

## GOD IN CHRIST THE BELIEVER'S PORTION.\*

## PSALM cxlii. 5.

*I cried unto thee, O Lord, I said, thou art my refuge, and my portion,  
in the land of the living.*

HAVING considered the nature of the refuge and portion mentioned in the text, especially that of the refuge, and shewn that those who have taken God in Christ for their refuge and portion, should recognise their so doing, I now proceed to another doctrine from the words, *viz.*

Doctr. To those who have sincerely made God in Christ their refuge, the same God in Christ is their portion to live on in that refuge.

In discoursing from this doctrine, I shall,

I. Consider God in Christ as a portion to live on.

II. Shew in what respects he is the believer's portion, or the portion of those who have taken him for their refuge.

III. Confirm the doctrine,

IV. Make some practical improvement.

I. I am to consider God in Christ as a portion to live on. For understanding this, consider,

*First*, Man needed and doth need a portion. Portions are given to supply wants, and answer the needs of those who get them. The need is twofold.

1. By necessity of nature, from the moment of his being, he needed a portion, something without himself to live upon. Innocent Adam did not need a refuge to flee to, guilt brought on that necessity. While he kept free from sin, none could do him harm. But he needed a portion as he was a creature, and therefore was not self-sufficient, which is an incommunicable property of God, Gen. xvii. 1. *I am God all-sufficient.* God was infinitely happy in himself before there was any creature; but no creature can be happy in itself, having desires to be satisfied, that must be satisfied from another quarter.

2. By necessity of loss. God himself, without the intervention of a mediator, was man's portion at first, and the well-furnished world was but an addition to the bargain, Gen. i. 26, 27. It was never

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given him for his portion; for it was what his innocent soul could never have subsisted on. But when he gave him every herb for the support of his earthly part, he gave him himself as his God for the support of his heavenly part. But man by sin lost his portion, God turning his enemy, and all access to the enjoyment of God being stopt. Thus mankind was left in a starving condition.

*Secondly*, The same way that God became a refuge to which guilty sinners might have access, he became a portion to which starving sinners might have access, namely, in Christ. The former drew with it the latter.

1. None less than a God could ever be a sufficient portion to man. Indeed if a man had no nobler part than the body, the earth of which it was made, might be a sufficient portion to him, as it is to the beasts. But since he is endowed with a rational soul, which is capable of desires that all the creation cannot satisfy, and none but God himself can, it is evident, that only God himself can be a sufficient portion to man.

2. But an absolute God could never be enjoyed as a portion by a sinful creature. Justice stood in the way of it, which requires the sinner to die the death, according to the threatening, Gen. ii. 17, "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die;" and therefore forbade the enjoying of their portion, by which the sinner might live. What was the life promised in the covenant of works, but that complete happiness flowing from the full enjoyment of God in heaven, and the happiness flowing from the full enjoyment of him here? The covenant then being broken, the justice of God necessarily staved him off from this.

4. But God having clothed himself with our nature in the person of the Son, and so became a refuge to the guilty creature, he became also a portion for the starving creature, upon which it might live. As a refuge we find in him a covert from revenging wrath, and what fully answers the demands of the law on our account. Hence taking him for our refuge, and so sheltering ourselves under the shade of a crucified Redeemer, in whom dwells the fulness of the Godhead, there is nothing to hinder our enjoyment of him as our portion, Psal. xvi. 5, 10.

*Thirdly*, God in Christ then is a portion, legally destined for, and offered to sinners in the gospel. He is a portion for them to live on, as well as a refuge for them to flee unto, John iii. 16, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." I take up this in these three things.

1. The soul of man may live on the enjoyment of God (Lam. iii.

24.) in Christ. It needs no more to make it live happily, John vi. 57. *He that eateth me, even he shall live by me.* The prodigal, when he was minded to return to his father, was convinced of this, Luke xv. 17, "How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!" And if you ask, What is this bread? our Lord Christ answers, John vi. 51, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give, is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." And if ye ask, Where the strength of this bread lies for nourishing of the soul? it is answered, John vi. 63, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life, Col. ii. 9, 10. For in-him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, who is the head of all principality and power." The enjoyment of God in Christ,

(1.) Removes the maladies of the soul, Psal. ciii.

3. *Bless the Lord, O my soul,—who healeth all thy diseases.* Sin has cast the soul into extreme disorders, has left it in a diseased condition, and the sickness is mortal, which the soul cannot miss to die of eternally, if it be not cured, John viii. 24, *If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.* It is cast into a fever of raging lusts, which cause in it many irregular and preternatural desires. And the answering of these desires does but increase the distemper of the soul. Men whose portion the world is, endeavour to satisfy them from their portion, but all in vain, Eccl. i. 8, "The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing." Hab. ii. 5. "He is a proud man, neither keepeth at home, who enlargeth his desire as hell, and is as death, and cannot be satisfied." Neither can they be satisfied from a holy God, whose holiness is perfectly opposite to their nature. But here lies the matter:

The enjoyment of God in Christ kills these desires, and frees the soul from them, according to the measure of it, John iv. 14, "Who-soever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst: but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." Like as the feverish man's drought is slaked, according to the measure of his recovery wrought by some suitable remedy: so God in Christ being enjoyed by faith, the irregular desires or lusts of the soul die; and when God in Christ shall be perfectly enjoyed in heaven, they shall be perfectly expelled out of the soul, Heb. xii. 23. Thus mortification is the effect of the enjoyment of God in Christ: and as lusts die, the soul lives, lives happily and comfortably.

(2.) It satisfies the regular cravings of the soul, Is. lv. 2. "Hear-

ken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." Take away the lustings, flowing from the distemper of the soul by sin, the desires of the heart are brought into a narrow compass, all centring in one thing, viz. what is really needful and useful for the soul's well-being, Luke x. ult. *One thing is needful.* Psal. xxvii. 4, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple." And that is to be found in the enjoyment of God in Christ, Psal. xxvii. 4, and lxxiii. 25, forecited. Now the regular craving of the soul may be comprised in these two things.

[1.] A desire of what may perfect its nature. Every thing has a native inclination towards its own perfection: and the sinful creature being made a new creature, has a strong inclination to its own perfection, and consequently desires what may advance that. Hence we read of the longing of the Spirit, Gal. v. 17, the groanings of the gracious soul under the remains of corruption, Rom. vii. 24. Now that which is perfecting to the renewed soul is the transformation of it into the image of God, 1 John iii. 2. For this is it by which it is brought back into the happy state it was created in at first, Gen. i. 27. And without question every thing is the more perfect, the nearer it comes to the likeness of him who is the fountain of all perfection. And therefore holiness is indeed the happiness and the life of the soul. Now the enjoyment of God in Christ answers the desire of the soul, according to the measure thereof. And in Christ there is a fulness for satisfying of it; for in him there is a fulness of the Spirit of sanctification, with light, life, strength, &c. and whatsoever is necessary for nourishing up the new creature to perfection, John i. 16. Rev. iii. 1. And through the enjoyment of God in him, the perfection of the soul is carried on, according to the degrees of the enjoyment, 2 Cor. iv. 18.

[2.] A desire of what may continue it in its perfection. This also is what every thing has a native inclination to, since nothing can desire its own destruction. And this the new creature or renewed soul is also endowed with, namely, a desire of its being for ever continued in the state of perfection once attained unto. But what portion is sufficient for such a boundless desire of the soul? Not this world surely, which will not last, but will be burnt up; but the eternal God, the everlasting Father, of infinite perfections, who is an inexhaustible fountain of perfection for ever. Therefore says the psalmist, "My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever," Psal. lxxiii. 26.

2. There is a sufficiency in God in Christ for the whole man, soul

and body too, Rom. xi. 36, "For of him, and through him, and to him are all things." He is infinite in perfections, therefore there can be nothing wanting in him, which is necessary for the good of his creature any manner of way, Job xi. 7, "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" Hence David says, Psal. xxxiv. 10, "They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." So that he who would have a portion that might furnish him with all he needs, both for his soul and his body, may have it in a God in Christ. Thus God in Christ is a portion the whole man may live on.

*Quest.* How can that be?

*Ans.* 1. There is enough in God to give a man full contentment of heart in any lot whatsoever, to cause him say from inward feeling that he has enough, whatever be his wants, Phil. iv. 11, *I have learned*, says the apostle, *in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.* Hab. iii. 17, 18, formerly quoted. And that is equivalent to one's having all, and wanting nothing, 2 Cor. vi. 10. Phil. iv. 18. A man living thus in a cottage, with coarse fare and a small measure of it, lives better than a discontented king in his palace, Luke xii. 15, "For a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." God satisfies such as with marrow and fat, of which a small quantity fill so as the man desires no more, but rejoiceth in his portion.

2. All good things whatsoever, that are not formally in God, are eminently and virtually in him as in their cause, Matth. xix. 17, 18. *There is none good but one, that is God.* That is to say, As one getting a great sum of money for his portion, may live upon it; because though it is not formally meat nor clothes, he cannot eat it nor clothe himself with the metal; yet it is virtually and in effect both meat and clothes, in so far as it can purchase these things to the man, and so is equivalent to all such things, Eccl. x. 19, *Money answereth all things.* Even so one getting God in Christ for his portion may live upon him; because he can furnish him with all good things whatsoever: so having him to be theirs, they have all in effect, since he has all, 1 Cor. iii. 21, not only all for the soul, but all for the body too.

These two grounds being laid, I say there is a sufficiency in a God in Christ for all that is necessary for the whole man; so that they who have him for their portion, have in him a sufficiency for the body as well as for the soul. And,

1st, For their maintenance, in meat and drink. That day the man takes God for his portion, his bread is baked, his provision is secured for time as well as for eternity. That is a clause in the

disposition made to them of their portion, Psal. xxxvii. 3, *Verily thou shalt be fed.* Isa. xxxiii. 16, *Bread shall be given him, his waters shall be sure.* All living is fed by him, Psal. cxlv. 15. However poor and needy they may be, he who feeds his birds, will not neglect his babes, Psal. cxlvii. 9.

*Quest.* But what can a man make of that sufficiency in God as a portion for maintenance, when he has empty pantries to go to ?

*Ans.* If he go by faith to his portion as his maintenance, he may make these four things of it,

(1.) He may get providential provision brought to him in the channel of the covenant, that is, as an accomplishment of the promise on which he relies. And if that were bare bread and water, it will be more sweet to the godly man than the most delicious meats to one whose portion God is not. So I doubt not Elijah's fare was sweeter to him, 1 Kings xvii. 6. than the fare of Baal's priests at Jezebel's table. Godly persons in straits helped to live by faith, get many sweet experiences, which they want when their lot is more plentiful. And sure I am the creature never tastes so sweet, as when it comes in answer to prayer and faith in the promise.

(2.) He may get a little to serve far, as in the case of Daniel and his companions, Dan. i. 15, whose countenances, at the end of ten days, appeared fairer, and fatter in flesh, by living on pulse and water, than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat. Nature may be content with little, and grace with less; whereas lust can never get enough. There is a curse that insensibly wastes the provision of some; while the small provision of others, by God's blessing comes to be like the widow's barrel of meal, and cruise of oil, 1 Kings xvii. She never had much, but yet she never wanted altogether. It is a certain truth, that *man doth not live by bread alone*, Matth. iv. 4; and that as men may eat plentifully, and not have enough, so they may be kept at very slender provision, and yet through grace have abundance.

(3.) When the streams are quite dry, he may get a draught of the fountain that will be strengthening and refreshful to his very body. Moses being in the mount with God, eat none for forty days, and missed neither meat nor drink. It is true, that was miraculous: but it tells us, that the godly man's portion is able to feed him without meat or drink. And I believe the experience of many of the saints proves, that a watering of grace to the soul is even sometimes refreshing and strengthening to the very body, agreeable to these scripture-texts, Isa. lxvi. 14. *Your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb.* Psal. xxxv. ix. 19. "My soul shall be joyful in the Lord: it shall rejoice in his salvation. All my

bones shall say, Lord, who is like unto thee, which deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him, yea, the poor and the needy from him that spoileth him?"

(4.) He may quietly and contentedly, in the faith of the promise, hang on at the door of his storehouse, not doubting but his Father will seasonably interpose for his help and relief, after he has tried him, and thus feed on hope, Psal. xxxvii. 3. *Trust in the Lord, and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.* And this is one of those ways how the Lord's people are satisfied in days of famine, verse 19. Do not you observe, that sometimes the hungry child cries for bread, and the mother gives him a promise of it some time after, and thereupon he is easy? And may we not think a promise embraced by faith, will have a satisfying influence on a child of God?

*2dly*, For their clothing. That likewise is an appurtenance of the saint's portion, Matth. vi. 30. "If God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" There is a lust for clothing and attire, for satisfying of which earth and seas, and even the most remote countries, Persia and the Indies, are ransacked: and yet that lust is not satisfied; still some new thing is desired. But, O the satisfaction of heart, where the man or woman lodges the key of their wardrobe in the hand of a God in Christ, believing that he will clothe them as is meet in his sight. This made the sheep skins and goat skins wherein the worthies, Heb. xi. 37. wandered about, more comfortable to them than the most gorgeous apparel could be to the persecutors.

*3dly*, For their housing or lodging, Psal. xc. 1. *Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations.* They that have God for their portion, though they were cast out of house and hold, will not want a place where they may lodge securely and comfortably. He who made a fiery furnace a comfortable lodging to the three children, can make any place sweet to his own. Jacob never lodged a night more comfortably, than when he durst not stay at his father's house for Esau, but got the vault of the heavens for the roof of his bed-chamber, the bare field for his bed, and a stone for his bolster, Gen. xxviii. That he preferred, as the house of God, to all the houses that ever his foot was in, verse 17.

*4thly*, For their provision with money. They that are lovers of it, shall never get enough of it, heap up as they will, Eccl. v. 10. Nay, it is ruining to them who seek it, use it, and value themselves upon it, as their portion, 1 Tim. vi. 10. "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have

erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." But those whose portion God is, shall have as much of it as he sees they really need; and that is abundance, Job xxii. 25. *Thou shalt have plenty of silver.* If their portion furnish them not money, it will furnish them money-worth, what is as good and better, *Heb. silver of strength, ibid.* The people of God might be very easy on this head, if they could believe that all the riches of the world belong to him, and are at his disposal, and that infinite wisdom and love carves out their portion of them; and that therefore if their part thereof be small, it is necessary for them that it should be so, and that want is made up another way, Hag. ii. 8. 9. "The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts."

*Lastly,* For a purchase to them. If men are for a heritage, some possession they might call their own, there is no such sure way for it as to take God in Christ for their portion. God gives bits of the earth, lairdships and lordships, &c. to some few of his children, though but few of them, 1 Cor. i. 26. The greatest part of those who are so well provided now, are those who have no more to expect at his hand. But,

(1.) Whereas worldly men have but bits of this earth, that they can call theirs; they that have God for their portion, have a right to the whole earth as their Father's ground, Matth. v. 5. *Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.* It is not the carnal worldlings that fight and worry one another for it, but the meek and quiet ones whose hearts rest in God, that shall inherit the earth. There is often a great difference betwixt the saints and others in this earth in respect of their possessions; they whom God has least kindness for, oft-times get the largest share of earth: but betwixt a believer and an unbeliever in that case there is just such a difference, as betwixt the young heir and one of his father's tenants. The tenant may be in possession of much of the land, while the young heir possesses not a furrow of it: but he has a right to it all; the tenant has no more than what he must pay a dear rent for, and may be turned out of at the term.

(2.) Whereas worldly men's property is confined to this earth, and they have no peculiar interest in the visible heavens, air, sun, moon, and stars; the children of God's property extends to these also, and they have a peculiar interest in them, as the outworks of their Father's palace, Psal. viii. 3. The visible heavens are a space of the universe, which Providence has kindly put beyond the reach



of men to impropriate : so that the beggar and the king are equally free to the air, sun, moon, &c. If it had been otherwise, no doubt the men of the world would have divided these among them too, as well as they have done the earth, waters, and seas ; so that the meaner sort would have had the light of the sun, moon, &c. to have paid for to the proprietors, as well as they have their houses and farms on the earth, &c. to pay for. But blessed be God, worldly men's heritage extends not that far. Yea, but the portioners of a God in Christ have a peculiar interest there, 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22. " All things are yours ; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come ; all are yours." Each of them may look up, and say, That is my sun and my moon, my stars, my air, purchased by the blood of my elder Brother, and disposed in the everlasting covenant by his Father to me, to give light to me, and for me to breathe in, by day and night, and discharged to wrong or hurt me, Psal. cxxi. 6. " The sun shall not smite thee by day ; nor the moon by night."

(3.) Whereas worldly men have no claim at all to the highest heavens, and so have no place to go to when they shall be shaken out of the earth at the resurrection, but the pit of hell ; the heirs, the portioners of God in Christ, their great interest lies there. Heaven is their own country, their own city, kingdom, and mansion-house : it is their own home, which they shall never depart from, if once they were there. It is disposed to them with their portion, and Christ as their proxy has taken possession of it for them in their name, Heb. vi. 10. *Whither the forerunner is for us entered.* Hence they are said to be settled there already, Eph. ii. 6. In one word, they enjoy all in their head, Col. ii. 9. 10.

3. Every man may have this God in Christ secured to him as his portion, in virtue of the everlasting covenant offered in the gospel. For thus the covenant is proposed to be believed, embraced, and appropriated by all to whom the gospel comes, Heb. viii. 10. " For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord : I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts : and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." A man's portion speaks a disposal of it to him by gift from the donor, and his property in it by claiming it as his own, and so accepting the gift. Thus God in Christ is a portion offered to all to whom the gospel comes, and a portion accepted by believers. I take up this in four things.

1<sup>st</sup>, The all which man is capable to enjoy, is divided into two great parts, God and the creature. This division was made by sin ; for before it entered, man enjoyed God and the creature, the latter

as the incast to the former : but man falling off from God, chose the creature as a portion in opposition to God, Luke xv. 12, 13. "The younger said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey, into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living." He left his father, with his portion. And thus all men by nature, while the two portions are set before them, grasp the creature as their portion.

*2dly*, Man by this choice brought himself into a wretched condition. (1.) He betook himself to a portion that could never be sufficient for him, Isa. lv. 22. "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not?" (2.) He lost all right to God as a portion any more. His name became *Lo-ammi*, *Not my people*, Hos. i. 9. Therefore men in their natural state are said to be *without God*, Eph. ii. 12; and if man had been ever so willing to have returned to the possession of God as his portion, by the first bargain, he could have had no access, more than the fallen angels, Gen. iii. 22, 24. Yea and it was quite beyond his power to have procured himself access to God again as his portion.

*3dly*, God in Christ hath freely made over himself as a portion to sinners, in the gospel; so that they all may, and are welcome to take possession of him as their portion again. This is Heaven's grant to poor sinners of the race of Adam, from which fallen angels are excluded, John iii. 16. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." Compare Prov. viii. 4. "Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of men." And thus the mercies of the covenant are called *sinners' own mercies*, John ii. 8. and the living God *the Saviour of all men*, 1 Tim. iv. 10. and salvation *the common salvation*, Jude 3.

*Quest.* But how hath God made over himself to lost sinners of Adam's race, as a portion?

*Ans.* By way of free gift to be received by faith. Hence Christ is called *the gift of God*, John iv. 10. Is. ix. 6. John vi. 32; his righteousness a *gift*, Rom. v. 17. yea, and eternal life is *given*, 1 John v. 11. This is the free gift made by Heaven to Adam's family, so that they may by faith, every one of them, claim it, and take possession thereof, without fear of vitious intromission. And this is indeed the foundation of faith; for no man can warrantably take what he has no manner of right to, nor can any receive what is not first given him. There must be a giving on God's part, before their can be a receiving on our part, John iii. 27.

The purport of what is said on this head is, That there is a gift of this portion made to you and every one of you. And by this gospel it is intimated to you, 1 John v. 11. so that nothing remains to make it your own in a saving manner, but that you by faith claim it and take possession of it. Ye have a clear and solid ground on which ye may do so, whatever be your case, Rev. xxii. 17. "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." And this brings me to the

4th and last thing, *viz.* Faith claims the gift of this portion, appropriates it, and takes possession thereof; so that it becomes actually the believer's own portion in a saving manner, John i. 12. The sinner convinced of his utter poverty and want, and the insufficiency of the whole creation to satisfy the soul in the starving condition that it is therefore in, hears and believes that God in Christ hath given himself as a portion to sinners, and therefore to himself in particular, in the word of the promise of the gospel; and therefore trusts and confides in him as his portion, for happiness and satisfaction, upon the warrant of the word of grace. Thus faith takes possession, and saith as in the text, "Thou art my portion. Lam. iii. 24. The Lord is my portion, saith my soul, therefore will I hope in him. See Psal. ii. *ult.* Blessed are all they that put their trust in him. Isa. xxvi. 3, 4. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee. Trust in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord **ЖЕHOVAH** is everlasting strength." Thus the man renounceth all other portions, believes a sufficiency in God, and that that sufficiency shall be made forthcoming to him, according to the promise, and so rest in God in Christ as his portion. This is saving faith, by which the soul takes God for its portion.

Even as if where a family is ruined and reduced to beggary, a friend of theirs should draw up a disposition, wherein he makes over to them his estate, unknown to them. And while they are going about in a starving condition, he causes intimate it to them, that they may come and claim it, and take possession of it, and so live on it. In that case, those of that family that claim it, enjoy it as their own: but if any of them will not believe the grant of the estate to be made to them, and therefore will not put in their claim to it, nor lay their weight on it; they must starve for all it, it never becomes theirs actually to any saving purpose. Adam's posterity is this family; God in Christ is the friend; the gospel promise in the Bible, is the disposition; the preaching of the gospel is the intimation; faith is the making of the claim; and unbelief is the not putting in a claim.

Thus have I shown you how God in Christ is a portion for sinners to live on. I shall,

*Fourthly and lastly*, Speak of the properties of this portion.

1. God in Christ is a suitable portion, Isa. lv. 2. "Eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." Many have little satisfaction in the portion given them, because it is not suitable to their case: but God in Christ is a portion suited to all the necessities of poor sinners, and therefore they may rejoice in him, Isa. lxi. 7. The whole world cannot make a suitable portion for man's soul. He spake like a fool who said, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry," Luke xii. 20. The soul being a spiritual substance, carnal things can never be a suitable portion to it, as being quite unsuitable to its nature. But God is a spirit, of infinite perfections, and therefore a suitable portion for the soul.

2. The double portion. Such a portion belonged to the first-born, Deut. xxi. 17. by which we may understand that which Elisha prayed for: *I pray thee*, said he to Elijah, *let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me*. This seems to have had something typical in it: for all believers in Christ, in the language of the Holy Ghost, are *first-born*, Heb. xii. 23. denoting that to them belongs the blessing, the dominion, the priesthood, and the double portion. Now God in Christ is their portion, therefore he is the double portion. This world is but the single portion, a portion for unbelievers; whatever be theirs, God is not theirs: But they that have God for their portion, they have the good things of this life as the incast to the bargain, Matth. vi. 33. 1 Tim. iv. 8. God's dealing with saints and sinners, is like that of Abraham with his children, Gen. xxv. 5, 6. "Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac. But unto the sons of the concubines which Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts, and sent them away." All is the believer's, Rom. viii. 17. compare Heb. i. 2.

3. A full portion, Col. i. 19. "It pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell;" compared with chap. ii. 9. "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." There is no worldly portion that one has or can have, but there is always something wanting in it. There was a want even in paradise. The treasures and kingdoms of the greatest monarch on earth cannot furnish all things. But there is a fulness in God himself, he is *all-sufficient*, Gen. xvii. 1. Eph. i. 23. The saints in heaven are all filled by him, so that they want nothing; and sometimes he has filled saints on earth, that they have been made to cry, Hold, lest the earthen pitcher, the body, should burst with the incomes of his fulness.

4. A heart-satisfying portion, Psal. lxxiii. 5, 6. "My soul shall be satisfied, says David, as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips," &c. Man's heart is a devouring depth, into which if one should cast the fulness of ten thousand worlds, it would all be swallowed up; and the heart would still be crying, *Give, give*. For the whole creation, yea all possible creations, cannot be commensurable to the desires of the soul of man; because the Creator enlarged its capacity to the enjoying of himself an infinite good, nothing less can truly satisfy or still its desires and cravings. But God himself is a portion satisfying to the soul: while he pours in of his goodness to the soul, it desires nothing beyond him, and nothing besides him, Psal. lxxiii. 25. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." Here is a portion, in which the restless soul comes to rest, like the hungry infant set on the breast, Isa. lxvi. 11.

5. A certain and secure portion, Matth. vi. 19, 20. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." No worldly portion is so; all of that kind is but moveables, which may be lost: but the saint's portion is not so, Heb. xii. 28, "a kingdom which cannot be moved." How many have had riches and wealth sometime a-day, who have been robbed and spoiled of all, having nothing left them? But none can take away this portion; for "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance," Rom. ix. 29. And this is the advantage of having God for our portion, in the tenor of the second covenant, beyond that of the first, John x. 28, 29. "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me, is greater than all: and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."

6. A durable portion. As there is no losing of it, so there is no wasting of it neither, John iv. 14. Many have had great portions in the world, who have got through them, having spent so prodigally that they have left themselves nothing. But this portion is infinite, so it is a well that can never be drawn dry. This is enough to bear the believer's ordinary and extraordinary charges, as the worthies, Heb. xii. experienced.

7. An everlasting portion, Psal. lxxiii. 26. Though men's portion in the world neither be taken from them, nor wasted by them; yet it will last no longer with them than the dying hour. When the breath is out, it is no more theirs; it becomes the portion of

others after them. But death takes not away the believer's portion : therefore is the phrase, "Lay up for yourselves," Matth. vi. 20. He will be the believer's portion in time and throughout eternity. And hence it follows, that he is,

8. *Lastly*, A nonsuch portion, the best of portions, the most desirable portion : no portion comparable to him, Jer. x. 15, 16. "They are vanity, and the work of errors : in the time of their visitation they shall perish. The portion of Jacob is not like them : for he is the former of all things, and Israel is the rod of his inheritance ; the Lord of hosts is his name," Psal. xvii. 14, 15. And so the believer reckons all but loss and dung in comparison of a God in Christ, Phil. iii. 8. So the world's portion being put in competition with Christ and his heavy cross, the Lord's people have rejoiced in their portion in the midst of the most cruel sufferings, and would not have exchanged their portion with their persecutors' fulness and ease.

II. The next general head is to show in what respects God in Christ is the portion of his people, or the portion of those who have taken him for their refuge.

1. They have and possess him as their portion in virtue of the covenant of grace, which is the disposition they have to it, Heb. viii. 10. Being brought within the covenant, they are secured in this which is the portion of God's covenant-people, his children and heirs. Others have the offer and grant of this portion, but they are actually possessed of it.

2. They desire him above all for their portion, Psal. lxxiii. 25. often cited. They have seen the vanity and emptiness of created things for a portion, Psal. xxvii. 14. the fulness and sufficiency of God in Christ ; and therefore their desires terminate in him for a portion, John xiv. 8. Psal. xxvii. 4. They desire him only, wholly and for ever. And so he is called their *desire*, Hag, ii. 7. all their desires of a portion centring in him.

3. They chuse him for their portion. When the two parts into which the all is divided, are set before them, and they are bid chuse, their souls take hold of a God in Christ, and say, *Thou art my portion* ; I will take thee as my portion and inheritance before all the world, Josh. xxiv. 15. They halt not, as many, betwixt two opinions : they are determined, they are brought to a point ; he is their choice.

4. They claim him as their portion, Lam. iii. 24. *Thou art my portion, saith my soul*. Their souls say with Thomas, *My Lord, and my God*. It is the proper work of faith to claim him as theirs. God insists on this, that they should claim him, Jer. iii. 4, "Wilt thou

not from this time cry unto me, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth?" He promises that they shall claim him, ver. 19. *I said, thou shalt call me, My Father.* And the Spirit of Christ in them causes them to claim him, Rom. viii. 15, "Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. Gal. iv. 6. God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." According to the measure of their faith, so is their claim, strong or weak, clear or not clear: but wherever faith is, it doth claim God in Christ as theirs. Doubts and darkness may indeed so overcloud the believer, that he cannot perceive his claiming God in Christ as his, it is like a pulse so weak that it can hardly be felt: yea, he may be at that, that he says, he has no claim to him as his, that he dare not, cannot claim him as his God or portion: and yet bid him in that case quit his claim; he would not do it for a thousand worlds: which argues that he hath a real claim, though to him as it were imperceptible.

5. *Lastly,* They rest in him as their portion, Heb. iv. 3. *We which have believed, do enter into rest.* Their poor hungry souls have been seeking a portion to live on. While they sought among the creatures for it, they could find nothing to rest in as a portion: but a discovery of God in Christ being made to them, and they apprehending him by faith, their souls say within them now, *This is my rest.* They are like *the merchant-man, seeking goodly pearls: who when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it,* Matth. xiii. 45, 46. They see that there is a fulness in him to satisfy their souls, to answer all their needs, and supply all their wants: so they rest in him as their portion.

III. I proceed now to confirm the doctrine. It appears from,

1. The nature of God, particularly his all-sufficiency and goodness. There is enough in him for all that sinners stand in need of: so he needs not send them for their provision to another quarter. He is good, infinitely good; and therefore ready to communicate of his sufficiency to his own, Psal. cxix. 68. *Thou art good, and dost good; and will not send them to another.* And so it is indeed, Psal. lxxxiv. 11. *The Lord God is a sun and shield; a shield for protection, and a sun for provision.*

2. The nature of the covenant, which is for provision as well as protection of those who come into it. The leading promise of the covenant, Heb. viii. 10. *I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people,* imports the one as well as the other. And so both are promised together, Psal. lxxxiv. 11, just quoted. God's covenant is not like the treacherous covenant the Duke of Alva made with some, to whom he promised them their life, but afterwards starved them,

pretending he had not promised them meat too. No; *I say unto you*, says Christ, *Take no thought* (i. e. anxious or perplexing thought) *for you life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on: Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?* Matth. vi. 25. It is a full covenant wherein all is secured to believers, Rev. xxi. 7. *He that overcometh shall inherit all things.* It is a covenant of service, and masters give provision as well as protection to their servants; a marriage-covenant, and the husband, if he be able, will surely maintain his own wife.

3. The nature of faith, which is the soul's going to God in Christ for rest; and that not only for rest to the conscience, under the covert of blood as a refuge; but for rest to the heart, in an all-sufficient God as a portion, Matth. xi. 28. This last as well as the former is the errand faith goes to God in Christ upon: and doubtless it cannot come amiss, for it obtains all, that being the constant rule of the dispensation of grace, *According to thy faith be it unto thee.*

4. The honour of God requires it, Heb. xi. 16. *God is not ashamed to be called their God.* Believers go to him and trust in him for all, and it lies upon the honour of God to provide for them, as well as to protect them. Hath he said, "If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel," 1 Tim. v. 8. and will he not see to the protection of his own family? Is it not a dishonour to any man of ability, to have his spouse or children hanging on about the hand of strangers, for something to live on? So it reflects dishonour on God, that his people hang on so about the world's door: and we may be sure they need not do it, John iv. 14.

5. The comfort and happiness of believers require it. It is not possible they can be provided otherwise with a portion on which they may live, John vi. 68. *Lord, said Peter, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.* Though while they lived in their natural state, they could like the prodigal feed on husks like the swine; yet their new nature cannot now relish such entertainment. Hence proceed those breathings of the new nature in them, "O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is," Psal. lxxiii. 1. And these desires are of the Lord's own kindling, and therefore he cannot but satisfy them, by being a portion to them himself. May not the whole creation say to the soul in these breathings, as 2 Kings vi. 27. *If the Lord do not help thee, whence shall I help thee?*

6. *Lastly*, The duty of believers supposes it. It is their duty to



live on a God in Christ as their portion, Isa. lv. 2. *Eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.* This very thing is the life of faith, which is the great thing God requires of his people. Hence Paul says, "The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God," Gal. ii. 20. Compare John vi. 27, 29. "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed. This is the work of God, that ye believe in him whom he hath sent." It is their privilege, ver. 57. *He that eateth me, even he shall live by me:* and consequently their duty to live by him. They ought to live on him, and lay all their wants upon him, Psal. lv. 22. *Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee.* Consequently he is their portion to live upon. He takes it ill at their hands, that they seek to any other for supply; this says, they are welcome to him.

I come now to the practical improvement of this comfortable subject, which I shall discuss in a threefold use, namely, of information, trial, and exhortation.

USE I. Of information. Hence we may learn,

1. The happiness of believers. They have in a God in Christ what makes them happy persons indeed. There are but two things necessary to make a guilty creature happy, namely, suitable protection and provision. The first removes evil from them, the last furnishes them with necessary good. In God the believer has both; for he is both a refuge to them, and a portion in that refuge. Wherefore we may conclude, as Psal. ii. *ult.* *Blessed are they that put their trust in him.*

2. The unhappiness of believers. They are poor portionless creatures, whatever they enjoy in the world; for any portion they have, is not worth the name. It is but a creature-portion, and that will be but a time-portion; it will neither satisfy, nor will it last with them. And therefore the Spirit of God speaks very diminutively of it, Prov. xxiii. 5. "Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings, they fly away as an eagle towards heaven." Matth. xiii. 12. *Whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away, even that he hath.* God is not their portion, for he is not their refuge: they have not a God to live upon as their God, since they are not by faith seated under his shadow.

3. Justification and sanctification are inseparable; for to whom God is a refuge he is also a portion. Faith takes God in Christ for a refuge, and so the soul is justified, Rom. viii. 1. *There is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.* It takes him for a portion, and so the soul is sanctified, Eph. ii. 20, 21. "Ye are built

upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord." Think not that ye shall separate what God has so closely joined. Ye that are unholy in your lives, may assure yourselves that your sins are not pardoned. The reigning power of sin in you may assure you, that it has yet its condemning power over you. If the guilt of it were taken away, the reigning power of it would be broken. Alas! how do men deceive themselves? They will be called by Christ's name; but they will eat their own bread. They will pretend to make Christ the rest of their consciences, while their hearts cannot rest in him, but in their lusts. But water as well as blood came out of Christ's pierced side: and if ye be sprinkled with the blood to the remission of your sin, ye are sprinkled with the water too, for the sanctification of your hearts and lives.

4. However, justification in the order of nature goes before sanctification. First, God is the sinner's refuge, and then he becomes his portion, Rom. iv. 5. "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Whosoever then would be made holy, and would attain to true evangelical repentance, which is the top-branch of true holiness, and the compend of all good works, must seek to be justified by faith in order thereunto. For till once the curse be taken off the soul in justification, how is it possible it should bring forth any good fruit? How can God become the portion of the sinner, till once he is become his refuge? A legal repentance may and doth go before the remission of sin as to the guilt of eternal wrath; but true gospel repentance follows it, and that inseparably, Luke vii. 47. *Her sins which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much.*

5. Believers are so set up with a portion, that they cannot break. Since God himself is their portion, they can never be poor; they will have enough in the worst of times, Psal. xxiii. 1, *The Lord is my shepherd, says David, I shall not want.* The believer's portion is not like that of the world, consisting of moveables, which may be taken from them; but it is *a kingdom which cannot be moved*, Heb. xii. 28. The Chaldeans and Sabeans took away Job's cattle, but not his God and portion; and therefore he could say after all his sad losses, *Is not my help in me?* Job vi. 13. The believer is like the landed man; though robbers take away his money, they cannot take away his land too: though a flood sweep away the crop, yet it leaves his ground still; so that he has whereon to live. Hence an eminent prophet said, "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the

fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stall: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation," Hab. iii. 17, 18.

6. *Lastly*, God is all-sufficient. Who but one all-sufficient could be a portion to all that flee into the great refuge? How great must that portion be, which all the saints from Adam have lived, and shall live upon, to the last that shall be in the world; and that not only for time, but for eternity? They shall all be heirs-portioners, and all shall have enough. This world is but a sorry portion; one generation must go, that another may come, and enjoy it; for it cannot serve all together, as God in Christ can do.

USE II. Of trial. Hereby ye may try whether ye be within the precincts, bounds, and protection of the great Refuge, or not; that is, in effect, whether ye be in Christ, or out of Christ; whether in a state of salvation or of condemnation? . This is a point of great weight, and it nearly concerns you to know, where you are, whether ye are yet got within the liberties of the refuge, or yet without them. And I would offer some motives to press you to put this for a trial.

*Mot. 1.* Life and death hang upon this point, Mark xvi. 16. *He that believeth, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned.* Your eternal salvation or damnation depend upon it. All that are within the precincts of this refuge are safe; death cannot come over the line: all that are without them are in the utmost hazard of eternal destruction every moment, Psal. vii. 12. *If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready.* There is no safety there; for it is the dominion of death, in which no man can be safe.

*Mot. 2.* There are several particular differences betwixt the state of them that are within, and of those that are without this refuge; and these differences are great and weighty. I will lay them before you in these five points,

1. In the matter of sin: there is no safety from it without this refuge, if you be not within this refuge, sin has all its power over you. It has a reigning power in you, so that do what ye will, ye can do nothing but sin, and cannot please God, Rom. viii. 8. *They that are in the flesh, cannot please God.* John xv. 5. *Without me ye can do nothing.* Ye may wrestle against it as ye will, but ye will never get victory over it, for that is got only within the refuge, 1 Cor. xv. 57. *But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.* Sin has a condemning power over you, it is armed with its sting against you, and keeps you under the guilt of eternal wrath, John iii. 18. *He that believeth not, is condemned already.* So it preys on you, as death on the carcase.—But if ye be within the refuge,

sin's dominion is broken unto you, Rom. vi. 14. *Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.* And though it yet dwell in you, it shall never recover the dominion, but, like the house of Saul, grow weaker and weaker. And it cannot condemn you, more than the fire could burn the three children: for *there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus*, Rom. viii. 1. Our Lord Christ felt the condemning power of sin as a public person, and so can never repeat its sentence on those who are in him.

2. In the matter of the law as a covenant of works. It extends its dominion over all to the very border of the refuge: so all that are within the refuge are free from it, but all that are without are under it, Rom. vi. 14. So if ye be without, ye are under the covenant of works, which exacts obedience of you every way perfect, under the pain of the curse; and whatever comes short of perfection in your obedience is rejected. So that when ye have done all you can, and the best you can: yet you and your works are all rejected of God because your works are not perfect. In the dominion ye live in, less is not accepted. But if ye be within the refuge, ye are under the covenant of grace, where obedience, yea perfect obedience is indeed required, but not under pain of the curse, which Christ already has bore away from all who are in him. But sincere obedience is accepted, and God takes it kindly off their hands, though it is not perfect, for the sake of the Mediator's perfect obedience, which always appears within the refuge.

3. In the matter of the curse. All without the refuge are under the curse, by the sentence of the law bound over to the revenging wrath of God, Gal. iii. 10. "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. Rom. iii. 19. What things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." But all within the refuge are freed from the curse, Gal. iii. 13, *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.*

4. In respect of Satan. All without the refuge are under his power, Acts xxvi. 18. They are his captives, prisoners, servants or slaves, and members of the kingdom of darkness. But they that are within the refuge, are set free from the power of that enemy, Col. i. 13, and reign in life through Jesus Christ.

5. *Lastly*, In the matter of death. To all without the refuge death is armed with its sting; but to those that are within it, it can do them no harm, 1 Cor. xv. 57, already quoted.

*Mot.* 3. All of us are born without the refuge, being *children of wrath*, Eph. ii. 3. None enter within it but those who are born

again. If ye be living then in the state ye were born in, ye are without the refuge, and so in the miserable case ye have heard of.

*Mot. 4.* Sinners when once awakened see that there is no living without the refuge. Hence Peter's hearers, when pricked in their heart, cried out, *What shall we do?* Acts ii. 37. No man could contentedly live in that case one moment, if he saw his danger.

*Mot. last.* Many miss the entry into the refuge who seem to aim at it, Luke xiii. 24, and so seem to themselves and others to be in, while they really are out.

Now ye may know if the Lord be your refuge by this: If the Lord be your portion to live on, he is your refuge. If ye have taken God in Christ for your refuge, ye have also taken him for your portion to live on. And whether God in Christ be your portion or not, ye may know by these marks,

*Mark 1.* Ye will have a transcendent esteem of and value for him, and love of him above all. He will have the highest seat in your judgment and practical understanding, in your heart, and in your affections, Luke xiv. 26. Propriety in a thing raises the value for it. A man will have a greater value for, and liking of his own cottage, than another man's castle. Hence the world is the chief in the minds and hearts of worldly men; they love the world, and the things that are in the world, 1 John ii. 15. But God in Christ is chief with the saints. The great pleasure of the former lies in appropriating the things of the world: so the worldly man has his great pleasure in earthly *Mys* Hos. ii. 5. "She said, I will go after my lovers, that give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, mine oil and my drink." Dan. iv. 30. "Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" The great pleasure of the latter lies in appropriating God in Christ: so they have their greatest pleasure in spiritual and heavenly *Mys*, as Psal. xviii. 2, "The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer: my God, my strength, in whom I must trust, my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.

2. Ye will be so disposed as to be satisfied in the enjoyment of God in Christ, even in the want of other things, Hab. iii. 17, 18, forecited. This is the rest of the soul in God as a portion, Psal. lxxiii. 25, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." Men who have the world for their portion, are very easy in the want of the enjoyment of God; they reign as kings without him, and rejoice in their portion. And the saints give worldly men the peel of that, being easy in the enjoyment of God, under the want of those things that worldly men

set their hearts on, Gal. vi. 14, "God forbid, says the apostle, that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Though alas! worldly men being altogether flesh, and the saints being spiritual but in part, the latter cannot get up to the measure of the former, to care quite as little for the world as they do for God.

3. Ye will not be content with any thing without him, Psal. lxxiii. 1, "O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is." No less than a God can afford a rest to the gracious soul: nothing can fill up his room to those whose portion he is. Carnal men whose portion is the creature, take their creature-portion from them, and they cry out, *What have I more?* Jud. xviii. 24. If their worldly enjoyments go, the pillow is taken quite from under their head, and they cannot be content even with a God without them, Exod. v. 7—9. Esau says, Gen. xxv. 32. "Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birth-right do to me?" And if God go, the pillow is taken from under the saint's head, and all the world cannot make him a bed, where he can lie easy: but still he cries, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* Psal. xxii. 1.

*Object.* But may not a gracious soul sometimes be very easy, even when the Lord is departed from him?

*Ans.* It is true, it may be so, when they are spiritually asleep: but yet they are never so fast asleep, but they have some uneasiness on that head, as the spouse had, Cant. v. 2, *I sleep, but my heart waketh.* And there is still a secret discontent in the soul with all things while he is away. And they will not lie always still in that case, but will awake, and clearly show that nothing without a God can content them, Cant. iii. 1, &c.

4. He will be your chief concern, Matth. vi. 21. *Where your treasure is, says our Lord, there will your heart be also.* Whatever it be that a man takes for his portion, he will be mainly taken up about that. Men that have their portion in this life, the things of this life are their main business: these get their sleeping and waking thoughts: all things else must yield thereto, and what concerns their souls is dragged at the heels of those things: and is cut and carved as may best consist with the advancing of them. And men whose portion the Lord is, it is their main business to enjoy him; as David witnesseth, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple," Psal. xxvii. 4. It is their greatest care to obtain his

favour, for Psal. xxx. 5. *In his favour is life.* And all other things must yield thereto, Phil. iii. 8. "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ."

5. It will be your great desire, and sincere endeavour, to be like him, 1 John iii. 3. Men generally look like their portion. It is known upon them, whether they have a small and poor portion, or a great and fat portion. And they that have God for their portion, will be like him in holiness, and it will be their desire and endeavour to be more and more like him, in all his imitable perfections, 2 Cor. iii. 18. God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, and gave us a copy of holiness and righteousness, love and beneficence to mankind, meekness, patience, &c. and his people will follow these.

6. It will be your great design to please him in all things, by having respect unto all his commandments, Psal. cxix. 6. She that is married takes the husband instead of all others, leaving father and mother for him; and so labours how to please her husband. And they that take God for their portion instead of all others, will be careful to please him, and walk by his direction in all things, Psal. xlv. 10. His will, will be not only the rule, but the reason of duty to them: and what is his pleasure they will not willingly baulk. He is their portion, and so their all. And so their obedience is limited.

7. *Lastly,* It will be upon his own that ye will serve him, Gal. ii. 20. *I live,* says the apostle, *yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.* Phil. iv. 13. *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.* Hypocrites never take God for their portion; they seem to themselves to have of their own; and upon that they serve him, leaning to their own abilities, like hired servants. But the saints, convinced they have nothing of their own, live on him as their portion, depending on him for strength, throughbearing, &c. in duties, Matth. v. 3. "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

USE III. Of exhortation; and that to those who have made God in Christ their refuge, and to those who are without a saving interest in him.

*First,* Ye who profess to have made God in Christ your refuge, carry as becomes those who have in him a portion to live on. And,

1. Hang not on about the door of the world and the lusts thereof, for satisfaction, as those who have no other portion but what they can squeeze out of these dry and fulsome breasts, John iv. 14.

Leave the husks which the swine do eat, to those poor prodigals that are not come to their Father's house. Ye have bread enough there. That contentment which others seek in these, ye may have in God.

2. If the world smile on you, let it not have your heart, since it is not your portion, Psal. lxii. 10. "If riches increase, set not your heart upon them." Carry your heart lightly over time-enjoyments, and let it not dip in them. Though these are carnal men's good things, they are not thy good things, Luke xvi. 25. Thy portion is in thy refuge.

If the world frown, bear it with holy courage. Whatever thou lose, thou canst not lose thy portion, which is in thy refuge. Alas! it is sad to think that believers should appear in that case as if all were gone, since they never want a portion.

*Secondly*, Ye who want a saving interest in Christ as your refuge, seek to get God in Christ for your portion. For motives, consider,

1. Nothing less can be a sufficient portion for you. Increase your portion in the world, as ye will, ye will still be in want, while God is not your portion. But in him your souls shall find complete satisfaction.

2. Any other portion may be lost. They that have not a God to live on, may soon be at that, they shall have nothing at all to live on. But if God be your portion, ye shall never want.

3. What but a God in Christ can be a portion to you at death, at the judgment-day, and through eternity? All things will leave you at death, and you can carry nothing with you into the other world. What portion then can you have, if God is not your portion now?

5. If God be not your portion here, ye will have a dreadful portion in the other world. God will then cut you asunder, and appoint you your portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, Matth. xxiv. ult. Remember what Abraham said to the rich man, Luke xvi. 25. "Son, remember that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented."

5. *Lastly*, God in Christ is now offering himself as a portion unto you; and ye may have this enriching portion. Your work now is to embrace the offer, and close the bargain.

(1.) Guilty creatures, take a God in Christ for your refuge; so shall ye be well provided for safety against the law, sin, death, and hell.

(2.) Poor portionless creatures, take God in Christ for your portion. Renounce all other portions, and take him for your portion for time and eternity. So shall you be provided happily from this time and for ever.