

THE
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BRIDGE'S
RIGHTIOUS MAN'S
HABITATION.
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BS 1450.91 .B74 1835
Bridge, William, 1600?-1677
The righteous man's
habitation in the time of



THE
RIGHTEOUS MAN'S
HABITATION,
&c.

THE
RIGHTEOUS MAN'S
HABITATION

IN THE TIME OF
PLAGUE AND PESTILENCE;

BEING

A BRIEF EXPOSITION OF THE 91ST. PSALM.

BY WILLIAM BRIDGE,

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at Yarmouth.

“There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any
plague come nigh thy dwelling.” *Psalm*, xci. 10.

FIRST PRINTED IN THE YEAR 1665.

DERBY:

THOMAS RICHARDSON;

SIMPKIN AND MARSHALL, LONDON.

1835.

THE
RIGHTEOUS MAN'S
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&c.

PSALM xci.

1. HE that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

2. I will say of the Lord, he is my refuge, and my fortress: my God, in him will I trust.

3. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler: and from the noisome pestilence.

4. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.

5. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night: nor for the arrow that flieth by day:

6. Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness: nor for the destruction that wasteth at noon-day.

7. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand: but it shall not come nigh thee.

8. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold, and see the reward of the wicked.

9. Because thou hast made the Lord which is my refuge, even the Most High, thy habitation.

10. There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.

11. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.

12. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.

13. Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.

14. Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name.

15. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honour him.

16. With long life will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation.

THIS Psalm (it is thought) was made upon the occasion of the plague and pestilence that was in David's time; (so Molerus;) wherein you have the best antidote against the plague and pestilence. The whole psalm is nothing else but a great promise of special protection for those that trust in the Lord in the time of the plague: wherein three or four things are most especially considerable, *the evil, danger, and misery of the plague or pestilence;* protection and deliverance promised in the time thereof; the persons upon whom the promise is entailed; the way, mode, means and manner, how God will deliver and protect in the time of a plague. As for the evil, danger, and misery of the plague or pestilence, you have it in many terms expressed in several

verses. In the third verse it is called the snare of the fowler; "he will deliver thee from the snare of the fowler;" it is called the snare of the fowler, because it takes men before they are aware; the word and, that follows, should not be in the line, so the next words do explain it; "He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler: from the noisome pestilence;" then it is called the noisome pestilence. In the Hebrew it is called the pestilence of woes or calamity, that is, most calamitous pestilence, that disease or sickness, that is accompanied with the most calamity. In the fifth verse it is called "the terror by night," and, the "arrow that flieth by day:" for with this arrow God doth kill and hit men at a distance, a great way off, when they think to fly away and be

at rest. It is said in the sixth verse, that it "walketh in darkness;" and it is called "destruction that wasteth at noon-day," in regard of the spreading and infective nature of it. At the thirteenth verse it is compared unto "the lion and adder, the young lion and the dragon," for the destructive and the devouring nature of it, which nothing can stand before.

Secondly, as for the protection promised in the time thereof, you have that in the general at the first verse, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty:" more particularly at the third verse, "Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler: from the noisome pestilence, he shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust.

His truth shall be thy shield and buckler," at the fourth verse. At the fifth and sixth verses again, "Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night: nor for the arrow that flieth by day: nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noon-day." And again, "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand: (in the seventh verse) but it shall not come nigh thee." In the tenth verse, "No evil shall befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways." And at the last verse, "With long life will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation."

As for the persons whom this promise of protection is entailed upon,

they are such as "do trust in the Lord. He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High; that say of the Lord, he is my refuge and my fortress: my God, in him I will trust," verse 2. At the ninth verse, "Because thou hast made the Lord which is my refuge, even the Most High, thy habitation, there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day," at the fifth verse. And as for the means and way, and mode how God will deliver in the time of the plague, he will do it by his angels; "There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For we shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.

They shall bear thee up in their hands," &c.

From all which, then, I take up this doctrine or observation: though the danger, evil, and misery of the pestilence be exceeding great, yet God will in an especial manner protect and deliver those that do trust in him in the time of a plague.

For the clearing and prosecution whereof, first of all, I shall a little labour to show you, that the evil, misery, and danger of a plague is exceedingly great. 2dly, That yet the Lord will protect and deliver those that do trust in him. 3dly, What that faith is, and what that trust is, that God hath promised this protection to in the time of a plague. 4thly, I would answer to some objections, questions, or cases of conscience. Then, 5thly, show how and

by what means God will protect and deliver in the time of a plague. Then call upon you and myself, to do our duty in this day.

As for the first, I shall not be long in it. The misery and danger of the plague is sufficiently known. It is called the plague above all other diseases, as if it were the plague of plagues.

The several and particular judgments and evils that fell upon Pharaoh, they were called plagues, they were all plagues; but now the pestilence carries the name of *the* plague, as if that, of all other diseases, were the plague of plagues.

It is, first of all, a most dreadful and terrible disease: it is here called in this Psalm, "the terror by night," fifth verse, "thou shalt not be afraid by the terror by night." Terror by

night; why, the night itself is a time of fear and terror: darkness brings fear; but the plague is the night of night, and the King of Terrors. How do men quake and tremble, and fly away at the noise of this, the report of this! When God appeared in his greatness, majesty, and glory, gave a terrible appearance of himself; it is said in the third of Habakkuk, that the pestilence went before him, in the third verse, "God came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise, and his brightness was as the light. He had horns coming out of his hand, and there was the hiding of his power." In the fifth verse, "Before him went the pestilence, and burning coals went forth at his feet." Before him went the pestilence, as

his officer and executioner. When the Lord doth set forth his terrible appearance, thus he sets it forth, "The pestilence went before him." Without all doubt it is that disease that is most dreadful and terrible. And, 2dly, as it is the most dreadful and terrible disease, so it is the most painful disease. The more suddenly any man is taken away in his strength, the more painful is his disease he dies of: a man that is spent with sickness, he is easily blown out; but when a man in his full strength shall suddenly die, it costs him a great deal of pain. Thus it is, when the plague takes one away in his full strength in a little time, therefore it is a very painful disease, and as it is a very painful disease, so it is an uncomfortable disease; then all friends leave us, then a man or wo.

man sit and lie all alone, and is a stranger to the breath of his own relations. If a man be sick of a fever, it is some comfort that he can take a bed-staff and knock, and his servant comes up and helps him with a cordial. But if a man be sick of the plague, then he sits and lies all alone; it is the most uncomfortable disease; and as it is that disease that is most uncomfortable, so it is that disease that is most mortal, and therefore of all other diseases it is called death. In the sixth of the Revelation, we read of *the sword and famine*, in the former part of the chapter; but in the 8th verse, "And I looked, and behold a pale horse; and his name that sat on him was Death." The sword is spoken of plainly before, in the fourth verse, "And there went out another horse, that was red:

and power was given to him that sat thereon, to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword;" there is the sword: then at the sixth verse there is a famine, "I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, "A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny:" now at the eighth verse comes on the pestilence, and that is called death; not the sword, or famine, but the plague, is that which hath the name of death; because of all other diseases it is the most mortal; and as it is the most mortal disease, so it is the most unavoidable disease. It may be avoided through the goodness of God; but I speak comparatively, of all diseases it is the most unavoidable. And it is the disease that is the most emptying disease; it empties houses, and it

empties towns, and empties cities. God threatens to empty a nation, as a man empties a dish, and wipes it, and turns it upside down. So to a family it is the most emptying disease of all other. But I will not stay here; it is too manifest that this evil, misery, and danger of a plague is exceeding great.

But yet, in the second place, there are a generation whom God will protect and deliver in the day of a plague. It was always so in the most desolating judgments: when the flood came was Noah and his house spared; and when Sodom was destroyed, there was Lot and his house preserved and delivered. In the sixth chapter of Isaiah, ye read of a desolation that looks like a plague: "Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered (at the

eleventh verse) until the cities be wasted and without inhabitants, and the houses be without man, and the land be utterly desolate, and the Lord have removed men far away:" yet, says he, at the thirteenth verse, "There shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and shall be eaten as teyle tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them," &c. yet there is a generation whom the Lord will preserve and deliver in such a general desolation as this. But who are these? This Psalm tells us, "they are such as do trust in the Lord," those that trust in the Lord in the time of a plague.

But why is there such a promise of protection entailed upon those that trust in the Lord in the time of a plague? Why, first of all, God will be all that to us which we make him, and build upon him for: as in Psalm

xxx. 2, 3, "Be thou my rock, for thou art my rock, be thou my defence, for thou art my fortress:" in the latter end of the second verse, "Be thou my strong rock, for an house of defence to save me, for thou art my rock and my fortress." Lord, be that unto me, which I build upon thee for. Thou art my rock, therefore be my rock: this is his argument. Now, by faith and trusting in the Lord, we do make God our protector, and therefore he will be a protector to those that do trust unto him in time of a plague.

2dly. Those that honour providence, shall be kept by providence. Jacob, what a wonderful great estate he attained unto; he presented Esau with a present fit for a king to give. How came he by this great estate? There was a controversy betwixt La-

ban and him, and he puts the business upon providence, and providence made him rich: those that honour providence; shall be kept by providence. Faith and trusting in God in the time of a plague, honour providence; therefore they that trust in God in such a day shall be kept.

3dly. Thereby God is engaged to help and deliver. In Psalm, xxxvii. last verse, "The Lord shall help them and deliver them, he shall save them because they trust in him; because they trust in him, God is engaged to help and deliver, if men trust in him. So in Isaiah, xxvi. 3, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee." Our very trusting in the Lord for deliverance and protection, doth engage God to deliver and protect.

MAN'S HABITATION.

4thly. When did God do ever an great thing, but it was put upon faith: ye read of great victories in the time of the Old Testament, and these were put upon faith: ye read of great cures in the time of the New Testament, and those were put upon faith. When did God do any great thing, but it was put upon faith? Now to be preserved and protected in the time of a plague, when thousands fall on the right hand and on our left, it is a great matter, next unto a miracle; therefore it must be put upon faith.

Again: God will honour those persons, and those graces most, that honour him most: of all graces faith honours God most, therefore God will honour that most; no wonder, then, that this protection is put upon faith and trusting in the Lord.

One thing more : there lies a blessing in course for all those that put themselves under the wing of the Lord in trusting in him. In the second of Ruth, verse 12, says Boaz to Ruth, "The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust;" under whose wings thou hast put thyself. It is faith, and faith only, that puts us under the wings of God. Psalm, lvii. at the first verse, "Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me, for my soul trusteth in thee; yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast:" it is faith that doth put a man under the wing of God. In Psalm, xxxvi. 7, "How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God! therefore the children of men

put their trust under the shadow of thy wings." Faith, of all other graces, puts a man under the shadow of God's wing, and there lies a blessing in course (I say) for all those that put themselves under God's wing; therefore no wonder that this great promise of protection and deliverance in the time of a plague is entailed upon trusting in God.

Well, but then 3dly, what faith is this, what trust is that which God hath promised protection and deliverance to in the time of a plague? what act of faith is it? what faith is it? I answer, first, there is a faith of persuasion, called faith, whereby men are persuaded and verily believe that they shall not die nor fall by the hand of the plague. This is well; but I do not find in the 91st Psalm, that this protection is entailed upon

this persuasion, neither do I find this faith here mentioned.

2dly. There is a faith of reliance, whereby a man doth rely upon God for salvation; this is a justifying faith, true justifying faith; this is true faith indeed: but I do not find in this Psalm, that this promise of protection and deliverance in the time of a plague is entailed upon this, nor that this is here mentioned.

But again, 3dly. There is a faith, I may call it a faith of recourse unto God, whereby a man doth betake himself unto God for shelter, for protection, as to his habitation: when other men do run, one this way, another that way, to their hiding-places: in the time of a plague, for a man then to betake himself to God as to his habitation, I think this is the faith that is here spoken of in this 91st

Psalm: for do but mark the words of the Psalm; at the first verse, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High," in the hiding-place of the Most High; as if he should say, When others run from the plague and pestilence, and run to the i hiding-places, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High," that betakes himself to God as his hiding-place and his habitation, he shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty, he shall be protected. And so at the ninth verse, "Because thou hast made the Lord which is my refuge, even the Most High thy habitation, then shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any
ague come nigh thy dwelling;" as if he should say thus, In time of a plague men are running and looking out for habitations and hiding-places; but because thou hast made the

Lord thy habitation, and hast recourse to him as thy habitation, “no evil shall befall thee, neither shall the plague come nigh thy dwelling:” and again, at the eleventh verse, it is said, “He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways,” the ways of thy calling; as if he should say, In the time of a plague men will be very apt to leave their station and calling, and so run away from the plague and pestilence; but (saith he) “He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways,” the ways of thy calling and place; that is, look when a man in the time of a plague shall conscientiously keep his station and place, and betake himself to God as his habitation: this is the faith that is here spoken of, and this is the faith that God hath promised protection to, here in this 91st Psalm.

But you will say then, Is it not lawful to fly in the time of persecution? Yes, without all doubt it is, so you carry God along with you for your habitation, so you make God your habitation still; a man may lawfully seek the preservation of his life and the life of his family.

But stay; the plague is called the hand of God; and can a man flee from the hand of God? Mark a little for answer: the hand of God is either mediate or immediate: suppose that the plague or pestilence were the immediate hand of God, and nothing of nature or infection in it: yet it is lawful to fly; it is lawful to go out of that place where the immediate hand of God rests. In the sixteenth of Numbers there was an immediate hand of God upon Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, for the earth opened her

mouth and swallowed them up; here was an immediate hand of God: yet the Lord speaks unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, in the twenty-first verse, "Separate yourselves from amongst this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment;" and at the twenty-fourth verse, "Speak unto the congregation saying, get ye up from about the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram; which was the immediate hand of God, and yet notwithstanding they were to go from among them that the hand of God fell upon, though it were an immediate hand. And in the following part of the chapter the same expression is used for the plague: in the forty-fourth verse, "They murmured and the Lord struck them with the plague." Well, the Lord spake unto Moses,

saying, in the forty-fifth verse, "Get you up from amongst this congregation, that I may consume them as in a moment:" the same that is said before, is said here concerning the plague. So that I say, although the plague were the immediate hand of God, and there were nothing of nature or infection in it, yet it were lawful to fly.

But, 2dly, the plague or pestilence is not so much the hand of God, as if there were no infection in it: for if there were no infection in it; if there were not something of nature in it, it could not be cured by remedies, nothing would do good; therefore it is not so the hand of God as if there were nothing of infection in it; but it is called the hand of God, because God's providence hath a special hand in the sending and ordering of it.

So now the famine may be called God's hand: God sends it; "I will call for a famine upon the land," says God: a famine is of God's sending, and therefore may I not fly from a famine? Abraham, when there was a famine in the land, went down to Abimelech: Isaac, when there was a famine in the land, went down: and Jacob, when there was a famine in the land, went down into Egypt. And is it lawful to fly in the time of a famine? and is it not lawful to fly in the time of a plague? Certainly, me one as well as the other.

But then you will say, if the Lord hath promised protection and deliverance to those that trust in him in the time of a plague, whether is it possible for a believer to die by a plague, seeing the whole Psalm is made to those; and promise such

protection to those that trust in the Lord, whether may a believer die of the plague? Without all doubt he may. Seventy thousand died in David's time: do you think there was not a good man among them? It is recorded of several good men, that they died of the plague; but you know what is said, *All things fall alike to good and bad*: if a good man may not die of the plague, how can all things fall alike to good and bad?

But how then is the promise fulfilled, if that a believer may die by the hand of a plague? Yes, very well; for possibly a believer may be out of his way, as good Josiah was, and died, though God promised him that he should die in peace. No disparagement to the promise, for he was out of his way; and this promise of protection in the time of a plague is

made to those believers that are in God's way: "He will give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all his ways;" therefore if a believer be out of God's way and die, it is no disparagement to this promise.

But, 2dly, you must know that this promise of protection and deliverance is not made to a believer as a believer, but as acting and exercising faith; for though a man be a believer, if he doubt, act, and exercise his faith, this promise will not reach him; therefore if a believer die not exercising faith and trusting in God, no disparagement to the promise.

Thirdly, you must know that this promise is not made to a believer, barely exercising and acting faith; but such an act of faith, and such an act of trust as you have heard of: therefore, though a believer die, and

die exercising some faith, yet this promise is fulfilled; for it is made to such an act of faith as you have heard of.

But then again, 4thly, you must know this promise is not made to a believer absolutely, but in opposition to the wicked: therefore it is said, the Lord having promised this to a believer, "that no evil should befall him, though a thousand should fall at his side, and ten thousand at his right hand;" at the eighth verse it is said, (so Montanus, rather than *only but*) "with thine eyes shalt thou behold, and see the reward of the wicked:" as if he should say, though this or that particular believer die of the plague; believers shall outlive the wicked and be last upon the ground, and they shall see the reward of the wicked; they shall see this judgment sweep away the ungodly.

But again, further, if I should interpret this as Austin doth in the first of John, concerning Christ, where it is said "he enlightens every one that comes into the world," that is, (says Austin) all that are enlightened, are enlightened by him. As you say of a schoolmaster in a town, this schoolmaster teaches all the boys in the town; not that he teaches every particular boy in the town, but that all that are taught, are taught by him. So says he, Christ enlightens every one that comes into the world, that is, all that are enlightened, are enlightened by him. So here the Lord doth promise protection and deliverance to all those that do believe in the time of a plague; that is, all that have protection and deliverance (in the time of the plague) have it from him.

But to end this, I do think that this 91st Psalm doth hold forth a promise of special protection in the time of a plague, for believers; the scope of it is not, that every particular believer shall not die; but the drift and scope of the Psalm is, to hold forth *a speciality of protection* for believers in the time of a plague. For as the time of a plague is a time of special danger; so God hath given out a special promise, and there shall be a speciality of protection for his people in the time of this danger; and that is the meaning of this place.

Well, but how, and by what means will God protect and deliver those that trust in him in the time of a plague?

For that I shall say only thus much; He will do it by the ministra-

tion of angels: specially by the ministration of angels: when angels go forth to destroy, then angels must go forth to deliver, seal, and secure; as in the seventh of the Revelation, and first verse, "After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree: And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God; and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was given to hurt the earth, and the sea, saying, Hurt not," &c. When angels go forth to hurt, then angels must go forth to seal, and save, and protect: now in the time of a plague, angels go forth to destroy; therefore saith the Lord here, "I will give my an-

gels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways, they shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against the stone." Have I given my angels commission to destroy? I have given my angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways. Thus now men shall be preserved and delivered in the time of a plague, by the ministry of angels. **And so you have the words opened.**

Now to bring things home to ourselves by way of application. Here we may see what is our work, our great work this day. The day we are fallen into is a dark day; a day of the plague and the pestilence: it is good for us to inquire what our work is; it is good at all times, but now especially, to inquire what our work is. Oh! what is my work this day? Now the work of this day.

our work is to trust in the Lord; this is the work that protection and deliverance in the time of a plague is entailed upon. Who is there that does not desire to be protected and delivered from this plague? Oh, that I and my family may be preserved! behold here your antidote to keep you from the plague? "Trust in the Lord, as ever you and your family may be protected now in this evil day. Trust in the Lord, and call upon yours to trust in the Lord!"

But what shall we do that we may trust in the Lord in this day of the plague? First of all, you must repent of your own sins, and be sorrowful for the sins of others, and of the times wherein you live. When the plague came in David's time, you know what David did, he repented; "Lord," says he, "I have done fool-

ishly ; as for these sheep, what have they done ? It is I, Lord, it is I." So let every one do ; this God expects in the time of a plague. In the 4th chapter of Amos, says the Lord there, in the 10th verse, " I have sent among you the pestilence after the manner of Egypt : your young men have I slain with the sword ; and have taken away your horses, and I have made the stink of your camps to come up unto your nostrils ; yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord." When God sends the pestilence, then he expects that men and women should return unto him ; repent and return unto him, in the 9th of Ezekiel ; those that sigh and mourn for the abominations, they are marked, when men go into the city with their destroying weapons. Those that sigh and mourn for the evil of

: he times, they are the marked men. They are not marked for deliverance, that do abstain from sin; a man may be given to drunkenness, and may leave his drunkenness, but that will not bring him under the mark: men are not brought under the mark for deliverance, that do repent of their own sin; but the mark is set upon those that do mourn for other men's sins: but now I put both together; if you trust in the Lord in this evil day, in the time of a plague, repent for your own sins, and mourn for the sins of others. For how can I trust in the Lord for protection, if I do not repent of my sins? If I live in any sin, and do not turn from all my evil ways, how can I trust in the Lord? I cannot do it; therefore repent and be sorrowful for your own sins, and for the sins of others.

Secondly, get assurance of your interest in Christ; Christ is our great High Priest that makes the atonement, as Aaron did in the time of the plague; it is by the ministry of angels especially that we are kept in the time of a plague; now says our Saviour Christ to Nathaniel, "Because I saw thee under the fig-tree believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these. And he saith unto him, Verily, verily I say unto you, hereafter ye shall see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the son of man." The angels ascend and descend upon Christ, all the ministry of angels is upon Christ's account, and you are preserved and protected in the time of a plague by the ministration of angels: what then? get an interest in Christ, and if you doubt of your

interest, get assurance, do not let that flit now ; now get an interest in Christ, now get assurance.

Thirdly, go to God to make good this promise ; in this 91st Psalm, if you do but mind it, the Lord doth not only promise protection and deliverance from the plague to those that trust in him, but he promises grace to trust in him ; he promises protection upon condition that you trust in him, and he promises you grace also to trust in him : (saith he) at the 5th verse, Art thou afraid, and canst not trust in me ! “Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night nor for the arrow that flieth by day ;” at the fourth verse, “He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust : Thou shalt nor be afraid,” &c. thou shalt be secure, and I will keep thee from fear.

The Lord that hath promised protection in the time of a plague, hath also promised freedom from fear, and grace to trust in him ; therefore go to God for this grace, go to him to make good this promise.

Then again, fourthly, consider what motives ye have to trust in God in the time of a plague ; you will say, What arguments or motives have we in the consideration whereof we may be moved to trust in God in a time of a plague ? there are many ; give me leave a little, that we may help one another's faith in this needful day.

First of all, though the destroyer be abroad, yet there is a man with his pen and ink-horn by his side also abroad, and that man is your friend, it is Christ : as you read in the 9th of Ezekiel, there goes a man out with

a pen and ink-horn by his side, to mark those that sigh, and mourn, and cry for the abominations that are done. Now to this man Christ is a friend, and therefore why should not you believe? why should you not trust in the Lord?

But, 2dly, if that the Lord do know those that do trust in him in the time of a plague, why should you not trust in him? In the first chapter of Nahum you find very great expressions of God's anger and indignation; it is said, at the second verse, "God is jealous and the Lord revengeth, the Lord revengeth and is furious; the Lord will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies," &c. At the fifth verse, "The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burnt at his presence, yea, the world and all

that dwell therein; who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him: what then? (in the 7th verse,) "The Lord is good, a strong-hold in the day of trouble, and he knoweth them that trust in him. The Lord when he is angry doth distinguish betwixt those that trust in him, and those that do not trust in him. If a man be angry and in fury, he strikes any that comes in his way, he does not know his friends from his enemies; but the Lord knows them that trust in him, though he be angry, and in fury, and in indignation, yet he knows them that trust in him; and therefore why should ye not trust in the Lord in the day of a plague?"

3dly, If that a plague and pestilence do make room for God's people, why should ye not trust in the Lord in the time of a plague? what, think you, should be the meaning of that which we read in the 3rd of Habakkuk? "Before him went the pestilence, and burning coals went forth at his feet." When was this? it was when God led his people into Canaan: "God came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran. (Selah.) His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise; before him went the pestilence, and burning coals went forth at his feet." He sent the pestilence among the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, to consume them and make way for his people. God can send a pestilence into a city, to make room for his people, and

to take off persecution. You see you have Scripture for it, "before him went the pestilence:" now I say, if God by a pestilence can, and doth, and will make room for his people, why should not ye, who are the people of God, trust in the Lord in the day of a plague?

4thly, If there be **mercy** with the Lord in the time of a plague, if God be ready to be entreated, and to receive atonement, and to show mercy unto his people, why then should not you trust in the Lord in the time of a plague? Now I pray look upon the story of David's time, and you may see how ready God was to show mercy in the day of a plague. First of all, upon that ground, God told David where the temple should be built, which he never told him before: but, 2dly, look into the story,

and you shall see what abatement there is; how God threatened and abates. There was threatened seven years' famine, and observe two abatements: 1 Chron. xxi. 12. God came to David, and said, Thus saith the Lord, choose thee either three years' famine. In the 2nd Samuel, 24, it is seven years' famine: in the 13th verse, "God came to David and told him, and said unto him, Shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land, or wilt thou flee three months before thine enemies?" Seven years of famine, says one place, three years of famine, says the other: Why? because God abates. Well, but there is a great abatement if you look upon the business of the plague. The Lord gave David his choice; "Shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land, or wilt thou fly three

months before thine enemies, or that there be three day's pestilence in thy land?" Well, at the fifteenth verse, 2 Sam. xxiv. 15, "So the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel, from the morning even to the time appointed." The time appointed, how long was that? What, three days? no, there was abatement; how doth that appear? "So the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel, from the morning even to the time appointed;" even to the evening sacrifice, for so it signifies. But how do you prove that it did not last three days? By two reasons, says Peter Martyr; one, because it is said, "The Lord repented him of the evil:" and another, because says he, at the sixteenth verse, "When the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the Lord repented him;" Why? if the three

days had been at an end, the angel would not have stretched out his hand to have destroyed Jerusalem: therefore the angel still putting forth his hand to destroy, shows that the three days were not at an end; so that there was an abatement. I speak it to show God's readiness to abate, and to show mercy in the time of a plague.

Thirdly, you may observe here in this story, that when the plague came to Jerusalem, which was the most populous place, there it stayed: at the 16th verse, "And when the angel stretched out his hand over Jerusalem to destroy it, the Lord repented him of the evil." When it came to the most populous place, where it was most likely to be infective, there it stayed: see the readiness of God to show mercy.

But, 4thly, you may observe, if you look into this story, that the Lord repented him, and gave command for the staying of the pestilence before David repented. I confess there is somewhat of his repentance before. But afterwards, "David said unto God (1 Chron. xxi. 17.) Is it not I that have commanded the people to be numbered, even I? it is I that have sinned and done evil indeed, let thine hand, I pray thee, O Lord, my God, be on me and on my father's house, but not on this people that they should be plagued." "David lift up his eyes (in the sixteenth verse) and saw the angel of the Lord stand between the earth and the heaven, having a drawn sword in his hand stretched out over against Jerusalem." And then follows that speech of David. But if you look before,

you shall find the Lord made an abatement before this speech of his, before this humiliation of his; the Lord showed mercy, and gave him his choice before, in the 2 Sam. xxiv. 16. "And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the Lord repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough, stay now thine hand; and the angel of the Lord was by the threshing floor of Araunath the Jebusite. And David spake unto the Lord when he saw the angel that smote the people, and said, Lo, I have said, and I have done wickedly; but these sheep what have they done? Let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me and against my father's house," at the 17th verse; but the Lord repented him, at the 16th verse; as if the Lord did pre-

vent David's repentance with his loving kindness, before his full repentance came out, the Lord gave commission to stay the plague; look well upon this story, and you may see how ready the Lord is to show mercy, and be entreated by his people in the time of a plague.

But, 5thly, if this promise in the ninety-first Psalm, which is nothing else but a promise in the time of a plague, if this promise be full, and certain, and solid, as it may obviate all our fears and objections; why then should we not trust in the Lord in the time of a plague? Now do but mark the Psalm, and you shall see the words are so said, as may obviate all your fears and objections.

Will you say, The destroying angels are now abroad, the arrows of the Almighty are now about us? says he,

“He will give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways; they shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.” Will you say, Aye, but hundreds fall on this side and on the other side, and thousands may quickly? then says he, “Yet it shall not come nigh thee: there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.” Ver. vii. 10.

Will you say, O, but this same disease of the plague, it is like a lion and an adder, and as a young lion and dragon; yet saith he, “Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder, and the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under thy feet,” in the thirteenth verse.

Will you say, O, but suppose the plague should come, all my friends

would leave me; I shall be left all alone, and what shall become of me then? why, says he, at the fifteenth verse, "He shall call upon me, and I will answer him, I will be with him in trouble," spoken in regard of the plague; I am of Molerus's mind, that the whole Psalm relates to the plague.

Will you say, O, but I cannot believe this; there is no likelihood that I should escape in a general plague: mark what he says in the last verse: "With long life will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation;" it shall be my salvation; thou shalt not be saved by second causes, but it shall be my salvation: and in the third verse, saith he, "Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the Fowler, from the noisome pestilence;" do not doubt it, surely he shall de-

liver thee. The words of this Psalm are so said, as to take off, and to obviate all our objections and fears; therefore why should we not trust in the Lord in the time of a plague?

But you will say then, How shall this work of faith and trusting in the Lord be carried on? I shall say no more in it, but only two or three things from this Psalm. It must be carried on with love to God, knowledge of his name, and prayer. In the fourteenth verse, "Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him." As you must believe and trust in God, so you must set your love on God; and, says he, "I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him." Here are three things; love to God, knowledge of his name, and prayer;

your faith and trust in such a day must go along with these three: some say, they do believe and trust in God, but they do not set their love upon God; some say they love him, but do not know his name, that whereby God is distinguished and worshipped; some say they know God's name, but they do not pray. But now if you would carry on your faith and trust in the Lord as you ought to do, your trusting in the Lord must be carried on with love to God, knowledge of his name, and prayer.

2dly, Go on in your way, Christians, do not start out of your way; "He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways:" in all thy ways, the ways of thy calling: take heed you be not found out of your way, that the plague

does not find you out of your way, look that you do not start out of your way.

3dly, And so to end; go to God, and tell the Lord that you do trust in him, and make him your habitation; "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, (in the Hebrew) I will say to the Lord, My refuge, my fortress, my God, in him will I trust." It is not enough to trust in the Lord, but you must go to God and tell him, that you do trust in him, that you make him your habitation; say, Lord, I make thee my habitation, I trust in thee, thou art my refuge, and my fortress, in thee do I trust.

PSALM xci. 11, 12.

“For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.

“They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.”

“FOR he shall give his angels charge over thee,” &c. Having treated of this Psalm already, I shall not spend much time in showing you the coherence of these words with the former; you see they are brought in with a *for*; “For he shall give his angels charge over thee,” as giving an account and reason of that which was said before. In the former part of the Psalm, you read of the Saints’ protection in, and their deliverance from, the plague and pestilence in the day thereof. At the tenth verse, “There shall no evil befall

thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling." Why? "For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways," &c. So that here still you have the promise of protection in the time of the plague and pestilence; the means whereby God will protect and deliver. The condition of this promise in these words, "Keep thee in all thy ways." So that though the danger of the plague and pestilence be never so great, yet if we be found in our ways, God's angels under him shall be our protection. "He shall give his angels charge over thee," &c. In which words, you may read the special and singular care and providence of God over his people in the time of plague and pestilence, to be managed by the hands of angels. God will take special order with the

angels for the safety of his people in the time of the plague and pestilence.

For the clearing of which argument, three things will fall under our consideration. First, that God hath singular care and providence over his children. Secondly, That this care and providence is managed by the hands of angels. Thirdly, That this, and all this, is and shall be exerted and drawn out specially in the time of the plague and pestilence.

As for the first, it is so full and clear in the words, that I shall need go no further. He doth not say that God will provide for his people in the general, but there is a singular and special care and providence that God hath for his people. For if you mind the words: first, he says, "He wil

give his angels charge over thee.' Charge; charge is a strict command, more than a bare command, as when you would have a servant do a business certainly and fully, you lay a charge upon him, I charge you that you do not neglect that business; you do not barely tell him what he should do, prescribe him his work, but you charge him to do it. So says the Lord unto the angels, My servants or children, now they are in the plague and pestilence, O my angels, I charge you, stir not from their houses, I charge you stir not from such an one's bed-side; it is a charge, "He shall give his angels charge."

2dly, He doth not only, and will not only charge his angel, but his angels; not one angel charged with the safety of his people, but many angels, for their better guard and se-

curity, "He shall give his angels charge."

And, 3dly, "He will give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee;" to keep thee; charge over thee, and to keep thee not only over the whole Church of God, but over every particular member of the Church of God; "He will give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee:" this is his marvellous care.

Well! but besides this, "He will give his angels charge to keep thee in all thy ways;" not in some of thy ways, but in all thy ways. As God's providence is particular in regard of our persons, so it is universal in regard of our ways. "He will give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee," not in some, but "in all thy ways."

But is this all? No; "They shall bear thee up in their hands," as every

servant desires and loves to take up the young heir, or the young master into his arms, so the angels. It is a great matter, that the Lord promiseth to pitch his tents. "And the angels of the Lord shall pitch their tents round about them that fear him:" but here is more; the angels shall not only pitch their tents, be their guard, but their nurses, to bear them up in their hands: but why? "That thou dash not thy foot against a stone." When children begin to go, they are very apt to fall, and get many a knock; to stumble at every little stone. Now there are many stones of stumbling that are in our way, and we are very apt to fall and miscarry; but such is the goodness of God, the providence of God, the goodness of his providence, that as he hath provided his angels to be

our guard, in opposition to all our foreign enemies; so he hath provided his angels to be our nurses, in opposition to all our weaknesses and infirmities, that we get no hurt, that we miscarry not in the least, "That we dash not our foot against a stone." Oh! how tender is the Lord of his! In other Scriptures you know the Lord is said to keep his people as the apple of his eye: what is a man more tender of than the apple of his eye? and when doth the Lord keep his people as the apple of his eye, but when they are lowest, and in the worst condition? In the xxxii. of Deuteronomy, ver. 10, "He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness: he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. When they came out of Egypt, and when

dus, and you shall see there how the Lord, by Moses, tells the people he would send an angel before them : “ I will send an angel before thee, and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite ; unto a land flowing with milk and honey : for I will not go up in the midst of thee, for thou art a stiff-necked people : lest I consume thee in the way : ” what then ? “ and when the people heard these evil tidings, they mourned, and no man did put on him his ornaments, ” when they heard these evil tidings ; what, was this evil tidings, that their enemies should all be driven out before them, and that God would honour them with an angel to go before them ? yes, they called this evil tidings, because they had not the Lord himself,

to go before them. So that the bare presence of angels without the Lord himself, could not satisfy a gracious soul; still, therefore, God himself is our great protector: and therefore the angels are said to be sent forth; are they not all ministering spirits sent forth? and who is it that doth send them forth? he whose they are; whose are they? they are called in the first of the Hebrews, "the angels of God;" and the text says they are his angels, His: indeed, in the eighteenth of Matthew, they are called the saints' angels; "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones, (10th verse) for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels," &c. their angels, and yet His angels; theirs in regard of profit, for they are sent forth for the good of the elect: but His in regard of autho-

rity, they are his servants, his ministers. So that I say still, though the angels have the management of this protection, yet God is the protector of his people: but yet I say, though God be our great protector, and God doth not quit his hands of this protection; yet he hath betruſted the protection of the ſaints very much in the hands of the angels; and therefore they are called cherubims; and wherefore are they called cherubims? Because they do hide and protect. Upon this account the King of Syrus is called a cherub, in that place of Ezekiel, because of his hiding and protecting the people that were under him. And the angels have wings, not only for their ſwiftness, but for protection; the wing being for protection, as well as to fly with. So that I say, though God be the great

protector of his people, yet that protection lies much on the hands of angels.

But what need God make use of angels to protect his people? he is able to do it alone; and is it not for God's dishonour to make use of them for the protection of his people? No, it is for the honour of God; for the more honourable the servants are the instruments are that a king or prince doth use for the protecting of his people, the more honourable is that king or prince. Now the angels they are honourable creatures; frequently they are called gods: "thou hast made him a little lower than the angels." In the Hebrew it is "a little lower than the gods, worship him all ye gods, (in the Hebrew) all ye angels. Well! but why are the angels called into this protection,

into this nursery, into this ministry ; God hath several creatures that he can use to protect and safe-guard his people ; why are the angels in a special manner called into this work of protection of the saints ?

They are the fittest people in the world for this employment ; fittest in regard of themselves, fittest in regard of the saints. They are fittest in regard of themselves ; for, first, they are an exceeding strong and potent people : who more fit to look to, and care for the concernments of the saints and people of God, than those that are strong and potent ? It is said of the angels in the 103rd Psalm, that they excel in strength ; “ Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength,” ver. 20. They are called powers in the host of God, they are the chariots and the horsemen, in

Psalm, lxxviii. 17, "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels;" thousands of angels: they are the chariots and horsemen in the host of God: other foot-companies he hath, but his chariots and horsemen, they are the angels. One angel (you know,) destroyed a hundred and fourscore thousand of the host of Assyria in a night; as one constable will scare away twenty thieves, so one good angel, invested with God's authority, is able to drive away a thousand evil angels, devils: they are an exceeding strong and potent people.

2dly, As they are an exceeding strong and potent people; so they are a very knowing, and a wise people: and who so fit to manage the affairs and concerns of the saints, and people of God, and to protect

and defend them as a knowing and understanding people? Such are the angels: the devils indeed, they are called knowing; but the angels, good angels, they are called intelligencers; you know what Joab said to David; "Thou art for wisdom as an angel of God;" says our Saviour, "No man knoweth that day and time, no not the angels in heaven;" as if the angels in heaven knew every secret, and were acquainted with every hidden thing: they are an exceeding knowing people, very prudent, and very wise.

3dly, As they are an exceeding knowing, and wise people, so they are also exceeding active and expeditious, quick in dispatches, who more fit to protect and defend the saints and people of God, than those that are active, expedite, and quick

in their dispatches? such are the angels. In the first of Ezekiel ye read that every one had four wings; why? because of their great activity and expedition, and the quick dispatch they make in all their affairs.

Again; as they are an active and expeditious people, so they are a people very faithful both to God and man; in the 103rd Psalm, they are ready to do God's will, and not only ready to fulfil God's will, but they do it; "Bless the Lord, all ye his angels that excel in strength, (ver. 20,) that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. Bless ye the Lord, all ye his hosts, ye ministers of his that do his pleasure:" they are very faithful; and who so fit to do this work, to attend and look to the concernments

of the saints and people of God, as those that are faithful.

5thly, As they are an exceeding faithful people, so they are a people that are very loving to the saints and children of God, very loving; otherwise they were not fit to be their nurses: what is a nurse without love? they are loving to the saints. "Do it not, (said the angel unto John) I am thy fellow servant;" do not give divine worship to me, I am thy fellow-servant; fellow-servants are loving to one another; they are fellow-servants with the saints. Are the saints and people of God members of Christ, and is Christ their head? so is Christ the Lord of angels; he is the Lord of angels, and they follow him. In Zachary, i. 8, "I saw by night, and behold a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among the myr-

the trees that were in the bottom ;” these myrtle trees in the bottom, are saints in a low condition ; “And behold a man riding upon a red horse,” this is Christ ; “and he stood among the myrtle trees that were in the bottom ; and behind him there were red horses speckled, and white ;” behind him ; mark who are these red horses, speckled and white, (in the ninth verse,) “Then said I, Oh my Lord, what are these ? and the angel that talked with me, said unto me, I will show thee what these be, and the man that stood among the myrtle trees answered and said, “these are they, whom the Lord hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth.” These are the angels that stand behind Christ, that are the followers of Christ ; they are his followers : the more union there is betwixt persons, the more they love ; and as the union

is, such is the love. If there be a natural union betwixt persons, their love will be natural; if their union be civil, political, their love will be political, civil; if the union be spiritual, ecclesiastical, the love is spiritual, ecclesiastical, more than natural. Now the union that is betwixt the angels and the saints, it is a church union. "Ye are come," says the apostle in Heb. xii. 22, "unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born:" so that they are of the same church, the general assembly and church of the first-born, and therefore they must needs be an exceeding loving people to the saints and people of God, and therefore a people fit for this employment, of all other the fittest for this em-

ployment, to be employed under God for the protection of the saints, fittest in regard of themselves.

But then again, 2dly, Fittest they are for this employment in regard of the saints; for who more fit to be employed in this protection under God, the protection of the saints, than those that are in some respect above the saints, and in some respect beneath them: if a nurse be above the child, she may despise it; if the child be altogether above the nurse, the nurse cannot rule it. Now the angels they are in some respect beneath and in some respect above the saints; they are above the saints in regard of their nature, as you all know; but in some respects they are beneath the saints and below the saints: for the second person did not come into their nature, as he did into

the nature of the saints ; he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham : and in that respect the saints are above them ; and the saints are clothed with the righteousness of Christ, such a garment as never came upon the back of an angel, herein the saints are above the angels : and the saints and people of God, they are members of Christ, and therein above the angels ; Christ is the Lord of angels, but you don't read that the angels are the members of Christ. So that I say, in some respect the angels are beneath the saints, and in some respect above them ; and so the more fit for this employment. Ye see how it is with a mean man that sits at dinner at a nobleman's table ; he sits down at the table with the nobleman, and the

servants of the nobleman, they attend upon him ; may be the servants are better men than he, but because he sits down at the nobleman's table, these servants attend upon him, as upon their master. Now the saints and people of God are members of Christ, they have communion with Christ, and sit down at his table : and therefore his followers the angels, they attend upon the saints and people of God : and thus now ye see why the angels are in a special manner called to this work of protection of the saints and people of God.

Well, but then, 3dly, Why are the angels called to this work of protection of the saints, especially in the time of plague and pestilence ? why doth the Lord give a special charge to his angels to have a special care of his people in the time of the

plague and pestilence, why at that time especially?

First of all, that time is a time of the greatest danger; when should the nurse look unto the child, if not in the greatest danger? now in the time of the greatest danger, then come the angels to the succour of God's people. In the 32nd chapter of Genesis, we read of the angels meeting of Jacob, (at the first verse) "Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him; and when Jacob saw them, he said, 'This is God's host;" they met him then; why then? he had a vision when he went out from his country, a promise in the way of a vision, the angels ascending and descending, and now he had the promise accomplished upon his return; why then? then he was in the greatest danger, he was betwixt

Laban and Esau; and though he had passed the pikes of Laban, yet now he was to meet an old provoked enemy, a wicked man, Esau; inso-much that he was grievously afraid, and he prayed, "Lord, deliver me from the hand of my brother;" well, and what then? then comes the angels; then comes this great danger, and then come the angels, "and he called the name of the place Mahanaim;" it is the same expression that is used in the sixth chapter of Canticles, concerning the Jews returning unto their own country, at the thirteenth verse, "Return, return, oh Shulamite, return, return, that we may look upon thee:" what will ye see in the Shulamite? (in the Jews returning) as it were the company of Mahanaims, Mahanaims; two armies you read it, but it is the same

word: why? possibly to show that God will send a host of angels to guard the Jews into their country, as he sent a host of angels to guard their father Jacob into his country. But I bring this to show that when the saints and people of God are in greatest danger, then come the angels to succour them. Now the time of sickness and of the plague is a time of great danger.

2dly, Look when all visible means and helps fail, then is a fit time for invisible help to come in. Now the help of the angel is invisible, his hands are under his wings; you cannot see his help: when all visible means and helps fail, then comes God's invisible help, then come the angels, a fit time for the angels.

But, 3dly, Look when the destroying angel is abroad, then is a fit time for the protecting angel to step in,

and be at work. Now in the time of the plague and pestilence, the destroying angel is abroad; only here then this question doth arise, whether the destroying angel, and the protecting angel differ? whether they be divers, or the same? I shall resolve it in two or three positions.

First, although the same angel may destroy, and spare; as in David's time: yet the destroying angel, and the protecting angel seems to be divers; in the seventh of Revelation, four angels came out to hurt, and another angel came out to save: in the ninth of Ezekiel, six men came out with their slaughter-weapons in their hands, and another came out to mark.

The second position is this; as the destroying and protecting angel may seem to be divers, so God doth

sometimes employ an evil angel to afflict and destroy good men, and doth sometimes employ a good angel to afflict and destroy bad men; sometimes God doth employ a good angel to afflict and destroy wicked men, as in the case of Sodom, they were good angels that destroyed Sodom: sometimes on the other side, God doth employ evil angels to afflict (and shall I use the word destroy) good men: the devil wasted Job, and killed his children.

But, 3dly, Though the angels may be thus employed, the destroyer, and the protector; yet this is certain, that all protection of the saints falls into the hands and the lap of the good angels, "for he shall give his angels charge over thee;" his, why his? in distinction from the devils, and evil angels, that did not stay by

him, but left him in the time of their apostacy: and "they shall bear thee in their arms;" devils do not bear the saints in their arms, therefore the business of the saints' protection, this falls wholly upon the good angels to do; but look, I say, when the destroying angel is abroad, then is a fit time for the protecting angel to be abroad too. Now in the time of the plague and pestilence, the destroying angel is abroad; therefore then especially is the good angel to be at work for the protection of the saints.

4thly, The time of the plague, is a time when the saints and people of God may want outward provision, good people may be shut up and starved for want of victuals, in the time of the plague: now it is the work of the good angels to provide meat and victuals for the people of

God, sometimes. In 1 Kings, xix. 5, it is said of Elijah, that "as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat, and he looked, and behold there was a cake baked on the coals, and a cruise of water at his head; and he did eat and drink, and laid him down again. And the angel of the Lord came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for thee," &c.

5thly, The time of the plague and pestilence, as it is a time of want, want of provision; so it is a time when many of God's people are put to go for it, to fly for it, to run for it, to seek abroad for their houses and habitations, do not know which way to go; it is the work of a good angel to go before them, to order and

direct their way. In Genesis, xxiv. 7, says Abraham to his servant, "He shall send his angel before thee;" it is the work of a good angel to order and direct, and guide the people of God in their way.

Lastly, The time of the plague and pestilence is a time when people need physicians and surgeons, surgeons and physicians against their malady; a good angel can do this, and sometimes doth it: in John, v. 4. "For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool and troubled the water, whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had;" this is the work of an angel, to prepare a medicine; this is the work of an angel.

Aye, but you will say, all these

instances are extraordinary ; what is this to me in this time of the plague and sickness, what is this to me ? these are extraordinary things : does their ministry still continue, or no ?

Mark ; yes certainly : the Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge : and how God was the God of Jacob, and how his refuge, ye heard even now : in Hebrews, i. 7. it is said, “ And of the angel he saith, who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire ; who maketh,” in the present tense ; as if it were always doing, not “ who hath made,” but “ who maketh ; who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire ;” it is the present tense, it is continually doing ; and if you look into the Old Testament, and compare the cherubims that were in the tabernacle, with the che-

rubims that were in the temple, you shall find that the cherubims that were in the tabernacle were but two, and the cherubims that were in the temple were four; why? but to show that their protection shall rather be enlarged than lessened; in the first chapter of John, says our Saviour Christ there to Nathaniel, (last verse), "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that hereafter ye shall see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man; hereafter," this is a Gospel truth, and the more you know and see the mystery of the Gospel revealed, the more will this mystery be revealed to you; "hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending," &c. hereafter in Gospel times; and pray mark the words of the text, "He shall give his angels

charge over thee;" over thee; say you, I confess this is a comfortable truth, the protection of angels in the time of the plague and pestilence especially, but what is this to me? yes, (says he), "He shall give his angels charge over thee," over thee. Now pray tell me when you read the Commandments, "Thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt do no murder;" do ye think that the "thou" there doth belong to you? yes; I dare not steal, I dare not do any murder, I dare not commit adultery: for it is said, "Thou shalt not murder, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not steal," and this "thou" belongs to me; and why should not the *thee* of the promise belong to you, as well as the *thou* of the commandment? Oh that those that are afflicted and trou-

bled in conscience would think but of this one thing! If thou concernest thyself in the *thou* of the commandment, thou art concerned in the *thee* of the promise; the *thee* of the promise concerns thee as certainly as the *thou* of the commandment: and thus now ye see I have gone through the doctrine. The Lord hath a singular care and providence over his people, especially in the time of the plague and pestilence, which is managed by the hands of angels. God will take special order with the angels for the safety of his people in the time of the plague and pestilence.

Now I come to the application.

If these things be so; first, great is the dignity of the saints, of the saints here on earth, though never so much despised by the world: they are attended with angels, they have angels

for their attendants; is it not an honour to have such attendants as these? The great ones of the earth think it an honour to have a company of glittering fellows attending upon them, and following them in reds and ribbands, and gold and silver laces. Oh, the beggarly attendants of this earth, unto the attendants the saints have, glorious angels attend them; it was much that Paul spake: "All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas," all are yours: Paul's, or Apollos's, or Cephas's; why what were they? they were ministers, and ministers are called angels, angels of the churches; but not only these angels are the saints' attendants, but heavenly angels are the saints' attendants; ah, what dignity, what honour is here! who dare despise any

of the saints or people of God, although they be never so mean? you see what our Saviour saith: Matt. xviii. 10, "Take heed that you despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven;" that is the first.

2dly, If these things be so, why then surely the highest enjoyment, and the meanest employment commanded, may and can stand together: what meaner employment than to attend upon a man that hath a plague-sore running upon him? this the angels are to do, and they have the highest enjoyment at the same time; says he after, "they always behold the face of my Father." So that then our highest enjoyments, and meanest employment commanded, may and

can stand together; it may be you say, I won't go to my calling, it is a poor and mean calling, I shall not enjoy God in it: aye, but know this, you may enjoy God in the lowest employment: the highest enjoyment and the meanest employment commanded, may and can stand together; that is the second.

3dly, If these things be so, great is the saint's security, great is the saint's safety; are they not in safe hands, that are in the hands of angels? not of one angel, but many angels, if this be not enough: why the angels bear them up in their arms: if this be not enough, God himself carries them in his arms, as in the days of old; God's eye is upon them, his ear is open to their cry: Christ's left hand is under their head, and his right hand doth em-

brace them, all the angels attending upon them; Oh, the safety and security of the saints and people of God, even in the worst of times, in the time of the plague and pestilence!

4thly, If these things be so; how good and gracious is the Lord unto you, you that are the saints and people of God! how good and gracious is the Lord to you! no sooner had David said, Psalm, xxxiv. 7, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them:" but the next words he subjoins, "Oh taste and see that the Lord is good." Aye, here you may taste and see the goodness of the Lord indeed, in the ministration of angels; that the angels nurse you, and carry you up and down in their arms: the more you look into this, the more you will see how good and

gracious the Lord is. In the eighth Psalm, when David had considered the creatures round, "Lord, (says he), what is man, that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him; for thou hast made him a little lower than the angels," for a time: "all sheep and oxen, and all creatures thou hast put under his feet:" he begins the Psalm thus, "Oh Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!" and because his heart was full of the sense of God's love, he ends the Psalm with the same words, "Oh Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!" aye, this is a taking thing indeed; here you may see how gracious and good the Lord is to you.

5thly, If these things be so; how infinitely are we all beholden unto

Jesus Christ, upon whose account it is that the angels are your attendants in this time of the plague and sickness; he is the ladder that Jacob saw: Christ explains that ladder himself; "You shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man:" it is upon Christ's account, all the ministry of angels is upon Christ's account: here you have more than Adam had in the state of innocency; when Adam fell, then you read indeed of the cherubims set to keep the tree of life, to keep Paradise; but you do not read that before the fall he had the angels to minister to him; but now in and by Jesus Christ, we have the ministration of angels, we are reconciled unto all the angels, and not only so, but they are brought in to be our atten-

dants. Oh blessed be God for Christ! why should we not say, "I love thee dearly, O Lord my Saviour, by whom I am made partaker of this infinite privilege of the ministration of angels.

6thly, If these things be so; what a mighty difference is there betwixt the godly and the wicked, even in the time of the plague. Your great desire in this sickness time is, that God would make a difference betwixt the one and the other; whatever outward difference there is; I am sure there is this difference, the saints and people of God have the angels to attend upon them, but the wicked have not. The corn and the weeds are cut down by the same scythe, one stroke cuts them both down, but the corn and the weeds are differenced. Two men, a godly man

and a wicked man, lay sick of the plague at the same time; the wicked man hath little or no attendance, when his friends leave him, it may be he hath nobody to attend him, except it be a halberdeer at the door; no angels to attend him: but the good man, when all his friends are gone, then come the angels and comfort him, and attend upon him: and he may comfort himself, and say, Though my friends have left me, yet here are the Lord's angels to look to me and comfort me. What a mighty difference is there betwixt the one and the other! Oh who would not be godly? who would not get into Christ upon this very account?

7thly. If these things be so; why then, why should we not trust in the Lord in this day of great mortality, this sickly time, this time of the plague

and pestilence? What, shall the angels be your attendants, (now especially) and wont you trust in God? what, have you such a promise as this is, and will not you trust in the Lord? shall the Lord himself be your protector, and charge his angels with you for such a time as this, and will you not trust in the Lord? It is recorded of Alexander, that being in great danger, and to fight next day with his enemies, he slept very soundly the night before, and he being asked the reason thereof, said, Parmenio wakes, meaning a great and faithful captain of his, Parmenio wakes, says he. The angels are called watchmen; they watch and are faithful, therefore you may be secure, quiet, and at rest; trust in the Lord for ever on this account, in this day trust in the Lord.

8thly, If these things be so; then (friends) why should we not stoop to any work commanded, though it lie much beneath us? Don't you think that the attending upon a sick man, a man that hath a plague-sore running upon him, is a work that lies much beneath angels? yet the angels do it because it is commanded, though much beneath them, yet they stoop to it because it is commanded; and what though a work lie much beneath you, yet if it be commanded, why should you not stoop to it? You will say, Such an one is much beneath me, I won't lay my hand under his shoes, he is much beneath me; ah, but the angels lay their hands under your shoes, and the work they do for you is much beneath them; why should we not be like our attendants? this is angelical

obedience; the angels do you many a kindness, and never look for thanks from you, they do you many a kindness that you are not aware of: why are you delivered, sometimes you know not how? there is a hand under a wing, the ministration of angels is the cause of it. But I say, the work they stoop to for you is much beneath them, and therefore why should we not stoop to any work commanded, though it lie much beneath us?

9thly, If these things be so; (friends) what manner of men and women ought we to be in all holy conversation? what, your attendants so holy, and you unholy? let the women be covered, because of the angels, says the apostle; so say I, let us walk holily because of the

angels, they are always about us: if you be in company with a grave man, you won't giggle, nor be so frothy as with others; if a man have a servant attending upon him that is grave and sober, he won't be frothy and vain; behold what grave and holy attendants there are about you; and will you giggle, and be frothy and vain? Oh what manner of men and women ought we to be in all holy conversation!

But, 10thly and lastly, to conclude: if these things be so why should we not always be found in that way, whereby we may come within the compass of this protection: in the thirty-fourth Psalm, it is put upon fearing God, "They shall pitch their tents round about them that fear him;" in this Psalm it is put most upon trusting in God.

In this ninety-first Psalm, in this verse, it is put upon (this protection of angels is put upon) being in our way; "They shall bear you up in their hands. He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep you in all your ways," in all your ways: your ways: your ways are God's ways, your way is the way commanded by God; if you be out of God's way, you are out of your own way; if you be in your way, the angels shall keep you, even in the time of a plague, and bear you up in their hands, that you dash not your foot against a stone; but if you be out of your way, I won't insure you of safety, When Balaam went upon the Devil's errand, an angel met him and scared his ass, and the ass ran his foot against the wall, dashed his foot against the wall; the promise is

thou shalt not dash thy foot against a stone; but he was out of his way, and the angel met him and scared his ass, and his ass made him rush his leg against the wall. Jonah went out of his way, when he ran away from God; God bade him go one way, and he went another: well, what then? were the angels with him for his protection? the very sea would not be quiet till he was thrown overboard; instead of angels to protect him, he had a whale to devour him. I confess indeed, through the free grace and mercy of God, the belly of destruction was made a chamber of preservation to him, but he was out of his way; and instead of an angel to keep him that he dash not his foot, his whole body was thrown overboard. Says Solomon, "As a bird from her nest, so is a man out

of his place ;” so long as the bird is in her nest, it is free from the hawk, it is free from the birding-piece, it is free from the nets, and gins, and snares, as long as it is in her nest; but when the bird is off her nest, then she is exposed to many dangers. So, so long as a man is in his way, in his place and in his way, he is well, and under protection; but when a man is off his nest, out of his place, and out of his way, then is he exposed to all dangers: but, be but in your way, be but in your way, and then you may assure yourselves of divine protection, and of the management thereof, by the hands of angels. Oh, who would not labour always to be in that way which God hath appointed him to be in! why should we not always consider with ourselves, and say, But

am I in my way? Old Mr. Dodd being upon the water, and going out of one boat into another, slipped between them, and the first word he spake was this, "Am I in my way?" so we should always be saying, But am I in my way? am I in my way? I am now idling away my time, but *Am I in my way?* Oh my soul, *am I in my way?* I am in my calling this day, without prayer in the morning and reading the Scriptures; but am I in my way? Oh my soul, am I in my way? I am now in such frothy company, where I get no good, but hurt; but am I in my way? ever consider this, am I in my way? you may expect the Lord's protection and the angels' attendance, if you be in your way, but not else. Now then, as ever you desire the protection of the Almighty, and the atten-

dance of angels, especially in this time of danger sickness, plague, and pestilence, let us all labour daily to look to it, that we be found in our way, the way the Lord hath set us in; and what I say to you, I say to myself, and to all, "Wait on the Lord and keep in his way."

A VOICE
FROM
HEAVEN.

IF I SEND PESTILENCE AMONG MY PEOPLE ;
IF MY PEOPLE WHICH ARE CALLED BY
MY NAME SHALL HUMBLE THEMSELVES,
AND PRAY, AND SEEK MY FACE, AND
TURN FROM THEIR WICKED WAYS ; THEN
WILL I HEAR FROM HEAVEN, AND WILL
FORGIVE THEIR SIN AND WILL HEAL
THEIR LAND. 2 Chron. vii. 13, 14.

THE CHOLERA is a pestilence sent by
the hand of Almighty God. The *pestilence*
is one of God's heaviest judgmer : the
sword is another: the *famine* is another;

three sore judgments by which he takes vengeance on men for their sins. Men, who never see God in any thing, will never acknowledge that the *sword* is God's judgment. They love to fight and to destroy: war is their element. *Destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known*, Rom. iii. 16, 17. If God gives them up to follow the lusts of their own hearts in war and bloodshed, it is an awful sign of his displeasure; but it is a sign they will not see, a judgment at which they will not tremble. Nor will they any more acknowledge that famine is his minister of wrath. If a scarcity ever occurs, instead of humbling themselves, they will vent their impotent rage upon their fellow-creatures, as if they were the authors of it. But the *pestilence* is a scourge from the hand of God, so direct, that no room is left for laying the blame upon this man or that man.

England has had no plague for one hundred and fifty years. God has been speaking to her one while by scarcity, another by war, and he has lately uttered his voice in the soft accents of gentle peace. She has

had repose from war nearly these twenty years. But neither threatened famine, nor actual war, nor a long peace, have humbled her and brought her to repentance. On the contrary, peace has filled her with pride, and fulness of bread with idleness. She has cast off her God; she has cherished his enemies; papists, infidels, blasphemers of all kinds have lain in her bosom, and been dandled on her knees. Shall I not take vengeance for these things, saith God? shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?

The Cholera has now been raging over the world for these last fifteen years. During that period, it has swept away *fifty millions* of our race. It began in India; from thence it passed into China; it reached also Arabia: it planted its bloody foot in Persia; it stalked along the Caspian Sea, to Russia, and lastly, it has been ravaging the cities, towns, and villages of Europe. From Hamburgh, it has crossed the sea to England, and it has come among us to say to us in a voice of thunder—**REPENT, REPENT.** It spares no age, nor sex; it flatters no man;

the rich are its prey as well as the poor; its sweeping besom casts them all alike into the pit of destruction.

And now let us ask ourselves—How are we prepared to meet this frightful scourge? Let the question be referred in the first instance to the SOUL.

How is your soul then prepared to meet your God in judgment? Do you ask, what preparation you are to have? That all important question is answered in the Bible. There JESUS the SON of GOD, *able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him.* Heb. vii. 25. There Jesus, the SON of MAN, *who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way.* Heb. v. 2. There, I say, in the Bible, Jesus is revealed as *the way, the new and living way,* Heb. x. 20. and the only refuge from *the wrath to come,* Matt. iii. 7. *Jesus saith, I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me,* John, xiv. 6. Between the world of guilty sinners—made guilty and corrupt by the sin of Adam, Rom. v.—and the Holy Ghost, Jesus interposed; *though he was*

rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, 2 Cor. viii. 9. He took the manhood into God—laid down his life on the cross—overcame death—and opened the gate of everlasting life to all who believe in him. When we were yet without strength, Christ died for the UNGODLY. God commendeth—(demonstrates, recommends, enhances, renders illustrious, as Rom. iii. 5) his love toward us, in that, while we were yet SINNERS, Christ died for us. When we were ENEMIES, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son. Hence being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him—being reconciled, we shall be much more saved by his life. Rom. v. 6—10.

Now, in what way have we received this revelation of God's love to us? In what way has the nation treated it? From the highest to the lowest, Christ has been neglected and despised, denied or betrayed, and once more crucified between thieves. We call ourselves a religious nation, and, because we have the *form*, infer that we have the *substance*.

Let us then ask ourselves—Are we holding

the truth in unrighteousness? *The wrath of God is revealed from heaven, against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness,* Rom. i. 18. Who can tell but that the pestilence may be the forerunner of his glorious appearing to vindicate his truth, his justice, and his power, and avenge his outraged gospel? Do you seem to yourself, or others to be a religious man, yet not bridling your tongue, but deceiving your own heart, full of party spirit, furious zeal, fierce contention? The word of God declares, *this man's religion is vain,* Jas. i. 26. Are you a thief, a liar, a perjured person, a glutton, a drunkard, an unclean person, sowing to the flesh? *He that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption,* Gal. vi. 8. In a word, are you an UNBELIEVER, living without God, and without hope? *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him,* John, iii. 36. It is high time therefore to awake out of sleep. The Judge is at the door to take vengeance on them that know

not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Repent and believe the Gospel—God delighteth not in the death of sinners. It was for sinners Christ died. It was the lost he came to save. Count that the long-suffering of the Lord is salvation. Turn to him in godly sorrow. Look unto him with lively faith. Call upon him in earnest prayer. *Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.* Is. lv. 6, 7.

Seek the Lord, seek to know the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Seek ye the Lord, seek him in his word, and above all, seek him as he is revealed in Christ, *who is the image of God.* 2 Cor. iv. 4. Let not the god of this world blind your eyes, and keep you from discovering the glory of God, as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ. Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, while you have opportunity. Trust not to a death-bed repentance. Above all, trust not

to a *Cholera* death-bed. Hear how that is described by eye-witnesses: "The skin is deadly cold, the voice is nearly gone. The patient asks only for water, speaks in a plaintive whisper, and only by a word at a time. He tosses incessantly from side to side, and complains of intolerable weight and anguish around his heart. He struggles for breath, and often lays his hand on his stomach and chest, to point out the seat of his agony. Toward the close of this scene, the patient becomes insensible, and, after a long convulsive sob or two, dies."

Remember that sin is a pestilence.—Desire more earnestly that your soul may be delivered from that scourge, than your body from the scourge of the Cholera. It is needless to pray that our land may be saved from that, while we feel no desire about the other. It is for this that God has a controversy with us. Let every man look into the *plague of his own heart*. Let him say, O Lord, heal me of that deadly disease! We are apt in our distresses to howl and repine, to gnaw our tongues, and tear our flesh, in the anguish of our sufferings; like the silly

hart, which runs mourning and bleeding, but never thinks of getting out the fatal dart which sticks in his side.*

* Bp. Reynolds.

FINIS.







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