any adversative particles expressed or understood),

**and it never yet was manifested** (on any occasion:

such is the force  
of the tense in the original. And the  
verb, as so often in St. John, and as in the  
next sentence, does not mean, made manifest  
to *knowledge* or *anticipation*,—for  
that it is, as asserted below: but, shewn  
forth *in actuality*, come to its manifestation)

**what we shall be** (understand, in  
virtue of this our state of sons of God: to  
what new development or condition this  
already existing fact will lead. But we  
must take care not to fall into Grotius’s  
error, “in what manner we are to be the  
sons of God:” for as Calovius rightly remarks,

“there are no degrees of sonship :”  
we are as truly, and in the same sense,  
children of God now, as we shall be then:  
but now [Gal. iv. 1] we are children waiting  
for an unknown inheritance—then we  
shall be children in full possession of that  
inheritance, And hence, from the reality  
and identity of that sonship, come what follows,  
—our certain knowledge, even in this  
absence of manifestation in detail, that our  
future condition will consist in likeness to  
Him). **We know** (no contrast, though *“but”*  
is required to fill out our English idiom: see  
above : what we know of this *what we shall  
be,* is this. There is not even a *correction*  
of the preceding : the connexion is simply,  
“This future condition of ours hath never  
yet appeared : thus much we know of it.””  
**we know,** as always, of certain, well-  
assured cognition) that, if it were manifested

(viz. the *“what we shall be ;”* this  
verb takes up again the former one. So  
most of the ancients and moderns. On the  
other hand, Bede, Calvin, Beza [and the  
A. V.: Tyndale and Cranmer had *“it”*),  
and others, supply *“He,”* understanding  
*Christ:* appealing to St. John’s well-known

usage which we have in ch. ii. 28,  
and below in our ver. 5. But it may be  
replied, that in the former case the subject  
was plainly suggested by the preceding  
words *“in Him,”* in the latter actually  
expressed : whereas here the reference of  
the verb is no less plainly given by the preceding verb,   
here again repeated. Besides  
which, *“He,”* in ver. 5, clearly shews that  
the divine subject of these verses is not  
Christ but the Father), **we shall be** (taken  
up again from above, and the emphatic  
**like Him** corresponding exactly to **what**  
above) **like Him** (*God:* see below), **because**

(this connecting particle must be  
kept firm to its causal meaning, and all the  
difficulties of the sentence met thus, not  
by explaining it away. Nor does it express

merely the *mode* of the transformation, as Lyra.

Still less must we with  
Calvin and others reverse the causal connexion,

and make the seeing Him as He is  
merely a proof that we shall be like Him.  
Whatever consequences it may entail, it is  
certain that the proposition introduced by  
*because* contains the real essential cause  
and ground of that which it follows) **we  
shall see Him** (God : see below) **as He is**(with St. John, the recognition and knowledge

of God is ever no mere cognition, but  
the measure of the spiritual life: he who  
has it, possesses God, has the Father and  
the Son: becomes more and more like God,  
having His seed in him. So that the full  
and perfect accomplishment of this knowledge

in the actual fruition of God Himself  
must of necessity bring with it entire likeness to God.

And this is the part of the  
future lot of the sons of God which is certain.  
Because we shall see Him as He is,  
—which is taken for granted as a Christian  
axiom,—it of necessity follows that we  
shall be entirely like Him: ethically like  
Him: we shall behold, as Ecumenins says,  
“the just, the just One—the pure, the pure  
One.” The difficulty, that no man can see  
God, is not in reality contained here, any  
more than it is in our Lord’s “ Blessed are  
the pure in heart, for they shall *see* God.”  
The word, however understood, has for its  
limit, that no created eye even in the glorified

body can behold the Creator: that  
beyond its keenest search there will be  
glory and perfection baffling and dazzling  
it: but this incapacity does not prevent  
the vision, as far as it can reach, being clear  
and unclouded: being, to the utmost extent  
of which our glorified nature is capable, *as  
He is*—a true and not a false vision of God.  
And if it be again objected that we seem to  
be thus confounding the ethical sight of  
God which is the measure of our likeness  
to God, with corporeal sight of Him in the