

It is a fact, surely not altogether without significance, that not only is the relation of master and slave—or “servant” as we translate it—so continually referred to in our LORD’s parables, without any word of reprobation, but that it is under the figure of a slaveholder that our LORD Himself is frequently depicted.* Nay, more. This very relation is used by S. Paul to illustrate the relation in which He stands toward ourselves. We are “not our own, but *bought with a price.*”† Not ransomed and set free, but *bought*. The property in us, which, by right of our sin, had belonged to Satan, transferred by right of purchase to God. And, *therefore*, we are bidden to glorify God in our bodies, and in our spirits, “which are God’s.” Surely it is somewhat hazardous to assume that a relation thus plainly, and without qualification, set forth as illustrating the position of the Almighty, can be of itself essentially evil!

We turn from the Bible estimate of the relation of master and slave, to examine the Bible estimate of the relation of the master and his free or hired servant. And here, too, even more, perhaps, than in the former case, do His ways seem strangely at variance with our ways, and His thoughts with our thoughts.

Shut out by the Mosaic law from that participation

* S. Matt. xviii. 23—34; xxv. 14—30. S. Mark xiii. 34. S. Luke xii. 47, 48.

† 1 Cor. vii. 20.