

1. THE State that we are admitted into by Adoption, viz. of the Children of God. And what greater dignity or honour can be put upon a Creature? The *Apostle* look'd upon this very title conferred on us by God, to be a display of his unparallel'd Love, 1 Joh. 3. 1. *BEHOLD, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.* And this is one manifest difference between Justification & Adoption, in that there is a peculiar honour contained in it, distinct from that of the former, though the Subjects be the same; and he that is owner of the one, is owner of the other too, and both of them come in upon believing. Justification indeed confers a Righteousness upon us, which makes us happy, but Adoption adds to bestow a Sonship on us; and this must needs constitute a new Relation between God and us, which the other did not, and such a Relation as is astonishing to think of. If we should consider no more, but the honour that is put upon us in it, it is transcendent; tho' we shall afterwards see that there is more than that. Honour is one of the Worlds Idols: How ambitious are men of it? And what pains will they be at to compass it? And, tho' the World's honours are of little worth, yet there is an Honour that comes from God, that is worthy our ambition. Hence that reflection on them, Joh. 5. 44. *How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?* The highest Honour in any Kingdom, is to be *Monarch* of it, to be *King* or *Supream*, and next to that is to be *Son* and *Heir*; and the greater Potentate this Monarch is, the more elevated is the honour of being so related to him. Well, God is the only Potentate, He is an everlasting King, and Believers are by this Adoption, made his Sons & Heirs. Hence called *Heirs of God*, Rom. 8. 17. The dignity of this is, that God is pleased to put his own Name upon them, and is not ashamed to own the relation. There is therefore *emphasis* in that of being called the *Sons of God*, 1 Joh. 3. 1. There is more in it than merely being so, viz. that God openly owns and acknowledgeth this Relation. Hence we have that remark, in Heb. 11. 16. *Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God.* When therefore God sent *Moses* to *Pharaoh*, he bad him to use that plea, Exod. 4. 22, 23. *And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my first born. And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy first-born.* And how rich Grace is it, for God to bestow such a Priviledge upon us? But that which greatly enhauncheth it, is to consider, who we were, on whom he hath conferred it: Not only *strangers*, and on that account could lay no claim to it by any natural right, any more than those who are left to go without it: but we were his *enemies*, and might have rather expected, that he

SERMON CXXIX.

2. IT follows that we consider of the *Special Nature* of this Benefit, in which we shall have a further display of the wonderfully *Free Grace* of God eminently appearing in it. For the clearing of this there are three Things that lie before us to be inquired into. 1. The State that we are admitted into by *Adoption*, viz. of the Children of God. 2. The Way in which we are admitted into this State, we are received into the Number. 3. The Glorious Advantage that accrues to us by it, we have a Right to all the Priviledges of such. These things may be briefly laid open before us.

he would have destroyed us. We were become ignoble; Sin had made us vile; we had lost all the Honour that was put upon us in our primitive state of integrity, and contracted all the ignominy to ourselves that was imaginable. We were become Sinners, and a worse thing cannot be said; unprofitable, good for nothing, but for Hell's flames: We were become Fools and Mad men, and fit for nothing but a Bedlam. We had made ourselves Slaves of Satan, and Vassals of every dirty Lust. We were men guilty of Death, under a Sentence of Condemnation in our selves, and going to Execution; and that from our Dunghill and Dungeon, and Scaffold, God should take us into his favour, and give us a name among his Sons and Daughters: *This honour have all His Saints.*

2. *THE Way in which we are admitted to this State, we are received into this number.* And herein more especially doth the nature of this Adoption appear, and the forecited difference between it and Justification is farther manifested. And here let us in *general* observe,

1. *THAT Adoption is not limited to one, but it extends to a Multitude.* There is a number of them, and their number is incomputable by us. Men usually bestow this favour but on one; or at most but a very few. And the reason is, because they have but a little in comparison to bestow, and their Grandeur would be lost, if it should be crumbled into too many parcels. But the Glory and Inheritance that God hath to bestow, is sufficient for a World, and hereupon he extends it to a great many. It is certain, every Believer is dignified with this Privilege, John 1. 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.* All that are entituled unto Christ by Faith, Gal. 3. 26. And they are an uncountable Number, Rev. 7. 9. *After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the thrones, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.* All that belong to the *General Assembly*, Heb. 12. 23. Hence they have that title put on them.

2. *THAT every one of this number is severally admitted to this Privilege.* When and how this is, will presently be considered; but it is certain, that all do not receive it at once, it being, as was before observed, a *transient Act*. It is true, all were at once appointed in the *Eternal Counsel* of God to this; and hence they are known unto God from Eternity, but they are introduced into it by another Act, in which they are made to receive it, as, Gal. 4. 5. *To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of Sons.*

3. *THAT this Privilege is equally extended to every one that is made partaker in it.* One is as much a Child of God as another, and his right is as good; the whole Inheritance

belongs to every one, nor hath one the less, because the other hath all, because there is an infinite fulness in it. For, though possibly there be different degrees in Glory, yet that is not from a greater title that one hath than another, but from the different capacity put into the Subject to receive it. But every Child of God is also a *pre born*, Heb. 12. 23. But for a more particular consideration of this, we may enquire, 1. *Who it is that receives them into this Number?* 2. *When they are thus received?* 3. *After what manner this Adoption is conferred.* A Word to each of these.

1. *WHO it is that receives them into this Number?*

Ans. *THIS can be no other but God himself, it being his Prerogative.* Who should impose upon the owner of a Name and Estate, whom he shall adopt to it. As therefore it is *God that justifieth*, so it is he that adopteth: It is true, because in the order of Divine Works, this belongs to Application, it is proper to the Spirit's manner of working. As the Father chose us to it, and the Son redeemed us for it; so the Spirit invests us with it. Adoption is a Privilege connected with, and that comes in upon believing, and must therefore have the same Author, which can be no other than God. He is therefore said to give it, Job. 1. 12.

2. *WHEN they are thus received?*

Ans. *IN general; though they were appointed to it from Eternity, yet it is conferred upon us in Believing.* We were chosen to be made partakers of it before the World was; but it was that we might be adopted, Eph. 1. 6. *Christ in fulness of time redeemed us for this purpose.* But it was that we might receive it, Gal. 4. 5. *To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.* So that it was to be an effect or fruit of the former. But that we might have fellowship with Christ in this Privilege, we must also be called. The conveyance of what he hath purchased for us, is in this order, Rom. 8. 30. *Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.* God's Election is an inmanent act in him, and of it self makes no change in the state of the Creature. Indeed it lays a sure foundation for what passeth afterwards, and makes it future, so that it shall without fail be accomplished in fulness of time. But for all this, God's Elect have in their natural state, a proper relation to the Covenant made with Adam, and remain under the curse of it, till the Spirit of God comes and works Conversion in them, in which they pass from death to life; unto which life this Adoption belongs. The Apostle therefore tells us, what we all were before this, Eph. 2. 3. *And were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.* And applies it distinctly to his Ephesians, telling them also, when the change of state was bestowed on them, ver. 12, 13. And as this

Priviledge is not received before, so neither is it deferred any longer, but is completely applied in our believing, *Gal. 3. 26.* They that make Adoption gradual, inchoated in our Conversion, and perfected in our entering into, and taking full possession of the Kingdom, confound it with Glorification. When God puts us among Children, and bestows on us a title to the eternal Inheritance, we are as much adopted as ever we shall be, and have as sure a title, as those now in Glory.

3. *AFTER what manner this Adoption is conferred?*

Ans. WE may make some guess at this Mystery, in the following *Conclusions,*

1. *THAT Adoption is a Priviledge purchased by Christ for his Redeemed.* God, in the Covenant of Redemption, promised him, not only that he should deliver us from wrath, but that we should be his *Seed, & Generation,* *Psal. 22. 30. Iſai. 53. 10. When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.* He therefore, having accomplished this Work, hath a claim to them; they are given him; he hath bought them with his Blood, *Act. 20. 28.* And he did it for this very end, *Gal. 4. 5.*

2. *HENCE, it is a Priviledge belonging to the promise of the New Covenant.* It is therefore exhibited and offered in the treaty of that Covenant. The Covenant of Grace hath its rooting in, and derives from the Covenant of Suretyship: God therefore having promised to Christ, that he shall have such a *Seed,* invites sinful men to come to him, and close with the terms of the Covenant, with such an encouragement as this, that if they so do, they shall be dignified with this Priviledge, *2 Cor. 6. 17, 18. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you: And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons & daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.*

3. *HENCE the Conveyance of it is, in the Ratification of the Covenant, between God & us.* All Covenant Promises are connected with the terms on which they are made: And hence the claim to them comes in upon the performance of those terms. God, in the Covenant exhibition tells us how we may come to be his Children, and engageth that in this way, he will own us as such. Now, till these terms be performed, the Covenant is in suspense, but when they are so, it is now ratified. Whatsoever was engaged on condition, is secured by the performance of it: And that which before, was ours only hypothetically, is now so absolutely. Such therefore are said to be heirs of promise, as have *Act &c. Heb. 6. 17, 18. Wherein God willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath. That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us.*

4. *THIS Covenant is a Covenant of Espousals between Christ and us.* Of all comparisons, the Scripture most frequently makes use of this to set it forth by. We have it pathetically express in the whole *Song of Solomon.* Christ therefore speaks of his being married to his People, *Jer. 3. 14. Turn, O back sliding children, saith the Lord, for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, & two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion. And he calls the Covenant a Covenant of Espousals, Hof. 2. 19, 20. And I will betroth thee unto me for ever, yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord. And Paul tells us the great design of his Ministry, *2 Cor. 11. 2. For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy, for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.* Hence also, the breach of Covenant is in Scripture frequently represented by Adultery, or violation of the bonds of Wedlock.*

5. *HENCE this Covenant is ratified in and upon our Union to the Lord Jesus Christ.* It is Christ who upon the opening of the New-Covenant, comes and makes love to poor Sinners. It is his Son whom God the Father offers to them, and invites them to accept of him in this near relation. It is the Person of Christ that is offered, with whom all his Benefits are conveyed inseparably. If we are in Christ, we have then the Condition wrought on which the Promise depends: And now all that is in it belongs to us. This made Paul so desirous to be found in him, *Phil. 3. 9.*

6. *THIS Union is made on our part, by our believing in him.* In Marriage Union there is the consent of both Parties necessary. Christ invites us, and declares his willingness, and by his Spirit, he makes us willing also, and gaining our free consent to his offer, we make an absolute choice of him, and take him as he is held forth in the Gospel. Thus Christ and we are made one. And this is the very thing that is done in believing: We give our selves up to him, everlastingly to be his, and take him to be our Lord and Saviour. He therefore is said to *dwell in our hearts by Faith,* *Eph. 3. 17.*

7. *ON this Union, we are made joynt-heirs with Him who is the Heir of all things.* Christ, as God, is Lord Proprietor of all things; but as Mediator, he is constituted Heir of them. They are made over to Him as his, *Heb. 1. 2.* So that this Heirship is rooted in him, and all that are introduced into it, are so by Co-heirship. Hence that, *Rom. 8. 17. And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joynt-heirs with Christ.* It is his right that becomes ours, and it derives as the right in all that is her Husband's belongs to the Wife. God therefore is said, to give every thing else with him, *Rom. 8. 32.* This then is the way, in which we come to be received into the Number of God's Children.

3. THE glorious *Advantage* that accrues to us by this Adoption; is, that we have a right to all the Privileges of the Children of God. And herein Adoption differs from Glorification, in as much as that puts us in possession of them, whereas this gives us the right to them. And there are two things here to be observed, *viz* 1. That there are precious Privileges belong to the Children of God. 2. That Adoption gives them a right to them all.

1. THAT there are precious Privileges that belong to the Children of God. When God takes us to be his Children, he doth not only give us an empty title, which hath nothing but a noise and a name in it, but there are those realities annexed to this relation, which are enough to make them happy now and forever. And the very reason why God makes us his Children, is that he may let us know and experience the Love of a Father, and doth accordingly confer upon us the things that are worthy of such a Father. It would be endless particularly to enumerate every thing that belongs to this title; for so we must recount every Promise that is made to Believers in the new Covenant, which they have a liberty to claim in right of Sonship, and no other can make a challenge of. However, we may as in a Luteskip take notice of the principal heads, to which these Privileges do refer. And here,

1. ONE main & comprehensive Privilege is, the Spirit of Adoption, which God bestows on all His Children. Compare, Rom. 8. 15. with Gal. 4. 6. It is indeed the same Spirit who is the Author of the whole work of Application from the beginning to the end, but there is a peculiar respect in which He is called the Spirit of Adoption, and that refers to those effects which he produceth in us, and so to us. As such a Spirit then, he seals us to the certain enjoyment of all the good promised us in the new Covenant. Eph. 4. 30. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. He ratifies our Sonship to be immutable, and confirms our title to all the Promises irreversible. As such a Spirit, he gives his testimony in us, to ratify all our evidences, and fully assure us of our Sonship and Heirship, Rom. 8. 16, 17. The Spirit it self beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joynt heirs with Christ. For though the assurance itself belongs to Glorification, yet the witness of it in us is from the Spirit of Adoption. As such a Spirit, he frees us from the spirit of bondage, and helps us so to come to God, and present our requests to him as a Father, Rom. 8. 15. And by this means we have access with boldness to the Throne of Grace. Eph. 2. 18. For through him we bold have an access by one Spirit unto the Father. It was he that helped them to that, *Ysa.* 63. 17. As such a Spirit, he upholds our Faith in us unto Perseverance, notwith-

standing all the infirmities of our flesh, and shocks of temptations, that assail us from our enemies. *1 Pet.* 1. 5. Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time. But for which, we should easily be drawn away, and fall from Grace. As such a Spirit, he nourisheth Grace in us, and helps us in the exercise of it. Hence said to help our infirmities, *Rom.* 8. 26. He takes and leads us by the hand, and stays our steps for us, that we may not fall, and lifts us up, if at any time we are down. Finally, as such a Spirit, he irradiates us with the light of God's Love, whereby we are enabled to rejoice in it, and in the midst of all the trials, that we meet with in our Pilgrimage, *Rom.* 5. 3, 5. And what a glorious Privilege is this?

2. ANOTHER Privilege, full of marrow and sweetness, is, that God, having assured this Relation of a Father to us, stands firmly engaged to be, and to carry to us in all things, as a Father. And how much is there wrapt up in this? Here is a field of Contemplation, in which we may well lose ourselves; and we may safely draw from it, all Soul-solacing Conclusions. Is he their Father? then he will certainly provide for them, and they may without anxiety rely upon him for it. Hence that, *Mat.* 6. 31, 32. Is he their Father? then he will surely be to them a safe Protection from all that would offer them any injury. He will see that none shall hurt them, and they need not be afraid of any such thing, *Heb.* 13. 5, 6. For he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me. If any offer them injury, he will be provoked, *Jer.* 2. 3. All that devour him, shall offend; evil shall come upon them, saith the Lord. Is he their Father? He will uphold them in their way, so that they shall not so hurt themselves, as to undo them. It may be said of them all, as, *Deut.* 33. 27. And that Promise belongs to them, *Psal.* 91. 11, 12. And hence the Ministry of Angels belongs to them as Children and Heirs, *Heb.* 1. 14. Is he their Father? He will give them all seasonable instruction, to guide them in their way, he will counsel them in their duty, and warn them of their danger. This he presumed of, *Psal.* 73. 24. And on this account is that precious Promise, *Ysa.* 20. 21. Is he their Father? He will help them in, and give them strength to do their work, that it shall not fail in their hands, so that sense of their own insufficiency need not discourage them. He hath therefore promised to give them Grace, *Psal.* 84. 11. and Strength, *Ysa.* 41. 10. Is he their Father? He will seasonably and profitably chasten them when they need it, *Heb.* 12. 6, 9, 11. And he will sanctify these Chastisements to them, *1 Cor.* 11. 32. They shall be able to say as, *Psal.* 119. 71. It is good for me that I have been afflicted: that I might learn thy statutes. And that is no small

Privilege; What saith he, Psal. 94. 12. *Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law. Is he their Father? He will accept of and commend their sincere Service, and overlook their infirmities. He accepted David's very desire to build him an House, 1 Kings 8. 18. And what a commendation gives he to Abraham, Gen. 22. 16, 17. And for his pity see, Psal. 103. 13, 14. And what precious Priviledges are these?*

3. ANOTHER Priviledge, is a *Glorious Liberty*. There is such an one belongs to them, Rom. 8. 21. And this is opposed to that bondage in which we are before, from which we are now delivered; both from the servitude of the Law, as a Covenant, so as that we are no more under the *curse* of it, Rom. 6. 14. Gal. 3. 13. Nor are we to seek our happiness, by the perfect personal Obedience required in it, but by Faith in Christ, Rom. 3. 28. And from the servitude of Sin, Rom. 6. 7. *For he that is dead, is freed from sin.* It shall no more reign in us, though it may molest us. Rom. 6. 12. *Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lust thereof.* Nor will God impute it to us, 2 Cor. 5. 19. *God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.* Nor shall we ever be condemned for it, Rom. 8. 1. *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.* In a word, there is a full and perfect freedom bestowed upon them through Christ, according to, Joh. 8. 36. *If the Son therefore make you free, ye shall be free indeed.* Saran's lordship & tyranny is destroyed, and the Kingdom of Christ, which is a Kingdom of liberty is set up. And this must needs be a very excellent Benefit.

4. THE last Priviledge I shall mention, is that of *Heirship*. And this naturally flows from it, Rom. 8. 17. *And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joynt-heirs with Christ.* And who can tell what is the Inheritance they are intitled to by it. *All is theirs, 1 Cor. 3. 22, 23.* All the Creation is made to serve them. The holy Angels are a Safe-guard to them. Psal. 34. 7. *The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.* Bring messages to them, Dan. 9. 23. And when they die are a convoy to them, Luk. 16. 22. *And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom.* Wicked men & Devils shall do them service, tho' against their will. Yea, every thing shall turn to their account. Rom. 8. 28. *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.* And there are all the Glories of the Eternal Kingdom reserved for them, and shall certainly be in due time bestowed on them; because they are not Servants, but Sons, Joh. 8. 35. *And the servants abide not in the house for ever: but the son abideth ever.* But the

best description we can take of this, is by drawing the Vail over it, 1 Cor. 2. 4. *But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*

2. THEIR Adoption gives them a Right to all these Priviledges. It doth not indeed put them into actual possession; they are at present under Age, and must, for that, arrive at the stature of a *perfect man in Christ*. But it makes them all theirs. This introduceth them into this right, they could make no claim to any of these before, but upon this, they may call all their own: And this is their great plea, or the reason of their claim; not because they were better than others, or had a natural claim to them, or have done any thing to purchase them, but because God hath made them his Sons *freely*, Rom. 8. 17. This Adoption also brings with it those things, which establish and confirm this right to them; they have in it, *the Sealing of the Spirit*, as we have already observed; and they have *the Earnest of the Spirit*, which is said to be the same, Eph. 1. 13, 14. *In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession unto the praise of his glory.* But yet there is a difference also observed, 2 Cor. 1. 22. *Who also hath sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.* The Sealing it self is one *Earnest*, but there are also with it, the *first fruits of the Spirit*, which are to give us the assurance of the Harvest to follow. For which reason we have the *Apostle* so arguing, Phil. 1. 6. *Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.* So that a Child of God may safely from his Adoption, argue to the certainty of his future participation in all the good that is purchased by Christ, and laid up in the Promise.

U S E. LET the Consideration of these things call on us all, and Children in particular, so labour to make sure of this Adoption. Let this be your great Ambition, to be the Children of God: And that, not by an outward relation in the Gospel Covenant only, but by that which is introduced by Faith in Christ, thro' whom only you can obtain Sonship & Heirship to this incorruptible and never fading Inheritance. Your Earthly Parents must dye shortly, if they are not gone already, and it is a poor Portion, which they can bestow on you, which can never make you happy: But if God once be your Father in Christ, you are happy indeed: He will be your Father in Heaven. He lives for ever, He will take care of you, He will never fail nor forsake you; He will keep you safe through an evil World, and bring you without fail to his Heavenly Kingdom: He will do more for you, then you can ask or think. He offers
this

this to you, and begs of you to accept it. Receive Christ for your Spouse, and his Father will be your Father, his God your

God, and nothing shall ever separate you from his Love.

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S E R M O N CXXX.