

THE
MYSTERY OF CHRIST
IN
THE FORM OF A SERVANT.

A Sermon preached at the administration of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

PHILIP. ii. 7.

And took upon him the form of a servant.

OUR holy religion, which hath its denomination from Jesus Christ, is a religion of mysteries; mysteries of faith, and mysteries of practice, neither of which can one be let into, in a saving manner, without supernatural grace. The mysteries of faith, mysteries to be believed, do, all of them, lead unto practice: yea, even these of them which are most sublime, the more they are truly believed, the more do they influence men to holiness of heart and life. Wherefore the apostle, in the context, to press the Philippians unto the practice of moral duties, particularly to love their neighbour as themselves, to lay out themselves to be beneficial to mankind, and for that end to deny themselves, and condescend to others for their good; lays before them, to be believed, that constellation of mysteries appearing in the incarnation of the Son of God: a motive to good works, unknown to the Jewish Rabbies, and Greek moralists; but sealed in the experience of believers, as the most powerful incentive to universal holiness.

In this verse, whereof the text is a part, are three of these mysteries. The first, which is the leading one, is, that "Christ Jesus being in the form of God, not thinking it robbery to be equal with God, yet made himself of no reputation," viz. for us. To be in the form of God, is to be very God, having the very nature and essence of God; the form being that which essentially distinguisheth things, and makes a thing to be precisely that which it is. And forasmuch as this form is, according to the apostle, the foundation of his equality with God his Father; it can denote no less than his being very God: for no excellency whatsoever, really different from the divine

essence, can found an equality with God; but still there would remain as great a disproportion as betwixt finite and infinite. Here then is a wonderful mystery: Christ being very God, the supreme, the Most High God, equal with the Father, emptied himself of his divine glory, laying it aside, namely, in point of manifestation, casting a veil, a thick veil, over it, for a time. The second mystery is, "He took upon him the form of a servant." Thus it was that he emptied himself. This form, to wit, of a servant, was the veil he drew over his divine glory: for so the original words run, "But emptied himself, taking the form of a servant." The third mystery is, "He was made in the likeness of men." In regard of the sinfulness cleaving to men's nature, which he was absolutely free of, he is said to have been made, not in a sameness with, but in the likeness of, men; truly man in substance and nature, but without sin, however like to sinful flesh he appeared, Rom. viii. 3, "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh." This was it that was prerequisite unto, and qualified him for, taking upon him the form of a servant: for so stand the words in the original, "Taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men."

It is the second of these mysteries, "And took upon him the form of a servant," which I am to insist upon. And two things here are to be opened; namely, "What the form of a servant is." And, "What Christ's taking it upon him bears." I begin with the latter of these.

Whatever is more particularly meant by the form of a servant, it is plain, that in the general it must denote a mean and low condition. And our Lord's taking it upon him, imports two things; 1. That he voluntarily and of his own free choice submitted to it, for the sake of poor sinners. He was not originally in the form of a servant, as some men have been, who were born in a state of servitude; nay, he was from eternity the Son of God, his Father's equal: but he, being Lord of heaven and earth, came, of his own accord, under the form of a servant. It was not laid upon him against his will; but he freely took it on himself, and became bound, when he might have continued free. 2. It imports, that what he was before, namely, very God, equal with the Father, he still continued to be, notwithstanding of his submitting to the form of a servant. He took upon him the form of a servant; that is, continuing in the form of God, he took upon him the form of a servant.

By the form of a servant, is not understood the likeness of a guilty man. That exposition weakens the force of the apostle's argument, and the force of that important term, the form of God; though indeed the thing itself is truth, and is taught in the last clause of the

verse. Neither is it to be understood of man's nature, which in respect of God is servile: because Christ's emptying of himself, consisting, according to the text, in his taking on the form of a servant was surely over, and at an end, in his exaltation, and the full manifestation of his divine glory; while yet his human nature remains. Neither doth that mean, low, and servile kind of condition, into which he was brought in his sufferings, seem to explain sufficiently the form of a servant, which he took upon himself.

The plain and literal sense of these words I take to be the true sense of them, viz. That the Son of God, our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, really became a servant, as really as ever man did, who served for his bread. He voluntarily took upon himself, that wherein the essence of that relation, on the servant's part, doth consist; and so was formally constituted a servant, to all intents and purposes of the bargain with him whose servant he became. As this is the literal sense of the words, from which we are never to depart without necessity; so it is confirmed to be the genuine sense, by the true import of that phrase, Being in the form of God. His being in the form of God, denotes his being very God; therefore his taking upon him the form of a servant, must denote his becoming really a servant.

Now, the scripture represents Jesus Christ, (1.) As a servant in his state of humiliation, and so he is called, a servant of rulers, Isa. xlix. 7. (2.) As a servant in his state of exaltation, Isa. liii. 11, "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many." Compare Acts v. 31, "Him hath God exalted, with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." It can hardly be a question with any who reads the text and context, whether the form of a humbled servant, or of an exalted servant, is meant here? Our Lord Jesus did take on both, the one in his humiliation, and the other in his exaltation; but it is evident, the former, and not the latter, is here meant; and they are vastly different. The form of a humbled servant he submitted to; the form of an exalted servant was conferred on him, as the reward of that submission, Philip. ii. 9. In this form of a servant, he has a most exalted and glorious honorary ministry; being a servant, for whose law the isles shall wait, Isa. xlii. 1, 4, "For the Father—hath committed all judgment unto the Son," John v. 22, hath "set him king upon his holy hill of Zion," Psalm ii. 6, and "given him all power in heaven and in earth." Matth. xxviii. 18. But in that form, whereof the text speaks, he had a service low and humble, onerous and heavy, a surety-service, a servitude; and so the form was the form of a bond-servant. In both the one and the other

Joseph was a shining type of him, being first sold for a servant, and then exalted to be ruler over all Egypt under Pharaoh.

Here then is a stupendous mystery: Christ Jesus, very God, the Father's equal, Lord of heaven and earth, became a servant for us, a bond-man or bond-servant; for so the word properly signifies, and therefore is the word that is constantly used in that New Testament phrase which we read bond or free, or bond and free, 1 Cor. xii. 13, Gal. iii. 28, Eph. vi. 8, Col. iii. 11, Rev. xiii. 16, and xix. 18. The greatest inequality found in any relation among men, is in that betwixt the master and the servant, the bond-servant: so the lowest levelling among them is that whereof mention is made, Isa. xxiv. 2, "It shall be—as with the servant, so with his master." Then, what unparalleled condescension, wonderful emptying was this! God's equal becoming a servant, a bond-servant, for poor sinners! Both these characters, the highest and the lowest, met together in Christ, in his state of humiliation, Zech. xiii. 7, "Awake, O sword,—against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord." Isa. xlii. 1, "Behold my servant;" the very same word that is rendered bond-man and bond-servant, Lev. xxv. 39, 42, 44.

DOCTRINE. Our Lord Jesus Christ, continuing to be his Father's equal, humbled himself into a state of servitude, and became his servant, his bond-servant, in man's nature, for poor sinners of Adam's race. This was a step lower than his becoming man; but the lower it was, the higher did his free love to man appear.

I am aware, that some in the height of their own wisdom, measuring gospel mysteries by their carnal reason, may be apt to say here, "This is an hard saying, who can hear it?" But it is undeniable, that Christ is expressly called God's servant in the holy Scripture; as Isa. xlii. 1, "Behold my servant whom I uphold," &c. compared with Matth. xii. 18, where that text is directly applied to him, Zech. iii. 8, "I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH." But what kind of a servant unto his Father was he? did he become a bond-man, a bond-servant? Yea, he did. Hear his own decision in that point, Psal. xl. 6, "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, mine ears hast thou opened." The word here rendered opened, properly signifies digged, as you may see in the margin: and so the words are, "Mine ears thou diggedst through;" that is, boredst, as it is well expressed in our paraphrase of the Psalms in metre, "Mine ears thou bored." This plainly hath a view to that law concerning the bond-servant, Exod. xxi. 6, "Then his master shall bring him unto the judges, he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door-post: and his master shall bore his ear through with

an awl; and he shall serve him for ever." This is confirmed from Hos. iii. 2, "So I bought her to me for fifteen pieces of silver," which was the half of the stated price of a bond-woman. In the original it is, "So I digged her thorough to me," &c., the same word being here used, as Psalm. xl. 6. It is a pregnant word, which is virtually two in signification: and the sense is, I bought her, and bored her ear to my door-post, to be my bond-woman, according to the law, Deut. xv. 17, "Thou shalt take an awl, and thrust it through his ear into the door, and he shall be thy servant for ever: and also unto thy maid servant thou shalt do likewise." The boring of her ear as a bond-woman, was noways inconsistent with the prophet's betrothing of her to himself, Hos. iii. 3, see Exod. xxi. 8.

I shall only add, that, accordingly, his most precious life, which was the ransom for the lives of the whole elect world, was sold by Judas for thirty pieces of silver, the stated price of the life of a bond-servant, Exod. xxi. 32, "If the ox shall push a man-servant, or maid-servant, he shall give unto their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned." And the death he was put to, namely, to die on a cross, was a Roman punishment, called by them the servile punishment, or punishment of bond-servants: because it was the death that bond-men malefactors were ordinarily doomed unto; free men seldom, if ever, according to law. And it is plain, that "Joseph who was sold for a servant," (Psalm cv. 17,) was therein a type of Christ.

Now, for the opening of this mystery of the state of servitude the Lord of glory put himself into for wretched sinners of Adam's race, we shall briefly consider the following particulars. (1.) To whom he became a servant. (2.) For whom. (3.) The necessity of it. (4.) The contract of service. (5.) His fulfilling of it. (6.) Wherefore he engaged in it.

I. To whom he became a servant. The Son of God, in our nature, became a servant to man's great Lord and Master. He put himself in a state of servitude to his Father, who said unto him, "Thou art my servant," Isa. xlix. 3. It was with his Father he entered into the contract of service: he it was that bored his ears, Psalm xl. 6. It was his Father's business he was employed in, Luke ii. 49, and to him he behoved to work, John ix. 4, "I must work the work of him that sent me." So, howbeit our Lord Jesus was and is, in respect of his divine nature, the Father's equal; yet, in that respect, he acknowledgeth the Father greater than he, as the lord is greater than the servant, John xiv. 28, "My Father is greater than I." Compare chap. xiii. 16, "The servant is not greater than his lord, neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him."

Christ is indeed called a servant of rulers, Isa. xlix. 7. But not in respect of the prime servile relation he stood in : that relation he bore to his Father only : but in regard of a secondary occasional relation ; as when a master obligeth his servant to serve another man in a particular piece of business. Thus our Lord Jesus was, by his Father, subjected to the Jewish and Roman rulers ; he paid tribute, and was by them both treated as a servant. But herein he was still about his Father's business.

II. For whom he became a servant. Our blessed Lord Jesus took on the service for and instead of others, who were bound to it, but utterly unable for it. The cup is found in Benjamin's sack ; therefore poor Benjamin, his father's darling, must be kept a bond-man in Egypt : Nay, says Judah, " Let me abide instead of the lad, a bond-man to my lord, and let Benjamin go," Gen. xlv. 33. An elect world is found guilty before the Lord ; they must therefore be bond-men for ever, as well as the rest of mankind : Nay, Father, saith our Lord, who sprang out of Judah, that yoke will be utterly insupportable to them, they will undoubtedly be ruined and perish for ever under it : I will take their state of servitude upon me, let that yoke be laid on *my* neck, let *me* be thy bond-man in their stead ; and let them go free. So be it, said God, who had set his electing love on them from eternity, I am well pleased with the exchange : thou then " art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified," Isa. xlix. 3. As to which words, it is evident from the context, that Christ is the party therein spoke to. By Israel is meant the spiritual Israel, to wit, the elect of mankind. Compare Rom. ix. 6, " They are not all Israel who are of Israel." The former text stands thus precisely in the original, " Thou art my servant ; Israel, in whom I will glorify myself." As if the Father had said to Christ, Son, these are utterly unable to make out their service ; for, their work-arm being broken by the fall, I cannot expect a good turn of their hand : be it known then, that it is agreed, that I take thee in their room and place, to perform the service due in virtue of the original contract ; thou in their stead art my servant, from whose hand I will look for that service : thou art Israel's representative in whom I will glorify myself, and make all mine attributes illustrious ; as I was dishonoured, and they darkened, by Israel the collective body of the elect. So, it was for the elect Christ became a servant.

III. The necessity of his becoming a servant for their salvation. No doubt all mankind might have been left to perish, even as the fallen angels, without any the least imputation of injustice, either on the Father, or on the Son. The saving of any of the lost

race of Adam, was not a necessary act which could not have been left undone; but an act of sovereign free grace. Howbeit, on the supposition that God would have an elect company saved, there was a necessity of Christ's taking upon himself the state of servitude for them. This will appear from the following particulars jointly considered.

1. The elect of God were, with the rest of mankind, constituted God's hired servants by the first covenant, the covenant of works; and actually entered to that their service, in their head the first Adam. And in token of this, we are all naturally inclined in that character to deal with God; though by the fall we are rendered incapable to perform the duty of it, Luke xv. 19, "Make me as one of thy hired servants." The work they were to work was perfect obedience to the holy law; the hire they were to have for their work was life; "The man which doth those things, shall live by them," Rom. x. 1. The penalty of breaking away from their master was perpetual bondage under the curse, Gal. iii. 10, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."

2. Howbeit they never made out their service: but, by the time they were well entered home, they, through the solicitation of the great runaway servant the devil, violated their covenant of service, and brake away from their Lord and Master. So they lost all plea for the hire; and justly became bond-men under the curse of the broken covenant of works, liable to be whipt to their work, and, for their malefices, to die the death of slaves, Gal. iv. 24, "These are the two covenants; the one from the Mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage." Their falling under the curse inferred the loss of their liberty, and constituted them bond-men for ever; as is evident from the nature of the thing, and instances of the cursed in other cases, as Gen. ix. 25, "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be." Josh. ix. 23, "Now therefore ye (the Gibeonites) are cursed, and there shall none of you be freed from being bond-men." The very ground being cursed, (Gen. iii. 17,) falls under bondage, according to the scripture, Rom. viii. 21. Compare Gal. iii. 13, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree;" which hath a special respect to dying on a cross, the capital punishment for bond-men.

3. By the breaking of that covenant, they lost all their ability for their service, and were left without strength, Rom. v. 6. They had no suffering strength to bear the punishment of their breaking away from their service; but they must have for ever perished under it. They had no doing or working strength left them; their work-arm, once sufficient for their service, was now quite broken,

so that they could work none at all to any good purpose: nay, they had neither hand nor heart for their work again, Rom. viii. 7, "The carnal mind is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." So it was not possible for them to make out their service, Josh. xxiv. 19, "Ye cannot serve the Lord."

4. Howbeit, the punishment due unto them, for breaking away, from their service, behoved to be borne; and the service itself behoved to be made out, according to the original contract, the covenant of works; else they could never have life and salvation. The truth of God insured this, Gen. ii. 17, "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." The honour of God's holy law and covenant required it, Isa. xlii. 21, "He will magnify the law, and make it honourable." And his exact justice confirmed it, Gen. xxviii. 15, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

Lastly, Since all this behoved to be done, and they could not do it; the misery of servitude behoved to be borne, and they were not able to bear it; the service behoved to be fulfilled, and they could by no means work it out: it was therefore absolutely necessary for their life and salvation, that Jesus Christ should come under the curse due to them, take on himself their form, put himself in the room of the poor bond-man, enter home to the service in their stead, and fully serve it out for them, transferring on himself their state of servitude, Gal. iii. 13, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Chap. iii. 3, 4, 5, "We—were in bondage under the elements of the world: But—God sent forth his Son—made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law."

IV. The contract of the service. It is the covenant of grace, made between the Father and Christ, the second Adam, representing all the elect his spiritual seed. The covenant of grace is justly looked upon as a covenant of service, strictly and properly so called; wherein so much work is to be done for so much wages. But it is a lamentable abuse of the covenant of grace, by legalists in their principles, and many of the communicants in their practice, that they put the work, for earning of the wages, in the wrong hand; namely, that they shall be the workers, and eternal life the hire of their work. This is to trample under foot God's covenant of grace, and to make a new one of our own, which he will never approve of. Heaven's device in this case was, that Christ should be the worker for life and salvation to poor sinners; and that they should get life and salvation, through him, by free grace; and so work from life and salvation received, as sons entitled to the in-

heritance antecedently to all their working, Rom. vi. 23, "For the wages of sin is death: but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Chap. iv. 4, 5, "Now to him that worketh, is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." So the covenant of grace was, in respect of Christ, a covenant of service in the strictest sense; and the reward is of debt to him, and him only, as the servant that worked for it, according to the covenant: and none but he was fit for that service.

Here consider, 1. This contract of service was entered into from eternity, Tit. i. 2, "In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the world began." The covenant by which salvation is to be had, is not a covenant of yesterday, or of to-day, now to be made by us: it was made in every point thereof before the world was. What remains for us is to take hold of it by faith. 2. The design of it was, (1.) To illustrate the divine glory, much darkened by the hired servants of God's own house. There was, by sin, an invasion made upon God's declarative glory and honour, and Jesus Christ was chosen to make the reparation. So, whatever wrong was done to the sovereignty, justice, holiness, and goodness of God, or any other the divine perfections, by the sin of those in whose room he stood, it is laid upon him to repair it, Isa. xlix. 3. (2.) To save lost sinners; to restore the Israel of God, whether Jews or Gentiles, to life and favour, Isa. xlix. 6. God had set his love from eternity on a select company of mankind: they were lost, ruined, and undone, and they must be saved: and Jesus Christ enters into his Father's service for that effect. 3. The service, which in this contract he undertook to perform, was, to fulfil the whole law for them; fully to answer in their room and stead, the demands which the broken covenant of works, the original contract had upon them, Heb. x. 9, "Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." Thus the parts of the service were these two; (1.) His bearing the punishment which they, as the breakers of the law, were bound to underly in virtue of the penalty of the covenant of works. And hereby he was to satisfy the penalty of that covenant, the law's sanction of death. (2.) His performing the obedience which they were still bound to fulfil, by the same covenant of works, though broken. And hereby he was to satisfy the commanding part of that covenant, requiring perfect obedience for life, Gal. iv. 4, 5, "God sent forth his Son—made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law." Chap. iii. 13, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us."

Matth. iii. 15, "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness."

4. The covenanted reward of the service was a glorious exaltation to himself, and eternal life for them. Of the former the apostle makes mention, Philip. ii. 2, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him." Of the latter, Tit. i. 2, "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began."

V. The fulfilling of the service, according to his contract. It was a hard service; but he went through with it, "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, Philip. ii. 8. And herein three things are to be considered.

1. He entered to his service, in his being conceived and born holy for them; so bringing a holy human nature into the world with him, which he retained unspotted to the end. Thus he answered the demand which the law had on them, for original holiness, holiness of nature, as a condition of life, Isa. ix. 6, "Unto us (or for us, chap. vi. 8,) a child is born:" even that holy thing, Luke i. 35. That this was a piece of the service he performed for them, and was indeed his entering to his service, appears by comparing Psalm xl. 6, "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, mine ears hast thou opened," (Heb.) digged through; with Heb. x. 5, "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me." Where the digging through, or boring of his ears to God's door-post, in the room and stead of the elect, is expounded of preparing him a body, a human nature.

2. He went on in his service in the righteousness of his life, being "obedient even unto death," Philip. ii. 8. All that he did in the space of about thirty-three years he lived upon earth, was working the work of his service, to the fulfilling of the whole law in its commands; which was that work wherein the first Adam failed, and so ruined all mankind. And thus the great Surety servant answered the demand which the law had on the elect, for perfect righteousness of conversation, as the condition of life, John xvi. 4, "I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work thou gavest me to do."

Lastly, Having suffered all his life long, in which he was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, he completed and finished his service in his death and burial; thus answering for them the law's demand of satisfaction for sin, John xix. 30, "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost." The term of his continuance in this state of servitude was, according to the covenant, till death, but no longer. This account of the matter he himself gives us, John ix. 4, "I must work the works of him that sent me, while

it is day : the night (viz. of death) cometh when no man can work." He was to serve during all the days of his life ; that is, in the language of the law, for ever, Exod. xxi. 6, " His master shall bore his ear through with an awl, and he shall serve him for ever," *i. e.* till death. In common cases, the law made an exception here of a jubilee intervening : but in the case of the great bond-servant, the Lord of glory, there was no such exception : nor could there be, in regard the true jubilee was to be brought about by his death. Howbeit, in the grave " the servant is free from his master," Job iii. 19 : so, having served out his full time, there he put off the form of a servant : and he rose and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living," Rom. xiv. 9.

VI. And *Lastly*, Wherefore he put himself into, and took on him, this state of servitude.

1. Love to his Father, and the love he had to his designed spouse, the captive daughter of Zion, and to his children the spiritual seed, engaged him to undertake it ; as in the case of the servant under the law, Exod. xxi. 5, " I love my master, my wife, and my children, I will not go out free." He saw that his Father would entirely lose his service from all mankind, if he did not in their nature take the service on himself ; the whole tribe of Adam, from the least to the greatest, being utterly disabled for it. Wherefore, for his Father's glory, the honour of his holy law, his justice and his mercy, he " took on him the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men." The captive daughter of Zion, his Father's choice, and his own choice, for a spouse to him, he could not have, but, as Jacob had Rachel, by serving for her, as unlovely and unsightly as she was. But he loved her freely, he loved her infinitely ; and, because he so loved, he took on the form of a servant for her, and, as the true Israel, served for a wife, Hos. xii. 12. He loved his children, the spiritual seed, the elect given him of his Father : notwithstanding of all the burden cleaving to them, he would not quit them : he saw they would be lost, if he should go out from them free ; therefore he consented to the boring of his ears, to serve all the days of his life upon the earth.

2. He took it on him, for releasing them from that state of servitude or bondage which their father Adam, by his mismanagement, had brought himself and all mankind into. What Judah offered to do, in the case of Benjamin his brother, Gen. xlv. 33, Christ really performed in the case of his brethren, becoming a bond-man in their stead, that they might be free. They were in bondage under the law, under the curse of the broken covenant of works : and they could never, by all their own doings and sufferings, have worked themselves out of their bondage ; but had perished in it, had not he put himself into their room and stead.

3. He did it for paying their debt. The law, in some cases, allowed parents to sell their children for paying their debt. Hence the Lord saith unto Israel, "Which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you?" Isa. l. 1. Thereby showing, that it was not to him, but to themselves their ruin was owing. We have a story to this purpose of one of the sons of the prophets, who was a holy man, but had died in debt: it is thus related by his poor widow, 2 Kings iv. 1, "Thy servant my husband is dead, and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the Lord: and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bond-men." Thus stood the case with the elect. Their father Adam, who ruined his own family, had brought a burden of debt on them, as well as on the rest of his children; he had left them under a double debt, a debt of obedience, and a debt of punishment, which they were utterly unable to pay. And Justice, as the creditor, was come to take them away for bond-men, and force them to serve for payment of the debt, never to be released till the last farthing of it was fully served for: but Christ said, O Justice, allow them to stay, and take me for a bond-man in their stead; if the service for payment of the debt lie on them, they will perish under it, and the debt will never be paid out: but I will serve for them. It was accepted: and the Lord Jesus took their room, and went away with the creditor for a bond-man in their stead.

Lastly, He took on him the form of a servant, to bring them into a state of adoption in the family of God. He became a bond-servant, that they might become sons and daughters. This the apostle plainly teacheth, Gal. iv. 1, "The heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant,"—ver. 3, "Even so we—were in bondage."—ver. 4, "But God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law," ver. 5, "To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."

USE I. What is said may serve for convincing, awakening, and alarming sinners who are strangers to Jesus Christ, whether they be profane persons, or formal hypocrites. Being yet in your natural state, not united to Christ; ye are in a state of bondage, there is a terrible and heavy yoke wreathed about your necks, from which ye are not able to deliver yourselves. Ye are bond-men under the law: and so,

1. It lies upon you, to perform and fulfil the service which man was bound to by the covenant of works, even to give perfect obedience to the law, under the pain of the curse: for to yon it saith, Rom. iii. 19, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." Now, ye are utterly

unable for this, and shall as soon remove these mountains as perform it: therefore ye can never be saved, while ye are out of Christ. Behold, in Christ's taking on him the form of a servant, how that service behoved of necessity to be performed, according to the law, ere one sinner could be saved. And if God did so stand upon the honour of his law with his own Son, that he behoved completely to fulfil that service for those whom he should save; it is vain for you to slight Christ, and think that God will grant an abatement of that service to you. Nay, as matters stand betwixt God and you, if you obey not perfectly, you do nothing to purpose: no less can be accepted off your hand, since ye are not in Christ by faith.

2. It lies upon you to bear the punishment due to you for breaking away from God your Lord and Master; according to the threatening, Gen. ii. 17, "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." All that ye can suffer in this world, will not be a sufficient compensation for the wrong thereby done to the honour of an infinite God: nay, ye shall never be able, through the ages of eternity, to exhaust that punishment, and get w^rom under it. None less than he, who was in the form of God, and equal with God, was able to go through it: therefore the Son of God took on him the form of a servant, that therein he might bear it, and bear it away from all that believe. A certain proof that none out of Christ shall escape it.

Consider then, I beseech you, what ye are doing: and see here, how precisely God stands to his having the service, owing him in virtue of the first covenant, fully made out; that, rather than any should be saved without its being fulfilled, he would have his own Son to take on him the form of a servant, and fulfil it for them.

USE II. Let all be exhorted to flee to the Lord Jesus Christ, and by faith to embrace him, and the service performed by him, as their only plea for life and salvation. Here is a mystery of faith; "Christ took upon him the form of a servant," proposed to be believed and applied by each one in particular to himself, for salvation. And surely it will be good tidings.

1. To the poor broken-hearted sinner, who sees he cannot serve the Lord according to the demand of the law, but one way or other mars every piece of work he takes in hand; who is out of conceit with his own best doings, because they are so ill done. There is a service performed by the Mediator for sinners, that is perfect even in the eye of the law. It is done, it is completed, and life and salvation is thereby gained for all that shall believe.

2. To such as are under the terror of the threatenings and curse of the holy law, for their running away from God's service, and

the dishonour they have done to the great Master. Here is the way of peace and reconciliation, by which ye may return to him as a Father; even through his own Son, who, for sinners, "took upon him the form of a servant," and finished his work.

Jesus Christ, with his service, and all the benefits thereof, is offered unto you this day: refuse him not, but take him as exhibited unto you in the gospel-offer. Take him for your righteousness, in which you will stand before the Lord; take him for your treasure, out of which all your debt shall be paid; take him for your work, from whence alone your righteousness shall arise for your justification before the Lord; take him for your Husband, Head, and Lord: take him for your all in all. Take himself, and his service shall be imputed to you; his state of servitude, which is now over, shall make thee a son or daughter of God's family: in him thou shalt be "received for ever, not now as a servant, but above a servant;" as Paul speaks in the case of Onesimus, a runaway bond-servant, Phil. 15, 16. So shall you get both heart and hand for working good works, works truly good; as children working to their Father, having the inheritance secured to them before, by the works of their elder Brother.

OBJECT. 1. "But will ever Christ make me partaker of the benefits of this service, who have served my lusts, instead of serving him?"
ANSW. Christ became not a bond-servant, but for those who were in bondage to sin and Satan: and it was the very end for which he took on him the form of a servant, that, by communicating to them the benefits of his service, he might deliver them from the service of sin, and cause them to serve him, Luke i. 74, "That we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him." Doubt not then, but that, coming to him, ye shall be partakers of the benefits of his service, to all intents and purposes of salvation: and particularly, that ye may be no more bond-servants under sin, but honorary servants to himself, whatever ye have been heretofore. "For we ourselves also were sometimes—serving divers lusts and pleasures," Tit. iii. 3, "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

OBJECT. 2. "I fear I am none of these in whose room and stead Christ took on him the form of a servant: how then can I embrace him, and apply his service to me, by believing?"
ANSW. Your right to take him, and apply his service to yourself by believing, doth not at all depend on that matter, which is a secret not to be known by you till ye do believe; but it depends on the offer of Christ, his service which he served, and righteousness which he

thereby wrought, made to you in the gospel of God, Rev. xxii. 17, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Howbeit Christ took on him the form of a servant, only in the name and stead of the elect; yet a slain Saviour, a crucified Jesus, having fulfilled the bond-service, is the ordinance of God for life and salvation unto all; that whosoever of all Adam's race "believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life," John iii. 16. And his service or righteousness is a gift made over in the gospel to all the hearers of it; so as it is lawful for them, and every one of them, to take possession of it by believing. Hence, according to the apostle, to believe, is to "receive the abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness," Rom. v. 17. And this is so certain, that ye must either receive it and be saved; or be held, in the court of heaven, refusers of heaven's gift of righteousness made to you, and so perish for ever with a double destruction, Mark xvi. 16, "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved: but he that believeth not, shall be damned."

USE *last*, O Christians, communicants, come to the Lord's table with the faith and admiration of this stupendous mystery, "Christ in the form of a bond-servant for you." See it in the exact justice of God, the invaluable price of your salvation from sin and wrath, and the strongest motive to the obedience of sons. And let the faith of it fill your hearts with love to him, who so loved us; with repentance and kindly sorrow for your sin, which brought God's equal so very low; with thankfulness for this unspeakable benefit; and with holy purposes of new obedience.

The continuation of the improvement.

This doctrine of Christ's state of servitude is too fruitful, both in point of faith and practice, to be dismissed without further improvement: therefore I shall now endeavour to improve it for your further instruction, and for exciting to the practice of holiness.

FIRST, This doctrine discovers the ground and reason of several other gospel truths, which spring from it as a root-principle. And, among these, I shall take notice of the following particulars.

1. Here is a clear ground, upon which the dead elect, incapable by any work or doing of their own, to make themselves to differ from others, are, in a consistency with God's impartial justice, quickened, and endowed with saving faith, while others remain dead about them; quickening grace coming on them as a dew from the Lord, as showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men," Micah v. 7. Our Lord Jesus having, in their name, taken on him the form of a bond-servant, did, in their

room and stead, perform the service required of them by the broken covenant of works, the original contract of service; but he did not perform that service in the room and stead of others. Hence, though not to others, yet to them is given life, as the reward of the service performed for them by the second Adam; even as their life was lost through the marring of that service in the hands of the first Adam. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive," 1 Cor. xv. 22, *i. e.*, as all Adam's natural seed die, by his breaking off from the service; so all Christ's spiritual seed shall be made alive by his fulfilling it for them. And now that the Lord Jesus, having finished his service by his death and burial, is risen again to be Lord of the dead and of the living; how can they miss of being quickened, each one in his time, since he lives, to see that the life, for which he served a hard service, be made forthcoming to them, according to the contract of service he entered into with his Father? "Because he lives, they shall live also."

2. Here is a clear ground, upon which the obedience of the man Christ may be imputed to believers for righteousness, as well as his satisfaction by suffering: notwithstanding obedience was due from the human nature of Christ as a creature. For it is evident that Christ's obeying his Father in the character of a bond-servant (which is it that is imputed to us for righteousness) could no more be due, antecedently to his contract of service, than his satisfaction by suffering.

3. Here is the ground upon which believers in Christ come to be justified before God; not upon the account of any thing wrought in them, or any work or deed done by them, whether the grace of faith itself, their act of believing, or any gospel obedience of theirs whatsoever, imputed to them for righteousness, but upon the account of Christ's service allennarly, imputed to them for their whole and only righteousness in the sight of God, according to the apostle's desire that he might "be found in him, not having his own righteousness—but that which is through the faith of Christ," Philip. iii. 9. For in the second covenant there was a transferring on him their state of servitude, under which they stood bound to make out the service, which was the condition of life: accordingly he wrought the work, and fulfilled the service for life, in their name and stead, both in the doing and suffering part of it. Now, they being united to him by faith, his righteousness arising from that service becomes theirs, and so is justly imputed to them. And since a holy, just God insisted to have his service, according to the original contract fulfilled for life and salvation to poor sinners, and Jesus Christ was the servant who did that work, not they; it cannot be, that any

thing else whatsoever should be imputed to them for righteousness, but Christ's service, which he himself served, and for the performing of which he took upon him the form of a bond-servant, Rom. iii. 22, 24, "Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe.—Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ." 2 Cor. v. 21, "For he made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." It is to his bearing the punishment due to the runaway servants, we owe the pardon of all our sins; and to the obedience given by him only, we owe our acceptance, as positively righteous in the sight of God.

4. Here is a clear and solid ground upon which believers in Christ are delivered from the covenant of works; or delivered from the law, considered as that covenant. For that broken covenant being so far ingrossed in the covenant with the second Adam, as that from it the service he was to perform in their room and stead was stated in all the parts thereof, it plainly follows, that the service being fully performed by him accordingly for them, and being really become theirs by faith, they are wholly delivered from that covenant; so that it can demand no more service of them, than a master can demand of a servant, who, in the person of another by him accepted, has served out his time, and so hath a right to the full hire, Rom. vii. 4, "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ." John viii. 36, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

5. Here is the ground upon which believers are no more bond-servants, to work for life and salvation, to get it by their own works; but advanced to the dignity of sons, and to serve as sons, to whom the inheritance belongs in virtue of their relation to their Father. For since the Lord Jesus Christ took on him the form of a bond-servant for them: and, having finished that service in their stead, became free again; they, being united to Christ by faith, can no longer remain bond-servants; it being the very end of Christ's becoming a bond-servant to set them free. This is their right and privilege before the Lord; howbeit, through the weakness of their faith they often serve the Lord as bond-men. And since it was the Son of God, the Father's equal, who served in the character of a bond-servant for them, they are, by the merit of that service, advanced to be sons of the house of heaven. From this ground it is that the apostle draws that conclusion concerning every believer, Gal. iv. 7, "Wherefore thou art no more a servant, (*i. e.* a bond-servant), but a son." Compare the preceding six verses of that chapter.

6. Here is the ground upon which believers are set beyond the reach of the curse, are freed from the guilt of eternal or revenging wrath, and can never for shorter or longer time fall under condemnation; howbeit their sins make them liable to all the effects of God's fatherly anger. For Christ taking on him the form of a bond-servant for them, bore all the curse, revenging wrath, and condemnation due to them for all their sins, whether before or after their union with him: the which service done for them is imputed to them, upon their believing in him; and from that moment is ever upon them, never again disimputed. The truth is, the curse would reduce them into the state of bond-servants again, and so un-son them; as condemnation, and the guilt of eternal wrath, speak the sinner on whom they fall to be a bond-servant, and not a son. Thus teach the holy scriptures, Gal. iii. 13, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." Chap. iv. 7, "Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son." Rom. viii. 1, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." Isa. liv. 9, "For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: (which waters were a type of the flood of wrath, wherewith Christ the true ark was tossed, 1 Pet. iii. 20, 21,) "For as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee." Psalm lxxxix. 31, 32, "If they break my statutes:—Then will I visit their transgression with the rod."

7. Here is the fountain-head of sanctification through faith in Christ; which is the only true sanctification competent to fallen Adam's children, the spring of all holy obedience and good works to be found amongst them. A sinful creature, in a state of servitude or bondage, under the law or covenant of works, is a bond-servant to sin: for "the strength of sin is the law," 1 Cor. xv. 56, binding over the sinner to death, yea, binding him down under death. And, being a bond-servant to sin, he is in bondage to Satan too; since the power of sin is his sceptre, whereby he rules over the children of fallen Adam. Hence, while the sinful man continues in bondage under that covenant, sin retains its full force and sway over him; even as the vermin doth over the dead corpse in the grave; so that he can neither be truly good, nor do any thing truly good. But the holy Jesus becoming a bond-servant under the law, in the room and stead of the sinful creature, answered all the demands thereof; and having finished the service, was, of course, freed from its yoke, which he had voluntarily taken on himself. Now, the sinner uniting with him by faith, Christ's service is imputed to him. Hence his bondage under the law as the

covenant of works is done away ; and he partakes more abundantly of the promised life of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus : so the reigning power of sin and Satan over him is broken, and he dies unto sin and lives unto righteousness, in holy obedience to the law of the ten commandments, as a rule of life to him in the hand of the Prince of life. Thus unholy creatures are sanctified in Christ Jesus, 1 Cor. i. 2. sanctified by faith, Acts xxvi. 18. And this the apostle plainly teacheth, Rom. vii. 5, 6, " For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sin, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held, that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter."

8. Here is the ground in law, for the perseverance of the saints ; that they shall never fall away totally nor finally, but the life given them, in their union with Christ, must needs be eternal, never to die out, from the moment it is given, through the ages of eternity. For the service upon which their life depends, is completely performed by Jesus Christ : and the life, which was the promised reward of that service, is actually bestowed on them in some measure : which life, therefore, can never totally nor finally fail, without the failure of the promise, the true and proper condition of which is already fulfilled. Wherefore, the time of trial (in the sense of the first covenant) for life and salvation to believers, being now over, in the second Adam their head engaging in the service ; their perseverance is as sure as the faithfulness of God can make it. And thus the apostle proves the perseverance of the saints, Heb. x. 38, from the testimony of the prophet, Hab. iv. 4. For, as the law saith, " He that doth these things shall live : " so the gospel saith, " The just by faith shall live : " as some valuable interpreters read this text, and, I think, rightly.

Lastly, Here is the only ground of their right to, and upon which they are put in possession of, complete life and salvation in heaven, namely, Christ's works and service performed for them, and pleaded by them in the way of believing. For what plea can one have for the hire or reward, either as to the right to it, or the possession of it, but the performance of the service upon the account of which it was promised ? Now, Christ alone performed that service : therefore we cannot found our plea before the Lord for heaven's happiness, on any other ground but Christ's works and service. Paul renounceth all other grounds, and thinks himself very safe upon this alone, while he desires to " be found in Christ, not having his own righteousness,—but that which is through the faith of Christ," Phil. iii. 9. For " they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ," Rom. v.

17. And the great design of the contrivance of salvation was, "That grace might reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord," ver. 21. There is a glorious recompense of reward, that follows the saints' work and labour of love: but the truth is, it is (properly and strictly speaking) the reward of the service of their head, not of the service of their hands.

SECONDLY, This doctrine of Christ's state of servitude, is a most powerful incentive to gospel-obedience; and, being applied to one's self by faith, will be found to be a spring of holiness of heart and life. And thus it may be improved. (1.) More generally. (2.) More particularly.

First, More generally, in two branches.

I. If ye have any part or lot in this matter of Christ's service, let it be the business of your life to serve the Lord Christ: say peremptorily and resolutely, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord," Josh. xxiv. 15. And devote yourselves to the service of God in Christ, which is your reasonable service. Serve him in the duties of worship, external and internal; serve him in secret, in your families, in the congregations of his people: serve him in first-table duties, and in second-table duties: serve him in your civil actions, and in your natural actions; "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God:" serve him in the several stations and relations wherein he has placed you: serve him in doing for him, and suffering for him, as he calls you. Set his holy law before you, in its spirituality and vast extent; and know that it is the rule and measure of the service ye owe him. Look upon the service Christ performed for you, and let it excite and animate you to serve him.

Here is a powerful motive, to engage you to serve him. And that it may have its due influence upon you to that effect, consider,

1. He was in the form of God, and God's equal, who served for you: ye were born in bondage, under the law, bond-servants to sin and Satan, the worst of masters. If you "look to the rock whence ye were hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye were digged;" and withal look unto the Son of God, leaving the Father's bosom, descending from his throne of majesty, laying aside the robes of his glory, and taking on the form of a servant, therein to serve for you; ye must needs be haled to his service by the overcoming force of his believed humiliation, 2 Cor. v. 14, "For the love of Christ constraineth us."

2. He has no need of your service to him, but ye were in absolute need of his service for you. Though ye had remained bond-slaves to Satan for ever, the want of your service, and all the disservice

ye could have done the Lord of glory, could not have hurt him; nor can your service add any thing to his happiness, Job xxxv. 7, 8. But, without his service for you, ye had perished for ever, ye had been bound hand and foot in utter darkness, for your breaking the first covenant of service. Are not ye and your service then wholly his? And, if ye believe ye had perished eternally unless he had served for you, can ye refuse him your service?

3. The service he performed for you was hard service; the yoke he puts upon you is easy, and the burden light, Matth. xi. 30. He served as a bond-servant for you; he requires you to serve him as a son serveth his father, Mal. iii. 17. If his people make their own service harder, they owe it not to his Spirit, but to their own spirit, or a worse, Rom. viii. 15, "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear." No less than obedience, every way perfect, could be accepted at his hand: but he will graciously accept sincere obedience, attended with many imperfections, at your hand. He had a hot service, a hot working service, a hot fighting service for you, in the fire of the wrath of God, which burnt against him, as standing in your room. Behold him in the garden, in a cold night, sweating great drops of blood at his service! behold him on the cross, at once grappling with the Father's wrath, the rage and power of devils and men! and hear him calling for your service on that very score, Cant. v. 2, "Open to me:—for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night."

4. His service being finished, he is now, in consequence thereof, exalted to be Lord of all, Phil. ii. 9, 10, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow." He is now crowned King in Zion; and all are solemnly commanded by the authority of Heaven to submit to him, and serve him, to kiss the Son, Psalm ii. 12. Our Joseph, who was sold for a servant, is now brought forth of the dungeon, and made ruler over all the land: he rides in the second chariot, and it is cried before him, "Bow the knee." His sheaf now stands upright: let all his brethren bow down before him, even to the earth. Behold him, O believer, who served for thee in the character of a bond-servant, now highly exalted, all power given unto him in heaven and in earth: behold him sitting on the right hand of the throne of majesty, commending thee to the broad law of the ten commands, the eternal rule of righteousness; and strictly binding thee to obedience thereto, by the authority of God thy Creator and Preserver; and with the additional tie of his mediatory authority, his right of redemption over thee, and his dying love to thee, which may well supply the place

of the bond of the covenant of works, and the curse, the only tie unto obedience which he hath taken from off thee by his service.

5. Christ served his hard and sore service for you, to this very end, that ye, being delivered from your bondage and slavery under sin and the curse, "might serve him in holiness and righteousness," Luke i. 74, 75. It was for this end the Lord Jesus undertook his service for you: why would ye then go about to frustrate the end of your Redeemer's undertaking for you? is this your kindness to your friend? It is unthankfulness with a witness, to refuse him your service, to which ye are bound by the strongest ties of gratitude for the greatest favour from your best friend.

6. Your service is dear bought; grudge it not. It is the price of blood, the blood of the Son of God, "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works," Tit. ii. 14. Serving the Lord is a precious privilege, as well as a duty; for it is a part of heaven's happiness, Rev. xxii. 3. "His servants shall serve him." Ye were in bondage to sin and Satan, which would not permit you to serve the Lord; until Christ, by his service, took their yoke from off your necks. Ye were in bondage under the curse, that no service to God could be accepted at your hand; till ye were relieved through Christ's becoming a curse for you. Ye were bound hand and foot, yea, dead in trespasses and sins, that ye could not serve the Lord; until his precious blood set you free, and his death gave you life and strength. And shall your service, the purchase of blood, be withheld from the glorious Purchaser? So far as it is so, it is doubtless owing to unbelief. O believer, look to the cross of Christ, and behold how he paid for every good work, every good word, yea, every good thought of thine. There is not one of these found, or that shall be found with thee, through the ages of eternity, but it springs from the merit and never-failing efficacy of Christ's service. And, had not the Lord Jesus taken on him the form of a servant for us, there had never been one piece of acceptable service to God, one good work, word, or thought, found among the children of men, after the breach of the first covenant.

7. There is a glorious and full reward, gained by Christ's service, awaiting all his servants at the end of their course; even the full enjoyment of God in the other world: in which ye shall be completely happy to all eternity, 1 Thess. iv. 17, "So shall we ever be with the Lord." 1 John iii. 27, "We shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." Our Lord Jesus having run in the name and on the head of the blessed company, the designed heirs of glory, and having won the prize for them all; now sits on a throne at the

end of the race, with the prize in his hand, calling you to make haste and follow him, and to run so, in faith and obedience, that you may obtain, 1 Cor. ix. 24. Have "respect to the recompense of reward," Heb. xi. 26. Set and keep your eye upon it, all along in your service, as a won prize, and won for you, by the great Servant: and let the hope of it excite, animate, and encourage you to the hardest pieces of service in your way towards it. The time is but short: wherefore, though your service be difficult, it will not be longsome. And the glorious reward will more than counterbalance all your toil. And remember, that according to your works in his service, so will your share of the reward be, greater or smaller, 2 Cor. ix. 6, "He which soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly: and he which soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully." The reason is, because both our service to God, and our reward, are purely and equally the fruits of Christ's service for us; and so they are proportioned to the efficacy of it in us; wherefore, according to the efficacy of Christ's service in us, so will our service be, and so will our reward be; and so the greater service, the greater reward.

8. If ye do indeed belong to Christ, as these for whom he served, ye shall certainly serve him. For, if he was crucified for you, your old man was nailed to the same cross with him, that sin might be destroyed in you, and you might serve him; Rom. vi. 6, "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." And your service is a part of the reward of his service, which he cannot lose; for he has his Father's faithfulness engaged for it, in the promise of the covenant made to him, Psalm xxii. 30, "A seed shall serve him;" they shall serve him sincerely here, and perfectly hereafter. So that heaven and earth shall be overturned, and the whole frame and course of nature reversed, rather than one soul, for which Christ served, be left in bondage to its lusts.

Take heed then to yourselves; for your deliverance from the bondage of your lusts, and your serving the Lord, is the necessary decisive evidence of your part in Christ, of any saving interest in him and his service. If ye serve him in truth, his service is yours, imputed to you for all the purposes of life and salvation. If ye serve him not, ye have neither part nor lot in that matter, but must perish for ever, Luke xiii. 3, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Rom. viii. 13, "If ye live after the flesh ye shall die: but if ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." If ye be not his servants, to serve him, ye are slaves to the devil and your lusts; and ye shall die the death of slaves

for your transgressions: ye shall die a cursed death, under the curse of the law, staking you down under eternal wrath, from which ye shall never be able to lift your head: ye shall die a shameful death, stripped of all covering whatsoever, the whole world beholding your shame; ye shall die a death painful beyond expression, through revenging wrath, like nails and spears, piercing into your very souls: and ye shall die a lingering death, spun out through all the ages of eternity.

Lastly, By Christ's service there is strength purchased, where-with ye may serve him; and it lies open to you, to be improved in the way of believing, for enabling you to your work, Isa. xlv. 24, "Surely, shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength." The service which the Lord Jesus took off our hand upon himself, namely, the bond-service, was what we neither had nor could have strength for. Strength for the suffering part of it man never had; strength for the working part of it man once indeed had, but now it is lost. Hence these who continue in the bond-service still, under the law or covenant of works, can work none at all; they can work no work truly good and acceptable in the sight of God. And it is vain, upon that view, to bid them work, without directing them, in the first place, to get in to Jesus Christ from under that covenant. But now the Mediator has purchased a new stock of strength, for the new service which he puts in our hand; and it is lodged in himself, treasured up in him as the head of influences: and in the faith of it we are to set about our work, 2 Tim. ii. 1, "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." So shall we be enabled for the hardest service required of us, Philip. iv. 13, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Come then, and resolutely ply the service he calls you to.

II. If ye have any part or lot in Christ's service, serve him as sons and daughters; serve him as a son serveth his father, not as a bond-servant serveth his master. If thou art in Christ, "thou art no more a servant, (*i. e.* a bond-servant), but a son." Gal. iv. 7. Serve him then agreeable to the character ye bear before him. As it is your duty, so it is your high privilege, that ye have access to serve him in that manner. It is the price of Christ's blood; slight it not. He served as a bond-man, that ye might serve as sons. Ye had been bond-servants for ever, had not the Son of God become a bond-servant for you, being "made under the law, that ye might receive the adoption of sons," Gal. iv. 4, 5. And indeed he only was fit to serve God in that character: none else was able to have managed it acceptably. Wherefore,

1. Serve him out of love to him; let your work and labour be a "work and labour of love," Heb. vi. 10. Behold the Son of God serving a hard service in your stead, from love to his Father, and love to you who were altogether unlovely; and let the love of Christ constrain you to obedience. Believing views of Christ in the form of a servant will produce this constraining love, 2 Cor. v. 14, "For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all," &c. They will also prevent your acting from a slavish fear of punishment, and a servile hope of reward, both of them unbecoming the state of sonship, 2 Tim. i. 7, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear: but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." As, on the other hand, they will fill you with a filial fear of God's fatherly anger, and a son-like hope of the purchased and promised reward.

2. Serve him universally, so as ye may "stand perfect and complete in all the will of God," Col. iv. 12. The Spirit of adoption brings men unto this evangelical perfection: but a sinner serving God in the state of bondage will never comply with the whole will of God; but there will still be exceptions lying in the heart of such a one against some one or other piece of commanded service. This is evident from the Psalmist's testimony, Psalm cxix. 3, "Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments." Serve ye the Lord then as sons, sticking at no piece of service commanded you, however painful, costly, or dangerous; for at this rate Christ served for you, sparing neither pains nor cost, and sticking at no danger.

Lastly, Serve him constantly, even to the end, Psalm. cxix. 112, "I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes alway, even unto the end." It argues the spirit of a sinner in the state of bondage, to ply the work no longer than the whip is held over one's head, or than one has something to gain to himself by his work, Job xxvii. 10, "Will he delight himself in the Almighty? will he always call upon God?" Shew yourselves sons of God, by cleaving to his service continually, and never going back again to your old masters. Remember him who was obedient even unto death.

Secondly, And more particularly, If ye have any part or lot in this matter, let the same mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus, who for you took on him the form of a servant.

1. Be of a loving and charitable disposition towards your brethren the sons of men. Be concerned for the good of others, as well as for your own. Lay aside all hatred, malice and revenge, envy and grudge, at the good of others, as ever ye would shew yourselves

partakers of the Spirit of Christ. Love your neighbour as yourselves. Let the love that Christ shewed to his Father and to mankind, in taking on the form of a servant in man's nature, inspire you with this love.

2. "As ye have opportunity, do good," and be serviceable "unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith," Gal. vi. 10. Whether they be good or bad, withhold not ye the good that is in the power of your hand to do them. The Father set his love on a select company of mankind: but they behoved to be redeemed, to be bought from destruction with a price: and no sooner was it proposed to the Son to do this for them, but he consented to it, and to take on him the form of a servant for that effect. If the same mind be in you that was in Christ, it will not divert you from doing good to men, though you are nothing obliged to them, they are unworthy of kindness, have done wrong to you, and ye cannot expect compensation from them. Could any or all of these arguments have prevailed with the Son of God to withhold his helping hand from us, we had been all under bondage to this day, without hope of relief. And let it move you to do good to the saints in a special manner, that they are the persons in particular for whom Christ took on him the form of a servant.

3. Put on bowels of humanity, mercies, and compassion towards those who are in distress, Col. iii. 12. A selfish and untender disposition, void of sympathy with those in misery, is most unlike that mind which was in Christ Jesus, who, in his pity towards miserable sinners, laid aside the robes of his glory, and took on him the form of a servant, that he might relieve them. But "he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy," James. ii. 13.

4. Shew a strict regard to justice in your dealings; and be conscientious in giving every one his due. It was from regard to justice and that the service due unto God from the elect, in virtue of the original contract, might be performed, that Jesus Christ took on him the form of a servant, and made out the service.

5. Be humble, and condescend to low things necessary for the good of others. For this we have the example of God's equal, taking on him the form of a servant: which may fill the faces of the proud and selfish with shame and blushing, John xiii. 14, 15, "If I then your Lord and Master have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you."

Lastly, Be mortified to the ease, pomp and splendour of the world. Be ready at God's call, to forego the comforts of a present life, in

the believing prospect of a better; "looking unto Jesus, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame:" and sit down contented, though the world should neither give you its good word, nor its kind look. All the time that our blessed Lord Jesus Christ was in the world, from his birth to his burial, he was in it in the character of a bond-servant: and accordingly had but coarse entertainment, hard lodging, being held in no reputation, and at length buffeted, scourged, and crucified.