

Heaven Opened

The Riches of God's Covenant

Richard Alleine



Soli Deo Gloria Publications

... for instruction in righteousness ...

Heaven Opened

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To the Reader

Reader,

The providence of God has led me to the publication of the ensuing treatise, much beyond my first intentions.

There came into my hands a synopsis of the covenant of grace on God's part, with a soliloquy annexed (both penned by my brother, Joseph Alleine, and inserted in my book *Vindiciae Pietatis*), attended with the author's desires, and of various other Christians, that this also might be incorporated into the same book.

These desires, neither being able to resist nor willing to deny, I prepared some meditations to be premised, with a purpose to have put forth another edition of that book with this addition; but, finding it to grow into too great a bulk to be there inserted, both this on God's part, and the former on man's part, come into your hands in this distinct treatise, followed with my prayers—that the good land, whereof some clusters are here presented to you, may be your inheritance. See and take.

Yours, because I am the Lord's covenanted servant,

Richard Alleine
July 8, 1665

Introduction

Good news from heaven! The Dayspring from on high has visited this undone world! After a deluge of sin and misery, behold the bow in the cloud! The Lord God has made and established a new covenant, and this is it which has cast the first beam on the dark state of lost and fallen man, and has brought life and immortality to light. This covenant is the hope of sinners, the riches of saints, the *Magna Charta* of the city of God. The forfeited lease of eternity is now renewed; this is God's deed of gift, wherein He has, on fair conditions, granted sinners their lives, and settled upon His saints an everlasting inheritance.

Hear, O you forlorn captives, who have sold yourselves into eternal bondage, spoiled yourselves of all your glory, and sealed yourselves up under everlasting misery: you are dead in your sins, guilty before God, under wrath, under a curse, and bound over to eternal vengeance. But, behold, there is yet hope in Israel concerning this thing. The Lord God has taken compassion upon you. He has opened a way for you to escape out of all this misery and bondage. Lift up the hands that hang down; comfort the trembling knees. God has prepared an ark, in which there is salvation from the flood. He has made and established a new covenant which, if you lay hold of it, will recover all you have lost, ransom you from death, redeem you from hell, and advance you to a more sure and blessed condition than the original state from which you have fallen. This is

the hope of sinners; this is the heritage of the servants of the Lord.

Glorious tidings! Good news indeed! But what is this covenant? What is there that is given and granted therein? Why, there is all that heaven and earth can afford, all that can be needed or desired, and this, by a firm and irrevocable deed, is made over and made sure to all who will sincerely embrace it.

Particularly, God has in His covenant granted and made over:

1. Himself
2. His Son
3. His Spirit
4. The earth
5. The angels of light
6. The powers of darkness
7. Death
8. The kingdom
9. All the means of salvation.

Chapter 1

God in the Covenant

The Lord God has made over Himself in this covenant. That is the great and comprehensive promise of Jeremiah 31:33: "I will be their God." It is as if God had said, "I am God, and what I am is all yours: Myself, My glorious and incomprehensible essence, all My glorious attributes—My omnipotence, My omniscience, My wisdom, My righteousness, My holiness, My all-sufficiency, My faithfulness. I will make Myself over to you to be henceforth and forever yours. I will be your Friend, your Portion, your Sun, and your Shield."

1. Our Friend. "I was angry, but My anger is turned away. I was an adversary. I had a controversy with you, but I am now reconciled. I have found a ransom; the quarrel is composed; My wrath is appeased, and I am friends with you. Jeremiah 31:34: 'I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.' I will take away your iniquity and receive you graciously. 'I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely; for Mine anger is turned away from them' (Hosea 14:4). 'Glory be to God on high, on earth peace, goodwill towards men' (Luke 2:14). Fury is not now in Me. Favor and friendship, love and goodwill, is all that you may henceforth expect from Me."

Sinners, what is there to fear? What is dreadful but an angry, provoked God? From thence is sorrow and anguish; thence is famine, pestilence, and sword;

thence is death and hell. He does not know what the wrath of God means who does not see in it all the plagues above ground and all the vengeance of eternal fire. Whatever terrors or torments have seized upon your body or soul; whatever losses, crosses, vexations, or afflictions plague you upon this earth; whatever horror and anguish, whatever amazing, confounding torments are likely to meet you and feed upon you in the lake below, you may say of all, "This is the wrath of God." The day that the Lord says to you, "Fury is not in Me," He also says, "Fear shall be no more to you." The hour that the Lord says, "I am your Friend," that same day death and hell vanish. The day is broken; the shadows fly away. And this is one thing included in the promise: "I am your God, I am your Friend."

2. Our Portion. Fury ceases, fears vanish, friendship, favor, and life are granted. But what shall man have to live upon? He was never intended to be self-sufficient; he was created under a necessity of dependence on something outside him, not only for the continuation of his being, but for the comfort of his being. He cannot live upon the air, even though he has escaped the fire. The soul of man is too big for all the world. Like Noah's dove, it can find no rest below. And where shall it find it, or on what shall it subsist?

Why, God will not starve His friends. He who has saved our lives will find a livelihood for us. Because there is no other to be found, He Himself will be a livelihood to us: our portion, our maintenance, and our heritage forever. As our deliverance is from Him, so our dependence shall be on Him. He is our substance, and on Him is our subsistence. He calls Himself "the Portion of Jacob" (Jeremiah 10:16), and His saints accept

Him as such. "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance" (Psalm 16:5). He is our bread and our water, our stock and our store. The Lord gives portions to His enemies. Not only the young ravens, but the old lions and tigers, the worst of men seek their meat from God. They "have their portion in this life, whose bellies Thou fillest with Thy hid treasure" (Psalm 17:14). They have their portion: some have their portion in the city, others a portion in the field. To some He gives a portion of gold, to others a portion of worldly glory, to others a portion of pleasures. With all these He deals as the father of the prodigal did: He gives them their portion and sends them away. But while He gives portions to these, He *is* the portion of His saints. He makes over and settles Himself upon us as our inheritance forever. We shall never be in want while there is in Him matter to supply us. We shall never be in straits while there is in Him resource to relieve us. All our wants are laid upon Him.

The Lord is our Portion, and He is a sufficient portion. "With Thee is the fountain of life" (Psalm 36:9). "In Thy presence is fullness" (Psalm 16:11). The Lord God is all things to us, and with Him there is enough, and still some to spare. Luke 15:17: "In My father's house there is bread enough, and to spare." He who has all things below God, but not God, has nothing. He who has nothing besides God, but has God, has all things—enough and to spare, filling up and running over. There is still more to be had if more could be held. The soul never has enough until it has more than enough. It is never full until it runs over. While it can contain and measure and number all that it has, it judges itself to not have enough.

But in God is enough for filling up and running over. There is enough in Him to fill up all our faculties, all our understandings. There are infinitely beautiful perfections where we may gaze and fill our eyes with unspeakable delight. But when we have looked the farthest into them, when the most searching eye, the most intense thoughts have searched and run their utmost, they do not come near the end. They shall look and look and see and see and, when they can reach no farther, then they shall wonder at those treasures of light and beauty that are still beyond them. Admiration takes place when the understanding is full and running over; when it is non-plussed, and can reach no further, then it wonders at what it perceives still beyond it. The apostle tells us in Ephesians 3:18 that the gospel, which presents God in flesh, has in it a height and depth and length and breadth. And I can tell you that it is a height without a top, a depth without a bottom, a length without limits, and a breadth without bounds. In a word, it is immensity immeasurable, and therefore it has unspeakable, unsearchable glory. While the blind world derides and despises the portion of the saints, looking on God and all the things of God as shallow things that have no depth in them, they will be found by those who search into them to be deep things that have no bottom. 1 Corinthians 2:10 calls them "the deep things of God." All the raptures and ecstasies of glorious joys of the saints in the other world are the running over of their eyes upon their hearts, and they break in upon them from their vision of God.

There is enough to fill up our wills and affections. There is infinite goodness, incomprehensible love, marvelous lovingkindness, unspeakable delights, and

glorious joys. “Oh! How great is Thy goodness which Thou hast laid up for those that fear Thee” (Psalm 31:19). How great is Thy goodness! It is the voice of exultation, an admiring word great beyond expression, great beyond imagination. “Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither have entered into the heart of man to conceive the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him” (1 Corinthians 2:9). This is the sound of a heart leaping for joy, rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God which is laid up for His saints. Laid up? Where? Why, laid up in Himself; that is the fountain, that is the treasury; there is love, there is joy, there is satisfaction—our life is hidden with Christ in God.

Oh, love the Lord, all ye His saints. Oh, bless the Lord, all ye His saints. He who is mighty has done great things for you. “Since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, besides Thee, what He hath prepared for him that waiteth for Him” (Isaiah 64:4). Or, as it is in the margin, “There hath not been heard or seen a God besides Thee, which doth so for him that waiteth for Him.”

There is enough to fill up our time. There is admiring and praise work forever; there is matter for love and joy to live upon and feed upon forever—endless praises, eternal pleasures, everlasting rejoicings, “everlasting joy” (Isaiah 35:10), and “pleasures forevermore” (Psalm 16:11). There is enough to reward all our labors and repay all our expenses; there is a full reward. “Fear not, Abraham, I am thy shield, and exceeding great reward” (Genesis 15:1).

Christian, you shall not serve the Lord for nought. He will reward you, and it is a small matter in His eyes

that you should serve Him for corn and for wine, for sheep and for oxen; yea, for the crowns and kingdoms of this world. These shall not be your hire, the everlasting God will be your reward, your exceeding great reward—exceeding not only your work, but your very thoughts also. A little is too much for your earnings, but the whole world is too little for His bounty. Less than nothing might satisfy for your labors, but less than Himself will not satisfy for His love. The eternal God will be your reward. Oh, the unsearchable riches of the poorest of saints! Poor? What, and yet you have God! In want? What, and yet you have all things! Is this God yours, and are you still in straits! Would a few sheep and oxen, some vineyards and oliveyards make you a rich man, and can having God leave you a beggar? Is not a pearl more than a pebble? Are not milk and wine more than mud and water?

Men used to say that money was everything—meat, drink, clothes, friends, land, virtually everything. And is God not more than money? Surely he has said to his gold, “You are my god,” who cannot say, “If God is mine, then everything else can go its way.” Do you have God, and yet feel poor?

Nay, farther, would the fatness of the earth and the fullness of heaven, if you had both, be enough for you? Would corn, wine, houses, lands, pleasures here and eternal life hereafter suffice? And is not God alone as much as all this? Do you lack starlight when you have the sun? Is the ocean more full for the rivers that run into it? Or would there be any want there if all these were stopped and dried up? Does the almighty God have a self-sufficiency, and does He not have enough to satisfy a poor worm? Is He blessed in Himself, and may

you not be blessed in Him? He who thinks anything less than God will suffice does not understand the soul; and he who wants anything more than God does not understand God. God alone is as much as God and all the world. And this is the heritage of the servants of the Lord: God is their Portion.

If enough has not been said, look awhile and consider from whence you are taken up into this blessedness. What have you left? What an exchange have you made? You were taken with the prodigal from the trough, with the beggar from the dunghill, yea, as a brand out of the burning; there your lot had fallen. Oh, where have you left the rest of the world? They are blessing themselves in vanity, pleasing themselves with shadows and apparitions, feeding on ashes, warming themselves at their painted fire, sporting themselves with the wind, and rejoicing in things of nought—their crackling thorns, their glazing pleasures, their drinking, dancing, and roaring, their horses, dogs, hawks, and harlots—trying to make merry with these things while they are hastening to the pit, to that fire and brimstone which is the portion of their cup.

Consider, O man, what is the chaff to the wheat? What is a comet to the sun? What is the night to the day? What are bubbles and children's toys to these durable riches? What are things that are not to Him whose name is "I AM"? But, oh, what is death and wrath and the curse, which was once all your heritage, to that life, love, peace, joy, and glory which you now possess in that God who is your Portion? What a poor wretch you were once when you had nothing but sin, shame and misery that you could call your own! These things were yours: sin was yours, woe was yours, death and the grave

were yours, the curse and the pit were yours; but that was all you had. The good things you lived upon, had they been of ever so great a value, were not yours. Your house and your land are not yours, your gold and silver and substance are not yours; they are all borrowed, and you are but a steward of them, all to be given up upon demand. And what you have spent of them you must reckon for. You were a poor wretch who had nothing; all that you have is not yours.

But now God is yours. All that He is, all that He has, is yours. You could never lay such a claim to anything you possessed, not to house, or wife, or child, or body, or soul, as now you may to God. God is as surely yours as you are yourself. As surely as you are a man, you have God.

Come, Christian, here is now your portion, the light of your eyes, the lifting up of your head, the joy of your heart, the strength of your bones, your stock, your treasure, your life, your health, your peace, your rest, your all. "Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth that I desires beside Thee. My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever" (Psalm 73:25-26). Here is your Portion. Know it for your good, take it for your own; live upon it, and live up to it.

Live upon your Portion. Here you may feed; herein you may rejoice; herein you may bless yourself forever. "Let him that blesseth himself on the earth bless himself in the God of truth" (Isaiah 65:16). Let him who rejoices on the earth rejoice in the God of truth. Let the strong man live upon his strength, let the wise man live upon his wits, let the rich man live upon his lands, you live upon your God. Come, enjoy God and your soul; en-

joy God in your soul; enjoy your soul in God. You have possession, what should hinder your fruition? In fruition the scholars tell us there are three things which go to making it up: knowledge, delight, and satisfaction.

Knowledge. According to the clarity or cloudiness of our apprehensions of any good, we more or less take the pleasure or comfort of it. And therefore the full fruition of God is not had until the end, when we shall know as we are known. Here we see but as in a glass, and darkly; we know but in part, and, while we know but in part, we love but in part and joy but in part. The dimness of our sight makes an abatement upon our joy. When the veil shall be taken away, when we shall come to see face to face, then we shall fully feel what it is to have a God. Christian, know the God of your fathers. The more you know, the more you have.

The carnal world does not enjoy God at all. God is not known in their tabernacles; it is in Judah that God is known. His name is great in Israel; at Salem is His tabernacle, and His dwelling is in Zion. But what of God in Edom, Ammon, Amalek, or Egypt, those dark regions wherein neither sun nor star appears? Leave them to their dunghill gods, to the gardens which they have desires, and the oaks which they have chosen. The Lord is before you; know it for your good. Study your God, Christian. Roll His sweetness over in your mind as you do the sweet morsel in your mouth. See what He is and what you have laid up in Him. Read over His glorious names daily; walk through those chambers of His presence, His glorious attributes. Look into the chamber of His power and see what you have laid up for you there. Go into the chamber of His wisdom and see what

that will afford you. Look into the chambers of His goodness, mercy, faithfulness, holiness, and behold what treasures are laid up for you in each of these. Enter into these chambers; they are all yours. Enter into these chambers; let your eye be there; let your meditation be there; let your soul be there every day. There is your portion; search it out and know it for your good.

Delight. Fruition is taking pleasure in what we have. We cannot enjoy what we do not love, and love has delight. We cannot enjoy that wherein we do not joy. "Delight thyself in the Lord" (Psalm 37:4). "I sat me down under his shadow with great delight" (Song of Solomon 2:3). If His shadow is so pleasant, what will His sunbeams be! "O taste and see that the Lord is good" (Psalm 34:8). Our senses help our understandings. We cannot, by the most rational discourse, perceive what the sweetness of honey is; we must taste it to perceive it. His fruit will be sweet unto your taste. Dwell in the light of the Lord and let your soul be ravished always with His love. Get out the marrow and fatness that your portion yields you. Let fools learn by beholding your face how dim their blazes are to the brightness of your day.

Let your delights in God be pure and unmixed delights. Let your spirit be so filled with God, and so raised above carnal joys, and the matters of them, that it is no discouragement to you to have nothing but God. Your wine is the more sprightful when it is not mixed with water. Live above in that serene air which is not defiled with earthly exhalations. Sick bodies and sick souls cannot live in too pure an air. Be so wholly spiritual that spiritual joys and spiritual delights may be suited to you and sufficient for you. Do not say, "I lack

the joy of the vintage and the harvest. I lack the joy of the bridegroom and the bride. I need the sound of the millstones and the light of the candle to make my comfort full." Let the joy of the Lord be your strength and your life. Say with the prophet, "Although the figtree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor 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 stalls; yet will I rejoice in the Lord. I will joy in the God of my salvation" (Habakkuk 3:17-18).

Satisfaction. Satisfaction is the quiet resting of the soul in its portion. Therefore the scholars say that it is only the last end that is the proper object of fruition. Whatever the carnal world possesses, yet it cannot be properly said to enjoy it. A man's flask may be his god, his yarn may be his god, his plow, his plenty, and his pleasure may be his god, but he cannot enjoy these things. There is no rest for him in his god. "What man is he that feareth the Lord? His soul shall dwell at ease" (Psalm 25:12-13). In the original it is "his soul shall lodge in goodness." The soul is never at ease while it is in want, for every want wrings. It can never take up its lodging where it cannot take its rest. His soul shall be at ease, shall lodge, that is, shall take up its rest in the goodness of God. And when we find rest in our beds, then it is that we enjoy them. Is your soul lodged in God? Oh, enjoy your lodging! "Soul, take thine ease, thou hast goods laid up for many years. Return to thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee."

As it was said to the church, so let it be said by the church, and by every saint, "This is my rest, here will I

dwell forever” (Psalm 132:14). Here you may find rest when you have no other rock to lean upon. You may be at rest in your God in your most restless state, in a weary land, in a barren wilderness, and in a tempestuous ocean. However it was in the vision of the prophet, yet you may say, “If the wind rises, the Lord is in the wind; if after the wind an earthquake, the Lord is in the earthquake; if after the earthquake a fire, the Lord God is in the fire.” And wherever you find God, you may find rest. If you find God in a wilderness, you will find rest in the wilderness; if you find God in the earthquake, the tempest, or the fire, even there also shall your soul find rest. When you cannot rest in your bed, in your house, or in your land, you may still rest in your God. Christian, say again, “Return to your rest, O my soul, for the Lord has dealt bountifully with me. Though my helps fail me, though friends fail me, and though my flesh and my heart fail me, God is the strength of my heart and my Portion forever. This is my rest, and here I will dwell forever.”

And to these three I will add a fourth thing wherein fruition stands:

Making use of our portion. He enjoys what he has who uses what he has. We then enjoy our portion when we have a power and heart to make use of it on all occasions. God is saying, “I am yours, soul, come and make use of Me as you will; you may do so freely. I have nothing but what is for you. You may freely come to My store, and the more often you come the more welcome you are.” You do not have God lying by you for no purpose. Do not let your God be as others’ gods are, serving only as a show. Do not have a God in name only, and, since He allows you to do so, having such a Friend,

use Him daily. Did not Paul say, "My God shall supply all your wants"? Never want while you have such a God; never fear or faint while you have such a God. Go to your treasure and take whatever you need. There is bread, clothes, health, life, and all that you need. O Christian, learn the divine skill of making God all things: make bread of your God, water, health, friends, and ease. He can supply you with all these, or, which is better, He can be, instead of all these, your food, your clothing, your friend, and your life to you. All this He has said to you in this one phrase: "I am your God."

And hereupon you may say, "I have no husband, and yet I am no widow; my Maker is my husband. I have no father or friend, and yet I am neither fatherless or friendless; my God is both my father and my friend. I have no child, but is He not better to me than ten children? I have no house, but yet I have a home. I have made the Most High my habitation. I am left alone, but I am not alone; my God is good company for me. With Him I can walk, with Him I can take sweet counsel and find sweet repose. At my lying down, at my rising up, while I am in the house, as I walk by the way, my God is ever with me. With Him I travel, I dwell, I lodge, I live, and shall live forever."

Live up to your privilege. Live according to your rank and quality, according to the riches laid up for you in God. The rich men of this world live like rich men: they sort themselves with persons of their own quality, attend the courts of princes, and are employed about the palace. You may read their estates in their whole way of life; they wear them on their backs and spread their tables with them. They live sumptuously and fare delicately.

Christians, do not feed on ashes or husks; you have better meat. You have milk and honey, marrow and fatness; you have the hidden manna, the bread that comes down from heaven, and you have the water of life. You have blessed privileges, precious promises, lively hopes, living comforts, glorious joys, the fountain of life to feed your souls upon. Come eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O my beloved. Outfare the rich man in Luke 16, who fared deliciously every day. You have enough to maintain it, so let every day be a glad day, a feastday with you.

Let your clothing be according to your feeding. Be clothed with the sun. Put on the Lord Jesus. The King's daughter is, and so let all the King's sons be, all glorious within; let their clothing be of wrought gold. Be clothed with humility; put on love, bowels of compassion, gentleness, and meekness; put on the garments of salvation.

Let your company and conduct be according to your clothing. Live among the excellent, among the generation of the just. Get yourself up to the "general assembly and church of the firstborn, to that innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect" (Hebrews 12:23). Live in the courts of the great King; behold His face; wait at His throne; bear His name; show forth His virtues; set forth His praises; advance His honor, and uphold His interest. Let vile persons and vile ways be condemned in your eyes; be of more raised spirits than to be companions with them. Learn hence a holy elevation of spirit. Do not regard their societies, nor their scorns, flatteries, or frowns. Do not rejoice with their joys; do not fear their fear; do not care for their care; do not feed on their dainties.

Get yourself up from among them, to your country, to your city, where no unclean thing can enter or annoy. Live by faith in the power of the Spirit, in the beauty of holiness, in the hope of the gospel, in the joy of your God, in the magnificence—and yet the humility—of the children of the great King.

3. Our Sun. God will reveal and make manifest to you the riches and glory of your Portion. He has granted you Himself as your Portion, and He will reveal and make manifest to you what a Portion He is. He will make manifest both the blessedness they shall enjoy in Him, and the way to it, as well as the dangers that lie in the way. “The Lord God is a sun” (Psalm 84:11). The sun is the light of the world: it reveals itself and all things besides. We cannot see the glory of the sun but by its own light; the moon, the stars, the firmament, and all this lower world, would all disappear if the sun withdrew its light. Beauty and deformity, safety and danger, the right way and the wrong way, are all brought to view by the light of the sun. The sunlight makes it day; night is spread all over the world when the sun has set. God is glorious, but who would ever be the wiser if this glory did not shine? “In Thy light we see light” (Psalm 36:9). Why is the glorious God apprehended, understood, and admired by so few among the sons of men? Why, it is because He is out of their sight. The sun has not risen upon them, nor does it shine into them. They have moonlight or starlight, some dimmer reflections of this glory coming secondhand from the creatures, but they do not see the sun.

What is the reason that truth and falsehood, good and evil, substances and shadows, things perishing and things permanent, are no better distinguished? What is

the reason that men are so mistaken and misguided in their judgments, in their choices, and in their ways? Why are they at such a loss, such wanderers from their own bliss? What is the reason that men's own sparks, the light of their own fires, their candlelight or torchlight, their fleshly imaginations, their carnal prosperity, their pleasures, their ease, their earthly glory, and their carnal joys that hence flash up to them are so adored and admired by them. Oh, they do not see the sun! God is out of sight, and from thence come all their dotages and foolish mistakes and miscarriages.

God will be a sun to His saints, their sun. "Thy sun shall no more go down" (Isaiah 60:20). We shall have both the propriety and the comfort of this glorious sun. He will show us His face. He will cause His glory to appear. He will lead us to Himself by His own beams. He will show us our end and the means to get there, the goal and the way to it. He will show us the good part and the right path. Good and evil, duties and sins, realities and delusions, helps and hindrances, dangers and advantages, our snares and our succors, will all be revealed to us by the light of the Lord.

Hearken, you poor and dark soul who has chosen, but you know not what; who is going, but you know not where; who are wandering and stumbling on, but you care not how; who complains that you cannot see, you cannot value, you cannot be affected with all the glory and joy of the invisible world; who finds your husks and your trash to be a greater pleasure to you than all the riches of immortality; who would fain mind and choose and love and relish and seek God and things above, but you cannot—you see so little of the beauty of them that they do not entice your heart after them. And, when you

are seeking, you are at a loss and in the dark as to the way that you should take. Hearken, soul, your God calls to you: "Come unto Me, look unto Me, and I will be your sun. I will show you all that glory, and the right way that will bring you to it. I promise you I will. Trust Me, for I will be a light unto you."

4. Our Shield. "The Lord God is a sun and a shield" (Psalm 84:11). The gods of the earth are called "the shields of the earth" in Psalm 47:9, much more the God of glory. Faith is called a shield in Ephesians 6:16 ("Above all taking the shield of faith"). It means that God is a shield. Faith is to the soul whatever God is. This is the grace that entitles the soul to God, and applies God to the soul. "Fear not, Abraham, I am thy shield" (Genesis 15:1). What is promised to the father of the faithful stands sure to all the seed (Romans 4:16).

The state of Christians in this life is a militant state, a state full of hardships and hazards, by reason whereof as richly as they are provided for they are subject to fears of being undone and spoiled of all. They are in fears about eternal things; they have spiritual adversaries who lie in wait for their souls, who fight against their souls, who are tempting them and enticing them from their God, who watch their opportunities to steal away their God by stealing their hearts away from Him. And such dangerous attempts of this kind they meet with that they are often in great doubt as to what the issue may be.

Christians are in fears about temporal things. Their names are shot at, their liberties are invaded, their estates and all the comforts of their lives are in danger. Today they are a praise, tomorrow they are a scorn; today they are full and abound, but tomorrow they may

have nothing left. They die daily and are killed all the day long. But whatever their dangers and their fears are, here is sufficient provision made against all: God is their Shield.

Christian, you have enough, and all that you have is in safety. You are compassed about with a Shield, secured on all hands; there is no coming at you. Whatever assaults are made, your God is a wall of partition between you and harm. They are not shields of brass and iron with which you are furnished; the strong God is your defense. Why do you doubt, O ye of little faith? Are you a Christian, and yet afraid? Are you shifting for yourself? Are you taking care for the asses, oxen, and sheep? Are you vexing and loading and losing yourself in your cares and fears from day to day? Where is your God, man? Does not God take care for oxen and asses and all that you have?

But, oh, what do you mean by this, shifting yourself from danger by shrinking back from your God, securing yourself from affliction by taking sanctuary in iniquity! What are you doing but throwing away your Shield to save yourself from harm, making a breach in your wall to keep yourself safe! "Walk before Me, and be thou perfect" (Genesis 17:1). It is as if He were saying, "Follow Me; stick to Me." And then "Fear not, Abraham, I am thy shield" (Genesis 15:1). This is the first and great promise of the covenant: "I am thy God." And the second is like it.