THE PRIVILEGE OF ADOPTION,

And

Tryall thereof by REGENERATION:

John 1, 12, 13.

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his Name.

Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

He blessed Evangelist Saint John in the entrance into this Gospel, discoursing of the admirable mystery of man's Redemption describes first, the Author of it, Christ the Son of God, and that according to his two-fold Nature.
His deity or God head in the first verse, was from all eternity.

2. His Humanity or Manhood in the 14. ver. in time assumed unto him. Secondly, in the midst betwene both hee describes the benefite which hereby redounds to all the faithful, partly by their adoption in the 12. verse, partly by their Regeneration, in he 13. verse. For the former there is,

First, The persons to whom this benefite doth accrue; and they are such as entertaine Christ not outwardly, but inwardly; not into their houses, but into their hearts.

2. He shewes what manner of entertainment it must bee; not corporall but spiritual, by trusting in Christ, or believing in his name, which are in effect both one.

For the other, the benefite itselfe that doth accrue unto them, that is described

1. In generall, it is a privilege or prerogative.

2. More particularly, they are said to be the adopted sons of God.

Now because this Adoption may be hid with God, and so may not be known unto themselves who are adopted. There followeth therefore hereupon a real change in them; which change is described in the 13. verse partly by the manner of it, that is a new casting, moulding, changing, alteration, and partly by the Ausmoure, onenesses whereby it is wrought, laid downes.

First, Negatively, or bloody or fleshly bre
g, 23, according to that rate concepul lissehe, as it is
Secondly, Positively, or affirmatively, that it of the spirit; as our Saviour faith, unless a man be borne againe of water, and of the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God, John 3.5. yea the words of Peter may bee a comment on my Text, 1 Peter 1.23. where he faith, being borne a new not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. And so much for the summe or substance of these words, with their severall branches.

Not to stand upon the nature of faith at this time, (because we have had occasion to speake of it formerly and may likewise have hereafter) as also to passe by divers instructions that may be from hence obserued, I will pitch only at this time upon two, which the Evangelist mainly intends in this place.

First, That all the faithful are the adopted children of God.

Secondly, None are the children of God by adoption, but only such as are so by regeneration. The former being the summe of the 12. ver. the latter of the 13. ver.

Doct. 1. All the faithful are the adopted children of God.

There are faith one (who goes under the name of Gregory Nazianzene) three sorts of fames of God.

1. By Generation.
2. By Creation.
3. By Adoption.

4. By Generation, and so is Christ alone.
2. By Creation, to Adam, Luke 3. and the Angels, 1 Cor. 15.

3. By Adoption, and so are all the faithful, Gal. 3. 26.

This point will more fully appear, if we consider the ground and end of our Adoption.

First, The ground of it, which is our union to Christ, the natural Son of God. We are alive, faith the Apostle, to God in Jesus Christ our Lord,

Rom. 6. 11. Rom. 11. 23. and so we become one with Christ, 1 Cor. 12. 27. as therefore a sitten taken out of one stock, and so inoculated into another, or as a child taken out of one family and translated into another, even so we are taken out of the household of Satan, and inherited into the family of God; yea into the mystical body of Christ, for the head and the body make but one Christ, Gal. 3. 16. He faith not to the seeds, as speaking of many, but unto thy seed, as of one, which is Christ, and so he and the faithful make but one Christ, 1 Cor. 12. 12. This was the end of his Incarnation, to make us the sons of God. The Son of God became the sonne of man, that wee sons of men might become the sons of God, Gal. 4. 4, 5.

Secondly, Consider we the end of our Adoption, that we might have a right and interest unto our heavenly inheritance;

The end of Christ's Incarnation is our adoption; and the end of our Adoption is our right and title to that inheritance without which we could not have had it; that therefore which is called Adoption, Rom. 8. 15. Is called the earnest of our inheritance,
of Adoption.

Yea, the inheritance itself is called by the name of Adoption, as Piscator observes, Rom. 8. 23. for our justification restored to us is no more than Adam had before his fall. But our Adoption advanceth us to an higher estate which Adam never had, nor (for ought we know) had never promised him before his fall.

We passe now to the second point.

Doct. 2. That none are the children of God by Adoption, but such as are so by Regeneration. There are (faith Augustine) three sorts of adopted sons.

1. There are (saies he) sons of God in our account, which are not so in Gods, Gen. 6. 1. The sons of God sate the daughters of men that they were faire, and so are all false and counterfeit Christians, which are Christians in name and title only, not in deed and truth, they are so in shadow and outward semblance, and profession, and yet but a counterfeit generation; a bastardly brood.

Secondly, There are some that are sons in regard of God, but not in regard of us; nor may so bee in regard of their owene esteeme neither; and so are all the elect as yet uncalled and ungathered together, as the Evangelist speaks, John 11. 52. they are for all that (as Augustine saies) in their fathers role, and predestinated to be adopted through Jesus Christ unto himselfe, according to the purpose of his will, Eph. 1. 6. as a man may purpose to adopt one, and set him in his will, though it be a long time ere it be knowne to the party so adopted.

3. There are sons of God really, that are al-
The Christians Lesson

ready received into the family of God, and actually incorporated into the body of Christ; the former shall be, but these are to already, these are adopted, and regenerated also, and the former both by adoption and regeneration, we shall find conjoined, Rom. 8. 10, 11. where also he makes one to argue the other.

This point also will appear more evidently, if we consider, as before the ground and end of our Regeneration.

1. The ground of our Regeneration (as before of our Adoption) is our union with Christ our head, and this is wrought by faith on our part, and by the spirit on God's part. First, I say, by faith on our part, which is a most holy faith, Jude ver. 20. to difference is from the faith of reprobates, Tit. 1. 1. and from the faith of devils, 1 Sam. 2. 19. the one being holy, the other unholy. This faith of God's Elect purifieth the heart, Acts 15. 9. and Acts 26.

18. Hence Christ dwells in our hearts, Ephes. 3. 17. and where he dwelleth there he moulds fashions, frames, and renues the heart, there he makes a new Creature; yea I may say, a new Christ. My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you, faith, the Apostle, Gal. 4. 19.

Secondly, by the spirit on God's part, he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit, 1 Cor. 6. 17. by which spirit he knits and fastens us to Christ, Gal.

2. 20. I live, as the soul in the body; yet not, but Christ liveth in me, and the life that I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God. And mark what the Apostle faith excellently to this purpose,

Rom. 8. 10, 11. Yet are not in the flesh, but in the spirit
The second thing that confirms the point is the end of our Regeneration. As, the end of our Adoption is to give us a righte and title to our heavenly inheritance, so the end of this is to prepare and fit us for the same. For unless we become new Creatures, that place is not for us; that is a pure and an holy place, into the which no uncleane thing must enter, Rev. 21:27. If some beggarly roagie were taken up to attend upon some great man (much more if to be the adopted son of a Prince), he must be stripped of all his ragges; and washed and purified, and even (if it could be) have a new heart put into him too; as Saul had, 1 Sam. 10:9. and 1 Sam. 15:30, as Rehoboam took Abijah, and set him to be under over the people, and for that purpose instructed him, that so he might demean himself according to that place whereunto he was advanced, so when we (wretched and forlorn creatures) are admitted not to be attendants only, but to bee the sons and Heires of the King of heaven, we should be

script

spirits because the spirit of God dwelleth in you, and verse 21. If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sinne, but the spirit is life for righteousness sake, and ver. 11. If the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, hee that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortall bodies, because of his spirit that dwelleth in you. This is that seed of God, which whosoever hath abiding in him hath the power of sinne quelled and subdued in him, 1 John 3:9. And unless ye be borne againe by water, and the Holy Ghost, saith our Saviour, John 3:5. Hee cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

The second thing that confirms the point is the end of our Regeneration. As, the end of our Adoption is to give us a righte and title to our heavenly inheritance, so the end of this is to prepare and fit us for the same. For unless we become new Creatures, that place is not for us; that is a pure and an holy place, into the which no uncleane thing must enter, Rev. 21:27. If some beggarly roagie were taken up to attend upon some great man (much more if to be the adopted son of a Prince), he must be stripped of all his ragges; and washed and purified, and even (if it could be) have a new heart put into him too; as Saul had, 1 Sam. 10:9. and 1 Sam. 15:30, as Rehoboam took Abijah, and set him to be under over the people, and for that purpose instructed him, that so he might demean himself according to that place whereunto he was advanced, so when we (wretched and forlorn creatures) are admitted not to be attendants only, but to bee the sons and Heires of the King of heaven, we should be
The Privilege,

Script of our natural defilements, and sin of our
selfishness; put off the old man, Ephes. 4. 23.
that we may be fit to live with them, which are
holy, as Acts 26. 18. To have an inheritance among
them that are sanctified, without holiness no man shall
see God, says the Apostle, Heb. 12. 14. and except
you be born again, faith our Saviour, John 3. 3. Ye
cannot see the kingdom of God; if we cannot see
God, or his kingdom, wrouth no inesse, much
less can we enter into it, and so we see the second
point also proved.

Etc.

The Vfe whereof serves first to inform us of
the great dignity, the honourable estate, the won-
derfull excellency of every true believer, of every
member of Christ; so great and so high, that the
Apostle speaks not of it without admiration,
1 John 3. 1. Behold what love the Father hath show-
ed us in that we are called the sons of God. And in-
deed, it is a wonder, that we can think of it with-
out wondering. When it was told David that he
might be the King's son in law, what (says Da-
avid) think you it a small matter to be the sonne in
law to a King? 1 Sam. 18. 23. How can we then
think it a small thing to be not a sonne in law, but
an heire, not to a mortall, but to an immortall
King, the King of Kings? How can we but deeme
it a speciall and unconceivable favour for
us, vile, wretched, wicked, and miserable sinners,
dust and ashes, filthy wormes, vessels of wrath and
vassals of Satan, to be preferred to so great a di-
genoty, as to be sons and heirs apparent unto the
kingdom of God?

Consider it, I beseech you, by some degrees.
It is no small matter to be an Attendant unto a Prince, or to some great man under the Prince, as it is said of the prudent, He shall stand before Princes; and the Queene of Sheba accounted Solomon's servants happy that stood before him, 2 Chr. 9.7. But how much greater an honour is it to be servant to Almighty God? Which title not only the Apostle Paul took unto himself, and sealed himself by in the beginning of sundry his Epistles, but also the blessed Psalmist entitles the in divers other Psalms, A Psalm of David the servant of the Lord; as a matter of excellent dignity, as Theodorus thought it a greater honour to be the servant of God, than to be Governor of the people of God.

But yet a greater honour is it to be the Kings friend, as Zabud is termed, 1 Kings 4.5. but not onely Abraham is called the friend of God, James 2.23. (taken out of 2 Chron. 20.7. and Isa. 41.8.) but also all the faithfull, the sones of Abraham. John 15.14, 15. Ye are my friends, if ye doe what I command you.

But yet further, because the servant abides not in the house for ever, John 8.35. but the sone abides for ever; thou art alwayes with me, and all that I have is thine; as he speakes in the parable, Luke 15. even this high priviledge we have also by our adoption, as the Apostle saith, Gal. 4.7. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a sone: and what followes thereupon? Now if thou be a sone, thou art also the heire of God; through Christ, Rom. 8.17. If we be sones, then are we also heires, even the heires of God, and heires annexed
annexed to Christ. And therefore as Christ is heir of all things, Heb. 1, 2. So also are we, Rev. 21, 7. for whether they be things present, or things to come, 1 Cor. 3, 22, 23. All are yours, and ye Christ, and Christ God, 1 Cor. 3, 22, 23. It is not with God as with great men, Abraham could make but one son his heir; and Neboason onely might suceede Solomon in the kingdom, 2 Chron. 11, 2, but Christ hath made us (even all that are regenerate) Kings and Priests to God his Father, Rev. 1, 6. God will give a crown, a kingdom, unto every one of his children. Fear not little flock, for it is your father's good pleasure to give you a kingdom, Luke 12, 32. And Come ye blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world, Matthew 25, 34. This is the first use, to set forth the great dignity wherein the faithfull are advanced, so great, as greater cannot be conceived.

The which then in the second place should stir us up to receive, and embrace Jesus Christ, by a true and lively faith offered unto us in the word of God, the Gospel of salvation. We see how ready men are to creep and insinuate themselves into great men's favours where they have some hope to get something by them; especially if he be a rich man that is without posterity. But here is an inheritance beyond all the world, and yet how few labour and strive for it! We should then check our selves for our backwardness; and labour for a true and a lively faith, whereby we may become the adopted sons of God. And so should wee be as careful of our children, not onely to bring them unto baptism, but that they may have the
the fruit and effect of it, to labour to unlike them, as to the politic body of Christ, so unto his mystical body, not to reach them (as most Parents do) civilly only, but chiefly too.

But may some say, why all this exhortation is needless, and might well have been spared, for we are the sons of God already, and so have right unto the heavenly inheritance.

I could wish, it were so. But there are many so called, and conceived so to be by us, which nevertheless are not so with God.

It stands us in hand therefore (and so to pass to a third use) to try ourselves, and examine our Adoption by our Regeneration, for unless thou art regenerated, thou canst have no assurance, or knowledge of thy Adoption.

But how then may we know that we are regenerat? I answer, by the nature of it, it is a breeding; now breeding is a producing of a living entire creature, resembling the party by whom it is produced. For in every natural birth there are these four things.

1. A producing of a new creature. Now it is a rule in Philosophy, that the generation of one is the corruption of another. So in the spiritual birth, the old man must be put off, before the new be put on, Rom. 6. There must be a death unto sin, Rom. 6. There must be a death unto sin, before a living to God; as the seed cast into the earth must dye, ere it can quicken, 1 Cor. 15. Therefore we finde in our selves that sin is not only curbed and restrained, but even quelled and killed, we
we are not as yet borne a new.

2. Breeding is of some living thing; so in the spiritual birth, Ephes. 2.5. Thou hast he quickned which were dead in trespasses and sins, Ezek. 36.26.

A new heart will I give unto you, and there will be an alteration and change in a man when he is once regenerated, a new joy, new love, new fear, new desires; and the Sabbath of God, which formerly were wearisome and burthenome unto him, are now delightome; and so of the rest. In a word, he will love what before he loathed, and loath what before he loved.

3. Breeding is a producing of an entire body; children have at the first not a rude maste, but an organically body, all the parts and lineaments of a man. So it is in this spiritual breeding likewise; put on the new man, Eph. 4. when men therefore shall seeme to be renuèd in some part alone, and not in the rest, they are not regenerate, they are not borne again, if they deny themselves in some lust, and not in others, so long as they live in any not controversed, but confessed sin.

4. Breeding must be the producing of a creature after the image of the party producing; every living creature begets his like; a sheepe brings not forth a wolfe, nor a Pigeon hatch a Kite. Even so God begetteth not young devils, but saints like himselfe. Those whom he foreknew, he predestinated to be like unto the Image of his sonne, Rom. 8. 29. But now if God be pure, and thou a professed Impuritan (as I may say) one to whom the very name of purity is reproachfull, if God be holy, mercifull, humble, and thou best unholy,
unholy, cruell, proud, thou mayest assuredly hereby know, thou art not as yet regenerate; and so consequently canst have no assurance of thy adoption.

But if upon strict examination, thou canst finde thy selfe regenerate, then in the next place learne thy duty; for every honour hath a burden attending upon it; This duty is described by the Apostle Peter, 1 Peter 1. 14. as obedient children, not sa. 1 Pet. 1. 14, 17. shiong your selves according to your former lust in your ignorance, verse 15. but as he which calleth you is holy, so bee ye holy in all manner of conversation, verse 17. and if ye call God father, who without respect of persons judgeth every mans work, passe the time of your sojourning here in feare.

First therefore, art thou called to be a sonne? then this estate requireth other manners, thou must behave thy selfe as a sonne; that is thou must abdicate and abandon all bad company, all thy former sones and luets, never to resume, or take them into thy practice againe.

It had bee a shame for Saul after he was made King to follow his fathers Asises; it had bee a shame for David after he was made King, to follow the Ems with young, as before Psalme 78. 38. 71. 71. It had bee a shame also for Agathocles a Porters sonne, to bee raking in the dirt and mire, when he was a King. In like manner must it needs be a shame for us, who are heyses apparent to the kingdom of heaven, to bee groveling among things of this life with others; but as we are partakers of that heavenly calling, Heb 3. 1. So should we have our conversation in Heaven, Phil 2. 20. Heb 3.
Secondly, Thou must be an obedient son; because thou art a son thou must not therefore think thy self exempted from duty; It is true indeed, the Apostle faith, wherefore, thou art no more a servant, but a son, Gal.4.7. but that frees us not from Gods service, and from our obedience unto him, as many would take occasion by these words likewise of the Apostle, 1Cor.7.23. You are bought with a price, be not ye therefore the servants of men: to shake off all bondage and service to man; whereas on the contrary it is to be understood, that because now they are professed Christians, being redeemed and bought by Christ, they should now serve men, not as the heathen did, but as the children of God; in singleness of heart as unto Christ, Ephes.6.5. Even so should we serve God now professing to bee his children, in a more free and honourable manner then heretofore, not for fear of the whip, or for hope of wages, but for love, the love of Christ confirmeth us, 2 Cor.5.14. It stands us upon now therefore to be more circumspect over our selves, and more careful of our courses, then ever heretofore we have beene, that ye might walke worthy of the Lord, faith the Apostle, and please him in all things being fruitful in every good work, and increasimg in the knowledge of God, and giving thanks to the Father who hath made us meete to be partakers of the inheritance, of the Saints in light, Col.1.10,12. If we be sons, then must our light so shine before men, that they seeing our good works may glorifie our Father which is in heaven, Matt.5.16. There is a good speech of Nazianzeus 3. If thou art a slave, then serve God for
of Adoption.

scare of the whip, if an hireling, then for hire: but
it a son, then for love; more affectionately, dili-
gently, lovingly, cheerfully, and freely, then ever
heretofore.

The last use then, (for I am enforced to cut off
many things) is for consolation, and encourage-
ment against any misery that can befall us.

First, Here is comfort against the sight and sense
of our own unworthinesse: if a man were to ex-
pect heaven by way of merit, indeed (as the Pa-
pists teach and maintain) then should our hope
be little enough of ever coming there. But our
hope is grounded on the promise of God; for ye
are all one in Christ Jesus, and if yee be Christ's, then
are yee Abraham's seed, and heirs by promise, Gal. Gal. 3.29.

What if a rich man will take up a rogue,
and make him his heir: who can hinder him? or what if a Prince (that hath power to dispose of
his crown) should bestow it upon a Peasant, who
elevishes, what shall let him? so what if it pleaseth
God to take mee and thee, and bestow upon us
merely of his owne good will, a crowne of life,
an heavenly inheritance: who shall hinder him? though it were presumption in any to have moved
God in it, unless God should merely upon his
owne free love and good will have offered it.

Secondly, Here is comfort against outward
poverty: it cannot hinder, or keepe us from hea-
ven. God hath chosen the poore of this world to be rich
in faith, and heirs of everlasta glory, James 2.5. and James 2.5.
blessed bee yee poore, for yours is the kingdom of hea-
much to live in a poore and low meane estate for
a while,
The Privilege,

a while, it hee knowes hee shall soone come to a rich and wealthy estate, especially if hee knowes he shall be advanced to a kingdom: as Ioseph therefore was bid to tell his brethren, that they should not regard their stature, for the best of all the land of Egypt was theirs, Genesis 45.20. So all the want and poverty which the faithfull suffer should not dismay them; when their thoughts are set upon their heavenly inheritance. This made the faithfull suffer with joy the losse of their goods, knowing that in heaven they had a better and an enduring substance, Hebrews 10.34.

Thirdly, Here is comfort against contempt of worldlings, who know not the dignity which the godly have in being God’s children; nor the account which God makes of them. Behold, faith the Apostle, what great love the father hath shewed upon us that we should be called the sons of God! but this the world knoweth not. Will a great man be troubled if a beggar scornes him? what if base wretches (for they are no better) should contemne and despise God’s children, what need they care? when our King went into Spaine disguised, was he troubled (think ye) because he was not respected according to his worth by those amongst whom he came? No surely, he knew that when he returned he should find royall entertainment with his father. In like manner the faithfull need not be troubled for that the men of the world set so light by them, seeing God hath them in so high account and estimation; and seeing a time shall come when those persons, by whom they are so undervalued now, shall bee trodden...
trodden under their feet, as the Prophet speaks, Mal. 4:3.

Fourthly, Here is comfort against fear of want; they may be sure God will provide for them. Matth. 7:7, 8, 9. Which of you having a child shall ask you bread, will ye give him a stone; or if he ask a fish, will ye give him a serpent? If ye that are evil know how to give good things unto your children that ask you, how much more will your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him? As he said by Hezekiah, the King my Master can deny you nothing. So in Matth. 6:26. Matth. 6:26. Consider the foules of the air, for they sow not, nor do they reap, nor gather into barnes, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them: are not ye much better then they? He is but their Creator, he is your Father. Will any man be so unnaturall, as to feed his hawkes and hounds, and suffer his children to want food? And will God our heavenly Father take care (thou knowest) for crows and ravens, and suffer his children to want?

But how comes it to passe then, that sometimes they do want?

I answer. Doth not thou thy selfe compell thy children to fast, when as thou knowest meat would hurt them? If God should see any outward and temporal good thing to be good for them, they should be sure to have it; and whencesoever he witholds it from them, he foresees, that by their enjoying it, the more hurt would redound unto them; otherwise (faith Augustine) he that will graunt a crowne will he deny a crumbe. Beare nor little flocke, Luke 12:32. It Luke 12:32. It
is as easie a matter for God to bestow upon us all the wealth in the world, as for us to bestow a crumbe upon a beggar.

Fifthly, here is comfort against those infirmities and weaknesses that hang upon us while we live here; we may be sure our Father will bear with them; as a father hath pity on his children, so will the Lord have compassion on them that fear him. Psal. 103. 13. I will spare them as a man spareth his owne sonne that serveth him. Mal. 3. 17. A small thing, we know, done by a sonne is more acceptable then a great deed done by a servant; a man respects his weake childe that cannot get his bread; as much as him that can earne his owne living: Will fathers thrust their children out of doores because they are not able to help themselves? No they will the more tender them, and beare with them. In like manner our heavenly Father makes account of his weakest children notwithstanding their manifold infirmities.

Sixthly, Here is comfort against afflictions. Can a woman forget the sonne of her wombe? (Sion thought that God had forgotten her) though she should, yet will not I forget thee, Isa. 49. 14, 15. he will lay at no time more upon us then we are able to beare, 1 Cor. 10. 13.

Seventhly, Here is comfort against persecutions, wrongs, and injuries offered them by the wicked; for God will be sure to right them, he will be unto them a wall of fire; and he that toucheth them, toucheth the apple of his eye, Zach. a. 3. 8. Men are commonly as chary of their children
of Adoption.

Children as of themselves, and had rather many times suffer wrong than their children shou'd. So sayes the Psalmist, Psal. 2. Kisse the Sonne lest he be an. Psal. 2. gry; take heed how ye offer any indignity to God's Sonne; and what is there saide of Christ, is true of all the co heires with Christ; whosoever shall offer the least injury unto them, shall be sure to smart for it. It were better for him to have a millstone hanged about his necke, and he cast into the sea, then to offend one of God's little ones, Mat. 18. 6. For he that redeemed them is mighty. Matt. 18. 6.

Eighthly. Here is comfort against perils, dangers, and distresses, for God will guard such as be his. They that trust in him shall be as mount Sion, that cannot be removed, Psal. 125. 1. The Angel of the Lord is about those that fear him, to guard them and keepe them continually. Nay mark that famous place in Esay, Isa. 43. 1,2. Thus faith the Lord, fear not, for I have redeemed thee; when thou goest thorow the water, I will be with thee, that the waves drowne thee not, that the billowes swallow thee not up: and when thou goest thorow the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. Let afflictions, let perils like the raging seas fall upon thee, let dangers fiery and fearefull overtake thee; here is comfort against the worst, God will be with thee. He will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

FINIS.