

**50-5**

John M. Krebs

LIBRAR  
Theological Sem

PRINCETON, N.

No. Case, 128

No. Shelf, 3000/

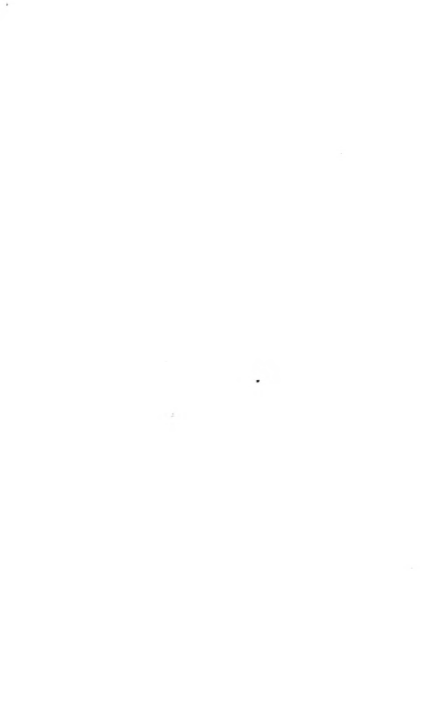
No. Book, No. 63

The John M. Krebs

BS 1450.91 .B74 1832  
Bridge, William, 1600?-1670  
The refuge



J



•••••

# THE REFUGE :

CONTAINING THE

RIGHTEOUS MAN'S HABITATION,

IN THE TIME OF

**Plague and Pestilence ;**

Being a brief Exposition of the 91st Psalm ;

BY WILLIAM BRIDGE,

*Sometime Fellow of Emanuel College, Cambridge,  
and late Preacher of the Word of God,  
at Yarmouth.*

ALSO,

AN EXPOSITION OF THE 91st PSALM,

BY

REV. BISHOP GEORGE HORNE.

WITH AN EXTRACT FROM AN ACCOUNT OF THE

**GREAT PLAGUE**

IN THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY.



NEW-YORK :

PUBLISHED BY DANIEL APPLETON,  
CLINTON HALL.

1832.

This work was first published at London, in 1665, during the prevalence of the "Great Plague," by which, at the lowest calculation, 68,000 of the inhabitants of that city died. The author was a member of the Westminster Assembly of Divines, a distinguished preacher and popular writer.

---

*G. F. Bunce, Printer.*



THE

RIGHTEOUS MAN'S HABITATION,

¶c. ¶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 pro-

mised 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 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 dark-

ness ; 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 he 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 exceeding 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 pro-

fect 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 for 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 woman 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 cleventh 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 a 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 xxxi. 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 controversy betwixt Laban 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.

4thly. When did God do ever any 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 thirdly, what faith is this, what trust is that 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 their 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, there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague 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 con-

cerning 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 secondly, the plague or pestilence is not so 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, the 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 ministration 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 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 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 foolishly; 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 tenth 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 the 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 not 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 pour-

ed 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 3d 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. Gad came to David, and said, thus saith the Lord, choose thee either three years famine. In the 2d Samuel 24, it is seven years famine : in the 13th verse, ‘ Gad 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 days pestilence in thy land ?’ Well, at the 15th 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 16th 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 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 Araunah 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 prevent 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 sto-

ry, 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, O, 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 deliver 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. 2dly. That this care and providence is managed by the hands of angels. 3dly. 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 will 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 a 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 security, ‘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 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 ap-

ple 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 32d 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 they were in the howling wilderness, the Lord did keep his people then as the apple of his eye ; and if you look into the 2d of Zachary, you shall find he did the same when they came out of Babylon, Zach. ii. ver. 6. ‘ Ho, ho, come forth, and flee from the land of the North, deliver thyself, oh Zion, that dwellest with the daughter of Babylon.’ There were some that staid still behind ; that were so wedded to their houses there, that they would not stir out of Babylon, some of the worst of them ; concerning these he says, at the 8th verse : ‘ After the glory hath he sent me to the nations which spoiled you ; for, he that toucheth you, toucheth the



apple of his eye.' Sinful, poor, unworthy people, that would not go home when they might, would not go out of Bablyon when they might; yet how tender was the Lord of them? But I say I shall need go no further than the text: the Lord hath said it, that 'He will give his angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways, that you dash not your foot against a stone.' So that thus then you see the singular care and providence of God over his servants and children. That is the First.

But then, 2dly, this care and providence of his is managed by the hands of angels; the angels are the people that are especially entrusted with this protection of the saints. Mistake not; not as if the Lord himself did quit his hands of their protection; though the angels should be our protectors, yet if God should withdraw his protection and presence, we could not be satisfied with the protection of angels. Look into the 33d of Exodus, 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 ; their’s in regard of profit, for they are sent forth for the good of the elect : but His in regard of authority, 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 be-trusted 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 Tyrus 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 are 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 103d Psalm, that they excel in strength, ; ‘ Bless the Lord ye his angels that excel in strength,’ verse 20. They are called powers in the host of God, they are the chariots and the horsemen, in Psalm lxviii. 17, ‘ The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels ;’ thousands of angels : they are the chariots and the 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 despatch 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 103 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, (verse 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 myrtle 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 those 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, they 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 employment, 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 32d 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; insomuch that he was grievously afraid, and he prayed, ‘Lord deliver me from the hand of my brother;’ well, and what then? then come 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 seem 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 cruse 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 angels 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 cherubims 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 troubled 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 embrace 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 attendants. 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 halberdier 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? O 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 won't 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 the 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 upon 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 at-

tendants 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 tenthly 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 run 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 angel's attendance, if you be in your way, but not else. Now then as ever you desire the protection of the Almighty, and the attendance 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.'



AN EXPOSITION  
OF  
THE NINETY FIRST PSALM,  
BY  
BISHOP HORNE.



# PSALM XCI.

## ARGUMENT.

The prophet, 1—10, declareth the security of the righteous man under the care and protection of heaven, in times of danger, when, 11, 12, a guard of angels is set about him. 13. His final victory over the enemies of his salvation is foretold; and 14—16, God himself is introduced, promising him deliverance, exaltation, glory, and immortality. The Psalm is addressed, primarily, to Messiah. That it relateth to him, Jews and Christians are agreed; and the devil, Matt. iv. 6, cited two verses from it, as universally known and allowed to have been spoken of him.

*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.*

In these verses, as they now stand, there is much obscurity and confusion. Bishop Lowth, in his 26th Lecture, seem-

eth to have given their true construction. “He who dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High ; who abideth under the shadow of the Almighty ; who saith of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I will trust ;”—leaving the sentence thus imperfect, the Psalmist maketh a beautiful apostrophe to that person whom he has been describing—“Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.” The description is eminently applicable to the man Christ Jesus.\* He is represented as dwelling, like the ark in the Holy of Holies, under the immediate “shadow” and protection of the Almighty, who was his “refuge and fortress” against the open attacks of his enemies ; his preserver from the “snares” of the devil, and from the universal contagion of sin, that spiritual “pestilence.” In all dangers, whether

\* Ode Davidica insignis xci agit directe et primo loco de tegmine et defensione quam Deus Christo, Jesu Doctori et apostolis ipsius præstaret.—*Vitringa*’ *Comment. Jesia.* ii. 565.

spiritual or corporeal, the members of Christ's mystical body may reflect with comfort, that they are under the same Almighty Protector.

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

The security afforded, by a superintending Providence, to those who trust therein, is here with the utmost beauty and elegance, compared to that shelter which the young of birds are always sure to find under the "wings" of their dam, when fear causeth them to fly thither for refuge.—See Deut. xxxii. 11. Matt. xxiii. 37. The "truth" of God's word, wherein he promiseth to be our defence, is, to a believer, his "shield and buckler," in the day of battle and war.

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.*

How much man standeth in need of the

above-mentioned protection of heaven, appeareth from a survey of the dangers to which he is continually exposed. Various are the terrors of the night: manifold the perils of the day; from diseases, whose infection maketh its progress unobserved; from assaults, casualties, and accidents, which can neither be foreseen, nor guarded against. The soul hath likewise her enemies, ready to attack and surprise her at all hours. Avarice and ambition are abroad watching for her in the day, while concupiscence, like a pestilence, "walketh in darkness." In adversity, she is disturbed by terrors; in prosperity, still more endangered by pleasures. But Jesus Christ has overcome the world, to prevent us being overcome by it.

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

The promise has oftentimes, in a wonderful manner, been verified to those faithful servants of God, whom the pestilence itself hath not deterred from doing



the duties of their station.\* The bishop, and some of the intendants of Marseilles, who continued to perform their respective offices, during the whole time of the the plague there, in 1720, are signal and well known instances. Sin is a pestilence, the contagion of which no son of Adam ever escaped, but the blessed Jesus. He stood alone untouched by its venom; thousands and ten thousands, all the myriads of mankind, fell around him; "but it did not come nigh Him." Heal us of this our distemper, O thou Physician of souls, and let it not prove our everlasting destruction; "stand," like thy representative of old, "between the dead and the living, and let the plague be stayed."—Numb. xvi. 47, 48.

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

The meaning is, that the righteous

\* During the plague which visited London in the year 1665, there were in the month of August 1000 died per day. Stepney parish had 116 sextons and gravediggers. August and September 1600 deaths per day, 30,000 died in three weeks, 100,000 were sick.

person, all along spoken of, himself secure from the judgments of God, should in safety behold the destruction wrought by them upon impenitent and incorrigible sinners. This will be the case with the church, as well as her glorious Head, at the last day.

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.*

The sentiment in these verses is evidently the same with that in verses 5, 6, namely, that God preserveth such as trust in him, after the pattern of the holy Jesus, from those evils, and from that perdition, which are reserved for the ungodly. Dr. Durell translates the 9th verse, in the way of apostrophe, literally thus,—“Surely, thou, O Lord, art my refuge; O Most High, thou hast fixed thine habitation;” *i. e.* in Sion, to be the protector of his servant.

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.*

This passage was cited by the devil, who tempted our Lord to cast himself from a pinnacle of the temple, upon presumption of the promise here made, that angels should guard and support him in all dangers. But Christ, in his answer, at once detecteth and exposeth the sophistry of the grand deceiver, by showing, that the promise belonged only to those who fell unavoidably into danger, in the course of duty; such might hope for the help and protection of heaven; but that he who should wantonly and absurdly throw himself into peril, merely to try whether Providence would bring him out of it, must expect to perish for his pains. “Jesus saith unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not *tempt* the Lord thy God.”—Matt. iv. 7.

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

The fury and the venom of our spiritual enemies are often in Scripture por-

trayed by the natural qualities of “lions and serpents.” Messiah’s complete victory over those enemies seemeth here to be predicted. Through grace, he maketh us more than conquerors in our conflicts with the same adversaries. “The God of peace,” saith St. Paul, “shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.”—Rom. xvi. 20. And it is observable, that when the seventy disciples return to Christ with joy, saying, “Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name;” he answers, in the metaphorical language of our Psalm,—“Behold I give unto you power to tread on scorpions and serpents, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding, in this rejoice not, that the *spirits* are subject unto you.” &c.—Luke x. 17. Give us, O Lord, courage to resist the “lion’s” rage, and wisdom to elude the wiles of the “serpent.”

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

In the former part of our Psalm, the prophet had spoken in his own person : here God himself is plainly introduced as the speaker. And, O how sweet, how delightful and comfortable are his words, addressed eminently to his beloved Son Messiah ; and in him to all of us, his adopted children, and the heirs of eternal life ; to all who love God, and have “known his name !” To such are promised an answer to their prayers ; the presence of their heavenly Father with them ; in the day of trouble, protection and deliverance ; salvation, and honour, and glory, and immortality. All these promises have already been made good to our gracious Head and Representative. His prayers have been heard ; his sufferings are over ; he is risen and ascended ; and, behold, he liveth and reigneth for evermore. Swift fly the intermediate

years, and rise that long expected morning, when he, who is gone “to prepare a place for us, shall come again, and take us to himself, that where he is we may be also.

EXTRACT  
FROM AN ACCOUNT  
OF  
THE GREAT PLAGUE  
IN THE  
FOURTEENTH CENTURY.





# THE GREAT PLAGUE

IN THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY.

THE memory of the Great Plague in London has been rendered immortal by the prose of Daniel Defoe, and the poetry of John Wilson. But the greater Plague which overran almost the whole world, three centuries before, is almost forgotten. A slight sketch of its history, drawn from old chroniclers, will show, by comparison, what a small matter is magnified into a pestilence in the present day.

This dreadful pestilence, like the Cholera, made its first appearance in the East. It arose in China, Tartary, India and Egypt, about the year 1345. It was ascribed by the contemporary writers, Mezeray and Giovanni Villani,

to a general corruption of the atmosphere accompanied by the appearance of millions of small serpents and other venomous insects, and, in other places, quantities of huge vermin, with numerous legs, and of a hideous aspect, which filled the air with putrid exhalations. Making every allowance for the ignorance and credulity of the age, it appears evident that some natural causes had contributed to corrupt the air and load it with pestiferous vapors. And it is remarkable that, before the disease appeared in Europe, singular meteorological phenomena, of a similar nature, took place. Thus, it came into England in the end of the year 1348; and it had rained from the previous Christmas till midsummer, almost without cessation; "so that all the while," to use the words of an old writer, "it hardly ever held up so much as for one day and night together." Great inundations followed; and accumulations of stagnant water, by which the whole atmosphere was poisoned. In France, several strange

meteoric appearances are described by writers of credit.

During the same period there were many dreadful earthquakes ; some of them in places where such phenomena have since been unheard of. At Rome, an earthquake threw down a great number of houses, steeples, and churches. At Naples there was an earthquake, accompanied with a tremendous hurricane, which destroyed a large portion of the city. On this occasion it is related, that while a friar was preaching to a crowded congregation, he and his auditory were swallowed up in an instant—all but one individual, who observed the trembling of the earth in time to save himself by flight. A great multitude of the inhabitants were buried in the ruins of their habitations ; and the citizens durst not venture in their houses, but remained terrified in the market places or fields, till the earthquake (which continued by fits for eight days,) had spent its fury. In Greece, particularly in the Morea, and the land

of Cyprus, whole villages were overwhelmed. Even in Germany, a country not liable to this calamity, there was an earthquake which extended over a great part of Austria and Syria, and destroyed many towns and villages in those districts. "And many other provinces," says an old historian, "suffered such lasting characters of the fury of these strong convulsions of nature, that, lest the joint concurrence of so many authors of those days should not obtain sufficient credit, they might be very plainly read even by late posterity." These earthquakes were generally attended with storms of thunder and lightning, wind and hail.

In many of these accounts we may presume that there is a good deal of exaggeration. But the testimonies are too numerous and respectable to leave any doubt that, before and during the pestilence, the elements were in a state of general convulsion, which seems unparalleled in history.

The plague extended its ravages from India into the more western parts of Asia, into Egypt, Abyssinia, and thence into the northern parts of Africa. It proceeded over Asia Minor, Greece, and the islands of the Archipelago, almost depopulating the regions over which it stalked. It may be literally said to have *decimated* the world, even though we were to take this term as implying the destruction of *nine*, in place of *one* out of ten. According to Mezeray, and other writers, where it was most favorable, it left one out of three, or one out of five, but where it raged most violently, it scarce left a fifteenth or twentieth person alive. Some countries, partly by plague, and partly by earthquakes, were left quite desolate. Giovanni Villani says, that in a part of Mesopotamia, only some women survived, who were driven by extremity and despair to devour one another.

The plague appears to have staid five or six months in one place, and

then to have gone in search of fresh victims. Its symptoms are minutely described by many writers, and appear to have been the same in every country it visited. It generally appeared in the groin, or under the armpits, where swellings were produced, which broke into sores, attended with fever, spitting and vomiting of blood. The patient frequently died in half a day—generally within a day or two at most. If he survived the third day, there was hope ; though even then many fell into a deep sleep from which they never awoke.

Before the pestilence invaded Christendom, it is recorded, in a report made to the pope at Avignon, that it swept away twenty-three millions eight hundred thousand persons throughout the East, in the course of a single year. While the Christians remained untouched, their supposed immunity, since their neighbors were suffering the extremity of the malady, operated so strongly on the minds of some of the heathen prin-

ces, that they resolved to propitiate heaven by embracing Christianity. The king of Tarsis, accompanied by a great multitude of his princes and nobles, actually set out on his journey to Avignon, to receive baptism from Pope Clement VI. But hearing on his way that the Christians too had become victims to the destroyer, he returned home.

From Greece the plague passed into Italy. The Venetians, having lost 100,000 souls, fled from their city, and left it almost uninhabited. At Florence, 60,000 persons died in one year. Among these was the historian Giovanni Villani, whose writings we have already referred to. He was one of the most distinguished men of his age ; and his historical works are looked upon as correct and valuable. He was the annalist of this pestilence almost down to the day of his falling a victim to it. France next became exposed to its ravages. At Avignon the mortality was horrible. In the strong language of Stow, people died bleeding at the nose,

mouth and fundament; so that rivers ran with blood, and streams of putrid gore issued from the graves, and sepulchres of the dead. When it first broke out there, no fewer than sixty-six of the Carmelite friars died before any body knew how, so that it was imagined they had murdered one another. Of the members of the English College at Avignon, not one was left alive; and of the whole inhabitants of the city, not one in five. According to a statement, or bill of mortality, laid before the Pope, there died in one day 1212, and in another 400 persons. The malady proceeded northward through France, till it reached Paris, where it cut off 50,000 people. About the same time it spread into Germany, where its ravages are estimated at the enormous amount of 12,400,000 souls. At Lubeck alone, according to the concurring accounts of several writers, 90,000 persons were swept away in one year, of whom 1500 are reported to have died in the space of four hours.



At last this fearful scourge began to be felt in England. About the beginning of August, 1348, it appeared in the sea port towns on the coasts of Dorset, Devon, and Somersetshire, whence it proceeded to Bristol. The people of Gloucestershire immediately interdicted all intercourse with Bristol, but in vain. The disease ran, or rather flew, over Gloucestershire. Thence it spread to Oxford; and about the 1st of November reached London. Finally it spread itself all over England, scattered every where such destruction, that out of the whole population, hardly one person in ten was left alive.

Incredible as this statement may appear, it seems borne out by the details of contemporary annalists. In the churchyard of Yarmouth, 7052 persons, who died of the plague, were buried in one year. In the city of Norwich, 57,374 persons died in six months, between the first of January and the first of July. In the city of York the mortality was equal. We find no general

statement of the total amount of the mortality in London ; but there are details sufficient to show that it must have been horrible beyond imagination. The dead were thrown into pits, forty, fifty, or sixty, into one ; and large fields were employed as burial places, the churchyards being insufficient for the purpose. No attempt was made to perform this last office with the usual care and decency. Deep and broad ditches were made, in which the dead bodies were laid in rows, and covered with earth, and surmounted with another layer of bodies, which also was covered. Sir Walter Manny, (whose name is so well known from his connection with the affecting incident of the surrender of Calais to Edward III.,) benevolently purchased and appropriated a burial ground near Smithfield, in which single place more than fifty thousand people were buried. Stow says that he had seen, on a stone cross in that burial ground, the following quaint inscription : “ Anno Domini MCCCXLIX. regnante magna

pestilentia consecratum fuit hoc cœmeterium ; in quo, et infra septa præsentis monasterii : sepulta fuerunt mortuorum corpora plusquam LM. præter alia multa abhine usque ad præsens. Quorum animabus propitietur Deus. Amen.”

This pestilence gave occasion to some diplomatic intercourse between England and France, which is strikingly characteristic of the manners of the age. While the mortality was raging in those countries, Pope Clement VI. never ceased importuning the monarchs of both to put an end to their mutual hostility, and, by doing so, to avoid the continuance of a calamity sent by heaven to punish the sins of mankind. Edward and Philip were induced by these pious exhortations to appoint commissioners, who met between Calais and St. Omers to negotiate a treaty. The French insisted on the restoration of Calais, or the raising of its fortifications ; a proposition which the English would not listen to. At last, however, a truce was agreed upon for six months,

till September following, in order to allow time to negotiate for a peace ; and it was farther agreed, that if, at the end of the truce, a final treaty was not concluded, the crown of France was to be brought to a convenient place within that realm, and the right to it decided by a pitched battle, without farther appeal. The death of the French king, however, which happened in August, 1350, before the expiration of the truce, put an end to this smooth and amicable plan of accommodation.

The mortality fell chiefly upon the lower classes of society, and among them, principally on old men, women and children. It was remarked, that not one king or prince of any nation died of the plague ; and of the English nobility, and people of distinction, very few were cut off by it. Among the higher orders of the church, the deaths were rare ; but such havoc was made among the inferior clergy, that numbers of churches were left wholly void, and without any one to perform divine ser-

vice, or any offices of religion. At the same time, all suits and proceedings in the courts of justice ceased ; and the sitting of parliament was intermitted for more than two years.

This terrible visitation was every where attended by a total dissolution of the bonds of society. An excellent old writer, gives the following eloquent description of the state of England :—  
“ We are told the influence of this disease was so contagious, that it not only infected by a touch or breathing, but transfused its malignity into the very beams of light, and darted death from the eyes ; and the very seats and garments of such proved fatal. Wherefore parents forsook their children, and wives their husbands ; nor would physicians here make their visits, for neither were they able to do good to others, and they were almost certain thereby to destroy themselves. Even the priests also, for the same horrid consideration, forbore either to administer the sacraments or absolve the dying penitent.

But yet neither priests, nor physicians, nor any other who sought thus to escape, did find their caution of any advantage : for death not only raged without doors as well as in chambers, but, as if it took indignation that any mortal should think to fly from it, these kind of people died both more speedily and proportionately in greater numbers. Then was their death without sorrow, affinity without friendship, wilful penance and dearth without scarcity, and flying without refuge or succor. For many fled from place to place because of the pestilence ; some into deserts and places not inhabited, either in hope or despair. But quick-sighted destruction found them out, and nimble-footed misery was ever ready to attend them. Others, having hired boats or other vessels, into which they laid up provision, thought, or at least hoped, so to elude the power of the infection, but the destroying angel, like that in the Revelation, had one foot upon the waters as well as on the land, for, alas! the

very air they breathed being tainted, they drew in death together with life itself. The horror of these things made others to lock themselves up in their houses, gardens, and sweet retired places; but the evil they intended to exclude pursued them through all their defences, and they had this only difference, to die without the company of any that might serve or pity them. No physician could tell the cause, or prescribe a cure; and even what was saving to one was no less than fatal to another. No astrologer could divine how or when it would cease; the only way left was to be prepared to receive it, and the most comfortable resolution to expect it without fear."

The pestilence extended into Wales, where it raged violently; and soon afterwards, passing into Ireland, it made great havoc among the English settled in that island. But it was remarked that the native Irish were little affected, particularly those that dwelt in hilly districts.

As to the Scots, they are said to have brought the malada upon themselves. Taking advantage of the defenceless state of England, they made a hostile irruption, with a large force, into the country. But they had not proceeded far, when the calamity which they courted, and so well deserved from their ungenerous conduct, overtook them. They perished in thousands ; and, in attempting to return home, they were overtaken, before they could reach the border, by a strong body of English, who routed them with great slaughter. The remnant carried the disease into Scotland, where its ravages were soon as destructive as in the southern parts of the island. "Scotland," says the writer whom we have already quoted, "partook of the universal contagion in as high a degree, and in the same manner, as other countries had done before ; only in this there was a difference, that whereas other nations sat still and waited for it, the Scots did seem ambitious to fetch it in among themselves !"



However much Scotland may have had to complain of the oppression and tyranny of England under the Edwards, it was ungenerous and unworthy of a brave people to attempt to retaliate on a nation laid prostrate by the hand of Heaven. At the same time, there is no reason to doubt that the general cause, whatever it was, of the pestilence, would at any rate have soon extended to Scotland, as well as Wales and Ireland.

Early in the year 1349, the plague began to abate in England; and by the month of August it had entirely disappeared. Its consequences, however, continued for some time to be severely felt. During the prevalence of the disease, the cattle, for want of men to tend them, were allowed to wander about the fields at random, and perished in such numbers as to occasion a great scarcity. Though the fields, too, were covered with a plentiful crop of corn, much of it was lost for want of hands to reap it and gather it in. The scarcity

of hands naturally produced excessively high wages. A reaper was not to be had under eight-pence a day, nor a mower under twelve-pence, besides victuals : and every other sort of labor was paid in proportion.\* This gave occasion to the act of the 25th of Edward III., known by the name of the Statute of Laborers ; which, on account of “ the insolence of servants, who endeavored to raise their wages upon their masters,” ordained that they should be contented with the same wages and liveries which they had been accustomed to receive in the 20th year of the king. In spite of his statute, high wages continued to be given by people who preferred doing so to losing the grain and other fruits of the earth,

\* In the time of Edward III., ten-pence contained half an ounce of silver, and was, consequently, equal to half a crown of our present money. The above wages therefore, were equivalent to two shillings and three shillings of our money. At the time the quarter of wheat was then six shillings and eightpence, or twenty shillings of modern money.—*Wealth of Nations, Book I, chap. 11.*

till Edward enforced obedience to it by severe measures both against masters and laborers. The enforcement of this statute is said by old writers to have prevented a famine from raging in England, similar to the one which afflicted the other countries that had undergone the visitation of the pestilence. How far it could have produced so salutary an affect, however, may well be questioned.

The last dregs of this calamity were drained by that unfortunate race, the Jews. A belief spread over several countries that they had produced the pestilence by poisoning the wells and fountains ; and, in many places, they were massacred in thousands by the infuriated populace. In several parts of Germany, where this persecution chiefly raged, the Jews were literally exterminated. Twelve thousand of them were murdered in the single city of Mentz : and multitudes of them, in the extremity of their despair, shut them-

selves up in their houses, and consumed themselves, and their families and property with fire. The extent of such atrocities, in a barbarous age, may well be imagined, when we remember the outrages which were produced by the cholera panic, only a few months ago, in some parts of the continent.

Though the pestilence ceased in England in 1349, yet the destroying angel continued his progress through other regions for several years longer, marks of his presence remaining on record down to the year 1362. The world has suffered no similar visitation since ; nor does its older history afford any instance of a calamity of the same kind, equally extensive and destructive. Even the pestilence so eloquently described by Gibbon, which ravaged a great part of the Roman empire ; seems to have been inferior in magnitude ; and the famous plague of Athens was confined within a still narrower compass. In almost every other memorable in-

stance of the plague, it has been limited to a particular district, or even a particular city.

Our present object has been merely to collect some circumstances of the history of this most remarkable event, and not to enter into the question of the theory of pestilence. We may, however, observe that not only was the great plague, of which we have been speaking, preceded and accompanied by disorders of the elements, tending to produce a general corruption of the atmosphere, but the very same phenomena are recorded in the other cases where the plague extended itself over various regions. In those eastern countries, too, where the plague is found to prevail almost constantly, it always occurs at times and places where the atmosphere is corrupted, either by physical causes or by the shockingly filthy habits of the inhabitants, or by both together. That a corrupted state of the atmosphere, therefore, is a cause of the plague, cannot be doubted; and it is a question

whether, to this certain cause, it is necessary to join the additional cause of contagion. As the ascertained cause suffices to account for every fact connected with the disease, we confess we do not see the necessity for having recourse to two separate causes for the same effect. And it is a strong circumstance, that in those countries where the disease is most familiarly known, little fear is entertained of contagion. "The more intelligent among the Turks," says a recent writer on this subject, "seems to be aware that the plague is not contagious; and we are assured that they do not destroy the bedding or clothes of those who die of the distemper, but often immediately put them on and wear them without any ill effects, or the smallest apprehension from contagion."

THE END.













Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library



1 1012 01004 9353