

## SINNERS INTERESTED IN CHRIST, OBTAINING FAVOUR OF THE LORD.

PROVERBS viii. 35,

*Whoso findeth me,—shall obtain favour of the Lord.*

By the favour of the Lord is not meant reconciliation, or a state of favour with God, for that is comprehended in the life found; but the benefits, fruit, and effects of God's favour, all along from the time the sinner is taken into favour. The word rendered obtained, signifies to bring forth as out of a treasure or storehouse. This treasure is open to the sinner, and access to it granted him, upon his union with Christ, so that from thence he may afterwards bring forth as he needs.

The doctrine deducible from the words is,

DOCTRINE. A sinner once interested in Christ, shall obtain favour of the Lord, bringing it forth as out of a treasure to which he is allowed access.

In handling this point, I shall,

I. Shew some things supposed in this truth, tending to clear the meaning of it.

II. Wherein the soul once interested in Christ shall obtain favour of the Lord.

III. Confirm the doctrine.

IV. Apply.

I. I will shew some things supposed in this truth, tending to clear the meaning of it.

1. There is a treasure of favour for poor sinners with the Lord; Matth. xiii. 44, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field," &c. A treasure speaks preciousness, variety, and abundance. God's favours are precious, because of his infinite excellency; there is a variety of them, suited to all the cases the sinner can be in; and there is abundance of them, an inexhaustible stock, sufficient to supply them all, and that at all times.

2. This treasure is locked on sinners out of Christ, they have no access to it, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world, Eph. ii. 12. There is favour with God, but it is not for such sinners; the treasure of wrath is their treasure, Rom. ii. 5. They have no saving interest in the Mediator, therefore no saving interest in the treasure of favour. It is hid in the field of the gospel; but the field is not theirs, so not the treasure neither.

3. The sinner once interested in Christ has free access to the treasure, to bring forth from thence whatever he needs; hence says the apostle, Heb. iv. 14, 16, "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, —let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. But it may be objected, Is there not free access to that treasure of favour proclaimed to all to whom the gospel comes? *ANSW.* It is so. But we may conceive, as it were, a twofold door of this treasure; the outer door, in the free offer of the gospel, the inner door, even Jesus Christ himself. Both are closed on fallen angels; the outer door is opened to sinners of the tribe of Adam, that they may freely partake of it, if they will come in by the inner door; but till they enter by this last, they cannot reach it. But the sinner once interested in Jesus Christ is put in possession of the treasure, so as to have access to it at any time thereafter, when he is disposed to bring forth favour out of it; John x. 9, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture."

4. Even the sinner when he is interested in Christ, will still be needing, while he is in this world. It is true, he will never be again reduced to the extremity of total want, John iv. 14, but he will be under partial wants while he lives here, John xiii. 10. And there is such an emptiness woven into the very nature of the creature, that the saints in heaven, though they will feel no want, yet will not become self-sufficient by glorification.

5. *Lastly.* As it is the privilege of believers, that they may, so it is their duty that they do, bring forth and fetch supply for all their wants out of that treasure. They must still have recourse to it, in all exigencies; and they are welcome to it. They are let into it, by their union with Christ, and they should make use of it in their daily walk. And when they come to heaven, they shall be filled from it for evermore, Rev. vii. 17, "For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

II. I proceed to shew wherein the soul once interested in Christ shall obtain favour of the Lord. They shall obtain it in all things, cases, and conditions, which they meet with or shall be in. The promise is broad and large, Heb. xiii. 5, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Rom. viii. 28, "All things shall work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to his purpose." Go as it will with the nation, the church, or

themselves in particular, they shall always obtain favour. But it will not be amiss to condescend on some particulars. They shall obtain favour,

1. In prosperity, when things in the world are in a thriving condition with them. That is what destroys many, Prov. i. *ult.* but it shall not destroy them, and that is a great favour; Job i. 10, "Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath upon every side?" a hedge not only about his house, &c., but about him. Many have the former, while they want the latter, and so are ruined. There is a threefold favour that a gracious person may obtain of the Lord in this case.

(1.) Balancing grace, to make them carry evenly and usefully in prosperity. Job got it in his prosperity, chap. i. 5. The sun of prosperity shone on him, and he was helped of God to retain his tenderness, and to improve the smiles of outward providences to the honour of God. And considering what a corrupt nature the best have, and how slippery ground the world's heights are, they obtain favour of the Lord indeed, whom Satan gets not cast over that precipice to their ruin.

(2.) Balancing providences, some such mixture of bitterness in their cup, as keeps them from mickenning themselves, and makes them sing of mercy and judgment; as the apostle experienced in his own case; 2 Cor. xii. 7, "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure." It is no small favour to the Christian to have some thorn of uneasiness put under him while he is here, to keep him from lying down among the lions' dens and mountains of leopards, and sleeping in these dangerous places. Every rub a Christian meets with in his way through the world, is a memorandum for him, that "this is not his rest." If that do not prevail, there is,

(3.) The change of the course of providence into adversity. Many times that is as great a favour as a Christian can meet with; Zeph. iii. 12, "I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord." Sometimes the Christian begins to feather his nest, and lie secure and forgetful of God; but God sets fire to his nest, and he is obliged to look to God whom he had forgotten. The world grows a burden to him, and God raises a wind that blows the burden off his back. And he draws away some gilded earth from him, that was drawing his heart from God.

2. In personal outward afflictions, to which the people of God

are liable as well as others. O it is a sad case with Christless sinners, under affliction: they cry out under their trouble, but they are not bettered by it; Job xxxv. 9, 10. Nay, many are worsted by their afflictions, their spirits are embittered; they have no comfort from earth, and they have none, and apply for none from heaven. But the sinner once interested in Christ shall obtain favour in this case.

(1.) They shall be bettered by it; Rom. viii. 28, forecited. Though they may for a time be fruitless under affliction, and as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke, yet they shall be brought to themselves, and gain some spiritual advantage thereby. And that is no small favour, to gather figs of such thorns and briers.

(2.) They shall be supported under it; Isa. xliii. 2, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." Though with one hand they be cast down, they shall be held up with the other. They have fatherly pity and sympathy in all their afflictions, Isa. lxiii. 9, and in their hopeless case the everlasting arms are underneath them.

(3.) They shall have deliverance in due time, one way or other, that they shall not perish in their affliction. Though the night be ever so long, the morning cometh; the days of their mourning shall end; Psalm xxxiv. 19, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivereth him out of them all."

3. In desertion. Christ's spouse may be under desertion; the Lord may withdraw and hide himself from those that are dear to him; they may for a time "walk in darkness, and see no light;" Isa. l. 10, "go mourning without the sun," and be so pressed that they cannot contain themselves from crying out; Job xxx. 28. All communication betwixt heaven and them may seem to be stopt and blocked up; Lam. iii. 8. They may be under fearful terrors from the Lord; Job vi. 4. And this case may be of long continuance with them, as in Heman; Psalm lxxxviii. 15, "I am afflicted and ready to die, from my youth up; while I suffer thy terrors, I am distracted." But in such a case they shall obtain favour of the Lord.

(1.) They shall never be totally deserted or forsaken. Though the husband may withdraw, yet the relation shall never be broken, nor shall they go out of mind with him, though they may apprehend themselves to be forgotten; Isa. xlix. 14, 15, 16. They shall have now and then some gleam of light in their darkness, and a secret support shall never be wanting; Psalm cxii. 4; Deut. xxxiii. 27.

(2) They shall not be finally deserted; Isa. liv. 6. Though he may be gone, he will certainly return. There is a seed of joy sown, which though it lie never so long under the clod, it cannot rot, it will spring up; Psalm xvii. 11. And for the spirit of heaviness they shall get the oil of joy. And the ill reports which unbelief has spread concerning a trying, hiding God, shall be proved false.

4. In temptation. While they are in the world, they are in a place of snares and temptations. Sometimes public temptations are going, compliance with which being fashionable it is hard to stand the shock. Private temptations are never wanting from a busy devil, an ensnaring world, and an evil heart. These are means of remediless ruin unto many. But in such a case they shall obtain favour of the Lord. They shall either,

1. Be made to keep their ground against the temptation, and stand conquerors; 2 Cor. xii. 9. They shall have grace to discover the snare, and grace to withstand the solicitations to comply with it. And that is a great favour bestowed on poor, weak, self-emptied Christians, in whom grace from the treasure of favour does triumph; while others leaning to themselves are suffered to fall; Isa. xl. 30, 31. The truth is there is no temptation so contemptible, but it will lay a self-confident man on his back; and none so great, but by faith the weakest Christian may get over it; Phil. iv. 13. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

(2.) At least temptation shall not get a complete victory over them as over unbelievers; Luke xxii. 31, 32, "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." Satan carried Peter far, even to the denying of Christ; but yet he found favour, that he could not get him all the length he would have had him. They may fall deep in temptation, but they will not be suffered to drown; for the Lord upholdeth them with his hand, Psalm xxxvii. 24.

5. Even when fallen into sin, the Lord will not leave them, nor cast them off; Heb. xiii. 5. They grieve the Spirit by their falls; so they may expect in that case, that God will withdraw the light of his countenance, that he will set a mark of his indignation upon their way, and it may cost them broken bones ere they recover. Yet in this case they shall obtain favour of the Lord.

(1.) God will not suffer them to lie still in it, but will raise them up again, John viii. 35. Some fall off, and are never recovered; but as for believers, not one of them shall be lost. God's love to them is through Jesus Christ; and forasmuch as he is always beloved of the Father, they shall ever be loved for his sake, Psalm lxxxix. 30—33. And love is active to raise up the beloved party fallen.

(2.) While he raiseth them up, he will make their falls work for good, Rom. viii. 28. Out of the eater shall be brought forth meat, and out of the strong sweetness. Satan shall be outshot in his own bow. They shall thereby be let into a clearer view of the corruption of their nature, see more need of Christ and his grace, be more emptied of themselves, and learn to prize imputed righteousness more, and so be led more to a life of faith, and close dependence on the Lord.

6. In a time of public calamity. We have all reason to look for such a time on this guilty declining generation, that God will sum up the old and new debts of Scotland, and charge them together upon the generation that is filling up the measure of our fathers. But come what will come, they that are once interested in Christ, shall obtain favour of the Lord.

(1.) It may be they shall be hid, and kept out of trouble, that the stroke shall not reach them, Zeph. ii. 3. The floods may swell, yet he that sitteth on the floods can keep them from touching his own when he will; and often does so, Psalm xxxii. 6, "Surely in the floods of great waters, they shall not come nigh unto him. Whatever be the stroke that is sent, every arrow has its commission, and can touch none whom God will have safe, Psalm xci. 7; as in the cases of Noah and Lot.

(2.) If it do fall upon them, they may expect a gracious mixture of favour in it; Jer. xv. 11, "The Lord said, Verily it shall be well with thy remnant, verily I will cause the enemy to entreat thee well in the time of evil and in the time of affliction. And the Lord has often made his care of his people in common calamity, with the beautiful mixture of kindnesses with sharp trials, more desirable in the issue, than to have been kept quite free, Rom. v. 3. This made Paul take a pleasure in distresses, 2 Cor. xii. 10.

(3.) Though it should come to an extremity with the child of God, yet the sting shall be out of it, and so it shall do him no real harm. Death is the worst of it, but the child of God may meet it with that saying; 1 Cor. xv. 55, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" The truth is, whereas the blessings of the wicked are cursed, the curses are changed into blessings to them that are in Christ, Rom. viii. 28.

7. *Lastly.* At death, and through all the ages of eternity. During life the wicked receive many common favours from the Lord, but at death that spring is quite dried up to them. But then the spring of favour to them that are in Christ, never to be interrupted any more, begins to flow abundantly. They shall obtain favour of the Lord.

(1.) They shall then be perfectly freed from sin, and all inclination or temptation to it, Heb. xii. 23. They will then get a full answer to that petition, "Lead us not into temptation." The leprosy in the house will then be quite removed, when it is pulled down. And the body of sin shall breathe out its last with the death of the body.

(2.) They shall be freed from all trouble whatever, and enjoy perfect happiness in the full enjoyment of God, Rev. xiv. 13. At the last day their bodies shall obtain the favour of a blessed resurrection, and soul and body shall be eternally glorified together.

III. I shall next confirm the doctrine, That a sinner once interested in Christ, shall obtain favour of the Lord. This is evident, if ye consider,

1. They have a right to the whole treasure of favour through Jesus Christ, in whom they are interested; 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23, "All are yours; and ye are Christ's." It is the purchase of his precious blood, and a purchase made for them; and hence not only the love and mercy of God, but the justice of God secures their enjoyment of it, 2 Thess. i. 6, 7.

2. Jesus Christ is the dispenser of the treasure, the high Steward of the house of heaven. As he has purchased it by his blood, so the Father has put the dispensing or distributing of it in his hand, John v. 22, Matth. xxviii. 18. Now he is their best friend, yea, he is their husband, their head, and they are members of his body. How then can they miss of obtaining favour of the Lord.

3. The enjoyment of it is secured to them by the covenant of promises. In the covenant there are promises suited to every case they can be in; all these are "yea and amen in Christ." So being interested in Christ, they are interested in all the promises, 2 Pet. i. 4. These are the several articles of their marriage covenant with Christ, by which the whole treasure of the favour of God is settled upon Christ's espoused ones, for their throughbearing in time, and complete provision to all eternity.

4. *Lastly.* They have each of them a private key to the treasure, and that is faith; hence says our Lord, Matth. xxi. 22, "All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." There is a cloud of witnesses, Heb. xi., who did, and suffered great things; not by their own strength, but by furniture from heaven; and how did they obtain it, but by faith, that self-emptying, taking, receiving grace, out of Christ's fulness? They who can rightly manage this key, need never want, be their case as low as it can be; faith is a noble provider, bringing strength to the weak, light to the blind, food to the hungry, clothing to the naked, &c.

I shall shut up this doctrine with some improvement.

**USE I. Of information.** It informs us, that,

1. Jesus Christ is the way to the Father, and the only way, John xiv. 6. Whoso would obtain favour of the Lord, must make him their friend in the first place. For he is the one Mediator, and all communication that we have with Heaven must be by him. They who place their confidence of acceptance with God in their duties, will obtain indignation and wrath, instead of favour from the Lord.

For in Christ only God is or can be well pleased with one that is a sinful creature.

2. Those who are interested in Christ are made up for ever, their bread is baked for time and eternity. They are provided for all conditions they can be in, or circumstances they can be brought into. This is a plentiful treasure, and a treasure that has no bottom, which is made over to them in Christ. Alas! that ever any losses in the world should disquiet a believer, that "has in heaven a better and an enduring substance," Heb. x. 34. He may put his gain in Christ in the balance with all worldly losses, and it will weigh them all down.

3. Those who are without Christ are without the favour of God, Eph ii. 12. Common favours they may receive, but special favour is far from them. The truth is, the best things they get are blasted to them; hence their prosperity destroys them, and the very gospel of God is the savour of death. How can they have the favour of a holy just God, who are not reconciled to him in his Son, and clothed with his righteousness?

4. *Lastly.* It is believers' own fault, that at any time they are not sufficiently provided according as their case requires. They may have it for the bringing it forth out of the treasure, John i. 16. The breasts are full, if we would suck of the divine consolations. The armoury is sufficiently furnished for the spiritual warfare, if we could bring forth the weapons. The promises which the believer is interested in, are the channel of conveyance of supply; but alas! faith is often wanting, which should draw it in through these means of conveyance. If we could believe, all things would be possible.

**USE II. Of exhortation, both to sinners and saints.** And,

*First,* To sinners. Labour ye above all things to get an interest in Christ. O that I could engage you to this pursuit! Truly this is and ought to be made by you the great business of your life, the great interest ye are to pursue, John vi. 29. Ye are all pursuing some one interest or other; and carnal worldly interest is what has the greatest number of followers. I would exhort you to labour to secure an interest in Christ. To press this, consider,

**MOTIVE 1.** An interest in Christ is the most worthy interest ye can



pursue. And I would commend it to you as such, as deserving your highest esteem and regard, as far excelling all the low and secular interests that can possibly engage your attention. It is the one thing needful, in comparison of which all other pursuits are ar-rant trifles.

**MOTIVE 2.** It is an interest that ye may now obtain. Christ is willing to be yours, and to confer upon you his whole fulness, all the riches of his grace and glory. "Behold, now is the accepted time: behold, now is the day of salvation." "To-day, if ye will hear the voice of Christ speaking in the gospel, harden not your hearts." Christ now calls you to come to him, that ye may have an interest in him. O then for the Lord's sake, and your own souls' sake, delay not to come to him, that ye may have life, and obtain favour of the Lord.

*Secondly,* To saints. Labour ye to improve your interest in Christ, by bringing in to yourselves daily out of that treasure for whatsoever ye need. The treasure is opened to you, ye are allowed free access to it; improve your privilege by bringing forth out of it suitable supply for all your wants.

**QUEST.** But how is that to be done? what way can one bring forth supply out of the treasure of favour? *Ans.* By faith. Faith is the key of the treasure-door that opens it, the feet that carry into it, the hand of the soul that takes up the necessary supply, and brings it away, Heb. xi. Hence the believer is said to "live by faith," Gal ii. 20, it being that which by its communication with Christ maintains the spiritual life, and is the great provider for all graces. Now, to manage this work successfully,

1. Ye must lay all your wants upon him. That moment that Christ and a soul meet in the everlasting covenant, the soul embracing him in the gospel-offer, he says to the soul, as Judg. xix. 20, "Peace be with thee; howsoever, let all thy wants lie upon me." Whatever ye want for soul or body, duty or danger, time or eternity, let it all lie on me. And this is agreeable to the marriage covenant, wherein the provision lies upon the husband, 1 Pet. v. 7. Now faith is to say, "Be it so; from henceforth all my wants be on my Lord." And this implies two things.

(1.) Renouncing of self-provision, or living on one's own stock and purchase; Matth. xvi. 24, "If any man will come after me let him deny himself." Faith empties a soul of itself; it is a man's going out of himself to Jesus Christ for all. While the provision brought from Egypt lasted, the manna fell not; and while men are busy bringing forth of their own store for their needs, the treasure in heaven is locked upon them; but it is opened to the self-emptied be-

liever; Luke i. 53, "He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away."

(2.) Trusting him for the supply of all your wants, betaking yourselves to him to live wholly by him. Ye must be like a poor man, who can do nothing for himself, being utterly unable to work and win any thing, that casts himself on his rich friend for all he needs, Psal. lv. 22, 1 Pet. v. 7, it is a pithy description of faith which we have; Ruth ii. 12, "The Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust;" for the believer is like a silly chicken unable to preserve itself from the bird of prey, getting in under the wings of the dam for protection.

2. Ye must lay your wants before him, table your complaints, and present your petitions unto him, upon whom all your wants are laid, Matth. xxi. 22. Thus Paul did again and again, and brought forth plentifully out of the treasure, 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9. What God has a mind to give, he will yet have his people to seek. And this imports,

(1.) A free unfolding of your case to him, as to your best friend, able and willing to help, Eph. iii. 12. Faith makes the believer pour out his heart to the Lord, Psalm lxii. 8. Ye must unfold it freely, fully, without reserve; for to do otherwise would argue distrust. Many a time the believer's heart is full of griefs, sorrows and anxieties; but the best ease a pained heart can get, is pouring out itself in the bosom of a God in Christ, Cant. vii. 11.

(2.) A resignation of the matter into the hands of the Lord, Psalm xxxvii. 5. He is infinitely wise, and the care of the household of heaven is devolved upon him by his Father, John v. 22. He is to judge what wants are really fit to be supplied to every one, what measures of supply they must have, at what time the supply is to be communicated, and in what manner. And it is the work of faith to leave all these upon him, and rest satisfied in his wise disposal.

3. Ye must believe the promises relative to the supply of your needs; Matth. xxi. 22, "All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." God will have his people deal with him in the way of trusting of his word of promise. And the more firm trust we have in his word, the more abundantly do we receive of his fulness. They are the breasts of the divine consolations, and faith sucks the sap of them, by believing them; Psalm xxviii. 7, "The Lord is my strength and my shield, my heart trusted in him, and I am helped."

(1.) Ye must believe them as a sure word, that shall certainly be made out, Psalm cxix. 160. The unbelieving world take the pro-

mises but for fair words, which they will not trust to; but do thou take them for sure words, big with mercy and favour, which shall not miscarry, but certainly bring forth at the set time, Psalm xii. 6.

(2.) Ye must believe them with a faith of particular application, not only that they shall be made out to others, but that they shall be made out to you, Mark xi. 24; James i. 6, 7. What canst thou be the better of a salve not applied to thy sore, or of a promise not applied to thy soul? The devils may believe that the promises shall be accomplished, but they cannot believe they shall be accomplished to them. In our national covenant we abjure the Pope's general and doubtful faith. But alas! the applicatory and appropriating act of faith, whereby one appropriates Christ and his benefits to one's self, is much fallen out of our divinity now-a-days, and is in hazard of being extruded, that it may not enter again. The promises are God's blank bills and bonds; if ye do not by faith fill up your own name in them, what will they avail you?" But fill it up by faith, and come forward with them in your hand, saying with David, Psalm cxix. 49, "Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope."

4. *Lastly.* Wait and hang on about the Lord's hand confidently, till the supply come, using the means of God's appointment for it, Isa. xl. *ult.*; Psalm xxvii. *ult.* Faith and the use of means do sweetly agree, so that they be means of God's appointment, Psalm xxxvii. 3. And they must not be separated. To use means without dependence on the Lord for the success, is atheism; to pretend to believe, and neglect the means of God's institution, is presumption. But be you in the use of means, and wait on him with confident expectation, that what is good the Lord will give. This is it which in the Old Testament is celebrated under the name of trusting, relying, and staying on the Lord. Trust reposed in a generous man, is a strong tie on him to answer expectation, Gen. xix. 8. And they who trust in the Lord shall never be ashamed.

Thus I have shewn you, how you may bring forth out of God's treasure of favour. O ye Christians who have interest in Christ, let this be your daily work; apply to the treasure. For motives, consider,

1. It is a high privilege that it is open to you, and ye have access to it, and will you not improve it? If ye consider that it is shut on the most part of the world, that it was opened to you by the blood of the Son of God, by the operation of the Spirit of God upon you, bringing you to embrace the everlasting covenant, ye will prize that access, and improve it. Had one ready access allowed them to their prince's favour, would they slight it? No surely.

2. This is the Christian life, by which true believers are distinguished from hypocrites, even the life of faith, Gal. ii. 20. And what is that but the daily travelling betwixt their own emptiness and the fulness that is in Jesus Christ? Whereas the hypocrite lives upon his own stock, a stranger to communion with God, and drawing supplies from him in the way of believing. As ever ye would prove yourselves sincere Christians then, take this way.

3. The want of this is the cause that Christians lead such poor lives as they do; Matth. xiii. ult, "He did not many mighty works there, because of their unbelief." Many who have cordially embraced Christ in the gospel-offer, spend their time in complaining of their wants, more than applying to the treasure for supply; more in doubting of their interest in Christ, more than in improving it this way; in disputing their right to the treasure of favour in Christ, more than believing. And hence such,

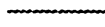
(1.) Unfruitful lives, little progress in holiness, victory over corruption, usefulness for God in their stations, &c., Col. ii. 6, 7. Little faith will always make little holiness; forasmuch as faith purifies the heart, and is the blessed instrument of the soul's communion with God, by which influences from heaven are brought down, without which the soul must needs be in a withered case.

(2.) Uncomfortable lives. God is "the God of consolation," Rom. xv. 5, and the way to obtain it is in the way of believing, ver. 13. The truth is, it is no wonder the Christian, when he looks to himself, be discouraged, and drive heavily, since often he can see nothing there but weakness, darkness, and deadness; but faith looks to Christ, and sees a fulness in him, "Who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption;" Col. ii. 9, 10.

4. This is a day when Christians have much need to keep up communion with God, and live by faith, Eph. v. 16. It is a day wherein religion is like to die out, and the little of it that is left is in hazard of dwindling away, in principle and practice, into mere morality; it is a day of many temptations and snares, and withdrawing of the Spirit, and wherein judgment seems to be hastening on apace, spiritual and temporal judgments too, for that men have not received the truth in the love thereof, and have walked in darkness while they had the light.

5. *Lastly*. They are most welcome to the Lord, who come with the most holy boldness, and oftenest unto him, for supply out of the treasure; Matth. xv. 28, "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Those honour God most, who are most emptied of themselves, and have most business in heaven, for supply

of their wants. It is a pleasure to have full breasts sucked; and there is a fulness in this treasure of favour lodged in Christ. His fulness is not the fulness of a vessel only to serve itself, but of a fountain to be communicated. O then bring forth daily out of it.



UNBELIEF THE SIN AGAINST CHRIST BY WAY OF EMINENCE, AND THE WRONG DONE TO THE SOUL THEREBY.

PROVERBS viii. 36,

*But he that sinneth against me, wrongeth his own soul; all they that hate me love death.*

THE preceding verse gave us the happiness of those who are interested in Christ; this verse gives us the misery of those who reject him. And in it we have two things.

1. A dreadful risk some sinners run; they sin against the wisdom of God, and wrong their own souls. In which consider,

(1.) The dangerous adventure they make: they sin against Christ the Son of God. I told you, that Christ the personal wisdom of God is here meant. I must here inquire what is meant by sinning against him. Christ being true God, every sin men commit is against him, and wrongs their souls too. But it is not every sin that is here meant; it is some sin by way of eminency against the second person of the Trinity; for it is such a one as is constructed to be a hating of him, and loving death, which cannot be said of every sin. You know that the Holy Ghost being true God also every sin is in some sort against him; yet there is a sin against the Holy Ghost so called by way of eminency; so here is a sin against Christ by way of eminency. Now those sins which have their denominations from the several persons of the Trinity, respect them not so much in their essence, as in their office, operation, and work. The Father is Creator, the original lawgiver, the Son Redeemer and Saviour, the Holy Ghost applier of Christ's purchase, Enlightener and Sanctifier. The first sin of Adam in him and us, and the sins of the Pagans still, are the sin against the Father, the transgressing of the law of the Creator. The sin of gospel-despisers is the sin against the Son, as a rejecting of the gospel of Christ. The sin of obstinate and malicious deliberate fighting against God, is the sin against the Holy Ghost, as against the inward working