

The Spirit of Bondage and of  
Adoption.

A

S E R M O N

On R o M. viii. 15.

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## R O M. VIII. xv.

*Ye have not received the Spirit of Bondage again unto Fear : But ye have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*

1. **S**T. PAUL here speaks to those who are the Children of God by Faith. Ye, saith he, who are indeed his Children, have drank into his Spirit. *Ye have not received the Spirit of Bondage again unto Fear. But because ye are Sons, GOD hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your Hearts. Ye have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father !*

2. The Spirit of Bondage and Fear is widely distant from this loving Spirit of Adoption. Those who are influenced only by slavish Fear, cannot be term'd, The Sons of God. Yet some of them may be stiled his Servants, and are *not far from the Kingdom of Heaven.*

3. But it is to be fear'd, the Bulk of Mankind, yea, of what is call'd *The Christian World*, have not attain'd even this ; but are still afar off, *neither is GOD in all their Thoughts.* A few Names may be found of those who love God : A few more there are that fear him. But the greater Part have neither the Fear of God before their Eyes, nor the Love of God in their Hearts.

4. Perhaps most of you, who by the Mercy of God, now partake of a better Spirit, may remember the Time, when ye were as they, when ye were under the same Condemnation. But at first ye knew it not, tho' ye were wallowing daily in your Sins and in your Blood : 'Till in due time ye *received the Spirit of Fear* (ye received ; for this also is the Gift of God) And afterwards, Fear vanish'd away, and the Spirit of Love fill'd your Hearts.

5. One who is in the first State of Mind, without

Fear or Love, is in Scripture term'd *a natural Man*. One who is under the Spirit of Bondage and Fear, is sometimes said to be *under the Law*: (Altho' that Expression more frequently signifies One, who is under the *Jewish Dispensation*, who thinks himself obliged to observe all the Rites and Ceremonies of the *Jewish Law*.) But one who has exchanged the Spirit of Fear for the Spirit of Love, is properly said, To be *under Grace*.

Now because it highly imports us, to know what Spirit we are of, I shall endeavour to point out distinctly, First, The State of a *natural Man*, Secondly, That of one who is *under the Law*, and Thirdly, of one who is *under Grace*.

I. 1. And, First, The State of a *natural Man*. This the Scripture represents as a State of Sleep. The Voice of God to him is, *Awake, thou that sleepest*. For his Soul is in a deep Sleep. His Spiritual Senses are not awake: They discern neither Spiritual Good nor Evil. The Eyes of his Understanding are closed; they are sealed together, and see not. Clouds and Darkness continually rest upon them; for he lies in the Valley of the Shadow of Death. Hence having no Inlets for the Knowledge of Spiritual Things, all the Avenues of his Soul being shut up, he is in gross, stupid, Ignorance of whatever he is most concern'd to know. He is utterly ignorant of God, knowing nothing concerning him as he ought to know. He is totally a Stranger to the Law of God, as to its True, Inward, Spiritual Meaning. He has no Conception of that Evangelical Holiness, without which no Man shall see the Lord; nor of the Happiness, which they only find, whose *Life is hid with Christ in God*.

2. And for this very Reason, because he is fast *asleep*, he is, in some Sense, at *rest*. Because he is *blind*, he is also *secure*: He saith, *Tush, there shall no Harm happen unto me*. The Darkness which covers him on every Side, keeps him in a kind of Peace: (So far as Peace can consist with the Works of the Devil, and with an earthly, devilish Mind.) He *sees* not that he stands on the Edge of the Pit; therefore he *fears* it not. He cannot *tremble* at the Danger he does not *know*. He has not Understanding enough to fear. Why is it that he is in

no Dread of G O D ? Because he is totally ignorant of him : If not *saying in his Heart, There is no G O D, or, that he sitteth on the Circle of the Heavens, and humbly not himself to behold the Things* which are done on Earth ; yet satisfying himself as well, to all *Epicurean* Intentions and Purposes, by saying, “ G O D is Merciful.” Confounding and swallowing up at once, in that unwieldy Idea of Mercy, all his Holiness and essential Hatred of Sin, all his Justice, Wisdom and Truth. He is in no Dread of the Vengeance denounced against those who obey not the blessed Law of G O D, because he understands it not. He imagines the main Point is, *To do thus, to be outwardly blameless* : And sees not that it extends to every Temper, Desire, Thought, Motion of the Heart. Or he fancies, that the Obligation hereto is ceas'd ; that Christ came to *destroy the Law and the Prophets* ; to save his People *in, not from* their Sins ; to bring them to Heaven, without Holiness. Notwithstanding his own Words, *Not one Jot or Tittle of the Law shall pass away, till all Things are fulfilled* : And, *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord ! shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven ; but he that doth the Will of my Father which is in Heaven.*

3. He is secure, because he is utterly ignorant of himself. Hence he talks of “ *repenting by and by* ;” he does not indeed exactly know when ; but some time or other before he dies : Taking it for granted, That this is quite in his own Power. For what should hinder his doing it, if he will ? If he does but once set a Resolution, no fear but he will make it good.

4. But this Ignorance never so strongly glares, as in those who are term'd, *Men of Learning*. If a Natural Man be one of these, he can talk at large of his Rational Faculties ; of the Freedom of his Will, and the absolute Necessity of such Freedom, in order to constitute Man a Moral Agent. He reads and argues, and proves to a Demonstration, That every Man may do as he will ; may dispose his own Heart to Evil or Good, as it seems best in his own Eyes. Thus the God of this World spreads a double Veil of Blindness over his Heart, lest by any Means *the Light of the glorious Gospel of Christ should shine upon it.*

5. From the same Ignorance of himself and God there may sometimes arise in the Natural Man a kind of Joy, in congratulating himself, upon his own Wisdom and Goodness. And what the World calls Joy, he may often possess. He may have Pleasure in various Kinds ; either in gratifying the Desire of the Flesh, or the Desire of the Eye, or the Pride of Life : Particularly if he has large Possessions ; if he enjoy an affluent Fortune. Then he may *Cloath* himself, in Purple and fine Linnen, and fare sumptuously every Day. And so long as he thus doth well unto himself, Men will doubtless speak good of him. They will say, He is a Happy Man : For indeed this is the Sum of Worldly Happiness : To dress, and visit, and talk, and eat, and drink, and rise up to play.

6. It is not surprizing, if one in such Circumstances as these, dozed with the Opiates of Flattery and Sin, should imagine, among his other waking Dreams, That he walks in great Liberty. How easily may he persuade himself, that he is at Liberty from all *Vulgar Errors*, and from the *Prejudice* of Education, judging exactly right, and keeping clear of all Extremes. " I am free (may he say) from all the *Enthusiasm* of weak and narrow Souls : From *Superstition*, the Disease of Fools and Cowards, always righteous over much ; and from *Bigotry*, continually incident to those who have not a free and generous Way of Thinking." And too sure it is, That he is altogether free, from the *Wisdom which cometh from above*, from Holiness, from the Religion of the Heart, from the whole Mind which was in Christ.

7. For all this Time, he is the Servant of Sin. He commits Sin, more or less, day by day. Yet he is not troubled : He " is in no Bondage ;" (as some speak) he feels no Condemnation. He contents himself (even tho' he should profess to believe, that the Christian Revelation is of God) with, " Man is frail. We are all weak. Every Man has his Infirmity. " Perhaps he quotes Scripture : " Why, does not Solomon say, " The Righteous Man falls into Sin seven times a Day ?" And doubtless, they are all Hypocrites or Enthusiasts who pretend to be better

better than their Neighbours." If at any Time a serious Thought fix upon him, he stifles it as soon as possible, with, "Why should I fear, since God is merciful, and Christ died for Sinners?" Thus he remains a willing Servant of Sin, content with the Bondage of Corruption; inwardly and outwardly unholy, and satisfied therewith; not only not conquering Sin, but not striving to conquer, particularly That Sin, which doth so easily beset him.

8. Such is the State of every *Natural Man*; whether he be a gross, scandalous Transgressor, or a more reputable and decent Sinner, having the Form, tho' not Power of Godliness. But how can such an one be *convinced of Sin*? How is he brought to *repent*? To be *under the Law*? To receive the *Spirit of Bondage unto Fear*? This is the Point which is next to be consider'd.

II. 1. By some awful Providence, or by his Word applied with the Demonstration of his Spirit, G O D touches the Heart of him that lay asleep in Darkness and in the Shadow of Death. He is terribly shaken out of his Sleep, and awakes into a Consciousness of his Danger. Perhaps in a Moment, perhaps by Degrees, the Eyes of his Understanding are open'd, and now first (the Veil being in Part removed) he discerns the real State he is in. Horrid Light breaks in upon his Soul; such Light, as may be conceived to gleam from the bottomless Pit, from the lowest Deep, from a Lake of Fire, burning with Brimstone. He at last sees the Loving, the Merciful God, is also a *consuming Fire*; that he is a just G O D and terrible, rendering to every Man according to his Works, entering into Judgment with the Ungodly for every idle Word, yea, and for the Imaginations of the Heart. He now clearly perceives, that the great and holy G O D is of *purser Eyes than to behold Iniquity*; that he is an Avenger of every one who rebelleth against him; and repayeth the Wicked to his Face; and that *it is a fearful thing, to fall into the Hands of the living G O D*.

3. The Inward, Spiritual Meaning of the Law of G O D now begins to glare upon him. He perceives the

*Commandment is exceeding broad, and there is nothing hid from the Light thereof.* He is convinced, that every Part of it relates not barely to outward Sin or Obedience, but to what passes in the secret Recesses of the Soul, which no Eye but G O D's can penetrate. If he now hears, *Thou shalt not kill*, G O D. speaks in Thunder, *He that hateth his Brother is a Murderer.* He that saith unto his Brother, *Thou Fool, is obnoxious to Hell-fire.* If the Law say, *Thou shalt not commit Adultery*, the Voice of the Lord sounds in his Ears, *He that looketh on a Woman, to lust after her, hath committed Adultery with her already in his Heart.* And thus in every Point, he feels the Word of G O D *quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged Sword.* It pierces even to the dividing asunder of his Soul and Spirit, his Joints and Marrow. And so much the more, because he is conscious to himself of having neglected so great Salvation; of having trodden under Foot the Son of G O D, who would have saved him from his Sins, and counted the Blood of the Covenant an unholy, a common, un sanctifying Thing.

4. And as he knows *all Things are naked and open'd unto the Eyes of him with whom we have to do*, so he sees himself, naked, stript of all the Fig-leaves which he had sew'd together. of all his poor Pretences to Religion or Virtue, and his wretched Excuses for sinning against G O D. He now sees himself, like the antient Sacrifices, *τετραχυδακτύλον*, cleft in sunder, as it were, from the Neck downward, so that all within him stands confest. His Heart is bare, and he sees it is all Sin, *deceitful above all things, desperately wicked*; that it is, altogether corrupt and abominable, more than it is possible for Tongue to express; that there dwelleth therein no good thing, but Unrighteousness and Ungodliness only; every Motion thereof, every Temper and Thought, being only Evil continually.

5. And he not only sees, but feels in himself, by an Emotion of Soul which he cannot describe, that for the Sins of his Heart, were his Life without Blame, (which yet it is not, and cannot be; seeing *an evil Tree cannot bring forth good Fruit.*) he deserves to be cast into the Fire that never shall be quenched. He feels, that the Wages, the just reward of Sin, of his Sin above all, is *Death*; even  
the



the Second Death, the Death which dieth not, the Destruction of Body and Soul in Hell.

6. Here ends his pleasing Dream, his delusive Rest, his false Peace, his vain Security. His Joy now vanishes as a Cloud : Pleasures, once loved, delight no more. They pall upon the Taste ; he loaths the nauseous Sweet ; he is weary to bear them. The Shadows of happiness flee away, and sink into Oblivion. So that he is stript of all, and wanders to and fro, seeking rest, but finding none.

7. The Fumes of those Opiates being now dispell'd, he feels the Anguish of a wounded Spirit. He finds that Sin let loose upon the Soul (whether it be Pride, Anger, or Evil Desire, whether Self-will, Malice, Envy, Revenge, or any other) is perfect Misery. He feels Sorrow of Heart for the Blessings he has lost, and the Curse which is come upon him ; Remorse for having thus destroyed himself, and despised his own Mercies ; Fear, from a lively Sense of the Wrath of G O D, and of the Consequences of his Wrath ; of the Punishment which he has justly deserv'd, and which he sees hanging over his Head ; Fear of Death, as being to him the Gate of Hell, the Entrance of Death eternal ; Fear of the Devil, the Executioner of the Wrath and righteous Vengeance of G O D : Fear of Men, who if they were able to kill his Body, would thereby plunge both Body and Soul into Hell ; Fear, sometimes arising to such a Height, that the poor, sinful, guilty Soul, is terrified with every thing, with nothing, with Shades, with a Leaf shaken of the Wind. Yea sometimes it may even border upon Distraction, making a Man *drunken, tho' not with Wine*, suspending the Exercise of the Memory, of the Understanding, of all the Natural Faculties. Sometimes it may approach to the very Brink of Despair : So that he who trembles at the Name of Death, may yet be ready to plunge into it every Moment, to *chuse strangling rather than Life*. Well may such a Man *roar*, like him of old, *for the very Disquietness of his Heart*. Well may he cry out, *The Spirit of a Man may sustain his Infirmities ; but a wounded Spirit who can bear ?*

8. Now

8. Now he truly desires to break loose from Sin, and begins to struggle with it. But tho' he strive with all his Might, he cannot conquer; Sin is mightier than he. He would fain escape; but he is so fast in Prison, that he cannot get forth. He resolves against Sin, but yet sins on: he sees the Snare, and abhors, and runs into it. So much does his boasted Reason avail! Only to enhance his Guilt, and increase his Misery. Such is the Freedom of his Will! Free only to Evil; free to *drink in Iniquity like Water*; to wander farther and farther from the living God, and do more *Despight to the Spirit of Grace!*

9. The more he strives, wishes, labours to be free, the more does he feel his Chains, the grievous Chains of Sin, wherewith Satan binds and *leads him Captive at his Will*: His Servant he is, tho' he repine ever so much; tho' he rebel, he cannot prevail. He is still in Bondage and Fear, by reason of Sin: Generally, of some outward Sin, to which he is peculiarly dispos'd, either by Nature, Custom, or Outward Circumstances; But always, of some inward Sin, some evil Temper or unholy Affection. And the more he frets against it, the more it prevails; he may bite, but cannot break his Chain. Thus he toils without End, repenting and sinning, and repenting and sinning again, till at length the poor sinful, helpless Wretch is even at his Wit's End, and can barely groan, *O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from the Body of this Death?*

10. This whole Struggle of one who is *under the Law*, under the *Spirit of Fear and Bondage*, is beautifully described by the Apostle in the foregoing Chapter, speaking in the Person of an awaken'd Man. *I* (saith he) *was alive without the Law once*, v. 9. I had much Life, Wisdom, Strength and Virtue; so I thought: *But when the Commandment came, Sin revived, and I died*. When the Commandment, in its spiritual Meaning, came to my Heart, with the Power of God, my Inbred Sin was stirred up, fretted, inflamed, and all my Virtue died away. *And the Commandment, which was ordained to Life, I found to be unto Death*. For Sin, taking occasion by the Commandment, deceived me, and by

by it *shew me*, v. 10, 11. It came upon me unawares, flew all my Hopes, and plainly shew'd, in the midst of Life I was in Death. *Wherefore the Law is holy, and the Commandment holy and just and good*, v. 12. I no longer lay the Blame on this, but on the Corruption of my own Heart. I acknowledge that *the Law is Spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under Sin*, v. 14. I now see both the Spiritual Nature of the Law, and my own carnal, devilish Heart; *sold under Sin*, totally inflav'd; (like Slaves bought with Money, who were absolutely at their Master's Disposal.) *For that which I do, I allow not; for what I would, I do not; but what I hate, that I do*, v. 15. Such is the Bondage under which I groan; such the Tyranny of my hard Master. *To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not: for the Good that I would, I do not; but the Evil which I would not, that I do*, v. 18, 19. I find a Law, an inward constraining Power, *that when I would do good, Evil is present with me. For I delight in (or consent to) the Law of GOD, after the inward Man*: (v. 21, 22.) (In my Mind: So the Apostle explains himself in the Words that immediately follow; and so *ὁ ἔσω ἄνθρωπος*, the inward Man, is understood in all other Greek Writers.) *But I see another Law in my Members, another constraining Power, warring against the Law of my Mind, or inward Man, and bringing me into Captivity to the Law, or Power, of Sin*, v. 23. dragging me as it were at my Conqueror's Chariot-wheels, into the very thing which my Soul abhors. *O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from the Body of this Death!* v. 24. Who shall deliver me from this helpless, dying Life; from this Bondage of Sin and Misery! Till this is done, *I myself* (or rather, *that I, ἑαυτοῦ ἐγώ*, that Man I am now personating) *with the Mind, or inward Man, serve the Law of GOD; my Mind, my Conscience is on God's Side: But with the Flesh; with my Body, the Law of Sin*, v. 25. being hurried away by a Force I cannot resist.

11. How lively a Portraiture is this of one *under the Law!* One who feels the Burthen he cannot shake off; who pants after Liberty, Power and Love, but is in  
Fear

Fear and Bondage still! Until the Time that God answers the wretched Man, crying out, *Who shall deliver me?* From this Bondage of Sin, from this Body of Death? *The Grace of GOD, through Jesus Christ thy Lord.*

III. 1. Then it is, that this miserable Bondage ends, and he is no more *under the Law, but under Grace.* This State we are Thirdly to consider, the State of one who has found *Grace* or Favour, in the Sight of God, even the Father, and who has the *Grace*, or Power of the Holy Ghost, reigning in his Heart: Who has receiv'd, in the Language of the Apostle, *the Spirit of Adoption, whereby he now cries, Abba, Father!*

2. *He cried unto the Lord in his Trouble, and God delivers him out of his Distress.* His Eyes are open'd in quite another manner than before, even to see a loving gracious God. While he is calling, *I beseech thee shew me thy Glory,* he hears a Voice in his inmost Soul, *I will make all my Goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the Name of the Lord: I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will shew Mercy to whom I will shew Mercy.* And it is not long before *the Lord descends in the Cloud, and proclaims the Name of the Lord.* Then he sees, (but not with Eyes of Flesh and Blood) *The Lord, the Lord GOD: Merciful and gracious, Long-suffering, and abundant in Goodness and Truth: Keeping Mercy for thousands, and forgiving Iniquities and Transgression and Sin.*

3. Heavenly, healing Light now breaks in upon his Soul. He looks on him whom he had pierced, and *GOD who out of Darkness commanded Light to shine, shineth in his Heart.* He sees *the Light of the glorious Love of GOD, in the Face of Jesus Christ.* He hath a divine Evidence of Things not seen by Sense, even of *the deep Things of GOD;* More particularly of the Love of God, of his pardoning Love to him that believes in Jesus. Overpowered with the Sight, his whole Soul cries out, *My Lord, and my GOD!* For he sees all his Iniquities laid on him, who *bare them in his own Body on the Tree:* He beholds the Lamb of God taking away his Sins. How clearly now does he discern, that *GOD was*

*in Christ, reconciling the World unto himself! Making him sin for us, who knew no Sin, that we might be made the Righteousness of GOD through him! And that he himself is reconciled to God, by that Blood of the Covenant!*

4. Here end both the Guilt and Power of Sin. He can now say, *I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. And the Life which I now live in the Flesh, even in this mortal Body, I live by Faith in the Son of GOD, who loved me and gave himself for me.* Here end Remorse and Sorrow of Heart, and the Anguish of a wounded Spirit. *GOD turneth his Heaviness into Joy. He made sore, and now his Hands bind up.* Here ends also that Bondage unto Fear; for *his Heart standeth fast, believing in the Lord.* He cannot fear any longer the Wrath of God; for he knows it is now turn'd away from him, and looks upon him no more as an angry Judge, but as a loving Father. He cannot fear the Devil, knowing he has *no Power, except it be given him from above.* He fears not Hell, being an Heir of the Kingdom of Heaven; consequently, he has no Fear of Death; by reason whereof he was in time past, for so many Years *subject to Bondage.* Rather, knowing that *if the earthly House of this Tabernacle be dissolved, he hath a Building of GOD, an House not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens: He groaneth earnestly, desiring to be clothed upon, with that House which is from Heaven.* He groans to shake off this House of Earth, that *Mortality may be swallowed up of Life: Knowing that GOD hath wrought him for the self same thing; who hath also given him the Earnest of his Spirit.*

5. And *where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty; Liberty not only from Guilt and Fear, but from Sin, from that heaviest of all Yokes, that basest of all Bondage.* His Labour is not now in vain. The Snare is broken and he is delivered. He not only strives, but likewise prevails; he not only fights, but conquers also. *Henceforth he doth not serve Sin (Chap. vi. ver. 6. &c.) He is dead unto Sin and alive unto GOD. Sin doth not now reign, even in his mortal Body,*  
 nor

nor doth he obey it in the Desires thereof. He does not yield his Members as Instruments of Unrighteousness unto Sin, but as Instruments of Righteousness unto GOD. For being now made free from Sin, he is become the Servant of Righteousness.

6. Thus having Peace with GOD, through our Lord Jesus Christ, rejoicing in Hope of the Glory of GOD, and having Power over all Sin, over every evil Desire and Temper, and Word and Work, he is a living Witness of the glorious Liberty of the Sons of GOD: All of whom being Partakers of like precious Faith, bear Record with one Voice, *We have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father!*

7. It is this Spirit which continually worketh in them, both to will and to do of his good Pleasure. It is he that sheds the Love of God abroad in their Hearts, and the Love of all Mankind; thereby purifying their Hearts from the Love of the World, from the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eye, and the Pride of Life. It is by him they are delivered from Anger and Pride, from all vile and inordinate Affections. In consequence, they are delivered from evil Words and Works, from all unholiness of Conversation; doing no Evil to any Child of Man, and being zealous of all good Works.

8. To sum up all. The Natural Man neither fears, nor loves God; one under the Law, fears, one under Grace, loves him. The first has no Light in the Things of God, but walks in utter Darkness. The Second sees the painful Light of Hell; the Third, the joyous Light of Heaven. He that sleeps in Death, has a false Peace. He that is awakened has no Peace at all. He that believes has true Peace, the Peace of God filling and ruling his Heart. The Heathen, baptized or unbaptized, hath a fancied Liberty, which is indeed Licentiousness: The Jew (or one under the Jewish Dispensation) is in heavy, grievous Bondage: The Christian enjoys the true glorious Liberty of the Sons of GOD. An unawakened Child of the Devil, sins willingly: One that is awakened sins unwillingly: A Child of God sinneth not, but keepeth himself, and the wicked one toucheth him not. To conclude; the Natural

tural Man neither conquers nor fights; the Man under the Law fights with sin, but cannot conquer. The Man under Grace fights and conquers, yea is *more than Conqueror, through him that loveth him.*

IV. 1. From this plain Account of the three-fold State of Man, the *Natural*, the *Legal* and the *Evangelical*, it appears, that it is not sufficient, to divide Mankind, into Sincere and Insincere. A Man may be sincere in any of these States; not only when he has the *Spirit of Adoption*, but while he has the *Spirit of Bondage unto Fear*. Yea, while he has neither this Fear, nor Love. For undoubtedly there may be sincere Heathens, as well as sincere *Jews* or Christians. This Circumstance then, does by no means prove that, a Man is in a State of Acceptance with God.

*Examine yourselves* therefore, not only whether ye are sincere, but *whether ye be in the Faith*. Examine narrowly; for it imports you much. What is the ruling Principle in your Soul? Is it the Love of God? Is it the Fear of God? Or is it neither one nor the other? Is it not rather, the Love of the World? the Love of Pleasure? or Gain? or Ease? or Reputation? If so, you are not come so far as a *Jew*. You are but a *Heathen* still. Have you Heaven in your Heart? Have you the Spirit of Adoption, ever crying, *Abba, Father*? Or do you cry unto God, as *out of the Belly of Hell*, overwhelmed with Sorrow and Fear? Or are you a Stranger to this whole Affair, and cannot imagine what I mean? Heathen pull off the Mask. Thou hast never put on Christ. Stand barefaced. Look up to Heaven. And own before him that liveth for ever and ever, thou hast no Part either among the Sons or Servants of God.

Whosoever thou art, Dost thou commit Sin, or dost thou not? If thou dost, is it willingly or unwillingly? In either Case God hath told thee whose thou art; *He that committeth Sin is of the Devil*. If thou committest it willingly, thou art his faithful Servant. He will not fail to reward thy Labour. If unwillingly, still thou art his Servant. God deliver thee out of his Hands.

Art thou daily fighting against all Sin? and daily more than Conqueror? I acknowledge thee for a Child of God. O stand fast in thy glorious Liberty. Art thou fighting, but not conquering; striving for the Mastery, but not able to attain? Then thou art not yet a Believer in Christ. But follow on; and thou shalt know the Lord. Art thou not fighting at all, but leading an easy, indolent, fashionable Life? O how hast thou dared to name the Name of Christ! Only to make it a Reproach among the Heathen? Awake thou Sleeper! Call upon thy God: Before the Deep swallow thee up.

2. Perhaps one Reason why so many think of themselves more highly than they ought to think, why they do not discern what State they are in, is, because these several States of Soul, are often mingled together, and in some measure meet, in one and the same Person. Thus Experience shews, that the legal State, or State of Fear, is frequently mixt with the Natural. For few Men are so fast asleep in Sin, but they are sometimes, more or less awakened. As the Spirit of God does not wait for the call of Man, so at sometimes he will be heard. He puts them in Fear, so that for a Season, at least, the Heathen know themselves to be but Men. They feel the Burthen of Sin, and earnestly desire to flee from the Wrath to come. But not long. They seldom suffer the the Arrows of Conviction to go deep into their Souls; but quickly stifle the Grace of God, and return to their Wallowing in the Mire.

In like manner, the Evangelical State, or State of Love, is frequently mixt with the Legal. For few of those who have the Spirit of Bondage and Fear, remain always without Hope. The wise and gracious God rarely suffers this; for he remembereth that we are but Dust. And he willeth not that *the Flesh should fail before him, or the Spirit which he hath made.* Therefore, at such times as he seeth good, he gives a Dawning of Light unto them that sit in Darkness. He causes a Part of his Goodness to pass before them, and shews he is a GOD that beareth the Prayer. They see the Promise which is by Faith in Christ Jesus, tho' it be yet



yet afar off: And hereby they are encouraged to *run with Patience the Race which is set before them.*

3. Another Reason why many deceive themselves, is because they do not consider, how far a Man may go, and yet be in a Natural, or at best, a Legal State. A Man may be of a compassionate and a benevolent Temper, he may be affable, courteous, generous, friendly; he may have some Degree of meekness, Patience, Temperance, and of many other moral Virtues. He may feel many Desires of shaking off all Vice, and attaining higher Degrees of Virtue. He may abstain from much Evil; perhaps from all that is grossly contrary to Justice, Mercy, or Truth. He may do much good, may feed the Hungry, cloath the Naked, relieve the Widow and Fatherless. He may attend Publick Worship, use Prayer in private, read many Books of Devotion: And yet for all this, he may be a mere Natural Man, knowing neither himself nor God; equally a Stranger to the Spirit of Fear and to that of Love; having neither repented nor believed the Gospel.

But suppose there were added to all this, a deep Conviction of Sin, with much Fear of the Wrath of God; vehement Desires to cast off every Sin, and to fulfil all Righteousness; frequent Rejoicing in Hope, and Touches of Love often glancing upon the Soul: Yet neither do these prove a Man to be *under Grace*, to have True Living, Christian Faith, unless the Spirit of Adoption abide in his Heart, unless he can continually cry, Abba Father!

4. Beware then, thou who art called by the Name of Christ, that thou come not short of the Mark of thy high Calling. Beware thou rest not, either in a Natural State, with too many that are accounted *good Christians*: Or in a Legal State, wherein those who are *highly esteemed of Men*, are generally content to live and die. Nay but God hath prepared better Things for thee, if thou follow on till thou attain. Thou art not called to fear and tremble, like Devils, but to rejoice and love, like the Angels of God. *Thou shalt*

*shalt love the Lord thy GOD, with all thy Heart, and  
 with all thy Soul and with all thy Mind, and with  
 all thy Strength. Thou shalt rejoice evermore. Thou  
 shalt pray without ceasing. Thou shalt in every Thing  
 give Thanks. Thou shalt do the Will of GOD on  
 Earth, as it is done in Heaven. O prove thou what  
 is that good and acceptable and perfect Will of GOD,  
 Now present thyself a living Sacrifice, holy, accepta-  
 ble to GOD. Whereunto thou hast already attained,  
 hold fast, by reaching forth unto those Things which  
 are before; until the GOD of Peace make thee perfect  
 in every good Work, working in thee that which is  
 well-pleasing in his Sight, through Jesus Christ, to  
 whom be Glory for ever and ever! Amen!*

F I N I S.