

5. You must submit to bear the world's hatred, if God see fit: Rev. iv. 29, 'They loved not their lives to the death;' Heb. ii. 10, 'For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the Captain of our salvation perfect through sufferings.' And therefore, as Christ said, so must we say, John xviii. 11, 'The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?'

6. Think often and seriously of this wonderful and matchless love; the subject requireth it.

[1.] These are things excellent and great, and such things usually force their way into our minds; all other things are trifles to this love, in making us his children. Alas! what are the things you dote upon, and wherein you applaud yourselves, to this? honours, lands, revenues, to these glorious mysteries? These are the most sweet and ravishing thoughts, a feast to the minds of all spiritual wise men: Eph. iii. 18, 'That we may, with all saints, comprehend the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of the love of Christ, and to know the love of God, which passeth knowledge;' to know as much as we can, that we may be affected with it.

[2.] These are things that nearly concern us. Needless speculations we may well spare, or other men's matters; all will seek their own things: in temporals it holdeth true. Now what doth more nearly concern us than to have God for our father, Christ for our elder brother, heaven for our inheritance, angels and saints for our fellow-members in the family? It may be so, if we do not forfeit or lose this privilege by our neglect or contempt. These things are ours by offer; they may be ours by choice. Consideration doth much promote it.

[3.] They are the most necessary things. What is more necessary to our happiness than to love God as a father, which is our work, and to know we are beloved of him as children?

[4.] Things most profitable should be considered by us. There is more profit to be gotten by the tillage of a fruitful land than a barren heath; and it is idle to stand telling stories when we have higher business of concernment in hand; so it is foolishness in us to muse upon vanity when we have the love of God to think of, to let the mill grind chaff when there is such plenty of corn at hand.

SERMON II.

Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.—1 JOHN iii. 1, 2.

In the first part of these words we have observed two things—

1. A great privilege represented.

2. An anticipation of an objection, or an exception which might be made to that privilege.

For the first, we have discoursed of the excellency of the privilege of adoption, or being God's children.

The second will give us occasion to discourse of the inconspicuousness of this privilege for the present to the world.

The objection or exception may be framed thus: There is little seen of this dignity and prerogative which you speak of as so great and glorious. The world hateth them whom you say God loveth; and their present condition is so unlike such an estate, that how can we believe it? many of God's children being mean, low, indigent, oppressed by the world, harassed with sundry calamities and afflictions, that it doth not appear that we have so great and glorious a Father; yea, what with corruption within and temptations without, we have much ado ourselves to be persuaded that we are the children of God; our condition being so much unsuitable to, and so much beneath, our rights and privileges. This objection the apostle would anticipate and prevent, both to vindicate the truth of the privilege, that it is as great and glorious as he had told them, and also to fortify them against the hatred and persecutions of the world.

But how doth he prevent it? In this prolepsis and anticipation there is—(1.) A concession; (2.) A correction.

1. By way of concession he granteth two things—

[1.] That the children of God are obnoxious to the contempt and hatred of the world, 'Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.'

[2.] That the privilege itself carrieth no splendid appearance in the world; yea, it is much obscured by the present state of those that possess it, 'It doth not appear what we shall be.'

2. By way of correction, wherein—

[1.] He asserts the reality of the privilege notwithstanding the present state, 'Beloved, now are we the sons of God.'

[2.] That in the future state the glory of God's children shall be manifest, 'But we know, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.'

First, Of the concession; and there the first granted truth is—

1. That the children of God are obnoxious to the contempt and hatred of the world, 'The world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.' By 'the world' is meant unbelievers, or the multitude of those that are without Christ. They know us not so as to own and love us, for they knew him not, that is, Christ. 'Him' is not referred to the next antecedent, the Father; for it is usual to express Christ by the relative word '*he*' by way of eminency, as is evident by the next verses, 'For when he shall appear.' Yea, all along the epistle: 1 John ii. 4, 'He that saith I know him, and keepeth not his commandments,' &c.; ver. 12, 'Our sins are forgiven for his name's sake;' ver. 25, 'The promise which he hath promised us;' ver. 27, 'The anointing which he hath received from him;' ver. 28, 'When he shall appear, we shall have boldness at his coming.' So after the text, chap. iii. 5, 'He was manifest to take away sin;' ver. 16, 'Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us;' 1 John iv. 17, 'As he is in the world, so are we in the world.' It is by way of eminency appropriated to Christ; so that the meaning is, they do not

acknowledge christianity, since they do not acknowledge Christ. Yet I will not rigorously insist upon this interpretation, so as to exclude the Father and the Spirit, because the world neither know Father, Son, nor Spirit, and therefore hate and contemn the people of God, and oppose the life and power of the gospel-dispensation. They know not the Father: John xv. 21, 'These things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.' They know not the Son, and therefore contemn and hate the saints: John xvi. 3, 'These things will they do unto you, because they know not the Father nor me.' Yea, they know not the Holy Spirit: John xiv. 17, 'I will send you another comforter, even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, nor knoweth him; but ye know him, because he dwelleth in you.' This is the first concession, that the world discerneth not any such great privilege, or dear and near relation between God and us.

2. The second concession is the imperfection of the present state, by which the glory of this privilege is darkened. It doth not appear what we shall be by what we are now. We are stained with sin, and blackened with sufferings. How many infirmities are we compassed about with! How many wants, necessities, and troubles are we pressed with! There is no visible appearance of our great privilege; it doth not appear who are God's children, or how they shall be glorified. The heirs of the world make a great show and noise; they may be pointed at where they go; there goeth such a prince, or such a lord's son and heir; but God's children carry no such port and state.

Secondly, By way of correction; and there—

1. He asserts the reality of the privilege, 'Beloved, now are we the sons of God.'

[1.] Now we have the immediate ground and foundation of this new relation, which is the new birth or regeneration, whereby is given to us a new nature, which is called a divine nature, whereby we are made partakers of the life and likeness of God: Titus iii. 5, 'According to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost;' 2 Cor. v. 17, 'If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away, and all things are become new.'

[2.] We have the right thence depending; for it is said, John i. 12, '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;' that is, right or privilege, for so the word is translated, Rev. xxii. 14, 'Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have a right to eat of the tree of life.' A right then we have, though not the possession or full fruition; that is reserved for the life everlasting; but it is a title to a glorious inheritance, that surely and shortly will come in hand. Therefore this present state and condition of ours is the state and condition of the sons of God. There must be a distinction between earth and heaven; though our filiation in the world to come be another thing to what it is in this world, yet now we are dear to God, reckoned to be of his family. God is with us now in our houses of clay, though we be not with him in his palace of glory. He is with us now in fire and water, in all conditions, though we be not in our everlasting con-

dition of peace and rest. He loveth us, and we are precious in his sight: Isa. xliii. 3, 4, 'For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee; since thou wast precious in my sight, and thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee.'

[3.] We have the comfort of it now, and the first-fruits and earnest to show how good and sure it is: Gal. iv. 6, 'Because ye are sons, he hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father;' 2 Cor. i. 22, 'Who hath sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit;' Rom. viii. 23, 'We ourselves, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our bodies.'

[4.] Now the fruits and effects do break out in our conversations, so that we are more visibly like unto God than others are, so that there is a manifest difference between the children of God and the children of the devil: 1 John iii. 10, 'In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, nor he that loveth not his brother.' In some sort we are like him now in holiness, hereafter shall be more perfect in purity, blessedness, and immortality. The world is sensible of this difference now: 1 Peter iv. 4, 'Wherein they think it strange that you run not with them into the same excess of riot.' They look on the children of God as contrary to them in nature, interest, and design, having other comforts, other dependencies, other practices. There is a generation of men whose life is not carnal, who have other delights and pleasures than the rest of mankind have. It is no wonder to see men proud, covetous, voluptuous, as it is no wonder to see the sun move, or the earth stand still, or water run downward; but it is a wonder to see men live as born of God, as having other hopes and expectations, to see them renounce what they see and love for God and heaven, which they never saw, to live upon supernatural supports, to comfort themselves with invisible hopes, and to sacrifice interests, life, and all to enjoy him. A christian that roweth against the stream of flesh and blood is the world's wonder and the world's reproof: Heb. xi. 7, 'By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house, by the which he condemned the world.' Well, then, we are the sons of God; we have much in hand, though more in hope.

2. That in the future state the glory of God's children shall be manifest: 'When he shall appear we shall be like him.' That shall be the day of the manifestation of the sons of God: Rom. viii. 19, 'The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.' First Christ, and then all the rest of his children: Col. iii. 3, 4, 'Your life is hid with Christ in God; but when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we shall appear with him in glory.'

Doct. That though God hath bestowed upon his people the glorious privileges of his children, yet little of this is seen in their present estate in the world.

1. I shall prove that the glory of our privileges and prerogatives is not seen in the present state.

2. Shall give you the reasons.

3. The uses.

I. Our glorious relation to God, with the effects and fruits of it, is a thing hidden and not seen.

1. It is not seen by the world; the world knoweth us not, as it knew him not; it is hidden from the world, as colours from a blind man; they have no eyes to see them—

[1.] Because they are blinded by the delusions of the flesh, and cannot judge of spiritual things: 1 Cor. ii. 14, 'The natural man receiveth not the things of God, for they are folly to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned;' as beasts cannot judge of the affairs of a man; it is a life above them; these are things out of their sphere; they know all things after the flesh, and value them according to the interests of the flesh; spiritual prerogatives are a riddle to them.

[2.] Being blinded with malice and prejudice, they censure this estate perversely, and so malign it and oppose it: 1 Peter iv. 4, 5, 'They think it strange that ye run not with them into the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you: who shall give an account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.' They are unwilling that any should part company, that there may be none to make them ashamed; and therefore, if they cannot draw others into a fellowship of their sins, they labour to blacken them with censures, or root them out by furious opposition and persecutions. But their perverse judgment should be no discouragement to the godly in the way of holiness, wherein they endeavour to imitate God, their heavenly Father.

(1.) Because if God be not known nor honoured in the world, nor Christ, nor the Spirit, why should we take it unkindly? We cannot in reason expect better entertainment in the world than Christ found in the world: John xv. 20, 'Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than the lord: if they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.' He had spoken it before to persuade them to humility and patience.

(2.) Their opinion is little to be valued, and therefore we should rather pity their ignorance than be offended by their censures. Though we be scorned and lightly esteemed, yea, persecuted by them, we must pity their ignorance of God and heavenly things. The world blindeth them: 2 Cor. iv. 4, 'In whom the god of this world hath blinded their minds which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine upon them.' They are so transformed into a conformity to those things they lust after, that they know not what is true happiness and excellency. Their being of the world is the cause of their ignorance. God's people are too touchy when they stand so much upon the respects of men. It argueth a secret leaven of pride if they murmur when the world doth not esteem them. A christian is an unknown man in the world, and therefore should not take it ill if he be slighted; he knoweth he hath the favour of God, that his hopes lie elsewhere; if they knew you better, they would use you better. When they slight you, nay, persecute and hate you, learn of your Lord to say, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.'

(3.) Christians should be satisfied with the approbation of God:

‘Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God! The world knoweth us not, as it knew him not.’ Though the world hate us, yet if God love us, it should be enough: John v. 44, ‘How can ye believe, that seek honour one of another, and are not content with the honour that cometh from God only?’ We make a strange medley when we would have both. It is enough that we have God’s image, God’s favour and fellowship, and are taken into God’s family.

(4.) It might be cause of suspicion to us if we were hugged and embraced by the world. However, things must be judged according to their intrinsic value and nature, not by the world’s love or hatred; this should alleviate the sense of the world’s contempt. The world cannot sincerely love that which is good: John xv. 19, ‘If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you.’ It is better to have the praise of their hatred than the scandal of their love and approbation.

(5.) Those that are truly blessed in their own consciences cannot be truly miserable by the judgment of other men: 2 Cor. i. 12, ‘For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that, in simplicity and godly sincerity, we have had our conversations in the world.’ The bird of the bosom sings sweetest. If all the world should applaud us, or all the world condemn us, if the world condemn and our consciences acquit us, we need not be troubled; God will not ask their vote and suffrage for our condemnation or absolution.

(6.) The slanders and mockery of worldly men should be no discouragement to us in the ways of the Lord; for God will reckon with them about their hard speeches against his people: 1 Peter iv. 4, ‘They speak evil of you, who shall give an account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.’ There is not an injurious thought in wicked men’s hearts, or word in their mouths, but God taketh notice of it. And therefore this may comfort us, that God will call them to a strict account for all their slanders, or at least keep us from discouragement in our duty.

2. As our dignity is not of the world, so in itself it doth not appear during our present state—(1.) Because it is spiritual, there is a veil upon it; (2.) It is hidden; (3.) Because it is future.

[1.] The privileges that belong to our dignity and prerogative of adoption are spiritual, and therefore make no fair show in the flesh; as, for instance—

(1.) The image of God is an internal image: Ps. xlv. 13, ‘The king’s daughter is glorious within.’ The world is glorious without, but the church is glorious within; its splendour lieth not in large possessions and great revenues, but in a plentiful effusion of gifts and graces. A harlot is more painted and decked with jewels than a matron; so is the false church more adorned with outward splendour than the true: Cant. i. 5, ‘I am black, but comely, like the tents of Kedar and the curtains of Solomon.’ There are many crosses and comforts, corruptions and graces, beauty and blackness; as the wild and wandering people that carried tents up and down were black in the outside, and sullied with the weather, but carried about with them costly and valuable things; and Solomon’s rich hangings and tapestry had other

coverings of smaller value, as the ark had of badgers' skins. There may be little splendour to the eye, yet much beauty within; even the beauty of our God may be upon them. The people of God are not to be judged by their outside, but by this inward glory. The world will not believe that such mean creatures can be the sons of God.

(2.) The life which floweth thence is hidden: Col. iii. 3, 'Our life is hid with Christ in God;' like the sap of the tree, which is not seen though the fruit appear.

(3.) Their comforts are spiritual, known by feeling rather than by report and imagination: 'The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds, through Jesus Christ.' It is not learning, but spiritual experience will tell us what this is: Rev. ii. 17, 'To him that overcometh I will give to eat of the hidden manna.' It is the heart of the godly that knoweth and feeleth these comforts: 'A stranger intermeddleth not with their joy.' The party that hath them feeleth them, but the bystander knoweth them not.

(4.) The protection and supplies of God's providence; it is a secret, it is a mystery, and a riddle to the world, that must have all under the view of sense: Ps. xxxi. 20, 'Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence, from the pride of men and the strife of tongues;' and so are said to 'dwell in the secret of the Most High,' Ps. xci. 1. Again 'the secret of the Lord is upon their tabernacle;' meaning God's protection and providence. This is the special favour of God, which the world knoweth not of, whereby God dwelleth with his people, and doth maintain and prosper them, nobody knoweth how; but there is a secret and insensible blessing on them, as, on the contrary, there is an insensible curse like a moth, that is sufficient to blast the fairest enjoyments of the wicked. God, to provide for his children, can put a very great blessing in a little means.

[2.] Because it is hidden: Col. iii. 3, 'Your life is hid with Christ in God;' not only in point of security, as maintained by an invisible power, but hidden in point of obscurity; there is a veil upon it.

(1.) The spiritual life is hidden under the veil of the natural life: Gal. ii. 20, 'The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.' They live in the flesh, but they do not live after the flesh. It is a life within a life. The spiritual life is nothing else but the natural life sublimated, and overruled to nobler and higher ends. The children of God eat, and drink, and sleep, and marry and give in marriage, as others do; they have not divested themselves of the interests and concernments of flesh and blood, but all these things are governed by grace, and carried on to high and eternal ends. But that grace which overruleth this life is not seen. We can see men move and breathe, and hear them discourse, but we see not the vital principle. We hear the clock strike, but the springs and wheels are out of sight. So are the inward motions of the soul, and the principles by which they are moved and stirred.

(2.) Another veil is that of afflictions and outward meanness and abasement: 'The world was not worthy of them,' yet they 'wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins.' Who would think so much worth should lie hid under a base outside? Would any man judge these to be highest in the favour of God, or heirs of glory? The glory was

darkened and obscured by a base outside : ' God hath chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of a kingdom.' So miserably poor, and yet in such a high relation to God, that they should have most of God's heart who feel his hand so heavy and smart upon them, and have so little of this world's good things : Ps. lxxviii. 13, ' Though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove, covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.' Sometimes God darkeneth all their outward glory, maketh them as scullions in the kitchen, yet in the meantime beautified with grace, and enriched with the evidences of his love ; those that shall be at length advanced to eternal glory may long lie in a sad, black, destitute, and despised condition.

(3.) Another veil is reproach and calumnies : 2 Cor. vi. 8, ' As deceivers, and yet true ;' that is, counted in the world a company of dissemblers, and yet the sincere servants and children of God : ' And judged according to men in the flesh, when they live to God in the spirit.' Reproach is the soil and dung whereby God maketh his heritage fruitful ; but the devil intendeth it for their destruction and extirpation. Satan is first a liar and then a murderer ; as they would invest the christians with bear-skins, and then bait them as bears ; and the world doth it to keep up their prejudices, and will not search, because they have a mind to hate.

(4.) There is another veil. Christians quench the vigour, and obscure the glory of this life by their infirmities ; they have too much of Adam, and too little of Jesus, and so the spiritual life is carried on darkly and in a riddle ; the good herbs and flowers are hidden in neglected gardens by the plenty of weeds. Christians are too negligent, and do not live as those that are born of God ; as they said of Hannibal when he was melting his days, his time, and army in the pleasures of Capua, that there was fire in him, but it needeth blowing ; so there is grace at the bottom, but it needeth a little stirring and quickening. The best of God's children have their failings : ' In many things we offend all.' Now the wicked insist more upon the faults of God's children than on their graces, as the flies pitch on a sore place, and the vultures fly over the gardens of delight to pitch on carrion. A pearl or diamond in the dirt and mire, its lustre cannot be discerned till it be washed. When corruptions are great and experiences small, a little grace can hardly be discerned ; as a staff is sooner found than a needle.

[3.] It is future : ' Now are we the children of God, but it doth not appear what we shall be ;' and so our filiation is not only hidden from others, but in a great measure from ourselves. The time of our perfection and blessedness is not yet come, and we cannot for the present judge of it ; what God will do for us, and what a glory shall be revealed in us. The glory intended is not fully revealed in scripture, for we have not a heart to conceive of it : 1 Cor. ii. 9, ' Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him ;' 1 Cor. xii. 9, ' Prophecy is but in part, but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.' And the apostle, when he was rapt into paradise, heard unspeakable

words. Heavenly joys cannot be told us in an earthly dialect; the scripture is fain to lisp to us, and speak as we can understand, of things to come by things present; therefore our glory is in a great measure unknown, and will be till we get up and see what a crown of glory is prepared for us.

II. The reasons why this glory doth not appear.

1. Because now is the time of trial, hereafter of recompense; therefore now is the hiding time, hereafter is the day of manifestation of the sons of God. If the glory of the spiritual life were too sensible, there were no trial, neither of the world nor of the people of God. It is meet mere men should be distinguished here; as Christ himself might be discerned by those that had a mind to see him, yet there was obscurity enough in his person to harden those that were resolved to continue in their prejudices. Therefore it is said, Luke ii. 34, 'This child was set for the rise and fall of many in Israel, and for a sign of contradiction to be spoken against.' He was a stumbling-block to the wicked. So if the whole excellency of the christian state were laid open, there would be no trial. Christ had his bright side and dark side, a glory to be seen by those eyes that were anointed with spiritual eyesalve, and affliction and meanness enough to harden them that had no mind to see; so God hath his chosen ones in the world, who keep up his honour and interest; and he hath his ways to express his love to them, but not openly. Now they are called his hidden ones, with respect to his secret blessing and protection: Ps. lxxx. 3, 'Turn again, O God, and cause thy face to shine.' And God hath chosen this way as most suitable, both for our trial and the world.

2. Now is the time of faith, hereafter of sight; and 'faith is the evidence of things not seen.' Therefore in this day of faith God will not too openly express things to the view of sense, for that would destroy faith. Now we are sanctified, and justified, and live by faith.

3. That we may be conformed to our head, the Lord Jesus Christ, who came not with external appearance. The glory of the divine nature was hidden under the veil of his flesh, and his dignity and excellency under a mean and base outside: 'He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.' In this outward state there was nothing lovely to be seen by a carnal eye; though intrue beauty surpassing men and angels, but not in outward state and condition of life: 'Is not this the carpenter's son?' He had his veil of reproaches; called 'a wine-bibber,' and that 'he casteth out devils through the prince of the devils.' He was tempted of Satan, persecuted by the sons of violence. He had no sin indeed, yet counted a sinner. Now we must be made like Christ in all things; he sanctified a mean condition to us.

4. God hath chosen this way as most fit to advance his glory; he will give us little in hand, that he may daily hear from us, and we may seek our supplies from him; for the spirit of adoption was given us that we may cry, 'Abba, Father.' And also that his power may be perfect in our weakness. By infirmities, weaknesses, and wants, his fatherly love more appeareth to us than in an absolute and total exemption from them. God would not hear so often from us, nor should we have such renewed experiences, to revive the sense of his

love and grace, which otherwise would be cold and dead in our hearts, were it not for those wants and afflictions during our minority and nonage.

Use 1. Be contented to be hidden from and hated by the world, if the course of your service expose you to it. As much as in him lieth, a christian should seek to be at peace with all, gain the good-will of all, that his service may not be obstructed. But none can carry it so innocently and meekly but he will meet with some opposition; but we should not stumble at the cross, be deterred from a course of godliness, or discouraged in God's stricter ways, because of the vexations and afflictions which accompany them. To this end—

1. Look upon things not as what they are esteemed to be now, but what they will be hereafter; now is the trouble, then the reward. If the blind see not these things, you should see them, 2 Peter i. 10. Present time is quickly past, therefore we should not look at things what they seem at present, but what they will prove to all eternity. Present pleasures, profits, or honours, may easily be counter-balanced by final shame. The derided, vilified believer, oh, how glorious a creature will he be, when Christ shall give him his eternal reward! Mat. v. 11, 12, 'Blessed are you when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you, for my name's sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven.'

2. Thankfully consider the benefits you have now by holiness, as well as the afflictions. The least cross is usually taken notice of more than all the advantages which follow holiness. Is your Father strange to you now? Doth not he give an hundred-fold? Mark x. 30; and give you that which is infinitely more worth than that he taketh from you? The world may be bought too dear, but not salvation and the comforts of the Spirit. Yea, as to outward things, you are not cast out of the care of his providence: 2 Cor. iv. 9, 'Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.' Though we wrestle with difficulties, yet are supported and maintained; our heavenly Father is fatherly still.

Use 2. Do not affect appearances, nor live by opinion, but content yourselves with the favour and approbation of God; an hypocrite's outside is the best, because he seeketh to please men. But count the inward life the best life, that inward adorning, the hidden man of the heart. The nettle mounteth on high when the violet shroudeth itself under its own leaves, and is only found out by its smell and fragrancly. A christian is satisfied with the honour that cometh of God only. Consider well—

1. Of the honourable estate and privileges to which believers are called, to be sons of God and friends of God.

2. The honour of his approbation in our consciences, and the testimony of our integrity, if approved of God and accepted of God, 2 Cor. v. 9, 2 Cor. x. 18. A good opinion of ourselves, and others' good opinion of us, cannot be so comfortable to us as the testimony of God concerning our sincerity.

3. His respects are many times made conspicuous to the world: 'Those that honour me, I will honour.' When a man sincerely sets himself

to exalt God, God will take care to honour him in the sight of the world when it is convenient.

4. God's approbation and testimony of us at the day of judgment, 1 Cor. iv. 5; 1 Peter i. 7, 'That the trial of your faith may be found to praise and glory.'

5. Eternal glory in heaven: Rom. ii. 7, 'To them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life.'

Use 3. If your privileges be hidden, let your graces appear in their fruits and effects. Little of your happiness is seen, but your holiness should be apparent and visible; it is for the honour of God that his children should be like him, Mat. v. 16, and 2 Thes. i. 12. If your condition be obscured and darkened by afflictions, let it not be obscured and darkened by sins; and though you live not in a perpetual tenor of happiness, yet there must be a constant course of holiness; no greatness like that of a gracious spirit.

Use 4. Be contented with a mean condition; it is not the day of the manifestation of the sons of God: though others that are wicked have a larger allowance, God doth not misplace his hands, as Joseph thought of his father, that he did not place his hands on the right head, Gen. xlviii., when he saw Ephraim preferred before Manasseh. In what a poor condition was the only-begotten Son of God when he lived in the world! Though you do not enjoy the pleasures, honours, riches, and esteem that others do, yet if you enjoy the favour of God, it is enough; though mean, yet heirs of glory, James i. 5. God doth not esteem men according to their outward lustre, 1 Sam. xvi. 7.

Use 5. Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment, John vii. 24. Do not judge the people of God by their outside or worldly privileges: Moses could see an excellency in the people of God in their afflicted condition, Heb. xi. 25. Do not misjudge yourselves: I am a poor, afflicted, contemptible man; that may prove a temptation, Ps. lxxiii. 13, 14. Do not misjudge others because of some failings; a pearl may lie under a great deal of chaff.

SERMON III.

But we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.—1 JOHN iii. 2.

FROM these words I observe—

That though for the present our adoption be obscured, yet when he shall appear the children of God are sure to enjoy a blessed and glorious estate.

For the clearing of this point I shall show you—

1. The nature of this blessedness.
2. The time when it shall commence.
3. The apprehension we have of it for the present.