

Sermon 1 (37)

Sermon 2 (38)

SERMON XXXVII.

Preached at
St. Alphage
Church, Lon-
don, May. 2.
1648.

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.

† Chrysostom.
* Ambros.
Hilarius.
Cartwright.

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 comes, may find you so doing*, ver. 46.

4. Your Reward. Happy Men if you be such, and do so, it's no less than Blessedness; *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 transitu*, and stay upon nothing long, nor need I in so Pious and Judicious an *Auditory*.

K k k k 2

I

I begin with the first, viz. their Office, which may be considered in a double reference. 1. To God in that word δούλος they are but *his Servants*. 2. To his People. They are ἐκὼς θεοῦ, *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 *Despotical*, but merely *Ministerial*.

That whereas Princes κατακυριεύουσι & κατεξουσιάζουσι, *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*. Διάνουνος ἐστὶ δούλος, *Matth. 20. 26, 27.* a Minister and a Servant is the highest stile 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 ἀνθρώπων κτίσεις, *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 peoples 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 *bigminded*, but fear. If God be a Master, upon

Use.

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 'twere well that *Christ's Servants* never were. There is one that stiles 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*; νεόφυτος τυφωδὲς, 1 Tim. 3. 6. *not a Novice*, lest being *puffed up* he fall into both the sin and condemnation of the Devil. Whence some collect the Devil's first sin was his being proud of his Office. A *Novice*, whether in Christianity or in Office, either *it 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*, *Obedi-* Ephes. 6.
ence, *Fear*, *Fidelity*, *not with Eye-service*, as *Men-pleasers*, but Col. 4.
with singleness of heart, as unto *Christ*, waiting upon him to ap- Tit. 2.
point you your work. Consult his Word and Providences, and say as, *Act. 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 ὀργανον ἐμψυχον, 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, chearfully, 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. 16. 2. *Matth.* 25. 19.

Act. 13. 36.

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 *Euge, well done good and faithful Servant, enter into thy Masters Joy?*

Thus much of your Office, as in reference to God in the word *ὁ δούλος*. 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 *ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ*, *Rulers of the household*. 2. The Institution of it, and the *investiture*, or putting them into it, in the word *κατέστησεν*, *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, *לְנִיר בֵּית אֱלֹהִים* 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 *ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ* (*οἰκίᾳ*) *over the Household*, i. e. in place of Rule and Superiority over the Household: as *Gen.* 41. 43. its said, *Παραὸν ἐποίησεν Ἰωσήφ ὅλον τὸν αἶμα τῆς γῆς τῆς Αἰγύπτου* *over all* (i. e. as our English rightly expresseth it, *Ruler over all*) *the Land of Egypt*, according as it's expressed, *Act.* 7. 10. *κατέστησεν αὐτὸν ἡγεμέμονον ἐπὶ τῆς Αἰγύπτου*.

1 Tim. 5. 17.

1 Thes. 5. 12.

Heb. 13. 7, 17,

24.

Act. 20. 28.

2. Other places in plain words and full titles express it, where they are called *πρεσβύτεροι*, *πρεσβύτεροι*, *ἡγούμενοι*, *ἐπίσκοποι*, 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 *γερασία*, such a *Senate* hath power.

Were it but only *Shepherds* and *Stewards* (as he that is here called *ὁ δούλος* is in *Luke* called *οἰκονόμος*, that tells that although like the *Centurion*, *Matth.* 8. 9. they be *under* a Superior *Authority*,

Act. 20.

1 Cor. 4. 1.

obority, yet as such, they have others under theirs. Called *οὐκ ἐγγενης*, Mark 13. 34. but not taken for an ordinary Porter, but *servus atrienfis*, 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 molt 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, especially of this day, is not to dispute Controversials, but to exhort and urge Practicals.

And therefore, in that God by this Office hath advanced you *Use 1.* 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 bafished 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 *παρρησία*, 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 Jehoshaphat 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 Jerusalems ruines, when the breaches were many, and the rubbish that hindered their work much; the strength of the Labourers 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 encouraging both Words and Actions endeavour to do as much for his Fellow-Labourers? Chap. 4. and 6. Tricubitalis Paulus, a low little Man for stature of Body, and yet for lowliness of heart yet lower, in his own Eyes less than the least of all Saints, Ephes. 3. 8. yet there was *magnum in parvo*. With what an Heroic 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 debased that *Fastigium Apostolicum*, with a *δοξάζω τὴν διακονίαν*, 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 trampled upon by the foot of Pride: which yet it is, and will (on purpose

pose) 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 practise.

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

Use. 2.

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 Gods 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 advised to be *Humble, Watchful, Fearful*.

As for Instance. Are we *over Gods Household*?

The higher Orb is to carry the inferiour ones about with his motion.

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 *Nebemiah*, 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 hid*, 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 awry: And no Precipice so dangerous, as when Satan prevails with us to cast our selves 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*, ὁ δούλος τοῦ κυρίου, ὃς οἶκε τὴν θέλησιν τοῦ κυρίου, καὶ οὐκ ἐποίησεν, 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 πάσῃ ὑπομονῇ διδάσκοντες ἀντιδιατιθέμενοι, 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 bescem us. For,

In the third place, This Height in being over God's Household Use 3. 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 judicat, 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 Censors. This ἐπισκοπή, this Supervisorship of ours in the name and nature of it, speaks more of Care and Labour, It will be a than of Honour and Preferment. And therefore let it be our labour and care with Paul, to magnifie our Office, as in a vigorous asserting it against such as oppose it, so in casting Beauty and Glory upon it in our holy, just, wise, grave, and faithful Management

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 grosser Deformities in the *Gospel's* Ministers? But what a sweet Note is that of *Paul's*, 1 Thes. 2. 10. *Ye are Witnesses, and God also, ὡς ὁσώς καὶ δικαίως καὶ ἀμειψίτως, honestly, 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* saith of him) as for his Divine Contemplations was ἐν σεβασμῷ ἀνθρώπου, so in regard of his heavenly Conversation ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς 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 *Investiture* in it, and both held out in the same word κατέστησεν, 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 signifieth *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 *that 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

Mark 13. 34.

Gal. 1. 1.
Heb. 5. 1, 4, 5.
Acts 14. 23.
Tit. 1. 5.

that he hath made them Rulers over his Household.

Which I earnestly desire, that all of you, who take upon *use.* 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. ἡ αὐτὸς ἐδίδαξε, &c. And he 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 Sacerdote, or other Seditarian, will ever make us call it in Question.*

You that are assisting 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

Priests, the *Children of Hobab*, who out of Ambition had married into *Barzilla's* stock, 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, *Nehem. 7. 63, 64.* And lest such a *Non est invenius* be returned, you have great need to search the Scriptures, the Rolls and Registers 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 Verse God's *ἔθετο, 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 abhorrency) 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.*

Jer. 23. 21.

2. And as sure that *your particular calling to it be 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 pragmatikness, or a tickling Itch after applause and domination, to be accounted some great *doe-littles*, 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 πρῶτον, Rom. 1. 15.* Or in case of a *Moses, Jeremias's, and Ezekiel's* averfeness, 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*, *Matth. 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 mission of some, and the welcom reception and giving of the *right hand of fellowship* from others, have drawn us *ab-inter sarcinulas*, as once *Saul*, (though in another fence than he was) to be *Rulers of his People.*

Acts 16. 9.

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 *halt* in this particular. It's error in *fundamento*

fundamento, a fault in the first Concoction. Were it no more than an unsettled 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 *balt quise down*, and give out wholly, when we are put to it in *rough and hard ways*; will make us fall short of that *παρρησία* 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 *δὲ τὸ ἐνδὸν εἶναι*, the Man that hath some inward defect, is faint within, by the warmest Fire, and in the cheariest Sun-shine: as the *Man*, though at a marriage-Feast, yet when he could not answer that question, *Friend how camest thou in hither?* is said to be left *Speechless*, 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 misgiving 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 hæc?* *who required these things?* or at least, *of your hands?* The discouragement Isa. 1. 12. and dependency of mind in this case would be very great, and the *Event* hath sometimes proved very *dreadful*, but not more *disheartning*,

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

John 7. 29.
Gal. 1. 1.
1 Cor. 9. 1.
& 15. 8, 9, 10.

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 hearken 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

2 Sam. 6. 14.
16, 19.

To be ready and earnest to do our utmost in our Duty. It was before the Lord that chose me, saith David, when he danced before the Ark with all his might, and he would therefore be more vile, though so vile already in Michal's Eyes, that she despised him. The Lion hath roared, who will not fear? The Lord hath spoken, who can but prophesy? Amos 3. 8. We cannot but speak, Act. 4. 20. ἀνάγκη μοι ἐπιτελεῖσθαι, a necessity is laid upon me, and woe unto me if I preach not the Gospel, 1 Cor. 9. 16. It engageth and encourageth the Heart to duty.

And in doing of it, to expect 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 discouragements to trust him, and confidently to rely upon him for

Acceptance: For if in both my Place and Imployment I be bin, 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 suffered his Servants to do his work by their own strength, but first bespeaks Gideon's might, Judg. 6. 12. and then v. 14. bids him go out in it, and promiseth he shall save Israel by it. Which adds a third thing,

Blissing. Common Adulteresses use not to be fruitful, and so Bastard 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 blesteth him, Gen. 28. 1, 2. i. e. he prayed for it: but our Master, when he sendeth us, he so blesteth, that he bestows it. Because the false Prophets ran on their own heads, they therefore went on a bootless errand. I sent them not, therefore they shall not profit this People at all, Jer. 23. 32. but had they stood in my Counsel, they should have converted my People,

People, v, 22. How do we go amain, when we have the Wind as well as the Tide with us ? the Gale of Heaven, as well as the current Stream of our Brethrens votes and desires ?

Reward. For whatever Man may do, yet God never suffered his Servants to serve him gratis. The same vertuous Woman that fetter 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 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 scape well, if you were but gainers in the sense of that Phrase, *Ad. 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.

Mr. Mooy of
Norwich.

[What follows was prepared, but
not Preached.]

SER-

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.

2 Work.

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 δίδόναι αὐτοῖς τὴν τροφὴν ἐν καιρῷ. It's to give them their Food in due season.

1. I will not insist upon that, which yet some observe from the word δίδόναι, 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 betruſted thee with to enjoy, or make a Mercat of for thy self, 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 putt'st off the Ordinances of God for: No, in this sence freely thou hast received, and therefore freely give.

Mat. 10. 8.

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

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*, saith 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 *διδόναι*, to give the Household their Food in due Season.

2. The second thing observable is, what they are to give, expressed in the word *τροφὴν*, their Food and Nourishment, by which *Hierom* means *Cibaria doctrinarum*: 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* *ποιμαίνει*, feeds whilst he rules, *Matth.* 2. 6. (Kings are *ποιμένες λαῶν*) 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 *ποιμαίνεν τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ Θεοῦ*, to feed the Church of God, *Act.* 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

M m m m

this

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 cast 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 wo 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 *Blond* 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 hungry 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 & potu animalium tuorum*, saith *Bernard*, *nam esuriunt, & non perunt*; they oft are Hungry, and yet so weak, sullen, or shamefaced, that they will not, or cannot ask; nay (which is worse) *inediâ languent, & tamen non esuriunt*, 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 *Spirit*, 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 *TECQD*, *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 *Poyson* of Heresies and corrupt Doctrines, or destructive Administrations. Your *Power* is given to *Edification*, 2 Cor. 10. 3. and *not to Destruction*.

It's *τροφή*, 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* use to feed on more *wholsom 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 be 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 *swell*, and that's all. *What's the Chaff to the Wheat?* Jer. 23. 28. It's *τροφή, ἄπλος*, 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 *τροφήν*, their *Food*, *Luke* in the parallel place, calls *σπομένην*, *demensum*, their *portion of Meat*, which *Agur* phraseth (though in another sence, *לחם חקי* (Prov. 30. 8.) *Food convenient for me*. The same Dispensation will not either for *kind* or *measure* sute 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 *Heſtical* 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 *beal a Whistow*, will not *cure a Gangrene*: As therefore God in his greater *House* of the *Wor'd*, 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 *Mannab* 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 *ὀρθοτομία*, this *right dividing of the Word of Truth*, 2 Tim. 2. 15. so as the *proud Sinner* may not *presume*, nor the *fainting Christian* droop, 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 *adulterancy, 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, huc opus, & τὸ πρῶτον τῶν ἔργων*; 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* in season, 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 wise 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 satisfieth 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. *Εὐκαιρῶς ἀναίρῶς*, 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 *bedeafly* and watchfully to watch and catch all fittest opportunities, in which they may act most seasonably:

1. Hard

Beza.

1. Hard to be hit on, and therefore the more carefully to be heeded. Much *good lost* because the opportunity is *slippt* : *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 *smoothly*. I am no *Arminian*, to make the *Efficacy* of *Grace* to consist in *Moral persuasions applied tempore & 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 *Corrupted* ; who, otherwise than other *Physicians*, can to purpose give *Physick* in the height of a *Fit*, as he cured *Simon's Wife's Mother*, *In astu Febris*, in the very *Paroxysm* of her *Disease*. *Nullum tempus occurrat Regi*.

SERMON XXXIX.

PHIL. I. 21.

I. Sermon
Preacht at St.
Maris, May
2. 1658.

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*. ^{2 Pet. 1. 4.} 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 *Malefactor* would not be accounted a *Strait*, but an *happy Enlargement*, when all his hopes are in *Life*, and he hath no assurance.