

An Ark for All God's Noahs in a Gloomy Stormy Day or,

The Best Wine Reserved Until Last or,

**The Transcendent Excellency of a Believer's
Portion above All Earthly Portions**

by Thomas Brooks, 1662

"The Lord is my portion, says my soul; therefore
I will hope in Him." Lamentations 3:24

WHAT A PORTION GOD IS

Now the excellency of this portion I shall show you by an induction of particulars, thus:

(1.) **God is a PRESENT portion.** He is a portion in hand, he is a portion in possession. All the scriptures that are cited to prove the doctrine, evidence this to be a truth, Psalm 48:14; Isaiah 25:9. And so does that Psalm 46:1, "God is a *very present help* in trouble." The Hebrew word is in the plural number *troubles*, that is, God is a present help in many troubles, in great troubles, and in continued troubles. It signifies the extremity of affliction and trouble. When the people of God are in their greatest extremity, then God will be a present help, a present portion to them. "But now, O Israel, the Lord who created you says—Do not be afraid, for I have ransomed you. I have called you by name; you are mine. When you go through deep waters and great trouble, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown! When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up; the flames will not consume you. For I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior." Isaiah 43:1-3.

God will be a present help, a present relief, a present support, a present comfort, a present portion to his people—in all those great and various trials that they may be exercised under. Psalm 142:5, "I cried unto you, O Lord—I said, You are my refuge and my portion in the land of the living." God is a portion in present possession, and not a portion only in reversion. The psalmist does not say, You *may* be my portion in another world—but "You are my portion in the land of the living;" nor he does not say, You *will* be my portion in another world—but "You are my portion in the land of the living." Look, as Elkanah gave Hannah a worthy portion in hand, 1 Sam 1:5, so God gives himself to his saints as a worthy portion in hand. Many men wait, and wait long, for their earthly portions before they enjoy them; yes, their patience is oftentimes wore so threadbare in waiting, that they wish their parents in Abraham's bosom; yes, and sometimes in a worse place, that so they may inherit their honors, lordships, lands, treasures, etc. Look, as a bird in the hand is worth two, yes, ten, in the bush—so a portion in possession is worth two, yes, ten, in reversion. Now, God is a portion in present possession, and that speaks out the excellency of the saints' portion. As he in Plutarch said of the Scythians, that although they had no music nor vines among them, yet, as a better thing, they had gods; so I may say, though the saints have not this, nor that, nor the other earthly portion among them, yet, as a better thing—they have God for their present portion; and what can they desire more? But,

(2.) As God is a present portion, so **God is an IMMENSE portion**, he is a vast large portion, he is the greatest portion of all portions. 1 Tim 6:15, "The blessed and only potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords." These words are a stately and lofty description of the greatness of God. The apostle heaps up many words together, to show that in greatness God excels all. Isaiah 40:15-17, "Surely the nations are like a drop in a bucket; they are regarded as dust on

the scales; he weighs the islands as though they were fine dust. Lebanon is not sufficient for altar fires, nor its animals enough for burnt offerings. Before him all the nations are as nothing; they are regarded by him as worthless and less than nothing." Not only one nation—but many nations; yes, not only many nations—but all nations, in comparison of God, are but as the drop of a bucket; and what is lesser than a drop? and as the small dust of a balance; and what is of lighter weight and lesser worth than the small dust or powder of the balance that hangs on the scale, and yet never alters the weight? yes, they are nothing, they are less than nothing. And though Lebanon was a very great spacious forest, and had abundance of animals in it, yet God was a God of that infinite greatness, that though all the animals harboring in that stately forest should be slain, and all the wood growing on it cut down to burn them with it—all would not make up a sacrifice any ways answerable or proportionable to his greatness with whom they had to do.

And so in that Psalm 147:5, "Great is our Lord, and of great power; his understanding is infinite," or as the Hebrew has it, "of his understanding there is no number." Such is his greatness, that he knows not only all kinds and sorts of things—but even all particulars, though they exceed all number. Psalm 145:3, "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable," or as the Hebrew has it, "of his greatness there is no search." God is infinitely above all names, all notions, all conceptions, all expressions, and all parallels! Psalm 150:2, "Praise him for his mighty acts, praise him according to his excellent greatness," or greatness of greatness, or abundance of greatness, or according to the multitude of his greatness, as the Hebrew and Greek carries it; and so in that Deut 10:17, "For the Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and awesome, who regards not people, nor takes reward." God is the original cause of all greatness. All that greatness that is in any created beings, whether they are angels or men, is from God; all their greatness is but a beam of his sun, a drop out of his sea, a mite out of his treasury. God is a God of that infinite greatness, that he fills heaven and earth with his presence; he is everywhere, and yet circumscribed to no place; he is in all things, and outside all things, and above all things, and this speaks out his immensity, Psalm 139.

Job had a very large portion, before God made a breach upon him—"He had seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred donkeys, and a very great household," Job 1:3; but at last God gives him twice as much as he had at first, "for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand donkeys," Job 42:12. Cattle are only instanced, because the wealth of that country consisted especially in cattle; but yet, doubtless, Job had a great many other good things, as goods, lands, possessions, and stately habitations; but what is all this to a saint's portion? **Certainly, had not Job had God for his portion, he had been but a rich fool, a golden beast,** notwithstanding all the great things that God had heaped upon him.

And so **Ahasuerus** had a very large portion, "he reigned from India unto Ethiopia, over a hundred and seven and twenty provinces," Esther 1:1-2; but what were all his provinces but as so many handfuls of dust, in comparison of the saints' portion? The whole Turkish empire, says Luther, is but a crust that God throws to a dog. Had a man all the world for his portion, it would be but a poor pittance. **Nebuchadnezzar** had a very great portion. Dan 5:18-19, "O king, the Most High God gave your father Nebuchadnezzar sovereignty and greatness and glory and splendor. Because of the high position he gave him, all the peoples and nations and men of every language dreaded and feared him. Those the king wanted to put to death, he put to death; those he wanted to spare, he spared; those he wanted to promote, he promoted; and those he wanted to humble, he humbled. " And so in that Jer 27:5-8, "With my great power and outstretched arm I made the earth and its people and the animals that are on it, and I give it to anyone I please. Now I will hand all your countries over to my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; I will make even the wild animals subject to him. All nations will serve him and his son and his grandson until the time for his land comes; then many nations and great kings will subjugate him." The portion that here God gives to Nebuchadnezzar is an amazingly large portion; and yet all these nations that God gave to him were but as so many molehills, or

as so many birds' nests, compared with a saint's portion!

All nations are but as a drop of a bucket, that may in a moment be wiped off with a finger, in comparison of God, nay, they are all nothing; but that word is too high, for they are less than nothing. **Had a man as many worlds at his command as there be men on earth, or angels in heaven, yet they would be but as so many drops, or as so many atoms—compared to a saint's portion!**

When Alcibiades was proudly boasting of his spacious lands, Socrates wittily rebukes his pride by bringing him a map of the world, and wishing him to show him where his lands did lie; his lands would hardly amount to more than the prick of a pin. England, Scotland, and Ireland are but three little spots compared to the vast continents which are in other parts of the world; and what then is your palace, your lordships, your manors, your farm, your house, your cottage—but a little speck—but a prick of a pin—compared to God, who is so great, so vast a portion!

Oh, sirs! had you the understanding of all the angels in heaven, and the tongues of all the men on earth, yet you would not be able to conceive, express, or set forth the greatness and largeness of a saint's portion. Can you count the stars of heaven, or number the sands of the sea, or stop the sun in his course, or raise the dead, or make a new world? Then, and not until then, will you be able to declare what a great, what an immense portion God is. If "eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man to conceive, the great things that God has laid up in the gospel" (for so that 1 Cor 2:9 is to be understood), oh how much less, then, are they able to declare the great things that God has laid up for his people in another world! But,

(3.) Thirdly, As God is an immense portion, a large portion, so **God is an ALL-SUFFICIENT portion.** Gen 17:1, "And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God—walk before me, and be perfect. I am God Almighty," or as some carry the words, "I am God all-sufficient, or self-sufficient." God has self-sufficiency and all-sufficiency in himself. Some derive the word Shaddai, that is here rendered almighty or all-sufficient, because God feeds his children with sufficiency of all good things, as the tender mother does the sucking child.

Gen 15:1, "After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram—I am your shield, and your exceeding great reward;" I will be your shield to defend you from all kind of mischief and miseries, and I will be your exceeding great reward to supply you with all necessary and desirable mercies; and what can a saint desire more?

Psalms 84:11, "For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory—and no good thing will he withhold from those who walk uprightly." The **sun**, which among all inanimate creatures is the most excellent, notes all manner of excellency, provision, and prosperity; and the **shield**, which among all artificial creatures is the chief, notes all manner of protection whatever. Under the name of **grace**, all spiritual good is wrapped up; and under the name of **glory**, all eternal good is wrapped up; and under the last clause, "no good thing will he withhold," is wrapped up all temporal good—all put together speaks out God to be an all-sufficient portion.

Before the world was made, before angels or men had a being, God was as blessed and as glorious in himself as now he is. God is such an all-sufficient and such an excellent being, that nothing can be added to him to make him more excellent. Man in his best estate is so great a piece of vanity, Psalm 39:5, that he stands in need of a thousand thousand things; he needs the air to breathe in, the earth to bear him, and fire to warm him, and clothes to cover him, and a house to shelter him, and food to nourish him, and a bed to ease him, and friends to comfort him, etc. But this is the excellency of God, that he has all excellencies in himself, and stands in need of nothing. Were there as many worlds as there are men in the world, and were all those

worlds full of blessed saints, yes, were there as many heavens as there are stars in heaven, and were all those heavens full of glorious angels, yet all these saints and angels together could not add the least to God; for what can drops taken out of the sea add unto the sea? what can finite creatures add to an infinite being?

Though all the men in the world should praise the sun, and say, The sun is a glorious creature, yet all this would add nothing to the light and glory of the sun; so, though all the saints and angels shall be blessing, and praising, and admiring, and worshiping of God to all eternity, yet they shall never be able to add anything to God, who is blessed forever.

O Christians! God is an all-sufficient portion—his power is all-sufficient to protect you; his wisdom is all-sufficient to direct you; his mercy is all-sufficient to pardon you; his goodness is all-sufficient to provide for you; his word is all-sufficient to support you and strengthen you; and his grace is all-sufficient to adorn you and enrich you; and his Spirit is all-sufficient to lead you and comfort you! What can you desire more? O sirs! God has within himself all the good of angels, of men, and universal nature; he has all glory, all dignity, all riches, all treasures, all pleasures, all delights, all comforts, all contentments, all joys, all beatitudes in himself. All the scattered excellencies and perfections that are in the creatures—are eminently, transcendently, and perfectly in him.

Look, as the worth and value of many pieces of silver are contracted in one piece of gold, so all the whole volume of perfections which is spread through heaven and earth are epitomized in God, according to that old saying, all good is in the chief good. **God is one infinite perfection in himself**—which is eminently and virtually all perfections of the creatures. All the good, the excellency, the beauty and glory, that is in all created beings, are but parts of that whole that is in God; and all the good that is in them is borrowed and derived from God, who is the first cause, and the universal cause, of all that good that is in angels or men. God is a sufficient portion to secure your souls, and to supply all your wants, and to satisfy all your desires, and to answer all your expectations, and to suppress all your enemies, and, after all, to bring you to glory! What can you desire more?

But now all earthly portions are insufficient portions; they can neither prevent afflictions, nor support the soul under afflictions, nor mitigate afflictions, nor yet deliver a man from afflictions; they can neither arm the soul against temptations, nor comfort the soul under temptations, nor lead the soul out of temptations. All the creatures in the world are but as so many ciphers without God; when God frowns, all the creatures in the world are not sufficient to cheer the soul; when God withdraws, all the creatures in the world are not sufficient to sustain the soul; when God clouds his face, all the creature in the world are not sufficient to make it *sunshine* with the soul, etc. There is not enough in the whole creation to content, quiet, or satisfy one immortal soul. He who has most of the world would have more, and he who has least of the world has enough, if his soul can but groundedly say—"The Lord is my portion." But,

(4.) Fourthly, As the Lord is an all-sufficient portion, so **the Lord is a most ABSOLUTE, NEEDFUL, and NECESSARY portion**. The lack of an earthly portion may trouble me—but the lack of God for my portion will damn me. It is not absolutely necessary that I should have a portion in gold, or silver, or jewels, or goods, or lands; but it is absolutely necessary that I should have God for my portion, I may have union and communion with God, though, with the apostles, I have neither gold nor silver in my purse, Acts 3:6; I may be holy and happy, though, with Lazarus, Luke 16:20-21, I have never a rag to hang on my back, nor never a dry crust to put into my belly; I may go to heaven at last, and I may be glorious in another world, though, with Job, I should be stripped of all my worldly glory, and set upon a ash-heap in this world, Job 1, etc. But I can never be happy here, nor blessed hereafter, except God is my portion. Though I could truly say that all the world were mine, yet if I could not truly say that the Lord is my portion, I should be but miserable under all my worldly enjoyments. To have God for my portion is absolutely necessary, for without it I am forever and ever undone.

"At that time you were without Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world." Eph 2:12. In this verse you have several withouts, and it is very observable that they that were without God in the world, they were without Christ, without the church, without the covenant, without the promise, and without hope in the world; and therefore, such people must needs be in a most sad and deplorable condition!

[1.] First, In relation to the soul, and in relation to salvation, God is the most absolute necessary portion. If God is not my portion, my soul can never enjoy communion with him in this world; if God is not my portion, my soul can never be saved by him in the other world. But,

[2.] Secondly, When sinners are under terrors and horrors of conscience, when their consciences are awakened and convinced of the vileness of their natures, of the unspeakable evil that is in sin, yes, in the least sin, and of their lost, undone, and miserable estate out of Christ, Oh then! what would they not give to have God for their portion? Oh, then they would give all the gold and silver they have in the world to have God for their portion; oh, then they would give, Mic 6:6-7, "thousands of rams, and ten thousands of rivers of oil; yes, they would give their firstborn, they would give the very fruit of their bodies," that they might have God to be the portion of their souls! Oh, then they would say, as Mephibosheth said unto the king, "Let Ziba take all, forasmuch as my Lord the king is come again in peace unto his own house." 2 Sam 19:29-30. Under distress of conscience, poor sinners will cry out, Oh! let who will—take all our honors, and all our manors, and all our treasures, and all our stores, and all our lands, and all our lordships, and all our bags—so we may have God for our portion. Oh! let us but have God for our portion, and we care not a straw who takes all. Now, what does this speak out—but that, of all portions, God is the most absolute necessary portion? But,

[3.] Thirdly, Upon a dying bed, an awakened sinner sets the highest price, value, and esteem upon such as have God for their portion. Now he esteems a saint in rags, who has God for his portion, above a wicked emperor in his royal robes, who has only the world for his portion. What though wicked men, when they are in the height of their worldly prosperity, felicity, and glory, do slight the saints, and revile and scorn the saints, and despise and undervalue the saints, Lam 2:14-15; Zeph 2:8-10, etc.; yet, when death knocks at their doors, and when their consciences are startled, and when hell fire flashes in their faces, and when the worm within begins to gnaw, oh now, if all the world were a lump of gold, and in their hands to dispose of, they would give it all, so they might have that honor and happiness to change conditions with those who have God for their portion! Num 23:10, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

Though men who have their portion in this life do not love to live the life of the righteous, yet, when they come to die, they are often desirous that they might die the death of the righteous. And this many hundred ministers and Christians can witness from their own experience. Lazarus having God for his portion, when he died he went to heaven without a rag on his back, or a penny in his purse; whereas Dives, who did not have God for his portion when he died, went tumbling down to hell in all his riches, bravery, and glory. Oh! it is infinitely better to go to heaven a beggar, than to go to hell an emperor!

This the sinner understands when his conscience comes to be enlightened upon a dying bed, and therefore he cries out, Oh send for such a minister, and send for such and such a Christian, and let them pray with me, and counsel me, and, if it be possible, give out some drops of comfort to me. Oh that I had never derided nor reviled them! Oh that I had never opposed and persecuted them! Oh that I had lived at such a rate of holiness and exactness as they have done! Oh that I had walked with God as they have walked! Oh that I had laid out my time, my strength, my treasure, my parts, my all for God, as they have done! Oh that my estate was as good, as safe, and as happy as theirs is! Oh that I could as truly say that the Lord is my portion, as they can say that the Lord is their portion! And what does all this speak out—but

that high esteem and value that they set upon those who have God for their portion? So that upon this threefold account, we may safely conclude that God is a most absolute, needful, and necessary portion. But,

(5.) Fifthly, As the Lord is a most absolute, needful, and necessary portion, so **the Lord is a PURE and UNMIXED portion**. God is an unmixed good, he has nothing in him but goodness; he is an ocean of sweetness, without one drop of bitterness; he is a perfect beauty, without the least spot or shadow of deformity, Deut 32:4; Hab 1:13. All other portions are a bitter-sweet; but God is a rose without prickles. He is a good, in which there is not the least evil. 1 John 1:5, "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." There are no mixtures in God. God is a most clear, bright, shining light, yes, he is all light, and in him is no darkness at all. God is all light and all love, all sweetness and all goodness, all kindness and all graciousness, and there is no impurity, no unloveliness, no bitterness, nor any darkness at all in God. The moon when it shines brightest has her dark spots and specks; but God is a light that shines most gloriously without the least spot or speck; God is a most pure, clear, splendid light.

It is very observable, that the apostle, to illustrate the perfect purity of God, adds a negative to his affirmative, "in him is no darkness at all;" that is, God is so pure, that not the least spot, the smallest speck of vanity or folly, can cleave to him. God is a pure, a most pure being, without the least potentiality, defectibility, or mutability; and therefore in the highest sense he "is light, and in him is no darkness at all." By this metaphorical description of God the apostle would not have us think that the nature of God is changed into the nature of light; but by this similitude the apostle merely represents something of the purity and excellency of God to us. The sun is light, the moon is light, and the stars are light; but it would be blasphemy for us to imagine that the essence of God is the same with this of the creatures; but this, sirs! you must remember, that there are many excellent properties of **LIGHT**, for which God is often in the Scripture resembled to light. As

[1.] First, **Light is PURE**, and so is God. Hab 1:13, "You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity." There are four things which God cannot do:

(1.) He cannot lie.

(2.) He cannot die.

(3.) He cannot deny himself,

(4.) He cannot look with a favorable eye upon iniquity. He is a God of such infinite purity, that he cannot look upon iniquity but with an hateful eye, an angry eye, a revengeful eye, and with a vindictive eye.

[2.] Secondly, **All things are CONSPICUOUS to the light**, and so they are to God. [Psalm 41:12; 1 Sam 2:1,3; Psalm 16:8; Psalm 119:168] Heb 4:13, "Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account." The Greek word is a metaphor, say some, that is taken from the priests under the law, who when they killed the beasts for sacrifice, all things that were within the beasts were laid naked and bare before the priest, that so he might see what was sound and what was corrupted. Others say, the apostle alludes to the anatomizing of such creatures, wherein men are very cautious and curious to search out every little vein or muscle, though they lie never so close. All agree in this, that all men's insides and outsides are anatomized, dissected, quartered, and laid naked to the eye of God! Job 34:21-22, "For his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he sees all his goings. There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves." "If you cannot hide yourself from the sun, which is God's minister of light, how impossible will it be to hide yourself from him whose eyes are ten thousand times brighter than the sun!" says Ambrose. But,

[3.] Thirdly, **Without light nothing can be SEEN**; so without the beams of heavenly light no heavenly things can be seen. A man cannot see God—but in that light which comes down from above; a man cannot see Christ without first being enlightened by Christ; a man cannot see heaven—but in that light which comes from heaven, James 1:17; 1 Cor 2:10,12,14-16. Were it not for the sun, it would be perpetual night in the world, notwithstanding all the torches that could be lighted, yes, notwithstanding all the light of the moon and stars. So it would be **perpetual night with poor souls**, notwithstanding all the torchlight of natural parts, and creature comforts, and notwithstanding all the starlight of civil honesty and common gifts, and notwithstanding all the moonlight of temporary faith and formal profession, did not the Sun of righteousness arise and shine upon them! But,

[4.] Fourthly, **There is nothing more PLEASANT than the light**. Eccles 11:7, "Truly the light is sweet, and it is a very pleasant thing to behold the sun." A philosopher being asked whether it were not a pleasant thing to behold the sun? answered, that that was a blind man's question, because life without light is but a lifeless life. Now, as there is nothing more pleasant and delightful to the eye than light, so there is nothing more pleasant and delightful to the soul than God. The poor northern nations, in Strabo, that lack the light of the sun for some months together, when the term of his return approaches, they climb up into the highest mountains to spy it; and he who spies it first was accounted the best and most beloved of God, and they chose him king. Now the return of the sun is not more pleasant and delightful to those poor northern nations, than God is pleasant and delightful to all gracious souls. But,

[5.] Fifthly, **The light shines and scatters its rays over all the world**, over east, west, north, and south, and so does the presence and goodness of God, Psalm 139. But,

[6.] Sixthly, **The light is a creature of a most resplendent BEAUTY, LUSTER, AND GLORY**. It dazzles the eyes of the beholders; and so God is a God of that transcendent beauty, majesty, and glory, that the very eyes of the angels are dazzled, as not being able to behold the brightness of his glory. Isaiah 6:2, "God dwells in that light which no man can approach unto." But,

[7.] Seventhly, and lastly, **Light is the most UNMIXED substance**; it will never mix with darkness; no more will God. 2 Cor 6:14, "What communion has light with darkness?" The nature of God is void of all composition. Light expels darkness, it never mixes nor mingles with it. By what has been said, you see that God is a pure and an unmixed light, and that in him there is no darkness at all.

But now all worldly portions are mixed with many troubles, sorrows, cares, fears, hazards, dangers, vexations, oppositions, crosses, losses, and oftentimes with many gripes of conscience too. All earthly portions are mixed portions; the goodness of all creatures is a mixed goodness; our wine is mixed with water, our silver with tin, our gold with dross, our wheat with chaff, and our honey with gall, etc. Every bee has his sting, and every rose has his prickles. And this mixture speaks out all earthly portions to be "vanity and vexation of spirit," Eccles 1:13.

That great king Xerxes was accustomed to say—You look upon my crown and my purple robes—but did you know how they were lined with thorns, you would not stoop to pick them up! And who is there in this our English Israel that cannot with both hands subscribe to this? The emblem of King Henry the Seventh, in all his buildings, in the windows, was still *a crown in a bush of thorns*; why, or with what historical allusion he did so, is uncertain; but surely it was to imply thus much—that great places are not free from great cares, that no man knows the weight of a scepter but he who sways it. This made Saul to hide himself among the stuff, when he should have been made king. Many a sleepless night, many a restless day, many a sad temptation, and many a busy shift, will their ambition cost them—who aspire to such places of eminency. Besides, high places are commonly very slippery; he who stands in them may suddenly fall, and wound his conscience, or easily fall and break his neck. But,

(6.) Sixthly, As God is a pure and unmixed portion, so he is **a GLORIOUS, a HAPPY, and a BLESSED portion**. Psalm 16:5-6. He is so in himself, and he makes them so also—who enjoy him for their portion. Psalm 33:12, "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, and the people whom he has chosen for his own inheritance." All the happiness and blessedness of the people of God consists in this—that God is their God, and that he is their portion, and that they are his inheritance! The Hebrew word which is here rendered *blessed*, is, 'Oh the blessedness!' or 'Oh the heaped up happiness of those whose God is the Lord!' The happiness of such is so great and so glorious, as cannot be conceived, as cannot be uttered! The words are a joyful acclamation for their felicity—who have God for their portion.

Psalm 144:15, "Happy is that people that is in such a case; yes, happy is that people whose God is the Lord." David having prayed for many temporal blessings in the behalf of the people, Psalm 144:12-15, at last concludes, "Blessed are the people that are in such a case;" but presently he checks and corrects himself, and eats, as it were, his own words—but rather, "happy is that people whose God is the Lord." The Syriac renders it question-wise, "Are not the people happy, who are in such a case?" The answer is, "No," except they have God to boot, Psalm 146:5. Nothing can make that man truly miserable, who has God for his portion; nor can anything make that man truly happy, who lacks God for his portion. God is the **author** of all true happiness; he is the **donor** of all true happiness; he is the **maintainer** of all true happiness, and he is the **center** of all true happiness and blessedness; and, therefore, he who has him for his God, for his portion, is the only happy man in the world!

But now all earthly portions cannot make a man truly happy and blessed. A crown, a kingdom cannot; for Saul and other princes have found it so. Honors cannot; for Haman and others have found it so. A high and noble birth cannot; for Absalom, Amnon, and others have found it so. Riches cannot; for the rich fool in the Gospel, and many thousand others, have found it so. Large dominions and great commands cannot; for Ahasuerus, Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and others, have found it so. Human wisdom cannot; for Ahithophel and other great counselors have found it so. Splendid apparel and delectable food cannot; for Dives and others have found it so. Applause and credit among the people cannot; for Herod and others have found it so. Learning and great gifts cannot; for the scribes and pharisees, and many others, have found it so. **No earthly thing, nor earthly creature, can give happiness or blessedness to man.** Nothing can give what it has not. If the conduit has no water, it can give no water; if the sun has no light, it can give no light; if the physician has no remedy, he can give no remedy, etc.

But now it is a very true observation, though it be a very sad observation, namely, **That every wicked man's portion is cursed unto him.**

Do but compare these scriptures together, [Deut 28:17-20; Job 20:22-29; Job 24:18; Prov 3:33; Mal 2:2; etc.] and then let conscience judge. All a wicked man's **relations** are cursed to him, and all a wicked man's **contentments** and **enjoyments** are cursed to him, and all his **mercies** within doors are cursed to him, etc. What though a man should have as many as a thousand bags of gold for his portion, yet if the plague would be in every bag, would you count him happy? Surely not! Verily this is the case of every man who has not God for his portion. But

(7.) Seventhly, As God is a glorious portion, so he is **a SPECIAL portion**, he is a portion particular to his people, Psalm 142:5-6; Jer 10:16. This is evident in the text, and in all the scriptures cited to prove the point, Psalm 16:5, and so in that Psalm 67:6, "Then shall the earth yield her increase, and God, even our own God, shall bless **us**." And so Psalm 68:20, "He who is **our** God is the God of salvation," or "God of salvations," as it is in the Hebrew. God is a God of all manner of salvations; he has all sorts and ways of salvations; he is not only powerful—but also skillful, to save his people from ten thousand deaths and dangers.

Faith is an appropriating grace, it is much in appropriating of God to itself—"My Lord and my God," and my Redeemer and my Savior and my portion; [John 20:28; Job 19:25; Luke 1:47]

Psalm 73:26, "My flesh and my heart fails—but God is the strength of my heart and **my** portion forever." In Gideon's camp every soldier had his own pitcher, Judg 7:16; among Solomon's men of valor, every man wore his own sword, 1 Chron 26:30; and the five wise virgins each had oil in her own lamp, Matt 25:4. Luther was accustomed to say, that there lay a great deal of divinity couched up in the personal pronouns, as in mine, yours, his—and so faith's appropriating of God to the soul, as its own portion, is all in all.

God is a portion particular to the saints; he is the hidden manna, the new name, the white stone, the bread to eat, which others know not of. There is never a *hardened Pharaoh* in the world who can truly say, "The Lord is my portion;" nor is there ever a *murdering Saul* in the world who can truly say, "The Lord is my portion;" nor is there ever a painted *bloody Jezebel* in the world who can truly say, "The Lord is my portion;" nor is there ever a *cunning Ahithophel* in the world who can truly say, "The Lord is my portion;" nor is there ever a *proud Haman* in the world who can truly say, "The Lord is my portion;" nor is there ever a *tyrannical Nebuchadnezzar* in the world who can truly say, "The Lord is my portion;" nor is there ever a *crafty Herod* in the world who can truly say, "The Lord is my portion;" nor is there ever a *rich Dives* in the world who can truly say, "The Lord is my portion;" nor is there ever a *treacherous Judas* in the world who can truly say, "The Lord is my portion;" nor is there ever a *hypocritical Simon Magus* in the world who can truly say, "The Lord is my portion;" nor is there ever an *apostatizing Demas* in the world who can truly say, "The Lord is my portion;" nor is there ever a *persecuting scribe or pharisee* in the world who can truly say, "The Lord is my portion." It is only the saint that can truly say, "The Lord is his portion," for God is particularly and specially his—he is only his.

But now **all earthly portions are common portions**; they are all common to good and bad, to the righteous and to the wicked, to the clean and to the unclean, to him that sacrifices and to him that sacrifices not; to him that swears and to him that fears an oath, Eccles 9:1-3. Was Abraham rich? so was Dives too; was David a king? so was Saul too; was Daniel a great favorite at court? so was Haman too, etc. And indeed **usually the basest and the worst of men have the largest share in earthly portions**; which made Luther say, that the whole Turkish empire was but a crust that God cast to a dog. Abraham gave unto his sons of the concubines gifts, and sent them away—but unto Isaac he gave all that he had, Gen 25:5-6. So all earthly portions, which are *giftless gifts*—God gives them to the worst and vilest of men; Dan 4:17, "This word is by decree of the observers; the matter is a command from the holy ones. This is so the living will know that the Most High is ruler over the kingdom of men. He gives it to anyone He wants and sets over it the lowliest of men." And so in that Dan 11:31, "The next to come to power will be a despicable man who is not directly in line for royal succession. But he will slip in when least expected and take over the kingdom by flattery and intrigue." Interpreters do generally agree, that by this vile person in the text is meant Antiochus Epiphanes, who was so great and mighty a prince, that when the Samaritans did write to him, they wrote—'to Antiochus the great God.' And indeed his very name speaks him out to be some great and glorious person, for Antiochus Epiphanes is Antiochus the illustrious, the famous; and yet you see that the Holy Spirit, speaking of him, calls him a despicable man.

Ah! how vile in the eyes of God are the greatest men in the world who have not God for their portion! Augustus in his solemn feasts gave trifles to some—but gold to others. **God gives the trifling portions of this world to the vilest and worst of men—but his gold, his Christ, himself—he gives only to his saints.** Gal 2:20, "And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Though many have counterfeit jewels, yet there are but a few who have the true diamond; though many have their earthly portions, yet there are but a few who have God for their portion. But,

(8.) Eighthly, As God is a particular and special portion, so he is **a UNIVERSAL portion**. God is a portion that includes all other portions. God has himself the good, the sweet, the profit, the pleasure, the delight, the comfort, etc.—of all portions. There is no good in wife, child, father, friend, husband, health, wealth, wit, wisdom, learning, honor, etc.—but is all

found in God. Rev 21:7, "He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son;" or as the Greek has it—he who is overcoming, though he has not yet overcome, yet if he be striving for the conquest, and will rather die than he will give up the battle—"he shall inherit all things;" that is, he shall inherit God in all and all in God.

Gen 33:9, "And Esau said, I have enough, my brother; keep what you have unto yourself;" as the Hebrew has it—"I have much, my brother." And indeed it was very much that an Esau should say he had much; it is more than many of the Esaus of these times will say. But Jacob speaks at a far higher rate in Gen 33:11—"Please take my gifts, for God has been very generous to me. I have more than enough." or rather, as the Hebrew has it—"I have all." Esau had much—but Jacob had all, because he had all in God, and God in all. **He has all—who has the possessor of all.** 2 Cor 6:10, "As having nothing, and yet possessing all things."

There is in God an immense fullness, an ocean of goodness, and an overplus of all that graciousness, sweetness, and kindness that is to be found in all other things or creatures. As Noah had a copy of every kind of creature in that famous library of the ark, out of which all were reprinted to the world; so he who has God for his portion, has the original copy of all blessings, out of which all may easily be renewed. All the goodlinesses and all the glories of all the creatures are eminently and perfectly to be enjoyed in God.

God is a universal excellency. All the particular excellencies that are scattered up and down among angels, men, and all other creatures, are virtually and transcendently in him; he has them all in his own being, Eph 1:3. All creatures in heaven and earth have but their particular excellencies; but God has in himself the very quintessence of all excellencies. The creatures have but drops of that sea, that ocean, that is in God. They have but their parts of that power, wisdom, goodness, righteousness, holiness, faithfulness, loveliness, desirableness, sweetness, graciousness, beauty, and glory—which is in God. One has this part, and another has that; one has this particular excellency, and another has that; but the whole of all these parts and excellencies are to be found in God alone. There is none but that God, who is the universal good, who can truly say, "All power, all wisdom, all strength, all knowledge, all goodness, all sweetness, all beauty, all glory, all excellency, etc., dwells in me!" He who can truly say this, is a God; and he who cannot, is no God.

There is no angel in heaven, nor saint on earth, that has the whole of any one of those excellencies that are in God. Nay, **all** the angels in heaven, and all the saints on earth, have not among them the whole of any **one** of those glorious excellencies and perfections that are in God. All the excellencies that are scattered up and down in the creatures, are united into one excellency in God; but there is not one excellency in God that is fully scattered up and down among all the creatures. There is a glorious union of all excellencies in God, and only in God.

Now this God, who is such a universal good, and who has all excellencies dwelling in himself; he says to the believer, as the king of Israel said to the king of Assyria, "I am yours, and all that I have is yours!" 1 Kings 20:4. **Our property reaches to all that God is, and to all that God has,** Jer 32:38,42. God is not parted, nor divided, nor distributed among his people, as earthly portions are divided among children in the family; so that one believer has one part of God, and another believer has another part of God, and a third another part of God; oh no! Every believer has the whole God wholly, he has all of God for his portion. God is not a believer's portion in a limited sense, nor in a comparative sense—but in an absolute sense. God **himself** is theirs, he is **wholly** theirs, he is **only** theirs, he is **always** theirs.

As Christ looks upon the Father, and says, "All that is yours is mine; and all that is mine is yours," 1 Cor 3:28; John 17:10, that may a saint say, looking upon God as his portion. He may truly say, 'O Lord, you are mine, and all that you have! And I am yours, and all that I have.' A saint may look upon God and say, 'O Lord, not only your gifts but your graces are mine, to adorn me and enrich me; and not only your mercies and your good things are mine to comfort me, and encourage me—but also you yourself are mine! And this is my joy and crown of

rejoicing.' **To be able to say, 'God is mine!' is more than if I were able to say that ten thousand worlds, yes, and as many heavens, are mine!** For it is God alone, who is the sparkling diamond in the ring of glory!

Heaven would be but a low thing without God, says Augustine; and Bernard had rather enjoy Christ in a chimney-corner, than to be in heaven without him; and Luther had rather be in hell with Christ, than in heaven without him. **It is God alone that makes heaven to be heaven.**

Now God is so every particular believer's portion, as that he is every believer's portion. 1 Cor 1:1-2 "Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ, through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, unto the church of God, which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with **all** that in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both theirs and ours." As the sun is every man's sun to see by, to walk by, to work by; and as the sea is every man's sea to trade by, etc.; so **God is every believer's portion.** He is a poor saint's portion as well as a rich saint's portion; he is the despised believer's portion, as well as the exalted believer's portion; he is the weak believer's portion, as well as the strong believer's portion; he was as much his portion who miscalled his faith, and who in the behalf of his son cried out with tears, "Lord, I believe, help my unbelief," Mark 11:24, as he was Abraham's portion, who, in the strength of his faith, offered up his only son, Gen 22. He was as much Job's portion sitting on a ash-heap, as he was David's portion sitting on a royal throne; he was as much Lazarus' portion, who never had a penny in his purse, as he was Solomon's portion, who made gold and silver as plenteous in Jerusalem as the stones of the streets, 2 Chron 1:15.

God is not my portion alone—but he is every saint's portion in heaven, and he is every saint's portion on earth. The father is every child's portion, and though they may wrangle and quarrel with one another, yet he is all their portions. And so it is here; and Oh what a spring of joy and comfort should this be to all the saints! Riches are not every believer's portion—but God is every believer's portion. Advancement in the world is not every believer's portion—but God is every believer's portion. Liberty and freedom are not every believer's portion—but God is every believer's portion. Honor and applause in the world is not every believer's portion—but God is every believer's portion. Prosperity and success are not every believer's portion—but God is every believer's portion, etc.

God is a universal portion, all things receive their being, essence, and existence from him, for the fullness of all things is in him, really and eminently. The heathen philosophers of old called God—'that which is all or everything.' God is the Lord of all, and contains all things in himself. Exod 33:19, "I will make all my goodness pass before you," that is, because in God are all good things, God is all things, God is everything. **The cream, the good, the sweet, the beauty, and the glory of every creature, and of every thing, centers in God.** But,

(9.) Ninthly, As God is a universal portion, so **God is a SAFE portion, a SECURE portion.** He is a portion that none can rob or wrong you of; he is a portion that none can touch or take from you—he is a portion that none can cheat or spoil you of. God is such a portion, that no friend, no foe, no man, no enemy, no devil—can ever rob a Christian of. O Christians, God is so yours in Christ, and so yours by covenant, and so yours by promise, and so yours by purchase, and so yours by conquest, and so yours by donation, and so yours by marriage union and communion, and so yours by the gift of the Spirit, and so yours by the feelings and witnessings of the Spirit—that no power or policy on earth can ever lay a finger on your portion; or cheat, or rob you of your portion.

Psalm 48:14, "For this God is our God forever and ever, and he will be our guide even unto death." He is not only our God for the present, nor he will be only our God for a short time. Oh no! He will be our God forever and ever! If God is once your portion, he will be forever your portion. It must be a power that must overmatch the power of God, and a strength that must be above the strength of God—which could rob or spoil a Christian of his portion; but

who is there that is stronger than God? Is the clay stronger than the potter, or the stubble than the flame, or weakness than strength? Yes, is not the very weakness of God stronger than man? and who then shall ever be able to take away a Christian's portion from him? Rom 9; 1 Cor 1:25; and 1 Cor 10:22.

But now **a man may be easily deprived of his earthly portion.** How many have been deprived of their earthly portions by storms at sea, and others by force and violence, and others by fraud and deceit, and others by hideous lying and hellish swearing? Many have lost their earthly portions by treachery, knavery, perjury, subtilty, robbery, etc. Some **play** away their earthly portions; and others with Esau **fool** away their earthly portions; and not a few, with the prodigal, **sin** away their earthly portions. Ahab's fingers itched to be a-fingering of Naboth's vineyard. 1 Kings 21:1-5. A man can no sooner come to enjoy an earthly portion—but other men's fingers itch to be a-fingering of his portion—as daily experience does sufficiently evidence.

But God is a portion that the fire cannot burn, nor the floods cannot drown, nor the thief cannot steal, nor the enemy cannot seize, nor the soldier cannot plunder a Christian of. **A man may take away my gold from me—but he cannot take away my God from me!** The Chaldeans and the Sabeans could take away Job's estate from him—but they could not take away Job's God from him, Job 1. And the Amalekites burnt Ziklag, and robbed David of his substance, and of his wives—but they could not rob him of his God, 1 Sam 30. And those persecutors in Heb 10:34, plundered the saints of their goods—but they could not plunder them of their God. Until weakness can make a breach upon strength, impotency upon omnipotency, the pitcher upon the potter, and the crawling worm upon the Lord Almighty—a saint's portion is safe and secure.

It is true, sickness and disease may take away my health and my strength from me, and death may take away my friends and my relations from me, and enemies may take away my estate, my liberty, my life from me; but none of all these can take away my God from me! I have read of the men of Tyrus, how that they chained and nailed their god Apollo to a post, that so they might be sure of him, supposing that all their safety lay in the enjoyment of him. Certainly God is so chained, and so linked, and so nailed to his people by his everlasting love, and by his everlasting covenant, and by the blood of his Son, and by his oath, and by that law of relation that is between him and them—that no created power shall ever be able to deprive them of him. But,

(10.) Tenthly, As God is a safe portion, a secure portion, so he **is a SUITABLE portion.** "Many are asking, 'Who can show us any good?' Let the light of your face shine upon us, O Lord. You have filled my heart with greater joy than when their grain and new wine abound. I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety." Psalm 4:6-8. No object is so suitable and adequate to the heart, as he is. He is a portion that punctually, exactly, and directly suits the condition of the soul. He suits the desires of the soul, the necessities of the soul, the wants of the soul, the longings of the soul, and the prayers of the soul. The soul can crave nothing, nor wish for nothing—but what is to be found in this portion. Here is light to enlighten the soul, and wisdom to counsel the soul, and power to support the soul, and goodness to supply the soul, and mercy to pardon the soul, and beauty to delight the soul, and glory to ravish the soul, and fullness to fill the soul, etc. Health is not more suitable to the sick man, nor wealth to the poor man, nor bread to the hungry man, nor drink to the thirsty man, nor clothes to the naked man, nor balm to the wounded man, nor ease to the tormented man, nor health to the diseased man, nor a pardon to the condemned man, nor a guide to the blind man, etc. than this portion is suitable to all the necessities of man; and this speaks out the excellency of this portion above all other portions.

Now there is no earthly portion which can suit an immortal soul; he is a fool upon record who said, "Soul, you have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry," Luke 12:18-20. If the man, says Ambrose upon the words, had the soul of a

swine, what could he have said more? for those things were more suitable to swine than they were to an immortal soul.

Man's soul is a spiritual and immortal substance, it is capable of union and communion with God; it is capable of a choice enjoyment of God here, and of an eternal fruition of God hereafter. A great shoe will not fit a little foot, nor a great sail a little ship, nor a great ring a little finger; no more will any earthly portion suit an immortal soul. The soul is the breath of God, the beauty of man, the wonder of angels, and the envy of devils. It is of an angelical nature; it is an heavenly spark, a celestial plant, and of a divine offspring. So that nothing can suit the soul below God, nor nothing can satisfy the soul without God. The soul is so high and so noble a piece, that all the riches of the east and west Indies, nor rocks of diamonds, nor mountains of gold, can fill it, or satisfy it, or suit it.

When a man is in prison, and condemned to die, if one should come to him, and tell him, that there is such a friend or such a relation that has left him a very large estate, a noble seat, etc., yet all this would not please him, nor content him, because it does not suit his present condition; oh—but now let a man bring him his pardon, sealed under his prince's hand, oh how will this delight him and joy him! And so tell a man who is ready to starve, that such and such loves him, and that such and such intends well towards him, etc., yet all this does not content him, it does not satisfy him, and all because it does not suit him; oh but now do but bring him food to eat, and this will joy him and delight him, and all because it suits him. That is the highest good—which is the most suitable good to the soul, and such a good is God; that is the most excellent portion—which is the most suitable portion to the soul, and such a portion is God. But,

(11.) Eleventhly, As God is a suitable portion, so he is **an INCOMPREHENSIBLE portion**. No created mind can comprehend what a portion God is, Psalm 147:5; Job 26:14. It is true, that God is not incomprehensible, in regard of his own understanding, for he perfectly understands himself, else he could not be God; but God is incomprehensible in regard of us, and the angels, who are no ways able to comprehend infiniteness. 1 Kings 8:27, "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold the heaven, and heaven of heavens, cannot contain you; how much less this house that I have built!" God is an **infinite** being, and therefore he cannot be contained in any place, nor comprehended by any created being. Such multiplied phrases and Hebraisms as are here, as heaven, and the heaven of heavens, do very emphatically set out the immensity and incomprehensibility of God.

Job 37:23, "Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out." We are as well able to fit the sea in a sea-shell, as we are able to comprehend God. God is above all name, all notion, and all comprehension. God is so incomprehensible, that you shall as soon count the stars of heaven, and number the sand of the sea, and stop the sun in his course, and raise the dead, and make a world, as you shall be able to comprehend the infiniteness of God's essence. Psalm 145:3, "His greatness is unsearchable." The most perfect knowledge that we can have of God is, that we cannot perfectly know him, because we do know him to be infinitely and incomprehensibly perfect. Rom 11:33, "Oh the depth both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" When men and angels do search farthest into God's perfection, they do then most of all discover their own imperfection; for it is utterly impossible for angels or men, by their most accurate disquisition, to find out the Almighty to perfection, 1 Tim 6:16, "who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen." Here is a denial both of the fact and the possibility. Observe the diligence of Paul, he does not say a light incomprehensible—but a light inaccessible, which is much more; for that which, being sought and searched for, cannot be comprehended, we say is incomprehensible; but that which allows not by any means the labor of searching after, and which no one can come near, that is unapproachable.

There is infinitely more in God than the tongues of men or angels can express. There is much

in God beyond the apprehension and comprehension of all created beings. The sum of all that philosophers and schoolmen have attained to concerning this great principle, amounts to no more than this, namely, that men and angels can never comprehend that perfection which dwells in God; for the perfection of God is infinite, and therefore incomprehensible. When one was asked what God was, he answered, that he must be God himself, before he could know God fully.

When the tyrant Hiero asked the poet Simonides what God was, he asked for a day to study an answer; but the more he sought into the nature of God, the more difficult he found it to express; the next day, after being questioned, he asked two days, and the third time he asked for four, and so went on, doubling the number; and being asked why he did so, he answered, that *the more he studied the nature of God, the less he was able to define what God was!* He being so incomprehensible in his nature, the more this poor heathen inquired—the more he admired, and the less he understood.

It was a notable observation of Chrysostom, who being very busy and studious in searching into the nature of God, says, I am like a man digging in a deep spring; I stand here, and the water rises upon me; and I stand there, and still the water rises upon me. Indeed, this is a knowledge that passes knowledge, Eph 3:19.

The Turks build their mosques without any roof, because they hold as we do, that God is incomprehensible. God is a circle whose center is everywhere, and whose circumference is nowhere—all which speaks out his infiniteness and incomprehensibility.

But now all earthly portions are easily apprehended and comprehended. A portion in money, or plate, or goods, or lands, or jewels—is easily counted up. There are few, except it be children or fools—but can readily give an account of all earthly portions. The child's portion, and the wife's portion, and the servant's portion, and the soldier's portion, and the poor man's portion, and the rich man's portion, are talked on all the city over, and all the town over, and all the country over; but God is such an incomprehensible portion, that there is not a man in town, city, or country—who is able to comprehend him, Prov 3:15. But,

(12.) Twelfthly, As God is an incomprehensible portion, so **God is an INEXHAUSTIBLE portion**; a portion which can never be spent, which can never be exhausted; a fountain which still overflows; a rich mine which has no bottom; a spring which can never be drawn dry—but continues always full, without augmentation or diminution. John 4:14, "But whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be a well of water springing up unto everlasting life." If grace in the soul be such a perpetual flowing fountain, that it shall never be exhausted until grace be swallowed up in glory—then certainly the God of grace is much more an inexhaustible fountain that can never be drawn dry. Angels, saints, and sinners have lived upon this portion almost this six thousand years, and it is not in the least diminished, Col 1:16-17.

God has his city-house, and his country-house, where millions have been kept at his table, and lived upon his purse, for days without number; and yet God is not one penny the poorer for all this. This portion is like the flour in the jar, and the oil in the jug—which never failed. 1 Kings 17:14-16, "For this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: 'The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the Lord gives rain on the land.' She went away and did as Elijah had told her. So there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family. For the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the Lord spoken by Elijah." God is such a portion as cannot be lessened nor diminished; he is such a portion as can never fail. Should all Christians now live to the age of the patriarchs, who lived many hundred years, and should they all live freely, and keep open house every day in the year, yet at the end, not a penny, no not a farthing of this portion will be expended or diminished.

Though men have ever so great a fortune, yet if they still spend upon it they will certainly consume it; oh—but God is such a fortune as can never be spent, as can never be consumed. If a sparrow should but fetch a drop of water out of the sea once a day, yes, once in a thousand years, yet in time it would be exhausted. Oh but God is such a sea, such an ocean, that if every angel in heaven, and every saint and sinner on earth, should drink whole rivers at a draught, yet not one drop could be diminished! If a child should take but a sea-shell of water out of the sea every day, the sea would be really the less, though not visibly the less, and in time it would be exhausted, and drawn dry. But let all created beings be every day a-drawing from God, yet they shall never lessen him, they shall never draw him dry. The mother's breasts are often drawn dry—but the more you draw at the breasts of God, the more milk of grace and comfort will flow in upon you. Isaiah 66:10-11, "Rejoice with Jerusalem and be glad for her, all you who love her; rejoice greatly with her, all you who mourn over her. For you will nurse and be satisfied at her comforting breasts; you will drink deeply and delight in her overflowing abundance." God keeps open house for all comers and goers, for all created creatures both in heaven and earth; and though they are perpetually sucking at his breasts, yet the more they draw, the more the heavenly milk of divine joy, contentment, and satisfaction flows in abundantly upon them, Psalm 104:24.

All creatures, both high and low, rich and poor, honorable and base, noble and ignoble, bond and free, Jews and Gentiles—are all maintained upon God's own cost and charge; they are all fed at his table, and maintained by what comes out of his treasury, his purse; and yet God is not a pin the poorer for all this! It would break and beggar all the princes on earth, to keep but one day the least part of that innumerable company which God feeds, and clothes, and nourishes, and maintains every day upon the account of his own revenue, which is never the poorer for all the vast expenses that he is daily at. There is still in God a fullness of abundance, and a fullness of redundance, notwithstanding the vast sums that he has spent, and does daily expend. It were blasphemy to think that God should be a penny the poorer by all that he has laid out for the maintenance of those millions of angels and men, who have had their dependence upon him, from their first creation to this very day. Look—as the sun has never the less light for filling the skies with light; and as the fountain has never the less water for filling the lesser vessels with water that are about it; so though God fills all the vessels, both of grace and glory, with his own fullness, yet he is never the less full himself; there is still in God the fullness of a fountain. Look—as the overflowing fountain pours out water abundantly, and yet after all it remains full; so though the Lord be such an overflowing fountain as that he fills all, yet still he retains all fullness in himself.

I have read of a Spanish ambassador, who, coming to see the treasury of Saint Mark in Venice, that is so much cried up in the world, he fell a-groping at the bottom of the chests and trunks, to see whether they had any bottom; and being asked the reason why he did so, answered in this among other things—'My master's treasure differs from yours, and excels yours, in that his has no bottom as yours have'—alluding to the mines in Mexico, Peru, and other parts of the western India. All men's mints, bags, purses, and coffers may be quickly exhausted and drawn dry—but God is such an inexhaustible portion, that he can never be drawn dry; all God's treasures are bottomless, and all his mints are bottomless, and all his bags are bottomless. Millions of thousands in heaven and earth feed every day upon him—and yet he feels it not; he is still a-giving, and yet his purse is never empty! He is still a-filling all the court of heaven, and all the creatures on earth—and yet he is a fountain that still overflows. There be those who say, that it is most certainly true of the oil at Rheims, that though it be continually spent in the inauguration of their kings of France, yet it never diminishes. But whatever truth is in this story, of this I am most sure—that though all the creatures in all worlds live and spend continually on Christ's treasury, yet it never diminishes!

But *all earthly portions are frequently exhausted and drawn dry*. The prodigal quickly spent his patrimony upon his harlots, Luke 15; and how many drunkards, and gluttons, and wantons, and gamesters, and lovers of pleasure—do continually waste their savings! Prov 23:20-21. "Have you entered into the treasures of the snow?" says God to Job, Job 38:22, etc. Now, says

Gregory, the treasures of the snow are worldly riches, which men rake together, even as children do snow, which the next shower washes away, and leaves nothing in the place of it but dirt. And ah! how many merchants, and shopkeepers, and others in these breaking times, have found all their riches and earthly portions to melt away—like snow before the sun! how many of late have been very rich one week, and stripped of all the next, and set with Job upon the ash-heap! All earthly portions are like water in a cistern, which may easily and quickly be drawn dry; but God is an inexhaustible portion, which can never be drawn dry; and this discovers the excellency of this portion above all other portions. But

(13.) Thirteenthly, As God is an inexhaustible portion, so **God is a SOUL-SATISFYING portion**, Psalm 17:15. He is a portion that gives the soul full satisfaction and contentment. Psalm 16:5-6, "Lord, You are my portion and my cup of blessing; You hold my future. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance." It was well with him as his heart could wish. And so in that Psalm 73:25, "Whom have I in heaven but you? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides you;" or as some render it, "I wish I were in heaven with you;" or as others read the words, "I have sought none in heaven or earth besides you;" or as others, "I desire none in heaven or earth besides you," or "I want none in heaven, nor none on earth like you; I love none in heaven, nor none on earth, in comparison of you; I esteem you instead of all other treasure, and above all other treasures which are in heaven, or which are on earth." The holy prophet had spiritual and sweet communion with Christ to comfort and strengthen him; he had a guard of glorious angels to protect him and secure him, and he had assurance of heaven in his bosom to gladden and rejoice him; and yet it was none of these, nay, it was not all these together—which could satisfy him; it was only an infinite good, an infinite God—who could satisfy him. He very well knew that the substantial of all true happiness and blessedness lay in God, and his enjoyment of God. It was not his high dignities nor honors—which could satisfy him; it was not the strength, riches, security, prosperity, and outward glory of his kingdom—which could satisfy him; it was not his delightful music, nor his noble attendance, nor his well furnished tables, nor his great victories, nor his stately palaces, nor his pleasant gardens, nor his beautiful wife, nor his lovely children—which could satisfy him. All these without God could never satisfy him; but God without all these was enough to quiet him, and satisfy him.

John 14:8, "Philip said unto him—Lord, show us the Father and we will be satisfied." A sight of God will satisfy a gracious soul more than all worldly contentments and enjoyments! Yes, one sight of God will satisfy a saint more than all the glory of heaven will do. God is the glory of heaven. Heaven alone is not sufficient to content a gracious soul—but God alone is sufficient to content and satisfy a gracious soul. God only is that satisfying good, who is able to fill, quiet, content, and satisfy an immortal soul. Certainly, if there be enough in God to satisfy the spirits of just men made perfect, whose capacities are far greater than ours, Heb 12:23-25; and if there be enough in God to satisfy the angels, whose capacities are far above theirs; if there be enough in God to satisfy Jesus Christ, whose capacity is inconceivable and unexpressible; yes, if there be enough in God to satisfy himself—then certainly there must needs be in God enough to satisfy the souls of his people. If all fullness, and all goodness and infiniteness will satisfy the soul—then God will.

There is nothing beyond God imaginable, nor nothing beyond God desirable, nor nothing beyond God delectable; and therefore the soul who enjoys him, cannot but be satisfied with him. God is a portion beyond all imagination, all expectation, all apprehension, and all comparison; and therefore he who has him cannot but sit down and say—I have enough! Gen 33:11. Psalm 63:5-6, "You satisfy me more than the richest of foods. I will praise you with songs of joy. I lie awake thinking of you, meditating on you through the night." The richest of foods cannot so satisfy the appetite—as God can satisfy a gracious soul! Yes, one smile from God, one glance of his countenance, one good word from heaven, one report of love and grace—will infinitely more satisfy an immortal soul, than all the richest of foods, and all the dainties and delicacies of this world can satisfy the appetite of any mortal man! The Hebrew has it—my soul shall be topful of comfort, it shall be filled up to the brim with pleasure and

delight, in the remembrance and enjoyment of God upon my bed, or upon my beds, in the plural, as the Hebrew has it. David had many a hard bed and many a hard lodging, while he was in his wilderness condition. It oftentimes so happened, that he had nothing but the bare ground for his bed, and the stones for his pillows, and the hedges for his curtains, and the heavens for his canopy; yet in this condition God was sweeter than the richest of foods to him. Though his bed was ever so hard, yet in God he had full satisfaction and contentment.

Jer 31:14, "I will satisfy my people with my bounty," says the Lord. "My God shall supply all your needs, according to his riches in glory, by Christ Jesus," Phil 4:19, says Paul, that great apostle of the Gentiles. The Greek word signifies to fill up, even as he did the widow's vessels, 2 Kings 4:4, until they did overflow. God will fill up all, he will make up all, he will supply all the wants and necessities of his people. That water which can fill the sea, can much more fill a cup; and that sun which can fill the world with light, can much more fill my house with light. So that God who fills heaven and earth with his glory, can much more fill my soul with his glory!

To show what a satisfying portion God is—he is set forth by all those things which may satisfy the heart of man, as by bread, water, wine, milk, honors, riches, clothing, houses, lands, friends, father, mother, sister, brother, health, wealth, light, life, etc. And if these things will not satisfy, what will? It is enough, says old Jacob, that Joseph is alive, Gen 45:28; so says a gracious soul—It is enough that God is my portion. A pardon cannot more satisfy a condemned man, nor bread a hungry man, nor drink a thirsty man, nor clothes a naked man, nor health a sick man, etc.—than God does satisfy a gracious man. But,

Worldly portions can never satisfy the souls of men, Eccles 5:10. "The one who loves money is never satisfied with money, and whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with income. This too is futile." All the world cannot fill the soul; nor can all the creatures in the world fill up the soul with complete satisfaction. As nothing can be the perfection of the soul—but he who made it, so nothing can be the satisfaction of the soul—but he who made it. If a man is hungry, **gold** cannot feed him; if naked, it cannot clothe him; if cold, it cannot warm him; if sick, it cannot recover him; if wounded, it cannot heal him; if weak, it cannot strengthen him; if fallen, it cannot raise him; if wandering, it cannot guide him; oh how much less able is it then to satisfy him! He who, out of love to gold, seeks after gold, shall love still to seek it—but shall never be satisfied with it. A man shall as soon satisfy the grave, and satisfy hell, and satisfy the stomach with wind—as he shall be able to satisfy his soul with any earthly portion! All earthly portions are dissatisfying portions, they do but vex and fret, gall and grieve, tear and torment—the souls of men. The world is a circle, and the heart of man is a triangle—and *no triangle can fill a circle*. Some good or other will be always lacking to that man who has only outward good to live upon.

Absalom's **beauty** could not satisfy him; Haman's **honor** could not satisfy him; Ahab's **kingdom** could not satisfy him; Balaam's **gold** could not satisfy him; Ahithophel's **wisdom** could not satisfy him; the scribes' and pharisees' **learning** could not satisfy them; Dives's **riches** could not satisfy him. Alexander's conquests could not satisfy him; for when, as he thought, he had conquered one world, he sits down and wishes for another world to conquer; and Cyrus the Persian king was accustomed to say, did men but know the cares which he sustained under his imperial crown, he thought no man would stoop to take it up. Gilimex, king of the Vandals, when he was led in triumph by Belisarius, cried out, "Vanity of vanity, all is vanity!" Charles the fifth, emperor of Germany, whom of all men the world judged most happy, cried out with detestation at all his honors, riches, pleasures, trophies, 'get you hence, let me hear no more of you!' And it has been long since said of our King Henry the second,

"He whom, alive, the world could scarce suffice,

When dead, in eight-foot earth contented lies."

By all these instances, it is most evident that no earthly portions can satisfy the souls of men. Can a man fill up his stomach with air? or can he fill up the huge ocean with a drop of water? or can a few drops of beer quench the thirst of a man in a burning fever? or can the smell of food, or dreaming of a banquet, satisfy a hungry stomach? No! no more can any earthly portions fill or satisfy the heart of man. If emptiness can fill the soul, if vanity can satisfy the soul, or if vexation can give contentment to the soul—then may earthly portions satisfy the soul—but not until then. When a man can gather grapes from thorns, and figs of thistles, and turn day into night, and winter into summer—then shall he find satisfaction in the creatures; but not before. All earthly portions are weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, and they are found to be lighter than the dust of the balance; and this will rather inflame the thirst—than quench it.

A man who has only the world for his portion, is like to Noah's dove out of the ark, which was in continual motion—but could find no resting place; but a man who has God for his portion is like the dove, returning and resting in the ark. The soul can never be at rest, until it comes to rest and center in God. God himself is the soul's only home. No good but the chief good, can suffice an immortal soul. Look, as God never rested until he had made man, so man can never rest until he comes to enjoy God; the soul of man is of a very vast capacity, and nothing can fill it to the brim but he who is fullness itself. *It is the breast—and not the doll nor the rattle—which will satisfy the hungry babe. And it is God, and not this or that creature—who can satisfy the soul of man.* But,

(14.) Fourteenthly, As God is a soul-satisfying portion, so **God is a permanent portion, a sure portion, a never-failing portion, a lasting, yes, an everlasting portion.** Psalm 73:26, "My flesh and my heart fails—but God is the strength, (or the rock,) of my heart, and my portion forever." God is a fountain which the hottest summer cannot dry; he is a bottomless treasure which can never be expended. God ever was, and ever will be. He cannot borrow his being from anything—who gives being and sustenance to all things. "God is the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, he is yesterday and today, and the same forever," Rev 1:8. God is the Almighty, who is, and who was, and who is to come.

Exod 3:14, "And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM." Some translate this text, according to the full scope of the tense among the Hebrews, "I am that I am, that I was, and that I will be;" for the tense among the Hebrews points at all differences of time, past, present, and to come; but others, observing the strict and proper signification of the future, translate it thus, "I will be that I will be." This name of God imports two of God's incommunicable attributes,

First, His **eternity**, when he says, "I will be."

Secondly, His **immutability**, when he says, "That I will be." The Rabbies, upon this text, express themselves after this manner—"I that have been, and I the same now, and I the same for time to come," etc. But others, more agreeable to the Chaldee paraphrase, express themselves thus—"he who is, and was, and hereafter will be." But it is observable, that the angel unites all differences of time in that great and glorious acknowledgment, Rev 16:5, "You are righteous, O Lord, who is, and were, and shall be."

God is a God of that infinite excellency and glory—that it is utterly impossible for him to be better, or other than he is. If God should in the least be alterable or mutable, he would presently cease to be God. God is a God of that transcendent excellency, that there can be nothing added to him, nor nothing subtracted from him. If you add anything to him, you deny him to be God; and if you take anything from him, you destroy his being, James 1:17; Psalm 90:2, "From everlasting to everlasting you are God." God is eternal—he is neither capable of a beginning nor ending; and therefore the Egyptians used to signify God by a circle, and the Persians thought that they honored God most, when, going up to the top of the highest tower, they called him the circle of heaven. Now you know a circle has no end. And it was a custom

among the Turks to go up every morning to a high tower, and to cry out, God always was, and always will be.

Some things have a beginning—but no ending, as angels and the souls of men; and some things have no beginning, and yet have an end, as the decrees of God in their final accomplishment; and some things have both a beginning and an ending, as all sublunary things; but God has neither beginning nor ending! All creatures have a lasting, angels have an outlasting—but God has an **everlasting** being. 1 Tim 1:17, "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory, forever and ever. Amen." God is without beginning and end, first and last, past and to come.

Psalm 102:25-27, "Long ago You established the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You will endure; all of them will wear out like clothing. You will change them like a garment, and they will pass away. But You are the same, and Your years will never end." Were there no other scripture to prove the eternity and immutability of God, this were enough. Whatever changes may pass upon the heavens and the earth—yet God will always remain unchangeable and unalterable. By what has been said, it is most evident that God is an everlasting portion, that he is a never-failing portion.

But all earthly portions are very uncertain; now they are, and shortly they are not. Prov 23:4-5, "Don't weary yourself trying to get rich. Why waste your time? For riches can disappear as though they had the wings of a bird!" Though the foolish world calls riches substance, yet they have no solid subsistence. All earthly portions are as transitory as a shadow, a ship, a bubble, a bird, a dream, an arrow, a runner who passes swiftly away. Riches were never true to any that have trusted in them. In this text, riches are said not to be, because they do not continue to be; they will not abide by a man, they will not long continue with a man, and therefore they are as if they were not. All earthly things are vain and transitory, they are rather phantoms and shadows—than real things themselves. 1 Cor 7:31, "For the fashion of this world passes away." The Greek word signifies a mathematical figure, which is a mere notion, and nothing in substance. All the glory of this world is rather a matter of shadow, than of substance; it is a body without a soul; it is a golden shell without a kernel; it is a shadow without a substance. There is no firmness, there is no solidness, there is no consistency, there is no constancy in any of the creatures. All the pomp, and state, and glory of the world is but a mere painted pageantry, a mask, a comedy, a fantasy!

Acts 25:23, "So the next day Agrippa and Bernice arrived at the auditorium with *great pomp*." The original words, signifies *great fantasy, or vain show*. The greatest glory and pomp of this world, in the eye of God, in the account of God—is but as a fantasy or a shadow. It was a custom in Rome, that when the emperor passed by upon some great day in all his imperial pomp, there was an officer appointed to burn flax before him, and to cry out, 'so the glory of this world passes away!' And this was purposely done to put him in mind that all his honor, pomp, glory, and grandeur should soon pass and vanish away, as the flax did, which he saw burnt before his eyes. That great conqueror of the world, Alexander, caused *a sword in a wheel* to be painted upon a table, to show that what he had gotten by the sword was subject to be turned about by the wheel of fortune. Many great conquerors, besides him, have found it so, and many now alive have seen it so.

Look! As the *rainbow* shows itself in all its dainty colors, and then vanishes away—so does all worldly honors, riches, and preferments show themselves and then vanish away! And how many in our days have found it so! When one was a-commending the riches and wealth of merchants; the other person said, 'I do not love that wealth which hangs upon ropes, for if they break, the ship and all her wealth miscarries.' Certainly within these few months the miscarrying of several ships has caused several merchants sadly to miscarry. A storm at sea, a spark of fire, an unfaithful employee, a false oath, or a treacherous friend, may quickly bring a man to sit with Job upon an ash-heap! Look, as the bird flies from tree to tree, and as the beggar goes from door to door, and as the pilgrim travels from place to place, and as the

physician walks from patient to patient; so all the riches, honors, and glory of this world do either fly from man to man, or else walk from man to man. Who knows not, that many times one is made honorable by another's disgrace? another is made full by another man's emptiness? and a third is made rich by another's poverty? How soon is the courtier's glory eclipsed, if the prince does but frown upon him! and how soon does the prince become a peasant, if *God* does but frown upon him! Now one is exalted—and shortly he is debased; now one is full—and at another time he is hungry; now one is clothed splendidly—and before long he is clothed with rags; now one is at liberty—and in a moment he is under captivity; now a man has many friends—and shortly he has not a friend. **There is nothing but vanity and uncertainty in all earthly portions!** But,

Fifteenthly, and lastly, As God is a permanent and never failing portion, so **God is an INCOMPARABLE portion**; and this follows clearly and soundly upon what has been said; for,

- (1.) If God is a **present** portion, a portion in hand, a portion in possession; and,
- (2.) If God is an **immense** portion, if he be the vastest, the largest, and the greatest portion; and,
- (3.) If God is an **all-sufficient** portion; and,
- (4.) If God is the most absolute, needful, and **necessary** portion; and
- (5.) If God is a pure and **unmixed** portion; and,
- (6.) If God is a **glorious**, a happy, and a blessed portion; and,
- (7.) If God is a **special** and **particular** portion; and,
- (8.) If God is a **universal** portion; and,
- (9.) If God is a **safe** portion, a secure portion, a portion that none can rob or wrong us of; and,
- (10.) If God is a **suitable** portion; and,
- (11.) If God is an **incomprehensible** portion; and,
- (12.) If God is an **inexhaustible** portion, a portion that can never be spent, that can never be exhausted or drawn dry; and,
- (13.) If God he a **soul-satisfying** portion; and,
- (14.) If God is a permanent and an everlasting portion—then it must very necessarily follow, that,
- (15.) **God is an INCOMPARABLE portion.** But such a portion God is, as I have proved at large; and, therefore, beyond all dispute, God must needs be an incomparable portion. Prov 3:13-15, "Happy is the man who finds wisdom," (that is, the Lord Jesus Christ), "and the man who gets understanding—for she is more profitable than silver and yields better returns than gold. She is more precious than rubies; nothing you desire can compare with her." All the gold of Ophir, and all the silver of the Indies, which are but the *guts and garbage of the earth*, are nothing, yes, less than nothing, compared with God. God is a portion more precious than all those things which are esteemed most precious.

A man may desire just about anything. He may desire that all the mountains in the world may be turned into mountains of gold for his use; he may desire that all the rocks in the world may be turned into the richest pearls for his use; he may desire that all the treasure that is buried in the sea may be brought into his treasuries; he may desire that all the crowns and scepters of all the princes and emperors of the world, may be piled up at his gate, as they were once said to be at Alexander's; yet all these things are not comparable to a saint's portion, yes, they are not to be named in that day, wherein the excellency of a saint's portion is set forth.

Horace writes of a precious stone that was more worth than twenty thousand shekels, and Pliny valued the two precious pearls of Cleopatra at twelve hundred thousand shekels. But what were these, and what were all other precious stones in the world—but dung and dross, in comparison of a saint's portion? Phil 3:7,9.

Did any man enjoy all that he could desire—it would be but a very small portion compared with God. We may truly say of all the honors, riches, greatness, grandeur, and glory of this world, compared with God, as Gideon once said of the vintage of Abiezer, "The gleanings of Ephraim are better than the vintage of Abiezer," Judg 8:2. So the very gleanings, yes, the smallest gatherings of God, are far better, and more excellent and transcendent; and more satisfying, more delighting, more ravishing, more quieting, and more contenting—than all earthly portions are—or can be. What comparison is there between a drop of a bucket—and the vast ocean? Or what comparison is there between a speck of dust—and the whole earth? Why, you will say, there is no comparison between these things; and I will say, there is less comparison between all finite portions, and such an infinite portion as God is. For this is most certain, that there must needs be always an infinite distance between what is finite and what is infinite; and such a portion God is. By all that has been said, it is most evident that God is an incomparable portion.

But now all earthly portions are *comparable* portions. You may easily and safely compare one earthly portion with another—one prince's revenues may be comparable to another's; and one great man's lordships may be comparable to another's; and one merchant's estate may be comparable to another's; and one gentlemen's lands may be comparable to another's; and one wife's portion may be comparable to another's; and one child's portion may be comparable to another's, etc. But God is an incomparable portion! There is no comparison to be made between God and other portions. And thus I have in these fifteen particulars fully discovered the excellency of the saints' portion above all other portions.

And, therefore, I shall now come to the second thing, and that is, to show you,

II. Upon what GROUNDS their title unto God as their portion is founded and bottomed; and they are these that follow: