having thus considered your place, Servants; and yet Rulers over God's Household: We come secondly, to take notice of the Institution of it, and your Inheritance in it, and both held out in the same word καρτέσιον, whom the Lord hath made Ruler over his Household. Quem constituit: A word in the signification and use of it holding forth an Institution, and accordingly here signifies Christ's Instituting the Office, and Constituting the Person; as here being compared to a Master taking a far Journey, and in his absence appointing. 1. That one of his Servants shall be in his place. And, 2. Chusing whom of them he pleaseth to look to the House, and to be over the rest of the Family. The Institution of the place, and choice of the Person being both at the Master's appointment, and both necessary, that this Servant may take it upon him, and act in it with Warrant and Authority; which holds here likewise, but only that the former (the Institution of the Office) is immediately and only from our Lord and Master: But the latter, viz. The calling and putting of fit Persons into it, though in extraordinary Functions, as of Apostles and Prophets, &c. that also belongs to God; yet in ours of Ministers and Elders, and such like, which are ordinary, he admits of an intermediate Call of the Church: But yet so according to general Rules prescribed by God, as that we may say, that both Places and Persons are Appointed of God, and
that he hath made them Rulers over his Household.

Which I earnestly desire, that all of you, who take upon you this Office, do heedfully take notice of, that (for your Encouragement whilst you are at your Work, and for your comfort when you are to give up your Account) you be groundedly assured that your Office is of God, and your Call to it, by God; that in both respects, whether you be Ministers, or other Elders, it is God that hath made you Rulers over his Household.

1. For us that are Preachers, that our Office is of God, I hope we are not in doubt, nor to seek for proof of. No. As long as we understand and remember what the Apostle saith, Ephes. 4. 11, 12. τὰ ἄγνωστα ἐδόθη, &c. And be gave some Apostles, some Prophets, some Evangelists, some Pastors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the Work of the Ministry, &c. No Socinian, or other Sellarian, will ever make us call it in Question.

You that are aspiring Elders, have had your Place and Employment formerly decried, and to this very day questioned, as for a long time forgotten in the Church, nor so fully and clearly held out in the Word; and therefore as the Man, in whom the evil Spirit was, said, Paul I know, and Apollos I know, but who are ye? Acts 19. 15. So some almost out of a like evil Spirit are ready to say, Pastors I acknowledg, and Teachers I allow, but who are ye? And therefore you have the more need to be fully grounded in this main Point, that your Office is not only Permitted and Allowed, but directly Instituted by Jesus Christ. For whatever others hold, I for my own part must freely profess my Thoughts, that if by your Place you have, as Officers of the Church, a share and Interest in the Government and Censures of the Church, in ordaining Ministers, admitting Members, and in casting out and Excommunicating scandalous Offenders, things all of them so material and essential to Church Communion, and so purely Ecclesiastical, nothing less than a Jus Divinum, and a true and proper Institution of Jesus Christ, will groundedly Warrant you to take upon you such an Office, and to manage such an Employment. Nothing is to be at the Master of the House his Appointment, if the great Officer and their chief Employments, upon which all the Government and Welfare of the whole Family depend, be not. Neither the Time, nor the Duty in hand will permit at present, a clearing of your Title: But it doth call upon me to call upon you to get it cleared in your own Consciences. The

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Priests, the Children of Hobajab, who out of Ambition had married into Barzilla's flock, and would be called by his Name, when they sought their Register, and it could not be found in Aaron's Genealogy, they were, as polluted, put from the Priesthood, Neh. 7. 63, 64. And left such a Non est inventus be returned, you have great need to search the Scriptures, the Rolls and Registries in which all such of God's Charters and Commissions are recorded; and if in 1 Cor. 12. 28. in that Κυβερνήτες, Governments, you can distinctly spell your Ruling-Power, you have in the beginning of that Ver. God's θεός, God hath set in his Church; and that speaks plainly an Institution; or if in 1 Tim. 5. 17. you can truly and satisfactorily make out Elders that Rule well to be distinct, both Persons and Officers, from them that labour in the Word and Doctrine, you have that which your Faith and Practice may safely build upon from that place, in which God provides for their Honour and Maintenance, and that in a Church-way, which he would not do, if they were our Creatures, and not his own Ordinances: for how should we dare to think what I am (though in way of abhorrence) afraid to utter, that our heavenly Father should keep our Bastards? Thus, make sure in the first place, that your Calling and Office be of God.

2. And as sure that your particular calling to is from God also; that he made the Seat, and then set you in it, that you did not run before you were sent, that neither greedy desire of gain in Ministers, or a busy pragmaticalness, or a tickling Itch after applause and domination, to be accounted some great doctilities, do prick on them or other Elders, but that God, after he had in some measure fitted them, hath inwardly inclined them and brought them to Paul's τὸ Πέραθημον, Rom. 1. 15. Or in case of a Moses, Jeremiah's, and Ezekiel's averseness, either some overpowering work of God's upon our Spirit, or over-ruling providence in our way hath thrust us out to be Labourers in his Harvest, Mat. 9. 38. and the wants of our Brethren have with the Man of Macedonia to Paul cried to us, Come and help; the vote and million of some, and the welcome reception and giving of the right hand of fellowship from others, have drawn us ab-inter sæculas, as once Saul, (though in another fence than he was) to be Rulers of his People.

In this Exhortation, I am the more serious:

1. As on the one side, because of our very uncomfortable walking in this way, if we bale in this particular. It's error in
fundamento, a fault in the first Concoction. Were it no more than an unsetled hesitancy, or a scrupulous doubtfulness of our Minds, that either the Calling is self is not of God, or that we are not called to it by God, it will be like Gravel in a strait Shoe, will pinch, and make us tread very gently, and tenderly, when we walk fair and easily in evenest ways; but will make us haste quite down, and give out wholly, when we are put to it in rough and hard ways; will make us fall short of that ἀγαθοποία or free boldness, which is requisite for the through carrying on of our work. When we seem to have the most assistance from God, and least opposition from Man, yet ἄνε εἰνεδρία εἴναι, the Man that hath some inward defect, is faint within, by the warmest Fire, and in the chearliest Sun-shine: as the Man, though at a marriage-Feast, yet when he could not answer that question, Friend how camest thou in hisber? is said to be left Speecless, Matth. 22. 12. But suppose, at some special times, and in some heavy pull, and great strait of our employment, God should seem to frown, and the World and Devil should indeed rage (as the former we may often deserve, and the latter we may be sure of) what cheer is like to be then, if as it was with Elijah, now in a Wilderness, and (as many think) out of his way, the Angel again and again haunt him, and ask, but what dost thou here Elijah? 1 King. 19. 9, 13. If in such a strait our own Consciences gagg us, and such mistgiving thoughts rise up within us, I fear my work is not the work of God, or, that I am not the workman appointed to it by God; and so, though Men blame me, yet God doth not thank me; though they unjustly oppose me, yet he may most justly desert me with a quis requisivit hanc? who required these things? or at least, of your hands? The discouragement, and despondency of mind in this case would be very great, and the Event hath sometimes proved very dreadful, but not more disheartening.

2. Than on the other side, the Conscience and clear Evidence that our errand is from God, and that he hath sent us on it, will be encouraging and strengthening, and as good as Elijah's first and second Bait, with him to walk, though it be in a Wilderness, many a hot Summers-day, and cold Winters night, till we come to the Mount of God. If it be a way of the Lord, it's Strength to the upright, Prov. 10. 29. and if I be called by him to it, my Call is my Comfort, my Commission my Warrant, which therefore Jeremiab (Chap. 17. 16. & 20. 7.) Amos (Chap. 7. 14)
and our Blessed Saviour, and his blessed Apostle Paul, had often
recourse to, and still held out and pleaded against all Objections
and Oppositions. For who hath more Authority in the House,
than the Lord of the Household? And if he have appointed and
employed me, what hath any Enemy or stranger, yea or fellow-
Servant to do to oppose or hinder me? When I can without wrong
make use of the Apostle’s plea, whether it be right in the sight of
God, to bearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye, Acts 4.
19. it’s a Back of Steel to my Bow, and a full Gale in my Sail,
strongly engageth the heart.

To be ready and earnest to do our utmost in our Duty. It was be-
fore the Lord that chose me, faith David, when he daishcd before
the Ark with all his might, and he would therefore be more vile,
though so vile already in Michal’s Eyes, that she despiseth him. The
Lion bath roared, who will not fear? The Lord hath spoken, who
can but Prophecy? Amos 3. 8. We cannot but speak, Acts 4. 20.
and ye know my work, there is a necessity is laid upon me, and woe unto me
if I preach not the Gospel, 1 Cor. 9. 16. It engageth and encou-
rageth the Heart to duty.

And in doing of it, to expel and wait for God’s Mercy. If I
be sure that my work be God’s, and that he hath called me to it, I
dare not but so far honour him, as notwithstanding all discour-
gagements to trust him, and confidently to rely upon him for

Acceptance: For if in both my Place and Employment I be
his, in accepting of me, he owns himself; else I may say, Lord
thou hast deceived me, Jer. 20. 7. Assistance, which other Masters
are wont to afford their Servants in their work, and our best
Master is not wont to be worse in this kind to his Servants in
theirs, who never suffred his Servants to do his work by their own
strength, but first bespeaks Gideon’s might, Judges 6. 12. and then
v. 14. bids him go out in it, and promoteth he shall save Israel by
it. Which adds a third thing,

Blessing. Common Adulteries use not to be fruitful, and so Ba-
stard Ordinances are barren; but as we love our own, so God, who
hath more cause, useth to love and bless what’s his. When Isaac
sends Jacob to Padan-Aram, he blesseth him, Gen. 28. 1, 2, i.e.
he prayed for it: but our Master, when he sendeth us, he so
blesseth, that he blesseth it. Because the false Prophets ran on their
own heads, they therefore went on a boothless errand. I sent them
not, therefore they shall not profit this People at all, Jer. 23. 32.
but bad they stood in my Counsel, they should have conversed my
People,
People, v, 22. How do we go a main, when we have the Wind as well as the Tide with us? the Gale of Heaven, as well as the current Stream of our Brethren's votes and desires?

Reward. For whatever Man may do, yet God never suffered his Servants to serve him gratis. The same virtuous Woman that set her Servants their Task, gives them also their portion of Meat, Prov. 31.13, 14, 15. and that God which sets you on work, will be sure Mr. Moor of to pay you your wages. For the outward Man, Gainers many of you cannot be, and it's well that it is so; and you might escape well, if you were but gainers in the sense of that Phrase, Acts. 27. 21. where Paul speaks of gaining harm and loss, that is, in preventing and avoiding it. Injuries and Losses may be all our gains from Men: but there will be nothing lost by what we lose for God, when we come to our last reckoning. When God sends us of his errand, he bids us indeed be stedfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; but for our encouragement withal, he tells us, that our Labour shall not be in vain in the Lord, 1 Cor. 15. 58.

[What follows was prepared, but not Preached.]
SERMON XXXVIII.

MAT. 24. 45, 46.

Who then is a faithful and wise Servant, whom his Lord hath made Ruler over his Household, to give them Meat in due season?
Blessed is that Servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing.

But that Reward is the last part of my Text. We are before that to consider of our Work.

And that is the 2d: Which (having dispatched our Office, Servants, and yet made Rulers over God's Household) we come to in those words, τὸ θείονα άδικοις τὴν τροφὴν ἐν κατάργη. It's to give them their Food in due season.

1. I will not insist upon that, which yet some observe from the word προδοτοι, that it's a giving, and not a selling of this Food to the Household. Christ once whipt Buyers and Sellers out of the Temple: but after-ages complained much that they were gotten in again. This Food for the Household is the Masters Provision, and only put into the Stewards hands for his Households use. All thy Grace, Wisdom, Ability to dispense the Word and other Ordinances, to govern the Church, &c. are God's Gifts, which he never betrust thee with to enjoy, or make a Merit of for thyself, thine own gain or applause, but for the Glory of thy Master, and the Service of his Spouse: and therefore although the Labourer be worthy of his hire, Luke 10.7. yet neither be thou on the one side ever so mercenary, as to account thy maintenance such an hire of thy Labour as which thou aimest at, and puttest off the Ordinances of God for: No, in this fence freely thou hast received, and therefore freely give.

Nor let the People be ever so mean as to think, when they have paid their Pittance they have bought you for Slaves, and like good Chapmen have made a fair purchase of the Word, and the

Mat. 10. 8.
the rest of God's Ordinances, which they hereupon claim as their due, and in case, though by their own default, they come short of, you shall fall short of yours. But how unworthy are such base Simoniacal chafferings of thee, as thou art either a Minister, or Christian? something akin to Judas selling, and the Jews buying of Christ for thirty pieces of Silver: and a goodly price, wherewith I was prised at of them, faith the Lord, Zech. 11. 13. The Apostle would lift us up to higher thoughts, when he calls the Church Officers maintenance, not Wages but Honour, 1 Tim. 5. 17. to be freely honorably allowed, not as a recompense of their Labour, but as an honorable testimony of our love and respect, not as the price of the Gospel, and all that either we mean to give for it, or the Ministers should look at in dispensing of it. There's much more that God expects for it from the People, and which his Ministers should look at in their administrations of it. They are first Did Owen, to give the Household their Food in due Season.

2. The second thing observable is, what they are to give, expressed in the word ταγαντα, their Food and Nourishment, by which Hieron means Cibaria doctinarum: others, verbi & Sacramentorum pabulum, the sacred Food of the Word and Sacraments; not excluding either the wholsom Physick of Church-Censures, for it's Physick as well a Food, which we pray for, when we begg our daily Bread, Matth. 6. 11. or the due administration of any other of the parts of Church-Government, for as Christ οικονόμες, feeds whilst he rules, Matth. 2. 6. (Kings are οικονόμες λαών) so we may properly be said to Feed, by Governing as well as Teaching. In reference to both which, Paul in his charge to the Elders of Ephesus calls upon them οικονόμες τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τῆς Θεοῦ, to feed the Church of God, Acts. 20. 28. That's their Task, nor can you conceive otherwise, if you consider,

1. Either the Master of the House his Royal Bounty. He would not have his Family starved, and therefore takes order that they shall be fed. In our Fathers House there's Bread enough, Luke 15. 17.

2. Or his Servant's Office and Duty. They are elsewhere stiled Shepherds; and a Pastor's work is to feed the Flock, Zech. 11. 7. Nurses; and they suckle and cherish their Children, 1 Thes. 2. 7. in the place of Luke parallel to the Text οἰκονόμοι, Stewards, whose whole work both here and there is summed up in...
S E R M. XXXVIII.

this comprehensive expression of giving Food to the whole Family. And for your quickning herein, the Application of this,

Use 1.

Proclaims the People of God their great need, even greater of these Spiritual supplies, than any can have of those corporal, the fainting-Soul standing in more need to be plied with Promises and Encouragements, than the swooning Man with Cordials; the careless and foul Sinner, of Threats and Admonitions; than the foul diseased Body of stronger Purges; and the obstinate Sinner more to be call out, than the gangren'd Member to be cut off: all of us as much and more of this Spiritual Food, than any, than all of us do of our Natural-Food, and Job called that necessary Food, Job. 23. 12. and therefore no wonder if Paul said, a necessity is laid upon me, and woe unto me if I preach not the Gospel, 1 Cor. 9. 16. God and Nature is not wanting to thee in necessities: Let not Grace suffer thee to be wanting to thy charge in their necessities. Christ was willing to bleed, that of his Flesh and Blood he might make the Provisions, wilt not thou be willing to be at the Cost, though it be of thy Sweat, to set them on the Board? Let thy People's hungering desires bespeak thy pity. It was one of the saddest Notes in the Church's Lamentations, that the Children asked Bread, and there was none to break it to them; Lament. 4. 4. Or should their Desires be silent, yet let their Wants cry for thy Compassion. Cogita de cibo & potui animalium tuo-rum, faith Bernard, nam esurient, & non perunt; they oft are Hungry, and yet so weak, fulsome, or shamefaced, that they will not, or cannot ask; nay (which is worse) inedia languent, & tamen non esurient, they too oft are half famished, and yet are not an hungry, are ready to die, not so much for want of Food, as of a Stomach, as it is with too many of our Flock at this day. And therefore (in this case, if in any) if there be any Consolation in Christ, if any Comfort of Love, if any fellowship of the Spirits, if any Bowels and Mercies, let our Bowels earn over them. Starved Souls will be frightful Ghosts to us, when they and we at last shall stand together to give up our account, and to receive our doom. Let this make us think of our charge and mind our work, It is to give Food to God's Household.

Use 2.

Which calls for a second part of our care, that it be indeed Γεύμα, nourishing-Food, that we give them. If they ask Bread, give them not a Stone; or if Fish, let it not be a Serpent, (Matth. 7. 9, 10.) in hard and harsh usages.

It's
It's Food, not the Poison of Heresies and corrupt Doctrines, or destructive Administrations. Your Power is given to Edification, 2 Cor. 10, 3. and not to Destruction.

It's ἔργον, solid nourishing Food, not the Froth of Airy Notions, or our fine-spun high-flown Speculations, not the Trash, Hay and Stubble of our own Fancies, Humors, Passions, no nor the rarest Flowers of our great Readings and curious Elegancies. The Sheep of Christ's Pasture ufe to feed on more wholesome Herbs, whilst they let such Flowers stand by. The Word is the immortal Seed, that begets us; 1 Pet. 1, 23. (These too dilute to be prolific, as he of the Philosopher's Books, animum non dant, quia non habent) and the sincere Milk Chap. 2. v. 2. to nourish us. From these we can suck nothing but Wind, which makes us smell, and that's all. What's the Chaff to the Wheat? Jer. 23, 28. It's ἔργον, ἀποσ, the solid nourishing Bread of Life, and therefore away with all such Kickshaws.

3. The third thing observable in this second part is, that what Matthew here calls ἔργον, their Food, Luke in the parallel place, calls σῶμαν εὐφήμορον, demensum, their portion of Meat, which Agur prafeth (though in another fence, אֶלֶף הוּא) (Prov. 30, 8.) Food convenient for me. The same Dispensation will not either for kind or measure suffice all. There are in God's Family young Babes as well as grown Men. Some sick and weak, others healthy and strong, some sick of lighter Fevers, others of more putrid, it may be Heatical or Malignant. That which will feed the Child will pine the Man; and what's Food to him that's healthy, may be poyson to the Sick: and that which will heal a Whistle, will not cure a Gangrene: As therefore God in his greater House of the World, hath such both store and choise, that he answers the want and desire of every living thing, Psal. 145, 16. So this Presence-Chamber of his Church he hath so fully fitted and furnished, that in his Word, Sacraments, Censures, and other Administrations, his Mammon is answerable to every Palat: he hath a fit Medicine for every Malady; both a Rod and a Pot of Manna in his Ark. But now to know which of them to use, and to whom. This ἐρωτομία, this right dividing of the Word of Truth, 2 Tim. 2, 15: so as the proud Sinner may not presume, nor the fainting Christian drop, the right Administration of the Keys, that no false Pretender, notwithstanding his greatest shews, may be let in, nor the weakest Believer, notwithstanding his many weaknesses, kept out, that we do not on
the one hand, in too rigorous a way kill a fly on our Brothers Forehead with a Beetle, nor on the other, through ignorance, in adversity, Interest or the like, blow whole a corrupt Ulcer a little skinned over. This is one of the hardest pieces of our work, hic labor, hoc opus, & τὸς πείγος τῶν ἡλίου; Lord who is sufficient for these things? 2 Cor. 2. 16. This would call for in Ministers a more diligent inspection into, and Knowledge of the state of our Flock (Prov. 27. 23.) than I fear we have any of us attained to, or many of us endeavoured after; which we had need this day to be greatly humbled for our want & neglect of. This requires all the qualifications, which Christ here mentioneth, of Faithfulness, Wisdom, Sincerity, Constancy, Instancy, which (I said) are contained in the third part of the Text, so worthy to be sought, and yet so hard to be found, if all of you should be like some of us, that in both respects Christ may here ask the question, Who is that Faithful and Wise Servant, whom his Lord shall make Ruler over his Household, to give them their Food, or due portion of Meat, in due season?

4. Which last words, ἐν Καιρῷ ἐν σεζόν, is the fourth particular in this second part of the Text.

Food is to be given, and that in a fit proportion, and also in a fit Season. It's so with orderly Men, and in well-ordered Families, Eccles. 10. 17. and God would not have his House worse ordered. The wife Physician as he weighs the Dose he gives, so he calculates the time in which he should most seasonably give it. It's the Wisdom of God as Governor of the World, that as he satisfies the desires of his Creatures in giving them their Food, so, that it is in due season, Psal. 145. 15. and accordingly as the Lawgiver of his Church you shall observe how punctual he is in the Law to require his Ordinances to be observed, but in their season, Exod. 13. 10. Levit. 23. 4. Numb. 9. 3,7,13 & 28. 2. He is now no whit less careful of it in the dispensation of the Gospel. Ἐνκαίρως ἐν καιρῷ, is the Apostolical Precept, 2 Tim. 4. 2. Be instant in season: He adds indeed, and out of season too, though that is out in some Copies: but if you take it in, you must understand it of that which the wisdom of the Flesh accounts out of season, as that it will not stand now with the Ministers profit, or the peoples occasions or humors. For otherwise it's the both faithfulness and wisdom of Ministers and other Church-Officers heedfully and watchfully to watch and catch all fittest opportunities, in which they may act most seasonably:

1. Hard
1. Hard to be hit on, and therefore the more carefully to be heeded. Much good lost because the opportunity is flipt: because to every purpose there is a time and judgment, therefore the misery of Man is great upon him, Ecclef. 8. 6.

2. Most Successful usually, if observed. The thing is then Beautiful, Ecclef. 3. 11. and therefore taking upon the Wheels then; and therefore goeth on smoothesly. I am no Arminian, to make the Efficacy of Grace to consist in Moral persuasions applied tempore et modo congruis, in the fitness and seasonableness of such Applications. No: I know that God to shew the freeness and prevailing Efficacy of his Grace, sometimes works it (as in Paul and others) when the Sinner is most indisposed, as Christ the Physician came when the World was most Corrupt, who, otherwise than other Physicians, can to purpose give Phisick in the height of a Fit, as he cured Simon's Wife's Mother, In aëra Fiebris, in the very Paroxism of her Disease. Nullum tempus occitit Regis.

SERMON XXXIX.

PHIL. I. 21.

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

According as our Nature is, so proportionably is our Life and Practice. It is so with us, as we are Men; and so it should be with us, as we are Christians. As such, in my former Text lately handled, Peter told us that our Nature is Divine; and Paul telleth us here, that his Life is such: To me to live is Christ, and so to die is gain. When Christ first is our Life, then even Death at last proves our advantage. In the two following Verses, the Apostle telleth us, he is in a strait between two, and knew not which of them to chuse. Happy strait! Not such an one as David was in, 2 Sam. 24. 14. when he was to chuse which of three Evils, but of two Good things, and both so Good, that he knew not which to make choice of. Such a proffer whether to live or die to a condemned Malesfactor would not be accounted a Strait, but an happy Enlargement, when all his hopes are in Life, and he hath no assurance.